

ANN ARBOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 5, 2011

DDA Offices, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Place: DDA Office, 150 S. Fifth Avenue, Suite 301, Ann Arbor, 48104

Time: Robert Guenzel called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Newcombe Clark, Russ Collins, Robert Guenzel, Leah Gunn, John Hieftje, Roger Hewitt, Joan Lowenstein, John Mouat, Nader Nassif, Keith Orr, Sandi Smith, John Splitt

Absent: none

Staff: Susan Pollay, Executive Director

Present: Joe Morehouse, Deputy Director
Amber Miller, Planning & Research Specialist
Jada Hahlbrock, Management Assistant

Audience: Dave Askins, *Ann Arbor Chronicle*
Josie Parker, Ann Arbor District Library
Andrew Cluley, WEMU
Adrian Iraola, PAC
Nancy Shore, getDowntown
Ray Detter, Downtown Area CAC
John Teter, First Martin Corporation
Diana Neering, Shelter Association
Paula Gardner, Ann Arbor.com

2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

John Teter said that First Martin manages several properties in the DDA area. He said that he felt the problems facing the downtown are both real and perceived. The issues raised in recent news stories are not due to homeless individuals, but rather are aggressive panhandlers and drug sellers who have come to Ann Arbor from outside the area. This type of behavior should not be tolerated and stronger ordinances along with increased enforcement are needed to combat the issue. Mr. Teter said he appreciated the support that the DDA gives local organizations like Dawn Farm and the Shelter Association, as it enables them to help people in need. Mr. Teter said that what the DDA now needs to work on is getting a stronger police presence in downtown.

Diana Neering, Shelter Association, said that she wanted to present the DDA with a Robert J. Delonis Community Service Award. The award reads: "In recognition of the regular and continued support of not only market rate residential developments, but also downtown affordable housing and supportive housing projects, the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County is pleased to present the Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority this award in recognition of the tremendous strides it has helped the community make in the fight to end homelessness. The DDA has regularly and generously provided housing grants to nonprofit organizations, such as the Shelter Association and Avalon Housing, in addition to financially encouraging the construction of affordable housing units in for-profit developments including, Ashley Mews and Village Green's future First & Washington project". Ms. Neering said that the DDA's support enables the Shelter Association to make meaningful changes in people's lives. She shared a story about a local man who was able to utilize resources at the Shelter Association

to get the financial support and medical assistance he needed. After nearly 4 years of homelessness this individual is now living independently, seeking employment and has reestablished long lost family connections.

3. REPORTS FROM CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Mr. Detter said that the CAC joined others to celebrate the Herbert Dreiseitl water sculpture installation in the new Municipal Plaza. The CAC has long supported public art and the Percent for Art concept. After the dedication, CAC members met to prepare comments for the Planning Commission regarding the Varsity project at 425 E. Washington. Mr. Detter said that the developers have made improvements to the project, including a public mews from E. Huron to E. Washington, however, the CAC believes that additional design improvements should be made. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the proposal, and it will now go to City Council where the CAC will continue to urge for additional design improvements. He said that he thought the new Downtown Design Guidelines and the Design Review Board process were working. It may take a while but everyone will continue to learn more about what makes good design.

Downtown Marketing Taskforce Mr. Hieftje reported that after many months' hiatus the Taskforce has begun meeting again. There was a very engaged discussion at the most recent meeting about illegal and inappropriate behavior on downtown sidewalks and in campus area alleyways. Police Chief Jones is aware of these concerns and has been developing a strategy to address safety concerns. The downtown associations asked the City's help addressing nuisance concerns such as trash and graffiti. Mr. Hieftje said that Community standards officers will be increasing their enforcement of city ordinances, and will begin by notifying property owners before issuing tickets or other actions. The Downtown Marketing Taskforce will meet on a monthly basis, (no meetings in July, August and December).

4. PRESENTATION: PARKING & TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR DOWNTOWN EMPLOYEES

Amber Miller, DDA and Nancy Shore, getDowntown gave a presentation outlining the many parking and transportation options available for daytime and evening employees, as well as the methods they will use to communicate this information. For instance, informational brochures will be created and distributed electronically that are tailored to specific businesses or downtown districts. Social media outlets will also be a valuable tool in communicating options and receiving feedback.

Mr. Mouat said that he was impressed by the presentation and felt that these communication tools will be utilized by individuals in addition to employees.

