



Legislation Text

File #: 20-1478, **Version:** 2

Resolution Accelerating Development of the Center of the City Community Commons and Recognizing the Self-Organized Open "Community Commons Initiating Committee" as a Community Partner in the Process

Whereas, Ann Arbor voters amended the City Charter in November 2018, designating the Center of the City public land as a "commons," to be developed as an urban central park and civic center;

Whereas, The City Council appointed a Center of the City Task Force to determine how to implement this voter decision, and passed its own Resolution to facilitate commons development;

Whereas, The Task Force met beginning in August 2019 and discussed for 7 months adopting unanimously and submitting a Report on the City Council on February 28, 2020;

Whereas, The City Council received and accepted unanimously the Task Force Report and its Recommendations to help guide the development of the Center of the City Central Park and Civic Center Commons, with the understanding that citizen initiative would drive this process;

Whereas, Some of the Recommendations define work and responsibility primarily of the City Administrator, such as to gather a Center of the City Block Partners Group from related governmental agencies and occupants of other spaces on the block to facilitate development of the Commons, to terminate the parking use and improve facilities on the commons spaces, and to include the commons development in the City Master Plan and planning;

Whereas, Other Recommendations express an aspiration for initiatives from the Community, such as on-site programming, creation of a Council of the Commons, and developing community support for wider commoning efforts such as sustainable economics programs, affordable housing, local currencies and time banking, a public bank, eldercare, childcare, and lifelong education and training initiatives;

Whereas, A self-organizing open "initiating committee" has formed itself to facilitate community initiatives in the development of the commons, to be "doers" of the Recommendations of the Center of the City Task Force, inviting past members of the Task Force, people who worked with the Task Force and all interested Ann Arbor people, and

Whereas, The initiating committee has established a 501c3 non-profit fiscal agency agreement with the established Library Green Conservancy to facilitate independent fundraising;

Whereas, The initiating committee has established and is developing a web site to facilitate communication, outreach and growth

www.annarborcommunitycommons.org <[https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.annarborcommunitycommons.org%2F&data=02%7C01%7CShiggins%40a2gov.org%7C5bcecec56efe4df1d0b008d864caf813%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.annarborcommunitycommons.org%2F&data=02%7C01%7CShiggins%40a2gov.org%7C5bcecec56efe4df1d0b008d864caf813%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%2F)>

[7C0%7C0%7C637370170190799101&sdata=PmoFvkomMAb8CQbCcz8PsWusBDWRIJNaU5HkokLmXNs%3D&reserved=0>](#);

Whereas, The initiating committee has begun to associate itself with a network of commoning co-cities, providing mutual aid to each other, and with leaders of commons development and commoning world wide;

Whereas, The initiating committee has begun explorations and organizing efforts toward re-purposing the previous parking surface, including setting up temporary stalls to enable local businesses and artists to showcase their wares, giving educational demonstrations of related A2Zero and green ways of living projects, planning several mini-park gardens, beginning a children's play area, activating music and other performances on both Liberty Plaza and the previous parking lot surface, (recognizing current physical distance limitations) as well as connecting with community currency and time sharing mutual aid and public bank activities;

Whereas the initiating committee is now at a point of wider community outreach, calling for commons assemblies of Ann Arbor residents responding to calls for participation, convening community interest working groups, inviting community helpers, neighbors, partners, and links with commoning networks, establishing liaisons with government agencies, gathering advisors, and connecting with Libraries, Universities and colleges to identify educational resources;

Whereas, The efforts of the initiating committee would be benefited by City Council recognition of this self-organizing community effort allowing the City Community Engagement Staff to facilitate followup and engagement with members of the public who participated or expressed interest in the commons development during the period of Task Force community engagement, and also encouraging the wider community attention; and

Whereas, Such efforts complement and support the City government's efforts to improve Ann Arbor as a whole;

RESOLVED, That the Ann Arbor City Council reaffirms its commitment to the development of the Center of the City Commons;

RESOLVED, That City Council recognizes the "Community Commons Initiating Committee" as a community based authority empowered to help facilitate the formation of an Ann Arbor Council of the Commons, and to advance responsibilities assigned to the Council of the Commons in the development of the commons, representing the agreed aspirations for the commons as expressed in the Task Force Report, Recommendations and Supporting Materials, including "The Vision" on page 7 of the Report, fostering a culture of peace and non-violence and a commitment to engage with the community in the "continued co-creation of the vision;" and referencing especially page 10, to develop programming, educational opportunities, activities and structures for the spaces that have broad community appeal, defining the "culture of the commons" and creating partnerships creating financial sustainability; and referencing pages 16-17 "building on past work and learning more about the commons and commoning," including Appendices C and F, on past work and commoning;

RESOLVED, City Council asks the City Administrator to serve as liaison, or provide a designated person as liaison, to interface with this community-based initiating committee and to cooperate with the initiating committee in the coordination of City responsibilities in the development of the

commons, such as providing public toilets, drinking water, electrical access, wifi internet connectivity, staging and performance facilities, and storage space, etc., as budget constraints allow;

RESOLVED, City Council asks the City Administrator to include the Community Commons Initiating Committee in the Center of the City Block Partners Groups whenever it is convened, (referencing page 11 of the Report,);

RESOLVED, City Council asks the City Community Engagement Staff of the Task Force to help formulate with the initiating committee and to send a joint letter to all community members who participated in community outreach or who asked to be kept informed of developments, to invite them into the continuing process following from the Task Force work;

RESOLVED, City Council directs the City Administrator to work with the Downtown Development Authority and Republic Parking to implement the recommendation to remove cars and terminate surface parking on the Library Lane underground lot, allowing repurposing of the Library Lane lot location as called for in the approved Task Force recommendations;

RESOLVED, That the City Council declares the formation of the Ann Arbor Center of the City- Council of the Commons; herein referred to as the Commons Council; while there is to be no limit on the amount of participants on the Commons Council, for the purposes of establishing the Commons Council bylaws 12 members will form the body, with 11 initially given a vote. The Commons Council will be comprised of the City Administrator, a non-voting member; and voting members comprised of two City Council members appointed and approved by City Council resolution, a citizen member of the City Planning Commission put forward by Planning Commission and affirmed by City Council, a citizen member of the Parks Advisory Commission put forward by PAC and affirmed by City Council, two members of the Community Commons Initiating Committee, two members of the Library Green Conservancy, and 3 citizens-at-large to be nominated by the City Council representatives Commons Council members, and affirmed by City Council.

Resources:

Center of the City Task Force Report:

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/programs/Documents/Center%20of%20the%20City%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report%202020.pdf>

Appendices:

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/systems-planning/programs/Pages/Center-of-the-City-Report-Appendices.aspx>

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Bannister and Hayner

As Amended and Approved by Ann Arbor City Council on October 5, 2020