

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2016
City Council Workroom / City Hall, 301 E. Huron St. 7:00 pm

Members Present: Joan French, Don Duquette, Hugh Sonk, Ray Detter
Visitors Present: Susan Pollay, Christine Crockett, Bethany Grzesiak, Nate Stevens, Jeff Crockett, Mary Hathaway, Ethel Potts, Alan Haber
Members Absent: Jim Kern, Sue Kern, Kathleen Nolan, Marsha Chamberlin, John Chamberlin

Last night, many current developments in Downtown Ann Arbor were at least touched upon as we discussed two major efforts for change being made in relation to area transportation issues and the future of the Library Block.

CAC members and guests appreciated a thorough discussion by Susan Pollay of transportation changes planned for Ann Arbor and the four county area of Southeast Michigan. The Southeast Michigan Regional Transit Authority's hopes for connecting Ann Arbor and Detroit via commuter rail as well as bus rapid transit services along certain corridors is impressive.

As Ex. Director of Ann Arbor's Downtown Development Authority, Susan has a full grasp of our local AATA, Get Downtown Program, and DDA Parking/Transportation/Demand Management Options. As a member of the Regional Transit Authority's Citizens Advisory Committee, she has a significant role to play in shaping the regional transit master plan that is expected to be adopted this year. Susan explained that the RTA is planning to ask voters in Washtenaw, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to approve a new regional transit tax this year. If the tax is approved, the RTA will move forward with the services being planned.

The CAC strongly supports these local and regional efforts. We also discussed issues regarding the proposed Ann Arbor Connector and the pros and cons of locations for our future railroad station (I should say stations.)

Alan Haber, advocate of a park on the Library Lot, also spoke last night. Everyone had a chance to express opinions. Result: The Downtown Area CAC will continue to support our stated position. We support mixed use development on the Library Lot, with a 12,000 sq. ft. public plaza, planned connectivity to the Library, the Blake Transit Center, the former YMCA site, the Allen Creek Greenway--and Liberty Plaza via the First Martin properties. Last week, at a public meeting organized by the CORE development group we heard criticism of the current proposal: It was too large, the public plaza would not be run by the city, and the entire area should be dedicated to public use.

The Downtown Area CAC remains committed to working to make the future development on the Library Lot site as good as it can possibly be. The CORE group is willing to make any changes supported by City government—whether in height, design, use, affordability, etc.--recognizing that the amount paid for the site might change based upon the need to make the project work financially. We look forward to future discussions.