

**Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes—September 3, 2013**  
301 E. Huron, Basement Conference Room, 7:00 pm.

Present: Hugh Sonk, Joan French, Ray Detter

Absent: Kathleen Nolan, Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Marsha Chamberlin, John Chamberlin,  
Herb Kaufer

Guests: Susan Pollay, Christine Crockett

In July I reported that a Planning Commission Executive Committee was in the process of hiring a consultant to organize a very public process of re-examining the Downtown A2D2 zoning changes that were adopted in 2009. A Downtown Design Guidelines Review Task Force was also to be appointed to look into the possibility of changes in Ann Arbor's Design Guidelines and Review Process.

We are disappointed that the Design Guidelines Review Task Force has not yet met. But in late July and through August, the Consulting Firm of Erin N. Perdu & Associates (ENP) conducted a series of interviews, focus groups, public events, community coffees, a public workshop and online surveys to engage residents, businesses, employees and downtown property owners—that's all of us-- in a discussion of what works, what doesn't work and what changes need to be made in downtown zoning.

Recently, the consultant group released a summary of some of their findings. Last night members of the CAC reviewed those summaries. Not surprisingly, 7 private interviews of developers and Downtown Real Estate professionals, as well as two DDA representatives, indicated that they felt current zoning was meeting its intent of more development and density downtown and that there were still too many limitations on downtown development. Most of them, however, felt that design guidelines should be more strictly enforced.

On the other hand, at larger public focus group meetings and at a public workshop citizen participants largely agreed that the north side of Huron between Division and State, the south Side of William between Main and Fourth, and the Ann Street Site adjacent to City Hall should be rezoned, perhaps to D2 or even a new hybrid D1 zoning (8-10 stories). Near downtown historic and residential neighborhoods needed to be protected by buffer zoning. There was general agreement that the current granting of residential premiums was not creating a desired diverse housing mix—allowing too much student housing and not encouraging affordable housing. Most also supported the idea that design guidelines should be followed to be eligible for any premiums—give design guidelines more teeth.

Across the board, most people in all phases of the public process, including on-line surveys agreed that more diverse housing should be encouraged in the downtown and that “the design of new buildings, especially with respect to adjacent historic neighborhoods, should be improved.” In this regard we members of the CAC were encouraged by the

Planning Commission's inclusion of "Mandatory adherence to the city's design guidelines" as a condition of any Request for Proposals for the future sale and development of the former YMCA site on Fifth and William.

ENP Associates has scheduled a series of community coffees, bag lunches and public focus groups for the next two weeks. Go to the Planning Commission on the City's home site for a list of them. Our Downtown Area CAC focus group will be next Tuesday, September 10, 5:30-7pm. in the City Hall Basement Conference Room. All are welcome.