



Meeting Minutes

Downtown Advisory Commission

Thursday, February 7, 2019

3:30 PM

NEU Conference Room

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Rubin called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Present: White, Rubin, Hitchcock, Frank, Miers, Zangler, Jeffries, Dalough (on behalf of Andersen), Nagle, Wood, Gustin, Hitchcock (arrived at 3:37 p.m.), Student Members Campolargo and Panse
Absent: Costello, Schatz

Also Present: Laff, Louden, Novack - City of Naperville
Donna Sack, Naper Settlement
Julie Carlsen, DuPage Children's Museum

Public: Marilyn Schweitzer

C. PUBLIC FORUM:

Marilyn Schweitzer spoke during public forum. She raised concerns about plans that are done, but not implemented. She also raised concerns about the current state of the downtown, such as deteriorating streetscape, lack of trees and landscaping, including trees that have been removed and not replanted, and sign clutter. The streetscape plan has good ideas, but has not been adopted. Why visit Downtown Naperville? It's not due to the ambiance, but more so due to its walkability and Riverwalk.

D. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

E. REPORTS:

1. Approve the minutes of the November 8, 2018 Downtown Advisory Commission meeting.

Commissioner Miers made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Frank, to approved the DAC minutes of November 8, 2018. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 11- White, Jeffries, Wood, Dalough, Frank, Miers, Rubin, Nagle, Hitchcock,

Zangler, Gustin
Nay: 0

F. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Receive information regarding the status of implementation items recommended in the *Naperville Downtown2030* plan.

Laff noted that at their November 8, 2018 meeting, DAC requested an update regarding the status of the implementation items recommended in the *Naperville Downtown2030* plan. In response, a table was prepared to provide an overview of each priority (24) and additional implementation item (21) listed in the plan, as well as their current status. Laff noted that as evidenced by the table provided, the recommended Implementation Action Plan has largely been accomplished since plan adoption in 2011.

Hitchcock noted that streetscape should not be listed as completed because DAC will continue to be involved in its execution, including future design and review. Miers clarified that DAC did make a recommendation on the streetscape standard; City Council review is pending, including funding discussions. Miers questioned what additional DAC review will be needed since the standard is set? Hitchcock noted his belief that DAC should be involved in the specific design (block by block), not just development of the prototype standard, as each block will have unique design considerations.

White recommended that an additional column be added to the table to indicate what work may still be required beyond DAC and the overall status of the project (i.e., under construction, etc.).

Nagle requested that staff provide an overview of any of the items on the table that are not completed. Staff provided that overview by item. Jeffries noted that while landmarking has been limited, preservation efforts are undertaken on a regular basis in conjunction with development proposals. Gustin recommended that this status be changed to "ongoing". Hitchcock noted that the urban plaza could function as a plaza during off-times from when it is used as parking and should not be discounted from consideration. White asked if there are any plans for a Bicentennial Celebration. Staff was unaware.

Zangler asked if there is any plan to update the *Downtown2030* plan. Staff noted that the 2030 update was prompted by prior zoning shortcomings, limited plan for downtown streetscape, and other new issues that have since been addressed. Staff does not have these (or similar) concerns with the current plan and therefore has not planned for any plan updates in the near future.

2. Provide feedback on a recommendation to convert DAC from a "commission" to a "taskforce".

Rubin provided an overview of the current commission structure, as well as prior versions.

Nagle - do you lose influence when you move from a Commission to a Task Force? Frank asked if Council receives those recommendations differently?

Gustin answered no - she does not view one as having higher importance than the other. White concurred, but he would like to see pros/cons of each. He would like to see public input continue to be taken at these meetings, even if they are not subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

Frank noted that if it is less impacting on staff, than maybe it needs to be a consideration. Miers asked who appoints the taskforce? Is a taskforce a short or long-term commitment?

