A regular meeting of the Downtown Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, August 9, 2018, at 4:00 p.m. at Water St. Solutions, with Chairman Mark Misselhorn presiding and with proper notice having been given.

MINUTES
Commissioner Neidy motioned for approval of the minutes of the regular Downtown Advisory Commission (DAC) meeting held on August 9, 2018; seconded by Commissioner Jenkins. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Misselhorn discussed the importance of downtown and why having a vibrant downtown is important to the City and region. The message needs to be communicated to more policymakers, citizens, and businesses, to understand downtown’s true value.

THE VALUE OF A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN – Presentation by Anthony Corso, City of Peoria Innovation Team

Anthony discussed why a vibrant downtown matters. Corporate job centers are shipping back to downtown, it is a national trend. A value per acre study was conducted by the I-Team that proved that downtown property generates more sales tax and property tax value per acre throughout the region. Most of the property tax revenue generated is from the downtown area. Chairman Misselhorn stated he wants to see more collaboration with organizations, city and county for downtown development and marketing.

Mike Freilinger, Downtown Development Corporation, discussed his experience as the County Administrator in Poke County, IA. The board focus on the development of downtown Desmoine. Mike involved the City and County in a marketing campaign with targeted audiences. He stated that it is important to build political support for a marketing campaign and the development of policy. Also, it is critical to use connections in the business community to think about moving into the downtown area.

Council Member Sid Ruckreigal suggested a community conversation through the region to develop how to tell the story of the importance of downtown Peoria to the region. The data supports the need to invest in downtown.

Further discussion among participants included; the perception about safety in downtown, the impact of the Peoria Public School District to attract families, and using story telling and arts to build interest in the downtown area.

BIG PICTURE ARTS MOVEMENT-Doug and Eileen Leunig
Doug began his presentation on the importance of art in the livability and lovability of a community. The Big Picture is a 501 (c3) organization formed with a vision to create a national arts destination for the Peoria region. The three components of big picture are (1) arts education (2) arts and film festivals and (3) public murals and art. Doug promoted the inaugural Big Picture Arts Festival scheduled for October 13, 2018. The festival consists of interactive art activities, music, and a film festival.
Eileen is working with school districts on the importance of arts as part of State learning standards. She also discussed using arts in place-making to create artistic public spaces. She presented proposals for murals in the Peoria downtown area on vacant buildings.

Doug then presented the mural Abraham Blue that will be placed on the side of the Peoria County building. He discussed Abraham Lincoln’s life and his struggle with depression and suicide. The goal is to raise $55,000 for the mural creation and installation. The mural presentation is scheduled for October 11, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENT
No public comments.

ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Lee made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Chairman Jenkins. The Downtown Advisory Commission Meeting adjourned at approximately at 6:02 p.m. after the motion was approved unanimously.

Leslie L. McKnight, PhD
Leslie L. McKnight, PhD, City of Peoria
City Manager’s Office