



DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2017 AT 4:30 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 September 5, 2017 meeting.
5. Presentation on downtown infrastructure (Presented by Jim Karch, Public Works 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, SEPTEMBER 5, 2017 AT 12:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Buragas called the meeting to order at **12:05 PM** and asked Ms. Hon to call the Roll.

2. **Roll Call**

List who was present of the Task Force:

Committee Member Jamie Mathy, Committee Member Carlo Robustelli, Committee Member Justin Boyd, Committee Member Bobby Vericella, and Chairperson Amelia Buragas

Committee Member Kim Bray arrived at 12:19 pm.

Staff Present:

Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager; Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director; David Hales, City Manager; 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:** Dan Handel; Tim Tilton; Vicki Tilton

4. **Minutes:** The Committee reviewed the August 15, 2017 minutes. Committee Member Robustelli moved to approve the minutes; Committee Member Boyd seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by a voice vote.

5. Items for discussion

6. **Presentation on possible downtown catalyst projects (Presentation by Tom Dabareiner, Community Development Director)**

Chairperson Buragas explained the two documents presented and stated that Connect Transit is interested in partnering with the City with whatever entities may come forward with the catalyst project. This document lays out their needs as well as their level of interest. The second document is a sampling of responses received from Charlie Moore in reaching out to some chamber members and asking whether a catalyst project would increase the likelihood of individuals choosing to invest private dollars in the downtown area.

Mr. Dabareiner presented a slide show on catalytic projects from a couple of perspectives. The first was looking at some areas in the City in the downtown area that are probably candidates and then looking at some projects that have been done elsewhere. He pointed out some specific areas that have been discussed. There are about 29 acres of land available for some kind of project. When talking about catalytic projects, you are talking about bringing more people to the downtown. He stated that downtown would not thrive unless adjacent neighborhoods are protected and vital. There also needs to be discussion about bike lanes, transit, sidewalk options and healthy and viable infrastructure.

Committee Member Mathy asked a question regarding zoning that had been previously brought up.

Mr. Dabareiner stated that the zoning ordinance will have to come before the Planning Commission.

Chairperson Buragas stated that according to some of the feedback from the Chamber of Commerce members, there was a desire to invest in the downtown area but there is a limiting factor and that is confidence in return on investment and asked how do we build that confidence in order to help the private sector feel like this is not a risky investment.

Mr. Dabareiner stated that investment talks and money talks. The private sector is very willing to go along with whatever level of support the City wants to provide in the downtown.

Chairperson Buragas asked when it comes to areas of focus for the Task Force, where should our focus be?

Mr. Dabareiner stated that location does make a difference.

Chairperson Buragas stated that we have talked a lot as a community and a Council in the last two years about the front and center block. One of the issues with that block is there are high barriers to development and asked about the one just to the north of it, the Market Street Deck, and what barriers that may be there.

Mr. Dabareiner stated that the first step in any project is do you have a cooperative owner to work with, and hopefully we have a cooperative owner with that particular block and consensus on willingness to move. That location is a really good property right next to the core.

Committee Member Bray asked what yellow stars mean as compared to orange in the presentation.

Mr. Dabareiner stated that yellow are properties that are inside the core. The smaller stars are individual properties like parking lots and stated that parking lots do not make a downtown pedestrian friendly.

Committee Member Robustelli stated that we continue to hear is that we want a more inviting place and more reasons to come downtown. He stated that there were three areas that he had been thinking about. The first is property acquisition, and there are some really prime properties such as the front and center building, but is a very difficult building to redevelop. The other thing is location in our focus area, and it is important that we have a focus area. Lastly, we are in an environment with extremely limited resources, and the City

Council is going to have to make some tough choices. He stated that in the short term, from the information that he has collected, given all the synergistic potentials and the barriers of acquisition on the front and center building, the Market Street garage presents the greatest opportunity for redevelopment.

Committee Member Boyd stated he would like to see front and center redeveloped; however, with the hurdles involved in that, the Market Street location does make a lot of sense. In looking at the options available, the library presents less risk than the others. We know that people go there every day. It is also the most fiscally responsible option between them.

