

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes November 5, 2014
301 E. Huron, Basement Conference Room, 7:00 pm.

Members Present: Ray Detter, Marsha Chamberlin, Barb Wood, Jim Kern, Sue Kern
Members Absent: John Chamberlin, Kathleen Nolan, Joan French, Hugh Sonk
Visitors: Susan Pollay, Steve Kaplan, John Giessler, Christine Crockett, Changming Fan,
Chris O'Donnell, Trevor O'Donnell,

Last night's CAC meeting was joined by a number of visitors, including four Skyline High School students and their parents who were encouraged to join in our discussions.

As a part of our updates we discussed the value of the proposed "Coleman Jewett Memorial, A Conversational Corner" to be located in front of the Farmers Market on the north corner of Detroit Street where it meets North Fifth. The two bronze Adirondack chairs to be located there are more than a memorial to Coleman Young, whose career as a citizen, teacher and artist and whose biography and family history were so much a part of African American history in Ann Arbor. His grandfather George Jewett, son of a blacksmith, was UM's first black football player—who later owned a dry cleaning business on S. State. When Coleman was a child he was often in attendance at the Dunbar Center in what is now the converted house on E. Kingsley and N. Fourth that now houses Legal Aid Services. The story of the history of the black community in Ann Arbor is told in the Street Exhibits located on two wall images across the street at Fifth and Detroit.

But these exhibits will also be a part of the pedestrian environment on N. Fifth. They are works of art, as well as a gathering place to sit and talk. They are part of what we hope will eventually be a restructured Fifth Avenue with the help of the DDA. This has the strong financial and community support of Ann Arbor Citizens including the Public Art Commission and the City of Ann Arbor. It also deserves the support of the Ann Arbor DDA. The Downtown Ann Arbor CAC strongly encourages you to provide that support in the form of a grant to what is not only a work of art, but a public streetscape amenity and a contribution to the expression of an important part of Ann Arbor history.

The major part of last night's CAC meeting--with the help of DDA Ex. Director Susan Pollay--was a discussion among CAC members, and all our meeting visitors, of their ideas to help us plan strategically for the future of downtown Ann Arbor. This agenda item was stimulated by last week's DDA's Capital Improvement Committee discussion. 1

Rapid changes have been taking place over the last few years in the downtown and we can expect more changes in the near future. How can we further identify goals, collect information, and identify alternatives to help guide our actions in dealing with increased residential, transportation, parking, and alternative transportation needs? Last night, Skyline students, visitors, and CAC members all identified the need for more downtown small retail businesses—not large chains. Other items included connectivity between parts of downtown through pedestrian alleys, bike sharing, alternative transportation, devoting passages and streets only to bikers and walkers. Appealing to a broad variety of

community values and possibilities is essential—parents, employers, employees, retirees, youth. Affordability and diversity must be considerations.

“No” to any more free standing above ground parking structures that pre-empt other downtown possibilities. “Yes” to underground parking that may provide needed car storage but may not encourage more downtown traffic. We didn’t get very far, but we look forward to future discussion of all of these issues and intend to provide our input.