

**FARMINGTON CITY COUNCIL
AND
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
JOINT MEETING**

A joint meeting of the Farmington City Council with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board was held on Saturday, November 14, 2009 in Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan. Notice of the meeting was posted in compliance with Public Act 267-1976.

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. by Mayor Knol.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Buck, Knol, McShane, Wiggins, Wright.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

CITY ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Halberstadt, City Manager Pastue.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND STAFF
PRESENT:**

Cowley (President), Frost, Gajewski, Higgins, Jakacki, Knowles (Director), Rock, and Schneemann (left at 12:30 p.m.).

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY MEMBER ABSENT:** Cornwell, Kuiken, Ziegler.

REVIEW OF DDA MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

After a review of the DDA Mission and Vision statements, the DDA Board and City Council concurred no changes were necessary.

REVIEW OF DDA CORE THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

Director Knowles reviewed DDA core themes of walkability, destination and employment.

Buck pointed out a balance between pedestrian and vehicle atmosphere in the downtown should be weighted towards pedestrian. He noted the Planning Commission is moving in the direction of a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

SPECIAL MEETING -2-
November 14, 2009

Core Theme: Walkability

Knowles reviewed the objectives, sample tasks and marketability of the walkability core theme. She asked for feedback on the viability of the walkability theme and any changes to its supporting objectives and sample tasks.

Discussion followed regarding clustering strategy and the need to gain support from property owners. Cowley pointed out clustering would naturally occur around a parking solution. Discussion continued regarding DDA's limited control in the downtown and the need to gain support for the concept of clustering.

Discussion followed regarding development of a planning strategy for the downtown.

McShane stated to facilitate the perception of a walkable community there needs to be sufficient parking signage, lighting and attractiveness of walkways.

Jakacki recommended making incremental steps towards improving existing parking. Discussion followed regarding the availability of parking in the downtown.

The DDA Board and City Council concurred to make no changes to the core theme of walkability and related objectives.

Core Theme: Destination

Knowles reviewed the objectives and sample tasks of destination as a core theme.

Gajewski advised adding sponsorships to the list of sample tasks, citing the importance of businesses investing in community events and how this impacts the City's self image.

Discussion followed regarding the value sponsorships bring to the community and the return on investment event advertising provides.

Discussion continued regarding using events to generate interest in the downtown as a destination, revenue for infrastructure projects and making them profit centers. Discussion followed regarding forming partnerships with other community organizations, i.e. Chamber of Commerce, in seeking sponsorships and other fundraising efforts.

DDA Board and City Council concurred no changes needed to be made to the core theme of destination and related objectives other than the addition of sponsorship.

Core Theme: Employment

Knowles reviewed the objectives and sample tasks of Employment as a core theme.

The DDA Board and City Council concurred no changes needed to be made to either the objectives and sample tasks.

Next Steps

Knowles advised committees would begin preparing proposed work plans over the next few months. She stated the Board would then have an opportunity to review and prioritize their "wish lists" at a winter meeting retreat. She advised a 2-year budget would be developed after the establishment of short and long term goals.

McShane asked about circumstances that may arise that are not covered in the current budget. Knowles responded a major expenditure would likely be deferred until the next budget cycle, however, smaller items could be addressed. Cowley advised priorities can be shifted if the Board is in agreement.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT 101

Knowles reviewed the recently produced business recruitment packet. She noted it does a good job of describing the downtown and its future direction. She stated the challenge is determining the best use of this information. She advised this will be an active time for the Economic Restructuring (ER) Committee as they attempt to establish recruitment teams and define the message to prospective businesses.

Knowles described some of the internal tasks that will be undertaken including: maintaining a current inventory of available buildings, keeping a record of programs and incentives; and identify and pursue targeted opportunities.

Knowles pointed out business recruitment is labor intensive with a very low return. She stated research indicates the importance of targeting specific business sectors. She advised the business must fit the expectations of the shoppers. She discussed a number of target opportunities that were identified by a market analysis and branding study. She noted current trade area for the downtown is largely residents located in the 48335-36 zip code area.

Discussion followed regarding attracting outside those zip codes through events like the Founders Festival. Discussion continued regarding clustering strategy and the marketable location of the downtown. Cowley pointed out the importance of density, knocking down and building up, and recruitment of destination businesses.

McShane concurred the limited area of the downtown requires building up rather than out, however, it would be tough to achieve in this economy. She advised the City needs to prepare to attract new businesses now.