Mr. Cardona, Library Board of Trustees, stated it is important for us to think holistically of what do we do not only for people who live there currently but then also how do we draw visitors. The library has been going down a path of trying to decide what was in the best intention for all of our residents, not only for Bloomington residents but we also have to take into account our Golden Prairie library district. When we have looked at what we wanted to do, we have only really looked at our location. The collaborative nature of this is exciting because we did not have this three years ago when we started a lot of this discussion. We would like to see more data and get timelines looked at and see if this is where the City really would like an entity in a catalytic project like the library, we would be very interested in learning and discussing it more.

Chairperson Buragas asked how many people use the library on a yearly basis.

Ms. Hamilton, Library Director, stated that it is about 1000 visitors daily and between 300,000 and 400,000 a year.

Mr. Cardona stated there are a couple of things that are going on right now that press us to make decisions fairly quickly, and one of them is the fiscal budget.

Committee Member Bray stated that Mr. Cardona had stated that this path started three years ago and there has been some investment based on that and asked how much money that is to date.

Mr. Cardona replied that the largest dollar amount has been invested with the hiring of Farnsworth to not only evaluate the current building but also look long term of what we could do. If we were going to look at another location, someone would have to invest money into that.

Committee Member Bray asked about the cost for the property to the south of the library that was procured.

Mr. Hales responded concerning the Sugar Creek manufacturing plant and stated the purchase price was somewhere around \$200,000 and there were demolition costs on top of that, so probably in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range.

Committee Member Boyd asked if we have a cost on moving Public Works?

Mr. Hales replied the bigger costs will be land acquisition and building new facilities. It is very rough, but it is a big number.

Mr. Cardona stated the most important thing for the library has been building a coalition around what we are going to do with this and with the downtown.

Committee Member Bray stated the meeting with the City Council and the Library Board occurred this past summer, and there was direction given there as far as the proposals on the table and that was to go forward in the current location. As the Downtown Task Force, we need to acknowledge and know about that.

Chairperson Buragas stated that we are grounded in the planning documents. She commented that she did not see how we, as a City, have sufficient funds or capacity to do both a catalytic project in downtown and build a new library.

Committee Member Bray stated that the idea of how much money is there for an add-on catalytic project is something we do not know, so we cannot make presumptions about that as of yet. We need to keep our minds open.

Committee Member Boyd stated that when we talk about other catalyst projects such as a hotel, conference center, etc., there are so many variables out there that we do not control, we might be looking many years down the road. With the Market Street garage, we control so many more of those pieces that we can see a larger impact faster.

Mr. McCurdy, Chairmen of the Connect Transit Board of Trustees, stated improving our Front Street transfer center has been a goal for many years. The facilities we have at this point are insufficient for those that are transit dependent and that area is not attracting choice riders. We are moving almost 1300 people through the downtown transfer center.

Mr. Thorne, Interim General Manager of Connect Transit, stated that on a daily basis, 1300 to 1500 people are being served there. People have to wait for a bus because there is not enough space to put all the buses in the downtown on Front Street.

Chairperson Buragas asked about the opportunity for low interest loans and federal grant money if there was to be partnering with the City.

Committee Member Mathy asked if the Market Street footprint is big enough to do what needs to be done for a transfer station.

Mr. Thorne stated he believed there is adequate space.

Committee Member Mathy spoke about a Wesleyan student who had done a presentation on the need for a public bathroom in downtown Bloomington and stated that if we are talking about something like this, this needs to be part of the conversation. He also mentioned the Mayors Challenge to Mr. Hales.

Mr. Hales replied that it was the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge.

Committee Member Vericella commented that he felt the library and the Market Street garage is a great idea.

Committee Member Bray stated we need to do some additional brainstorming about whatever our catalyst would be if it is not this.

Committee Member Mathy stated we still have not had a real conversation about infrastructure underneath the roads and asked if that was going to be scheduled sometime soon.

Committee Member Robustelli stated that there were a lot of questions about the previous costs associated with determining the needs of the library and moving the library forward. Concerning the Market Street garage, we are going to have to do something. Do we continue to fix it or do we decide we want to do something that is catalytic?

Committee Member Bray stated that doing nothing for Market Street is not in the cards. We need to stay with where we know we have been, and if we are going to diverge, call it like it is.

7. Adjourn