

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes—October 1, 2013
City Council Work Room, 2nd. Floor, City Hall, October 1, 2013, 7:00 pm.

Present: Herb and Jane Kaufer, Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Ray Detter

Absent: Kathleen Nolan, Marsha Chamberlin, John Chamberlin, Hugh Sonk

Guests: Susan Pollay, Christine Crockett

The CAC highly values the importance of DDA's vision, strong leadership and strategic planning in shaping the future of downtown. That creative vision requires a focus that moves beyond the political control and power essential for city government to provide for general operations and specific needs. We believe the downtown requires special attention. We also believe that only the DDA is uniquely equipped with the creative focus and economic tools necessary for the strategic planning that enables us to realize our long-term community goals for the downtown.

For last night's meeting, all members of the Downtown Area CAC received copies of the draft of the Downtown Development Authority's proposed Five Year Project Plan for 2013-2018. As you know, the draft plan develops specific strategies for public improvements in Streetscapes, Sidewalk Maintenance, Infrastructure, Transportation, Business Encouragement, Housing, Downtown Parks, and Community Services—all of them to accomplish the DDA mission of having the greatest impact in strengthening the downtown area and attracting new private investment. Members of the CAC asked me to assure you of our strong support for your proposed Five Year Plan and our willingness to participate in the public processes that will implement it.

At the same time, in relation to DDA's Five Year Project Plan commitment, CAC members asked me to strongly support your approval of the Arts Alliance's request for DDA financial participation in its "Power Art! Proposal—Local art on urban canvases: traffic signal boxes." This carefully developed plan, using local artists, will eventually put printed art replicas on a total of 42 traffic boxes in downtown Ann Arbor. We all remember when Bob Dascola, several years ago, led the efforts to first put art on these boxes. That effort won broad public praise. This Arts Alliance plan will go much further in that effort and hopefully provide a sustainable program for graffiti free public art in the downtown and beyond.

In relationship to the issue of downtown graffiti, some of us were present at yesterday's Mayor's Downtown Task Force meeting to hear Police Sergeant Thomas Hickey describe a new Police Community Engagement program. It involves using convicted "taggers" of public and private property in a new downtown graffiti cleanup and education program. These are kids 15-16 years old, some as young as 12, who are required to provide public service as a part of their sentence. Provided with new types of graffiti cleaning materials, and supervised by Sergeant Hickey, they are required to clean up what they and others have done to downtown buildings, and public spaces. They all know one another as well as others who are still involved in this vandalism. The hope is that they will not only learn an important lesson themselves but will spread the message to others who are involved in this destructive behavior. Members of the CAC want to commend Sergeant Hickey and the Police Department for a program that we hope will be supplemented by other efforts to deal with this problem.