

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2016
City Council Workroom / City Hall, 301 E. Huron St. 7:00 pm

Members Present: Ray Detter, John Chamberlin, Marsha Chamberlin, Hugh Sonk
Visitors Present: Megan Masson-Minock, Eric Grimm, Joshua Sacks, Chris Crockett,
Jeff Crockett, Bethany Grzesiak, Steve Kaplan, Nate Stevens, Ilene Tyler
Members Absent: Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Joan French, Kathleen Nolan, Don Duquette

Last night's CAC meeting was broken down into three related parts. Megan Masson-Minock of ENP Associates is planning to bring recommendations for changes in the downtown zoning premium ordinance to a Planning Commission public hearing in April. She wanted the CAC's reaction to proposed amendments. (A premium is an incentive of additional building floor area for a new building if the building has attributes the market does not provide.) The premium is by right, meaning if the developer provides the attribute, the City has to approve the additional building. Over the course of a 45 minute discussion last night, those attending the CAC meeting generally supported the proposed amendments which among other things, raised the bar for receiving some premiums, eliminated others (Hist. Preservation, Pedestrian Amenity, Public Parking), raised green standards, and lowered the minimum size units to allow 400 square foot micro-units. We once again stressed our desire that no premiums should be granted at any time if they have a negative impact upon the historic character of downtown or the context of near downtown residential and historic neighborhoods.

The second part of our meeting was devoted to a discussion with Eric Grimm, Senior VP of Development for the CORE Group and one of his architects, Joshua Sacks. They have been selected to negotiate a possible mixed-use, high-rise development on the Library Lot. We stressed our position that the best future for that lot was not the highest, the most massive and most expensive project, but the one that was best for that location—and the entire community—the one that provided connectivity with Liberty Plaza, the Blake Transit Center, the former YMCA lot, even the Allen Creek Greenway, and particularly the District Library as well as nearby historic and residential properties. .

We also discussed CORE group Architect John Myefski's plans for the proposed residential property at 603 E. Huron between Sloan Plaza and the former Campus Inn--including a least two more changes we wished to see in that project. We then adjourned our meeting and moved next door to City Council Chambers where a public hearing on the 603 East Huron project was about to take place before the Planning Commission.

At the public hearing, members of the CAC, residents of Sloan Plaza, and residents of the Old Fourth Ward praised the CORE GROUP and their architect John Myefski for the cooperative way in which they had designed their building to conform to the new D1 zoning on the site. Unlike the developers of 413 E. Huron, who had arrived with a preconceived site plan that set out to maximize every inch of floor space in a massive building that they called "by right"--even though it negatively impacted its neighbors and was opposed by most the Ann Arbor community--the CORE group sought out their new neighbors and organized multiple meetings to find the best solution to the new 120 foot

height and 130 foot diagonal requirements of the site. CORE voluntarily attended two meetings of Ann Arbor's Design Review Board to get their input. They visited many units in Sloan Plaza, consulted with Sloan residents and made important changes based on their input. **The result:** 413 E. Huron (now identified as non-conforming) gained approval only by threatening the City with a multi-million dollar lawsuit. CORE's project at 603 East Huron was praised and unanimously approved by the Planning Commission.