

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes - January 5, 2016
City Council Workroom / City Hall, 301 E. Huron St. 7:00 pm

Members Present: Ray Detter, Marsha Chamberlin, John Chamberlin

Visitors Present: Don Duquette, Steve Kaplan, Chris Crockett, Mary Hathaway, Bethany Grzesiak, Shreya Chakravarthy, Simone Coverly, Lucie Grooters, Lindsie Rogerl, Jane Bunch, Molly Karain

Members Absent: Hugh Sonk, Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Joan French, Kathleen Nolan,

At last night's CAC meeting, six Pioneer High School Advanced Placement Government students joined us to hear a discussion of some of the major issues of 2016 and beyond.

The CAC asked me to communicate to you our strong support for your resolutions and plans for the 5th & Detroit Streetscape Project. We are pleased to see SmithGroupJJR's outreach commitment to full involvement of not only the Kerrytown District, the North Central Property Owner's Association, Community High, the Farmers Market and the Old Fourth Ward, but to the entire Ann Arbor community. We are all stakeholders in this important project. The CAC looks forward to being a part of the focus group process.

Although not up for a resolution today, we also support your efforts to develop a plan for improving the pedestrian traffic and parking design of South University. The process of public involvement has already begun with individual pedestrian surveys. We look forward to a process that will encourage participation of not only the many students that have now moved into the three new S. U. student high rises, but also participants from nearby neighborhoods that were once strongly identified with the S.U. area.

Last night the CAC also confirmed our support of the architectural plans of the Core Group and Myefski Architects for the new 12 story apartment building between Sloan Plaza and the former Campus Inn site. It will soon go before the Planning Commission. We hope the process of neighborhood and developer cooperation in shaping this project will be a model for future developers of properties in the downtown.

We are disappointed, however, that the proposed D2 project proposed at 615 South Main (the site of S. Main Market, next to the floodway), did not follow the successful approach of the Core Group. Developers of 615 not only refused to return to appear a second time before the Design Review Board, but they also refused to have a second Public Participation Meeting--even though a large number of interested citizens were unable to attend the first meeting because the packed Library room was too small to hold them. As a result, a large and growing neighborhood group has now formed to resist the project.

Finally, the CAC is pleased that the two developers still hoping to build mixed-use projects on the Library Block now recognize that a 12,000 sq. foot public plaza must be a part of their proposals. However, we still question the openness of the entire Library Block development process. We don't believe that either remaining development proposal provides the expected pedestrian connection and relation to Liberty Plaza, the Blake Transit Center and the YMCA site, as well as the historic structures on the block

and a clearly developed positive benefit to the District Library. We believe these are essential considerations in the development of this important Library Block. It should be developed with an overall concept that includes all these benefits. The CAC believes that both of the current proposals for the site should be rejected, or set aside until we have considered all the possibilities of producing a cohesive plan for the Block.