

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes-January 8, 2019

Members Present: Ray Detter, Carolyn Arcure, Peter Honeyman, Hugh Sonk, Don Duquette, John Splitt, Joan French

Members Absent: John Chamberlin, Kathleen Nolan, Chaz Stucken

Guests Present: Joe Arcure, Christine Crockett, Jeff Crockett, Sue Pollay, John Kotarski, Alan Haber, Chuck Bultman Steve Kaplan, Students from Skyline High School: Nolan Force, Gavin La Housse

Fourteen members of the Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council and nearby downtown neighbors were joined last night in the City Council workroom by two students from Skyline High School to discuss possible future development in the downtown and Central Area. We were all encouraged to attend this afternoon's Citizens Participation meeting for the "Standard" residential project on South Main and William. The meeting will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. in the Kalamazoo Room of the Michigan League. We have already provided a lot of input at other meetings for the 250,000-sq, ft, residential and mixed-use building proposed for the site. Our goal is to keep making the project better and less threatening to the nearby residential and historic neighborhood. We hope this development will help set a "standard" for downtown planning.

Only two blocks away, we considered the possibilities for the future of the Library Block now that the 17 story CORE proposal may no longer be viable. Passage of City charter amendment, Proposal A, stipulates that City property on the Library lot can't be sold and must be transformed into a city park and civic center commons—that also includes Liberty Plaza. But what are the possibilities for the lot if the other assets on the block are included in planning—the Library, the First Martin properties, the Credit Union, and nearby historic properties. Unlike the Tree line, which currently has some financial support, that possible financial is not currently available for planning the Library Lot.

Those present at the CAC meeting also considered the future of the nearby Blake Transit Center as well as the former YMCA site. The consensus was that residential mixed income development was desirable (including workforce housing), but the YMCA site should not all be solely for very low-income units.

Moving to discussion of the proposed 19 story 241-unit residential building on E. Washington and State, those present generally supported the by-right project, particularly the inclusion of 20 units of smaller work force housing in the six-story part of the project behind Sava's and adequate parking on the lower floors of the residential structure on East Washington. Mixed use on lower levels was also a plus. (2 story "premium" floors are expected because of inclusion of micro unit affordable housing).

The Downtown Area CAC has always supported connectivity as a part of planning the entire Central area of downtown. We discussed possibilities of future UM development of the Fingerle's property to complement our city plans for the central area—along with development of the “Treeline” and current residential developments east of South Main. Inclusion of plans for the DTE site, North Main, location of the future railroad depot site, the 16 unit residential “Garnet” development on E. Summit, another UM parking structure on Maiden Lane—with accompanying transit available to everyone, moving ahead on the Glen Hotel development has to be a part of our future downtown traffic plan—even though it is not in the downtown.

We talked about all these possibilities last night—and will continue doing so in the year 2019.