Discussion followed regarding the need to provide current businesses with the tools to improve their facades and window displays.

Discussion continued regarding business recruitment and providing an attractive package of benefits to entice businesses to relocate or locate in the downtown. Discussion included a respect for other communities in recruiting businesses.

SPECIAL MEETING -4-
November 14, 2009

McShane pointed out the DDA needs a point person, not directly related to any realtor, who can follow up on business opportunities. Discussion followed regarding what attracts a business to the downtown, i.e. incentives, location, infrastructure, demographics, etc.

Frost proposed development of two teams each focused on a unique business category. One team would solicit existing small to medium businesses that meet DDA goals to add a second location in Farmington. The second team would solicit larger businesses to locate in Farmington, and would also identify opportunities to redevelop existing properties that would support the Master Plan.

Discussion followed regarding the “tools” these teams would use to entice business owners to move to Farmington. Discussion continued regarding the reality of limited funds over the next several years and establishing priorities.

Cowley expressed support for providing additional incentives to commercial realtors to steer more businesses to Farmington.

Responding to a question from Wright, Knowles confirmed the additional incentive fee could be paid out of a professional service account.

Schneemann pointed out the City and DDA need to work together to prepare for small and large investors; laying the groundwork necessary for future investments.

Cowley recommended that Frost present plans for the business recruitment teams to the ER Committee and provide feedback to the DDA Board. He stated the first step is to determine what will be in the “tool belt” to attract businesses to Farmington.

There was a general consensus of Council and DDA Board members to support the “team approach” in attracting new businesses.

Buck stated this should be a mutually collaborative effort that engages the City, DDA, and the Chamber of Commerce. He recommended a Councilmember serve on one of the recruitment teams.

Wright advised the “team approach” to business recruitment should apply to all properties in the City, not just within the boundaries of the DDA.

Cowley advised Frost and team should start the integration conversation with the Chair of the ER Committee, the City, and Chamber of Commerce and provide a business plan at the next DDA Board meeting.

PARKING MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Cowley reviewed the highlights of a 2008 parking study. He noted only 31% of total parking supply is publicly owned. He pointed out the disparity in available parking with

SPECIAL MEETING -5-
November 14, 2009

the majority of spaces on the south side of Grand River. He reviewed future parking needs based on a projected yearly growth rate of 5%. He asserted the study's conclusion that there is sufficient parking in the downtown is wrong. He stated it is wrong for two reasons: they don't live here and the 80% yardstick for peak parking occupancy doesn't work for Farmington because it includes everything including mall parking. He stated the analysis and comparison should have been specific to downtowns.

Discussion followed regarding three options for a parking structure in the downtown included in the study. Cowley pointed out the experts recommended the north side of Grand River as the number one location for a parking structure.

Cowley stated the goal is to create consensus between the business owners, DDA and the City on a long term parking strategy which would include land banking. He pointed out commercial brokers have indicated the number one issue to selling Farmington is parking. He expressed support for Option One identified on the Downtown Parking Master Plan as the best location for a parking structure.

Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons of the three options provided in the Master Plan. Cowley pointed out a parking structure would need to be 5-6 stories to make it cost efficient. He stated in the next 1-2 years decisions need to be made regarding land banking. He noted Council needs to be a part of the decision-making process.

Cowley stated the City and the DDA need to determine the best economic area for a major development project in the downtown and then put a stake in the ground around land banking and clustering.

Discussion followed regarding economic capability of the City and DDA to begin the process of land banking.

Wright suggested instructing the City Manager to direct the Treasurer to develop some "what ifs" on financing land banking strategy to determine if it is possible. He expressed his belief that it is not possible in the current economic climate.

Buck advised there is a general agreement on the concept of parking management and improvement, but noted there is a significant amount of work that needs to be done.

Responding to a question from Cowley, meeting participants generally agreed the Grand River corridor is more strategic than Farmington Road.

Discussion followed regarding management of current parking and working cooperatively to maximize use of both private and public spaces available.

Buck advised a greater effort is needed to achieve consensus on major issues in order to establish a direction for both the City and DDA to achieve common goals.

SPECIAL MEETING -6-
November 14, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Valerie S. Knol, Mayor

Annette Knowles, DDA Director

Susan K. Halberstadt, City Clerk

APPROVED: December 21, 2009