

**Downtown Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2021**

Present: Steve Rubin, Peggy Frank, Allison Laff, Kaylin Risvold, Danielle Tufano, Tom Miers, Katie Wood, Greg DeGeeter, Christine Jeffries, Shannon Kunicki, Mike Panas.

Via Zoom: Rick Hitchcock, Bill Novack, Doug Krieger, Patrick Kelley, Benny White, Brien Nagle

Guests: Andy Hynes, Gabrielle Mattingly

The minutes from the September 13, 2021 meeting and the October 11, 2021 meeting were approved. A motion was made and approved with one correction to the October 11 meeting minutes; Rick Hitchcock was listed as an attendee but was not in attendance.

Downtown Design Guidelines: Allison Laff asked the committee for feedback on exterior painting criteria per the city's downtown design guidelines. City staff is preparing updates to present to the Planning and Zoning Committee (PZC) and the issue of exterior painting in the downtown has raised questions. Painting previously unpainted brick – which is not allowed – and the amount of contrasting colors – the city currently allows up to 25% as accent color – were the two focus points. After discussion the committee agreed that the interpretation of the guidelines is sufficient and recommend that it should be maintained as currently written. An additional suggestion by the committee to staff and PZC is to encourage property owners to use the accent color to call out attractive architectural features such as moldings or window arches to provide character and highlight the unique architectural styles of downtown buildings. A motion was made and approved to maintain the current standard of the downtown design guidelines.

Buy-In for Downtown SSA Parking: Bill Novack asked for DAC's input on the buy-in on the downtown SSA's for parking. The city set a rate per space for properties that are outside the downtown core (SSA) to 'buy-in' to the parking and not have to provide their own onsite parking. With the exception of residential, downtown properties that are in the original parking SSAs are grandfathered and do not need to provide parking onsite or pay buy-in; they do participate in all current SSAs. The buy-in rate was set by blending the costs of construction for each of the downtown parking decks and dividing by the number of spaces. That rate has an annual adjustment for inflation. The current rate is approximately \$17,500 per space. The funds are used to retire debt on existing decks and/or it goes into a fund for future downtown parking improvements. The committee recommended the city continue the current buy-in program.

Main/Jefferson Streetscape: The project will include the south and north sides of Jefferson Avenue (north is pending the approval of the additional SSA). The schedule is to award the bid in February 2022, start the project in March and finish by Labor Day. Main Street will be first, then on to Jefferson Avenue. The public hearing for the north Jefferson SSA is on January 4, 2022, then to council in March for City adoption providing 51% of property owners do not object. The committee thanked Bill Novack

and his TED team for an update on the plans and expressed excitement at seeing this project move forward. It was also noted that the city council has approved a \$50,000 grant to the DNA for specialized marketing during the construction.

Washington Street Bridge & Possible Streetscape: The Washington Street Bridge project is slated to begin in late 2022 and go into 2023. The city staff is also proposing streetscape improvements be done concurrently from the bridge north along Washington Street to Van Buren Avenue. To proceed with the streetscape, a new SSA would need to be approved by the affected property owners and the city. More to come on this matter.

Streetscape Repairs – priority report: Rick Hitchcock provided an overview of the results of the walk-arounds in downtown with city staff from TED and DPW. A list was created for repairs and/or improvements that would be deemed a *priority* and that are not included in other imminent streetscape plans. Some of the priorities include repair to concrete sidewalks where it is uneven and poses a risk to pedestrians and replacing trees that have outgrown their bases (replacing some trees or providing planters in other locations). The installation of the new streetlights is ongoing, additional garbage cans have been ordered, and areas where the stamped brick crosswalks are crumbling will be removed and replaced with asphalt.

Nichols Parking Deck-Andy Hynes, City Planner presented to the committee on the potential for a new parking deck at Nichols library at Jefferson and Webster. After looking at potential places in the downtown to add parking it was decided that Nichols library would be a good location for a three level parking deck. The design features would include a three level L shaped deck, one underground level, two upper levels, one being at roof level. Other features include book drop area, brick façade improvements, updated landscaping, and public bathrooms. The cost based on 2021 estimates came to \$23,500,00.00. The city is considering this a *shovel-ready project* in which they can apply for a state grant. A motion was made and approved to support the continued plan moving forward. Councilman Patrick Kelly said the next step after recommendations would be to put a working group together for a workshop then to City Council.

New Business: Bill Novack reported that council is considering making Franklin Street tow zone. It will be decided at the next council meeting. Sensors at Water Street decks need to be replaced. The upper levels of the parking decks continue to be closed but need to be reopened, those floors may be converted to downtown parking tag only parking. Danielle Tufano mentioned that the Pottery Barn is closing in January. Two Brothers is planning on reopening in the Spring.

Meeting adjourned at 5:22pm