

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 12, 2023, 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 4:34 p.m. Roll Call confirmed the following Commissioners:

Present (5): Mark Misselhorn, Kim McGhee, Ray Lees, Jack Berres, Jon Jenkins

Absent (4): Maykala Suetler, Jon Neidy, Alma Brown, Angie Walker

City Liaison: Debbie Van Sickle

Others Present: Lenora Fisher, Paul Berres, Susan O'Neal

MINUTES APPROVED

Commissioner McGhee made a motion to approve the December 8th, 2022, DAC minutes; seconded by Commissioner Jenkins and approved unanimously.

MEETING OPENING

Chairman Misselhorn welcomed attendees and provided a recap of the of proposed list of recommendations that included the following:

Policies

City Council **Policy Session** focused on the Downtown

Council **retreat** focused on the Downtown

Special Service Area (SSA) for defined area downtown. Peoria is believed to be one of the largest cities in Illinois that doesn't have one for the Downtown.

Jon J- What is stopping developers from doing residential? City gives impression of not being receptive to change. Important for the City to adopt a more "customer service-oriented" approach.

Jack- City took out light pole and tree, so he could build outdoor seating, but has not been able to get any further communication or action on this from the City (lack of timely communication).

Jon J- Customer service and accountability by city staff. SSA why am I asked to pay more when these things should already be paid for. Boundary for SSA concept too large last time (2017).

Programs

Better communication and **collaboration** among the Downtown and regional organizations and stakeholders

Better, consistent **communications** on Downtown happenings needed (media/press releases, web presence, social media, etc.)

Annual State of the Downtown platform to show collaboration

Safe and clean programs (most likely SSA- funded)

Projects

Target **300 & 500 blocks of Main Street** for catalytic projects

Riverfront building at **330 SW Water Street**- consider city paying for resolution of existing problem with lower level/flood plain, to allow building to be feasibly redeveloped.

Pop-ups in unoccupied or underutilized buildings

Extend riverfront trail into Warehouse District (create connectivity/signage/create urban loop)

Prioritize restoration of slow 2-way traffic through Fulton Plaza. Create a more vibrant and flexible urban street that accommodates cars, on-street parking and people (and can be readily closed off for events).

Jon-we need frequent small green spaces if we have more people living downtown

Susan O'Neil- Make sure to recognize that numerous nearby apartment dwellers use the green space now for dog walking

Jack- Downtown residents need some green spaces, and not sure if eliminating the current pedestrian plaza should be high priority

Initiatives

Activate underutilized green space along riverfront for fun activities (e.g. pickle ball under Michel Bridge, adult kickball leagues in lawn area north of Murray Baler Bridge, croquet in green space where former Riverfront Village stood).

Activate green space where Riverfront Village once stood (e.g. variety of seating, picnic tables, temporary art installations, great Wi-Fi, music, yoga. Coordinate and collaborate with Riverfront Market)- all temporary and low investment, before permanent Riverfront Park improvement are made

Activate former (city-owned) Spirit of Peoria Boat dock/platform for a seasonal pop-up attraction such as a bar/coffee place (until a new river boat is committed)

Jack-that would bring boaters who get out and shop/eat

Activate former (city-owned) Hooters building as pop-up attraction if building not leased long-term

Activate former (city-owned) Emack & Bolio's ice cream building

Make Downtown a Christmastime Destination-Improve/enhance Santa Claus parade, excellent Christmas decorations, PRM did great with inaugural Christmas in the Village last year-expand on that. Multiple bars & restaurants participate. Pop-up markets and shops in underutilized storefronts. Tubing on man-made snow in Dozer Park. Focus on riverfront and 800 block of Adams in Warehouse District. Black Friday all through New Year's Day.

Jon-new leader at Festival of Lights and are looking at regional approach

Recruit new river boat. Kimberly Richardson is working on it.

Jon J-**Fulton Sheen sainthood** could be a major draw due to the history

Public art for placemaking

Promote groups bicycling to Downtown from North Peoria via the newly completed Rock Island Greenway

COMMENTS

Lenora-entry to bike/walk trail is really rough by Komatsu

Jon J -More communication to share the good news that is occurring. Downtown is critical to overall city economics.

Ray-Need something like the Chicago "Bean"- Wow factor. Tried to get backing from CAT for an attraction on their parking deck building. Let's have a call to entry for an installation. Utilization of what we already have, hard scape with elevated space by PRM but there isn't any shade. Plan to reorient the museum that they are waiting on.

Mark-Noted recent unveiling of a large scale sculpture in Boston Commons \$30m that is interactive you can walk around and through. Monumental attraction.

Lenora- Light projections on buildings (nighttime).

Kimberly-FB post by a Peoria business owner describing a full adventure you can have downtown. Schedule the State of Downtown event in May 2023 when weather is nice. Need riverboat, pop-up shops and utilizing rooftop space for events. Christmas capital is great and part of growing up. Santa clause parade and Festival of Lights. Could be weekend for visitors. Different events by different orgs/businesses each weekend. Bring pop-ups from around the city to the downtown for the Christmastime. Need to be open to ALL people- Can't say "we want you here" but not certain others.

Jack-didn't know the PRM tree was being lighted. Not enough broad advertising of Downtown events.

Kimberly-New Santa Claus parade route and have people decorate the windows.

Jack-City council needs to have time to focus on downtown. Change maintenance contracts on the parking garages. Sell Hooters to farmers market because the market is growing and successful.

Lenora-asked if the farmers market season could be extended. Mark-vendors reportedly too hard to get, and people tend to be fickle with weather.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ribbon-cutting for the Michel bridge opening late Fall 2023. Have a Peoria/East Peoria bridge walk before opening to cars.

Lenora-we have all the events to promote the seasons from fall through Christmas

Suzand O'Neil- New to Peoria-2 block section in Galesburg (Seminary Street) that has awnings etc. and its cute and all the stores were open. Would be good for Adam's to Perry, Main to Fulton. All these organizations don't talk to one another nor to the businesses. Could there be a ordinance that requires businesses to remain open?

NEW BUSINESS

Parking deck vouchers for the meeting will be available for Commissioners at each Downtown Advisory Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jenkins made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Lees and approved unanimously. The Downtown Advisory Commission Meeting adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Debbie Van Sickle , Economic Development Manager and
Staff Liaison