A regular meeting of the Downtown Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, February 13, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. at Twin Towers HR Training Room, 456 Fulton, Room 420, with Chairman Mark Misselhorn presiding and with proper notice having been given.

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. Roll Call confirmed the following Commissioners:

Absent (2): Peter Kobak, Jon Jenkins
City Liaison: Kevin Evans
Others Present: Sharon Gramm, Chris Setti, Andrew Ngui, Phil Lockwood, Sharon & John Amdall, Eileen & Doug Leunig, Jon Walker, Steve Tarter, Susie Stockman, Jennelle Justice
City Council: Denise Moore
City Staff: Josh Naven, Senior Planner, City of Peoria; Anthony Corso, i-Team Director

Chairman Misselhorn opened the meeting at 4:30 PM.

MINUTES

Mark Misselhorn welcome commissioners to 2020 actions called for motion to approve minutes from January subject to correction to reflect Jon Neidy, Ray Lees present at January meeting.

MOTION: to approve the minutes of the regular Downtown Advisory Commission (DAC) meeting held on January 9, 2020. Motion by Jon Neidy, seconded by Kim McGhee The motion was approved unanimously.

FEEDBACK 2020 CONTINUED

KEVIN PROVIDED BRIEF INTRODUCTION/RECAP ON FEEDBACK. TURNED THE MEETING OVER TO MARK MISSELHORN TO CONTINUE SOLICITING FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING.

FEEDBACK FROM DENISE MOORE, CITY COUNCILPERSON

- Indicated she is present, spoke at last DAC meeting, and would like to listen to direct feedback from stakeholders
- Summarized the Legislative Breakfast Agenda, which featured 8 of 12 items with capital requests for funding related to Downtown Peoria

FEEDBACK FROM Sharon Gramm, Peoria Riverfront Association

- Issues related to Downtown parking in general, but crucially on/around the riverfront.
- Parking in Warehouse District
- Free 2-hour parking in Riverfront lot is great; can it be extended to 3-hour parking? 3 hours would allow patrons of downtown businesses to stay longer without feeling rushed. Many have indicated 2 hours is not quite enough and feel pressure to plug the meter to avoid ticketing, causing them to leave earlier
- Concerns related to impact of Murray Baker Bridge closings and how they will hurt Downtown businesses

FEEDBACK FROM Doug Leunig, Big Picture Initiative

- Consider the use of color to create more vibrancy in downtown and throughout the city
- Consider the alleyways as additional opportunities to beautify the city with Art on garages and other rear-facing structures
Consider ways to incentivize property owners to seek more productive uses of buildings in Downtown, including the need for retail art galleries.

FEEDBACK FROM Eileen Leunig, Big Picture Initiative
- Consider ways to encourage more walkability of the city. Public Art and walkability go hand-in-hand
- Provide more incentives to change behaviors versus penalties (land owner incentives)

FEEDBACK FROM John Amdall
- Expressed his pleasure to see the concept of a defined Vision for Downtown at the center of the discussion
- Discussed the past as defined by CAT, Vaudeville and how it defined City in past
- Discussed a need for a more diversified identity for the City of Peoria
- Discussed a need to appeal to seniors/retirees in the area. 1,200 OLLIE members, 6,000 OLLIE member mailing list. All can consider moving to other places- so focus on opportunities for seniors would be impactful to consider
- Craft a message for why seniors should stay vs. going to Florida, for example
- Affirmed that creating a Vision is the correct way for moving forward

FEEDBACK FROM Chris Setti, CEO GPEDC
- Stressed economic & cultural importance of City Centers in general. Stressed importance of Downtown Peoria to the entire city and the entire region.
- Need to focus on Livability of the City
  - Arts
  - Sports
  - Need for variety of DTown living options (market rate apartments and affordable apartments)
  - Focus on small locally owned/unique enterprises vs. big box in Downtown
  - Focus on attracting millennials, Gen X to bring into downtown
  - Continued focus on Innovation i.e. Innovation District & Hub
  - Need policies to deal with property owners who are not contributing to the enhancement/value of downtown
  - Open up Fulton Plaza to move traffic through downtown more effectively
  - Assess the financial impact of vacant/unused deteriorating property in downtown and develop a plan to reduce it