5. MINUTES

Mr. Hieftje moved and Ms. Gunn seconded approval of the minutes for the September 7, 2011 DDA meeting.

A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Clark, Collins, Guenzel, Gunn, Hewitt, Hieftje, Lowenstein, Mouat, Nassif, Orr, Smith, Splitt

NAYS: none

The motion carried.

6. PARTNERSHIPS/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Planning for parking lot redevelopment Ms. Lowenstein reported that the committee began by creating a goal statement for the William St/ Midtown planning project: **The goal is to develop this area to its full potential in a way that enhances existing assets and gives expression to community values and downtown planning (including Calthorpe, A2D2 and the Design guidelines).** The committee discussed the formation of a Leadership & Outreach Committee (LOC) for the project as it was felt that a steering committee would be helpful to ensure that members of the community are involved and that we can hear from a number of voices. The first meeting of the LOC committee will be held on October 11th at 3pm in the DDA meeting room and will be open to the public. The LOC will work toward creating a defined role for the area, a framework plan, a decision making matrix and alternative scenarios for achieving development. Ms. Smith said that she is quite pleased with the progress that has been made on this project and that things are really starting to come together.

Communication subcommittee Mr. Collins and Mr. Clark said that they met and developed two main goals for this subcommittee: 1) increase DDA visibility and thus public awareness of the important work of the DDA, and 2) create a toolbox of proactive and reactive plans to help the DDA staff and board members better communicate with the public and each other. The initial work plan will be to invite media and communication professionals to lend their expertise and provide strategies.

Ms. Lowenstein announced that the next Partnerships/ Economic Development Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, October 12th at 9 am.

7. BRICKS/MONEY/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

2010/11 Parking Operating Income Statement Mr. Hewitt pointed out that structures that have paid off their debt service are profitable (Forest, Liberty Square and Ann Ashley). Mr. Hewitt said that consideration was being given to making the Forest structure an automated facility, and although it wouldn't have cashiers there would be other Republic Parking staff on site.

August 2011 Parking Income Mr. Hewitt said that August revenue was up 12% and patrons were up 5% versus last year. Mr. Collins was glad to see that parking in the State Street area was up. He sees that as a sign that positive things are indeed happening in that area. Mr. Hieftje added that he heard anecdotally from Tom Heywood and the State Street Area Association that the new CVS on State Street is the busiest in the region (based on sq. footage sales).

GetDowntown and go!pass updates Mr. Mouat reported that the getDowntown advisory board members and staff have recommended that the program remain with the AATA. That means that the AATA will continue to handle the bookkeeping needs of the program and office space will be made available for the program in the future Blake Transit facility.

Mr. Mouat explained that some changes have been made to the go!pass program this year. The changes include a price increase to \$10. An Employer handbook has been created to help employers with the new rules that have been established regarding verification of employees and hours worked. Nancy Shore reported substantially increased go!pass ridership in August. She also explained that swipe information for the go!passes will enable her to report on go!pass use by specific groups.

City sidewalk milage Ms. Pollay reported that there was some discussion at the committee meeting about the proposed sidewalk millage. Mr. Hieftje said that the intent of the millage was to give voters a choice about how they want sidewalk repairs paid for, by the City or by the property owner.

Construction Update Mr. Splitt reported that light poles have been installed at Fifth & Liberty and will soon be powered. Landscape installation on the 300 block will begin in mid-November, weather permitting. The west side of the 200 block of S. Fifth has been completed. In regards to the Library Lane garage, Mr. Splitt reported that construction of exterior walls and columns continue daily. Concrete will be poured on the east end in a few weeks and will give a good idea of what Library Lane will look like. He explained that DDA staff and consultants have working with the Library to plan for access between Library Lane and the Library. Ms. Parker, Ann Arbor District Library, spoke about the proposed improvements and said that they will be very beneficial to library patrons. She expressed her thanks for the consideration given to the library throughout this entire process.

Mr. Hewitt announced that the next Bricks/Money/Transportation Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, October 26th at 11 am. At that meeting planning for the November City Council work session will continue. The goal will be to balance TDM strategies with consideration of the financial situation of the DDA.

8. OTHER DDA BUSINESS

None

9. OTHER AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
--

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Mr. Collins moved and Mr. Mouat seconded the motion to adjourn. Mr. Guenzel declared the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director