



**DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 AT 12:00 PM**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment

*(Each regular Task Force meeting shall have a public comment period not to exceed 30 minutes. Every speaker is entitled to speak for up to 3 minutes. To be considered for public comment, complete a public comment card at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. The Chairperson will randomly draw from the cards submitted. Public comment is a time to give comment. It is not a question and answer period, and the Task Force Committee does not respond to public comments. Speakers who engage in threatening or disorderly behavior will have their time ceased.)*

4. Consideration, review and approval of Minutes from the August 15, 2017 meeting
5. Presentation on possible downtown catalyst projects (Presentation by Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director)
6. Downtown Task Force Committee discussion
7. Adjourn

DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2017 AT 4:30 PM

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Buragas called the meeting to order at **4:32 PM** and asked Ms. Hon to call the Roll.

2. **Roll Call**

**List who was present of the Task Force:**

Committee Member Kim Bray, Committee Member Jamie Mathy, Committee Member Carlo Robustelli, Committee Member Justin Boyd, Committee Member Tricia Stiller, Committee Member Mike Manna, Committee Member Bobby Vericella, Committee Member Joe Haney and Chairperson Amelia Buragas

**Staff Present:**

Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager; Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Austin Grammer, Economic Development Coordinator; Katie Simpson, City Planner; Jeanne Hamilton, Library Director; and Diana Hauman, Alderman Ward 8

3. **Public Comment:** *None*

4. **Minutes:** The Committee reviewed the July 18, 2017 minutes. Committee Member Stiller moved to approve the minutes; Committee Member Bray seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by a voice vote.

5. Items for discussion

a. **Presentation on public safety in downtown (Presented by Ken Bays, Assistant Chief of the Bloomington Police Department)**

Asst. Chief Bays stated he had the Analyst Unit take a breakdown and confined for our purposes that fall into statistics, this being the downtown area from Front to Locust, Madison to Prairie. Looking back from FY 2013 all the way through current date FY 2018, he provided a call breakdown. These statistics provided information about when more calls were taken, and the numbers are going down with each fiscal year. There was a relative spike in FY 2014, but we began staffing more officers to address some of the concerns. He explained that some of these numbers look high but it is because we are positively policing rather than reactively policing – proactive policing.

Chairperson Buragas asked what helps to keep downtown safe.

Asst. Chief Bays stated he felt that a lot of it comes down to perception. Downtown is showing some prosperity and with that, there is a draw that brings other elements that may detract from that some and one small incident, detracts from the overall good of everything. There has been a surge in homeless population, and many people are not accustomed to that. To specifically address it, he believes is education on what are real dangers versus perceived dangers. The statistics speak loudly, but perceptions speak even louder. We have increased patrols, which has had an impact in the calls for service.

Committee Member Mathy commented that we have taken proactive steps to get the patrons safely home faster.

Asst. Chief Bays stated that getting people to understand the difference between a crime and nuisance. A nuisance could be perceived as a safety risk, but a nuisance is not necessarily a crime.

Committee Member Bray asked if any of the calls for fighting and checking well-being could be related to lighting issues. Is there any area of downtown that is under lit and may be causing problems? The committee is taking a look at some lighting and would like to know.

Asst. Chief Bays stated that there have been some improvements to the lighting over the 5 years and that has been a dramatic benefitted, but stated that, yes, there are some areas of lightning, possibly alleyways.

Committee Member Bray asked about the safety of the parking garages.

Committee Member Manna stated that he is in and out of the deck in the evening every day and there is not that much activity in there in terms of crime. His concern is the weeknights – Sunday through Wednesday – and none of the bars are open, the party buses are not there, and there are no kids at all downtown and it is the aggressive homeless people that are down there. Until the City wants to do something that problem and has the authority to do so, it is always going to be that. Wherever there is a bustling downtown, you will have this homeless issue as it relates to what we have in our culture. He stated that he had noticed in the recent months that the homeless downtown are very aggressive.

Chairperson Buragas asked Asst. Chief Bays to put this in perspective as compared to other communities.

Asst. Chief Bays stated that homeless calls are less than 2% with regards to all the calls within the downtown area. He then gave examples of situations that would give cause for arrest and stated the officer has to make an assessment at the time of the contact and assess if those elements have been met to arrest someone.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that by making downtown more attractive, it has also made it more attractive for the kind of people we do not want to get down there.

How can we make the downtown attractive as we want it to be, but discourage the kinds of people that we do not want to be down there.

Committee Member Manna stated that they do not put up with it in Normal and other communities, but here we do have this issue.

Committee Member Robustelli commented that he had seen a very robust campaign that diverts the on-the-street money that people are giving individuals and diverts it to organizations that are helping to end homelessness.

Committee Member Mathy stated he had just gotten back from Atlanta and on every block there was a box for donations to fund the programs to help those with mental illness.

