

X4-25-16

DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

**April 18, 2016 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers - City Hall**

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The Downtown Review Board members held a work session to discuss updating the Downtown Precise Plan.

Attending: Sid Breese, John Spencer, Mary McGarry, Scott Sollars, Larry Buck, Chuck Hamilton

City Staff: Nic Hutchison, City Planner; Rebecca Shipp, Executive Secretary

Larry Buck, Chairman of the Downtown Review Board, called the work session to order at 5:30p.m.

Buck presented the Board with a brief background of the Downtown Precise Plan.

Buck questioned the boundaries of the Downtown Precise Plan as shown in Figure 1. After discussion among the Board members the map as shown in Figure 1 was decided to be accurate.

Hutchison asked the Board to consider the intent of the Downtown Precise Plan going forward. He stated the document in its current form presented no clear vision or direction to developers. Hutchison stated his desire to use the document as a sales tool when discussing long range plans with developers and other interested parties. Hutchison feels the document lacks any analysis of the current downtown situation and the potential reuse of buildings to make downtown a more vibrant area. Hutchison stated the design guidelines currently focused on sidewalk cafes and street carts.

Buck stated there is a generally agreed upon moratorium on low-mod housing, Buck also reminded the Board they did not have the capacity to require historic structures to be built.

McGarry stated her position that patio dining etc needed to stay in the document.

Hutchison explained he hopes for a more proactive precise plan.

Spencer asked how do we make sure people are aware if the plan.

Hamilton stated the problem is coordination between the Building and Planning departments.

Spencer stated Hutchison's counterpart in the Building department should be invited to attend. Spencer also stated the need for a check list to be used during the permitting process. The problem of unpermitted work was brought up at this time. Discussion among Board members concluded that this was also a problem.

Hutchison stated there are different partnerships, different associations that need to work together as well as understanding that the City is the ultimate authority/permission granter. The recent installation of way finding signs was given as an example.

McGarry stated the computers should be programmed to flag anything that hasn't come before the Downtown Review Board and no permits should be issued without board approval.

Hutchison stated there seems to be a scattered authority perception and a misconnection among the different partnership and associations. Hutchison reminded the Board for the need of a vision for downtown development.

The Board asked Hutchison to provide samples/reviews of precise plans from other similar cities. Buck stated the comparison needed to be from comparable historically industrial towns.

Spencer stated he thought the current Downtown Precise Plan is very vague but also does not want the precise plan to become a deterrent. Spencer requested a copy of the ordinances that pertain to the DRB be distributed.

Board members discussed meeting again at the regularly scheduled date (May 4th) to continue the discussion.

Hutchison suggested a possible memo of understanding and responsibility to be established between the different partnerships and associations.

McGarry asked what was going to be done about the Taco Bell.

Buck asked the board to consider the issue of how to address false facades and retail use of public sidewalks while revising the precise plan.

McGarry asked if anyone had looked into Pink Salt and their potential violation of code by allowing outside food/vending.

There was discussion among the board regarding the use of fencing in conjunction with side walk dining/alcohol consumption.

Hamilton asked if it were possible for the Frederick Avenue area to establish a precise plan as it is a main gateway to downtown.

Hutchison stated that would be a possibility going forward. Buck reminded the Board of the difficulty encountered the last time there was interest in setting up a precise plan in that area.

Hutchison stated the goal of the Downtown Precise Plan was to bring the highest quality development to the downtown area.

Buck explained his thought that something is better than nothing.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.