

Downtown Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2023

Present: Steve Rubin, Christine Jeffries, Tom Miers, Bill Novack, Rick Hitchcock, Doug Krieger

Via Zoom: Kaylin Risvold, Joe Costello, Doug Krieger, Allison Laff

Staff & Guest: Shannon Kunicki, Mike Panas

The minutes for the March 6, 2023 , DAC meeting were submitted. A motion was made by Doug Krieger, seconded by Tom Miers, unanimously approved with and abstention from Rick Hitchcock.

Wayfinding Signs: Rick Hitchcock updated the committee on the status of the wayfinding sign project. Progress has been really good. There is going to be a small group that will meet to review the materials for the open house. The open house for the wayfinding signs will take place on April 13, 2023 from 4 to 7pm at the municipal center. The open house will consist of listening to the public's input as well as a presentation. The committee would like to see the college, the beach and the park district represented in the wayfinding signs. They would also like to see some connectivity to key points in the city and not to just keep people in the downtown. Public Works has offered to make a lot of the signs in house, to reduce cost.

Washington St Bridge & Streetscape Update: Bill Novack reported an update on the Washington street bridge project. The bridge project is in full force, Nicor has placed new mains at Chicago Ave and Aurora Ave. AT&T is continuing to work on replacing and moving all of their lines. Steel supports will be brought in to move traffic to the west side of the bridge, to start the demo and reconstruction on the East side of the bridge. The construction on the bridge is expected to continue until late 2024. The Washington St. streetscape has been pushed back until 2024 due to the design process not being finished in time. They are hoping that a bid will go out in Oct/Nov for the streetscape and start late Feb/Mar. The Washington streetscape SSA has been approved by city council with a NO vote.

Library Parking Deck: Bill Novack gave an update as to where the city is in the process of moving forward on the Nichols Library Parking Deck. City staff are currently collecting data that will be presented to the new council this spring. A few questions that are being analyzed, Do we need additional parking? Where is the parking needed and is the library the right place? How often are we over capacity? and is the Van Buren Deck being used properly? DAC agrees that more parking is necessary, especially on Friday and Saturday when parking is at pre pandemic levels. Doug Krieger said that DAC, DNA and the library need to be the drivers for the parking deck. City staff is looking at July to put this back on the agenda.

Culture of the Downtown Discussion: Steve Rubin talked about the culture of the downtown and to try and determine a way forward. Some key factors that have helped maintain the culture of the downtown were things such as a good tenant mix, with only retail allowed on the first floor and services on the second floor. The upkeep and cleanliness of the downtown, walkability, events and attractions. What are some ways to understand what to do moving forward. Suggestions would be to put together a list of great draws for the downtown. Educate the Planning and Zoning and city council so they are all on the same page. Possibly have Allison come in and revisit and refresh us with the 2030 plan for downtown.

Meeting adjourned at 5:08pm