FEEDBACK FROM ANTHONY CORSO, City of Peoria i-Team
- Address the perception issues related to safety and security not just the financial consequences related to vacant unused property
- Consider solutions based on best practices from other communities
- Innovate and develop more agile opportunities for property use without comprising life safety code related issues
- Consider an incremental approach to creating vibrancy (including small-scale private development and tactical urbanism)

FEEDBACK FROM Jenelle Justice, Jay Goldberg Events
- Parking concerns — currently not enough in close proximity to event venues
- Safety after hours when crowds leave create a feeling of fear for safety (even if it’s just perception)
- Desire to have more and better policing after events, not just during
- Would consider lighting & Cameras as steps in the right direction for creating a feeling of greater safety

FEEDBACK FROM PHIL LOCKWOOD, Peoria Innovation Alliance
- Parking — consider smart mobility as a solution plan for fewer (not more) cars in the long term
- Recognize trend of electrification of vehicles and preparing downtown to receive and welcome electric cars
- Understand population shift from density within a 9 mile radius, now spread to a 45 mile radius
- As representative of the IL Valley Striders- Expressed serious concern over added costs/fees for police and road closures for running events

**FEEDBACK FROM Josh Naven, Senior Planner City of Peoria**
- Expressed support for much of the innovations suggested
- Reiterated innovation should be tempered with consideration for life safety considerations
  - Consider floodway issues
  - Life safety
  - Setbacks/build-to lines
- Importance of activation/phasing-in already in-place plans
  - Streetscape Master plan
  - Wayfinding plan
  - Tiger Grant as a basis for current development in Warehouse District
  - Reconstruction of Fulton Street
  - Public Parks and public lands as leaders in revitalization of communities

**FEEDBACK FROM Susie Stockman, P.A.C.E.**
- Small organizations creating and managing events downtown need more support vs. more barriers like fees, to continue and to remain viable in the City
- Better communications on things like Murray Baker Bridge closing
- Concern for the viability of events in downtown during closures like the bridges and other traffic related events

**FEEDBACK FROM Andrew Ngui, GPEDC Director of Innovation & Start-Ups**
- Suggest this community should walk more alter perceptions/mindsets)
- Find ways to create vibrancy “hacks” – what do we have, what do we do with what we have?
- What are the things we can do now?
- Consider better public/mass mobility or transit options

**FEEDBACK FROM Steve Tarter, independent journalist**
- Noted the complaints on proximity to parking options as relative. He used the walk of 2 blocks in Peoria as the benchmark and compared it the 10 block walk in Chicago.
- Perception vs. reality of parking scarcity; and changing expectations of people
- Commented on the need to focus on the City Center/central biz district as an area in need of focus to bring back more activity and interest

**FEEDBACK FROM Jon Walker, downtown resident/property owner & PRA Board member**
- Consider West Main as an extension of Downtown. Connectivity to Bradley University
- Look at policies and funding sources for consistent, high quality streetscape elements and amenities Downtown

**ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK FROM Commissioners, in review of recent and past opinion gathering:**
- Parking issues
  - Perceptions
  - Structures
  - On-street
  - Surface lots
  - Habits/expectations
• Lighting
  o Vibrancy
  o Safety
  o Streetscaping
  o Appearance/Consistency
  o technology
• Event Support
  o Runs/Events/concerts
  o City support
• Opening up Downtown with 1-way to 2-way streets
• Focus on vacant buildings being neglected
• Mobility and transportation
• Connect Bradley, Main Street to Downtown
• Riverfront Park master planning
• Connection to the Near Northside
• Recommendations for opportunities for when I-74 bridge is closed
• Safety/security
• Public Arts & events
• Wayfinding
• Aesthetics/design quality
• Branding/marketing/messaging
• Innovation

DISCUSSION:

NEW BUSINESS & PUBLIC COMMENT

No New Business

MOTION TO ADJOURN BY KIM MCGHEE, SECOND BY VINCENT BOYLE. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Kevin S. Evans
Kevin Evans Senior Economic Engagement Specialist