Nagle asked what the impetus is for this discussion. Laff noted that during DAC discussion at their November 8, 2018 meeting, DAC members emphasized that DAC's effectiveness, including their desire to meet more frequently, is being limited by available staff resources and budget. In response to this discussion, staff noted that it may be appropriate to reconsider the current structure and format of DAC.

DAC will create a subcommittee of not more than 3 DAC members and including the student member(s), other regular meeting attendees, and other persons of interest to investigate this idea further.

3. Downtown Updates: Discuss recent activity and trends in the retail environment, as well as planned infrastructure improvements (i.e., Washington Street Bridge; streetscape on Blocks 429 and 430) in Downtown Naperville.

Rubin led a discussion regarding recent activity and trends in the retail environment, as well as planned infrastructure improvements in the Downtown. Rubin noted that he has concerns with stresses on the downtown, including retail environment, streetscape, and parking. Rubin noted that, regardless, Downtown is still very successful.

Wood noted that retail is struggling nationally and Downtown Naperville is not completely insulated from this. DAC should continue to review zoning regulations and amend, as necessary, to keep occupancies steady. Dalough agreed.

Gustin noted that visiting the Downtown is an experience. What will continue to build that experience to encourage in-person vs. online shopping? Jeffries noted that Naperville is experiential organically, due to the Riverwalk, local offices (built in users), and governmental uses (post office, library, municipal center). Jeffries noted, and most commissioners agreed, that construction in the downtown (private property and infrastructure work) has a significant impact on downtown visits; we need to be sensitive to this and try to limit its impact on business.

Hitchcock noted that DAC's primary focus has been, and will always be, land use, mobility, and appearance. DAC needs to continue to be mindful of this and encourage Council to think about these items as CIP planning occurs. Decisions must be data driven. Zangler reiterated the importance of updating our plans to make sure they are forward thinking.

Miers asked if there is an ability to research what other towns are doing to address these same issues; the Commission should be working on these efforts and cannot just rely on staff to do this work.

Student Member Campolargo noted that we need to adapt and use data to understand people's habits and shopping preferences. This data can be gathered through primary (in-person interviews) and secondary market research (social media, online surveys).

Gustin emphasized the need for live, work, and play in the Downtown. Wood noted that she has, for the first time, added an "experience" category on the downtown brochures given businesses like Pinot's Palette, Code Verse, etc.

Rubin noted that we need to be vigilant to make sure that Downtown continues to move in the right direction.

Other Items:

Russell Cleaners

Rubin discussed the next stages of construction at Russell Cleaners. What can be done to minimize the impact of the construction zone? Novack noted that we will push as much as we can; however, each time the fence moves it costs \$3,000. Jeffries indicated that we need to push harder on them, shorten their deadlines.

Rubin recommended evaluating temporary turning movement improvements in that area while construction is pending.

Wood noted that it may be worth providing weekly progress reports to the public so that all understand what is happening.

Downtown Funding

Additional funding needs to be requested to support and manage the downtown.

Rubin Streetscape

Rubin gave an overview of his pending streetscape project, as well as the SSA. One item that Rubin would like some feedback on: brick vs. concrete at the corner. Based on feedback from the Advisory Commission on Disabilities (ACD) and the Accessible Community Task Force (ACTF), the corners are proposed to be improved with concrete. Rubin prefers brick based on new technology that prevents shifting and settlement. Rubin intends to reach out to the ACTF and other stakeholders; however, is wondering how DAC feels about brick at the corners vs. the approved concrete?

White - is the brick an impediment to accessibility? Loudon and Novack noted that the brick will meet ADA requirements; however, it was not preferred by the stakeholders because it is not as smooth of a travel surface.

Schweitzer noted that the concrete corner provides a clear delineation of what is an amenity zone vs. the pedestrian path - this may be lost with the brick corner.

Frank is not opposed to the change; however, the ACD and ACTF need to be involved in the discussion. DAC's consensus was brick at the corner.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.