Committee Member Manna stated that he had no problems with the existing homeless, but is talking about the four or five individuals that are the troublemakers.

**b. Presentation on the creation of public spaces in downtown areas  
(Presented by Vasu Pinnamaraju, Executive Director of the McLean  
County Regional Planning Commission)**

Ms. Pinnamaraju brought out several points about creating public spaces and talked about placemaking and what makes a great place. It is all about comfort and image. Do we all agree that our downtown is safe, clean, green, walkable? She stated her presentation today is mostly images. The first aspect is sociability. We need to use what we can to bring people out, and it does not have to be expensive. She explained uses and activities and that they do not have to be permanent, but can be temporary. The third aspect is access and linkages. Having multi-modal access to downtown is key to making a downtown a unique place. When looking at comfort and image, you need a place that you want to explore and see what else is there. There are other concepts like strategic placemaking, creative placemaking and tactical placemaking. Strategic placemaking involves needing an anchor project for downtown and these could be any number of things. Creative placemaking is taking your existing place highlighting that. Tactical placemaking is where we invest next to nothing and yet create a unique place. Open Streets project has become a global movement and many major cities are doing this.

Committee Member Bray asked how traveling art installations work.

Committee Member Robustelli asked about the importance of public/private partnerships in terms of placemaking.

Ms. Pinnamaraju stated that it is not a matter of do we need a catalyst project. We need a catalyst project and it is a matter of what we need. Public/private partnerships are needed for the catalyst projects on a major scale. On a more tactical scale, Parking Day is a good example of how public/private partnership is needed. She stated that it is refreshing to see how proactive the City wants to

be in enabling all the things that downtown needs.

Committee Member Stiller commented that it is nice to be reminded that we have accomplished a lot. We have a long way to go, but we have a large downtown.

Chairperson Buragas stated that it is time to dig into a catalyst project and start talking about do we want to make a recommendation for a catalyst project and what that might look like.

Committee Member Mathy took over for Chairperson Buragas, due to her departure at 5:30 pm, and suggested starting with doing a review of things that were talked about the last time. We obviously generated a lot of conversation in the public. He stated that the last time he threw out the idea of parking meters as one of the things he thought would be a good idea for downtown, and that generated a lot of media coverage. He stated he got a lot of support and phone calls from people on the idea of parking meters.

Committee Member Boyd stated he heard both good and bad concerning parking meters, but stated that we need a cost analysis. He stated that he did not put it as a high priority.

Committee Member Haney stated he was totally against parking meters.

Committee Member Robustelli stated he was not in any position at this point to support parking meters downtown. It might be something that can be looked at down the road, but for the Task Force he does not put it as a high priority.

Committee Member Vericella stated he felt one of the biggest problems is getting the employees and business owners to park in the garage. If the tenants, business owners and their employees to park in the garage, that will free up a lot of parking on the street.

Committee Member Robustelli stated he felt that the City should look at the parking deck signage issues.

Committee Member Boyd stated more 15-minute parking was needed in certain areas of downtown, and we need to provide some of the businesses more loading zones. He also feels that a pedestrian mall is needed but does not need to be on a street. South of the coliseum, there could be a mall-type atmosphere with walkway and fountains, etc.

Committee Member Stiller stated the point is that we want to encourage people to park and enjoy.

Committee Member Mathy stated one of their recommendations could be to get the ordinances changed to allow more flowers, lighting and more creativity by some of our downtown artists. He also brought up that there was an ordinance that allowed sidewalk cafes but asked is there an ordinance that allows businesses to do other things on the sidewalk. He asked if anyone had anything new to bring forward that they have looked at that were in the comprehensive plan that they want to talk about.

Committee Member Boyd stated that focusing on those issues right now will give us strength to move forward.

Committee Member Robustelli added that it is important to think differently about our infrastructure.

Committee Member Vericella stated that if the City is going to get behind the downtown, they need to make it look good and have the resources to make it look good.

Committee Member Bray stated that Tom Dabareiner challenged us to redefine what was considered as downtown. Do we want to include that in our recommendation for now or do we want to put some options out.

Committee Member Stiller stated that she would recommend more information and conversation is needed.

Committee Member Mathy asked about talking about the catalyst project at the next meeting and what that might look like. We have not talked about infrastructure yet.

A citizen asked about plans for the library.

Committee Member Bray stated that a lot of different options are being looked at right now, and there are a variety of plans.

Committee Member Mathy stated that the Council had a work session with the library and were shown the plans to expand where they are right now or build a new building.

Committee Member Bray stated the majority went with current location due to cost. One of the visions was that City Hall and a couple of spaces here would be incorporated into that and add retail around here and maybe thinking about this as a core area and calling that a cultural district.

Committee Member Haney stated that the City Hall building does not work well anymore.

Committee Member Mathy stated that at the next meeting we could talk about infrastructure and some options.

## 6. Adjourn