

**Downtown Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
August 5, 2024**

**Present:** Steve Rubin, Monica Conners, Bill Novack, Mike Hudson, Meghna Bansal, Mikel Mayes, Rick Hitchcock, Tom Castagnoli, Tom Miers, Katie Wood.

**Via Zoom:** Joe Costello, Derek McDaniel, Doug Krieger, Joe Costello

**Staff & Guest:** Shannon Kunicki.

The minutes for the May 13, 2024, meeting was submitted. A motion was made to approve by Katie Wood, seconded by Tom Castagnoli, unanimously approved.

**Washington St Bridge:** Bill Novack gave a brief update on the Washington St bridge construction. They are not moving fast enough even with working subsequent Saturdays. They have not taken any suggestions from the city. IDOT has the contract, and they agree with the city on assessing penalties with each day the contractors are late. The quality of the work has been very good just moving very slowly. The estimated timeframe for the completion of the bridge would be May-June of 2025.

**Washington Streetscape:** Bill Novack gave an update on the Washington streetscape. The timing and the quality are good. They hope to have pavement laid on the western side later this week. Then they will move traffic over to the west and start work on the other side. They will also start working across the North side of Chicago Ave., for utility work. The city has been very happy with the contractor and is very close to finishing on time around Oct 14-15.

**Wayfinding Signs:** Bill Novack and Rick Hitchcock shared with the committee on where they are at with the wayfinding signs. The consultant is close to finishing construction documents for all the signs. The design team is working with the contractor to make accommodation for lighting, because they were not included in the original plan. Everyone is excited about the feedback on the design. The next step is to put together a list of every sign that needs to be fabricated and the messaging. With the design guidelines from Hitchcock Group, public works will fabricate and install these signs. There are some higher ends designed signs that will need to be done by professional fabricators, and a package will be put together and go out to bid in the next few months. The hope is to have all of this done and installed by next spring.

**DNA:** They are very focused on streetscape and helping the businesses. Putting up banners to help the businesses, including more promotions. New businesses include Alta Vida, and Insomnia Cookies. Katie is making videos with owners of the businesses and offering \$10 gift cards to anyone that comes in. July has been a little quieter but starting to pick up steam again and thinking about the holidays.

**NDP Director Update:** Monica Conners gave an update on the recent Melaniphy Retail sales report. Naperville ranked #2 again in the state right behind Chicago in retail sales. Strong in drinking and eating, auto dealerships, and home improvement and showed growth as well. Growth for the year was 4.2%, strong performance for Naperville in retail sales in 2023. The NDP has issued an RFP for the I-88 corridor study, to help us to identify what the best practices are and what we should be doing. This affects downtown businesses with bringing in new businesses to the corridor for shopping and dining. The CVB is working with LIV Golf and is doing some geofencing to promote dining in Naperville as the tournament is being played at Bolingbrook Country Club September 14-15.

**Century Walk:** Doug Krieger mentioned there is a meeting this Wednesday to continue ongoing discussions that are moving at a very slow pace.

**NCC Update:** Mike Hudson shared that the college is in the process of their master land use plan update. This Wednesday in PNZ with the hope of successfully getting a recommendation to the city council. Students are starting to arrive at campus for the new school year. Tom Miers commented on an article that everyone should read talking about the new President.

**Safety & Comfort:** Officer Colton was not able to join us, so Steve Rubin talked about the atmosphere downtown on Saturday night around 10pm. He described it as the wild west with Potters music extremely loud and lots of noise from cars and motorcycles. Point is that we make sure we are keeping awareness of all of this activity. Is there something we can do to measure the noise moving forward to make more of an awareness. It seemed to quiet down as the presence of a police car was around. Katie said that having a police presence does make a difference and at least through the summer months. Will follow up with Chief Arres and Officer Colton.

**Review & Discuss Workshop #1:** Steve and Monica gave some insight and what we gained out of the Retail workshop that was held on .

Key Points:

*\*Experiential Retail:* Balance what you are offering to patrons. Good Mix.

*\*Bench Market Retail Centers:* A list of a few retail centers to look at and compare.

*\*Luxury Brands:* Look into higher end retail, however if we have the space they will come.

*\*Pop Up Retail:* Open spaces allowed for short term leases for a concept tenant.

*Broker panel:* takeaways was that the approach to first floor tenants vs. second floor tenants. If you allow this use on the first floor it could boost the sales for everyone. The goal to invest in some technology that would identify datapoints, it is more of a science now than an art.

*Developer panel:* The NDP built a relationship with Kite Realty and will be meeting regularly to keep up to date on their project.

*Jackson Ave:* What was the feeling on the one-way flow of traffic. Brokers feel that they have a hard time leasing on a one-way street. Katie says it may be worth looking at changing it in two ways, because those retailers struggle on that block. Another recommendation would make it a green space, pocket park, multi-use space. Continued discussion and a priority.

*Rent vs Concept:* The brokers spoke to the fact that rent is high but what is the opportunity. This is something that we need to talk about the opportunity.

Rick Hitchcock said getting the property owners together in the downtown and putting something together to power forward with what our intentions are for downtown. Mikel Mays suggested a rendering of the new streetscape to promote the downtown to potential businesses. The upcoming ribbon cutting for the completion of the bridge, streetscape and wayfinding signs would be a great way to promote the downtown.

In summary, takeaways to focus on:

1. Statistics
2. Tenant – Mix
3. Pop ups
4. Jackson Ave
5. Green Space Downtown
6. Creating experiential retail

The next workshop will include the restaurants sometime in September. Workshop 3 would be about comfort and safety. These would follow the same format as the retail workshop.

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, potential date for next DAC meeting due to Labor Day.

Motion to adjourned by Tom Castagnoli, seconded by Tom Miers, unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 5:13pm