DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS

: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS:

: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS:

A regular meeting of the Downtown Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, January 10, 2019, at 4:00 p.m. at City of Peoria, City Hall, 419 Fulton St., Room 404, with Chairman Mark Misselhorn presiding and with proper notice having been given.

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call confirmed the following Commissioners
Present (7): Mark Misselhorn, Vincent Boyle, Ray Lees, Jon Neidy, Paige Dodson, Jon Jenkins, Alma Brown
Absent (1): Becky Frye
City Liaison: Leslie McKnight, PhD
Presenters: Deborah Roethler, Assistant City Manager, City of Peoria
Others Present: Council Member Denise Moore and Council Member Sid Ruckriegel, and about 20 other people attended the meeting.
City staff: Patrick Urich, Stacy Peterson, Josh Naven, Leah Allison, Kim Smith, Anthony Corso, Kate Green

Chairman Misselhorn opened the meeting with the introduction of Deborah Roethler, Assistant City Manager and asked DAC Commissioners to introduce themselves. He informed the DAC Commissioners that Commissioner Frye has resigned from the Commission. He also thanked the audience for attending and stated that the DAC will be dedicating the meeting to a discussion of the DAC strategic direction for 2019.

MINUTES

Commissioner Brown motioned for approval of the minutes of the regular Downtown Advisory Commission (DAC) meeting held on December 13, 2018; seconded by Commissioner Lees. The motion was approved unanimously.

Note: It was later noted by Councilperson Denise Moore that the street names under the topic of One-Way to Two-Way Conversions be changed from “Lincoln and Howett” to “Jefferson and Adams” (see discussion below).

2019 DAC STRATEGIC DIRECTION DISCUSSION

Chairman Misselhorn began the strategic discussion by presenting three identified 2019 downtown priorities and activities under each priority. Priorities included parking and infrastructure, the value of downtown Peoria, and planning implementation. Assistant City Manager Roethler then led the discussion on how the priorities were established for 2019. She stated the goal of the strategic session is to establish a work plan for commissioners for 2019 based on research, existing resources, and City priorities. She anticipates the commissioners to form working groups based on their interest, research topics, and make recommendations to the Commission and the City on activities and projects that can be implemented in 2019. She engaged in dialogue with the Commissioners to get further input on their priorities for downtown. Commissioner Lees mentioned that over the years a number of plans have been adopted by the City and due to limited resources and other circumstances, have not been fully implemented. He stated that the Commission should have a good understanding of the goals and strategies already outlined in existing plans. Commissioner Dodson suggested adding an attraction program for unique businesses downtown. She also stated that there is an opportunity to attract youth, particularly Bradley students.
to the downtown area based on unique businesses and experiences. Commissioner Dodson also suggested the idea of a trolley that could take downtown pedestrians to parking decks instead of spending limited resources on a new deck. Commissioner Brown mentioned the need to prioritize people and their experiences in the downtown area. Commissioner Neidy discussed the need for more community engagement to identify services, events and activities. As a result of this discussion, the Commissioners decided to add another priority category and topics to their list:

**People Strategy**
- Input from community
- Community engagement—health, service and fund
- Youth strategy and attraction
- Residents, visitors, and employment
- Attract businesses

Assistant City Manager Roethler opened up further discussion and input from the audience. Pat Sullivan stated that downtown studies have been done in the past and plans are usually shelved due to no funds. Chairman Misselhorn stated that he is open to having the study items be topics for discussion in subsequent DAC meetings. Dr. McKnight also reiterated that the DAC Commission can review existing downtown plans and based on established priorities select strategies for implementation and identify community partners to assist in implementation. The DAC can discuss, evaluate, and provide funding recommendations to City Council. John Amdall suggested a unifying theme and vision for downtown Peoria. This led to a DAC discussion on establishing a business case for the region. Chairman Misselhorn suggested to staff and Council Members the need to develop a vision statement for downtown Peoria. A recommendation was made to read the book ‘Our Town’ which is about an American City that went through its own renaissance. Jon Walker suggested ways to merge the CSO solutions into downtown development. Council Member Moore commented on the youth attraction efforts for downtown. She stated that some academic institutions develop eco-systems to keep students on campus. She would like to see the City/DAC work with academic campus communities to encourage students to experience downtown Peoria and their surrounding community. Council Member Sid Ruckriegel suggested the DAC get strategic plans from the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and the arts community to gather their downtown strategies as well. Peter Kobak suggested equitable development and gave an example where community benefit plans can be added to City agreements with developers. Doug Leunig focused on engaging arts in the community through education. He said all people can collaborate in the arts through creativity and innovation. He suggested ongoing support of the Big Picture Initiative and the utilization of the creative class for development opportunities.

Chairman Misselhorn then led a discussion to identify the most important items based on the DAC discussion and audience input. He stated that the idea of the value of downtown that includes a vision statement is foundational. Mark proposed the DAC focus on the value of downtown. The DAC decided that they need an inventory of what downtown and warehouse district plans exists. The list should include any identified strategic partners and costs of implementation in a matrix. The DAC would like to have the list for discussion at the next DAC meeting. Commissioner Lees suggested a City Council advocate for DAC Commissioners, an at-large and district representative. Council Member Ruckriegel supported the suggestion to have representation. Council Member Moore stated that she also supports council members that are knowledgeable of downtown activities. She also provided a point of clarification from the last DAC meeting minutes. Adams and Jefferson St., should be changed to Lincoln and Howett St.

Patrick Urich stated the importance of DAC. Their efforts led to the creation of the Downtown Development Corporation (DDC). He believes the DAC recommendations should be considered in the City's capital budget. DAC
can also be used to get input from the community on downtown projects and activities. As downtown projects are implemented, the projects will be designed based on the downtown streetscape master plan. Patrick stated his interest is in how to get more employment in downtown. He would like more people and more jobs in downtown. Chris Setti says downtown is vital to the entire region. He stated the need to have vibrant urban spaces with arts, cultural activities to make Peoria competitive. He said there are great assets in downtown Peoria. He suggested efforts to market downtown office space. He also mentioned the Peoria Opportunity Zone. Peoria is the only city in the state that has downtown in their Opportunity Zone. Josh Naven, City Urban Planner stated that he can provide the DAC with recent downtown and riverfront plans.

Chairman Misselhorn and Assistant City Manager Roethler thanked the Commissioners and audience for their participation in the DAC strategic direction for 2019 and encouraged attendance at future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENT
No new business.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Neidy made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Chairman Jenkins. The Downtown Advisory Commission Meeting adjourned at approximately at 5:30 p.m. after the motion was approved unanimously.

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