MINUTES
Downtown Development Authority Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 1999

Place: DDA Office
301 E. Liberty, Suite 690
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Time: The Chair, Ed Shaffran, called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Ron Dankert, David Fritz, Maria Harshe, Karl Pohrt, Ed Shaffran, Skip Ungrodt
Absent: Neal Berlin, Dave DeVarti, Bob Gillett, Leah Gunn, Deanna Relyea, Lorri Sipes
Staff: Susan Pollay, Executive Director
Present: Joseph Morehouse, Fiscal and Administrative Manager
Audience: Peter Allen, Allen & Kwan Commercial
Ray Detter, Citizens Advisory Council
Bob Frazier, National Garages
Hannah Harshe, Citizen
Bob Henderson, Citizens Advisory Council
Adrian Iraola, City Engineering
Donna Johnson, City Planning Dept.
Jeff Muir, Allen & Kwan Commercial
Cathy O'Donnell, Ann Arbor News
Gurvinder Singh, Embassy Hotel

2. Citizens Advisory Council

Last night members of the Citizens Council completed our Projects Issues and Development Plans for 1999 that we began at our December meeting, and we discussed the ways we might work with the DDA, its committees, and other groups to achieve our goals for the downtown.

Mr. Gillett arrives.

We have now completed our Downtown Residential Survey. Copies have been given to Susan Pollay and to Leah Gunn, Chair of the Parking Operations Committee of the DDA. This work emerged from the participation of a number of our members on that DDA committee. The survey now identifies every residential dwelling in the downtown by address, lists the building type, number of units, and the type of units—apartments, lofts, rooms, etc. It will also tell us whether or not any parking is available, although it won't tell us how much, or whether or not it is provided with the housing units. We hope this kind of cooperation between the Citizens Advisory Council and the DDA will characterize all our common efforts on the many issues and projects that will be dealt with in 1999.

At last night's meeting we also discussed the possibility of focusing more of our efforts in the New Year on the proposition that the future development of Ann Arbor can and should be directed toward encouraging its development as a cultural center as well as a very desirable residential environment. It is no secret that the downtown area and the University campus have an impressive array of bookstores, galleries, museums, concert halls and other performance venues—as well as being the site of one of the largest Art Fairs in the nation. How can we build on this?

There was no unanimity at our meeting on exactly how we should deal with this cultural focus. But all of us are excited about this issue, as well as many others, that may be included in the discussions that will be a part of the New Urbanism Symposium planned for this spring. Several of us want to work with Lorri Sipes in the development of this important event. Other groups in the downtown, including the new Urban Environmental Alliance and nearby neighborhoods, are anxious to participate. We want to make sure that
this Symposium is specifically organized to focus on issues that relate concepts of the New Urbanism to the past, present and future of downtown Ann Arbor.

We hope that the University of Michigan will also play a part in this spring event. We want the Venturi Scott Brown Associates group to be there. But, frankly, the current position of the University on a number of issues does not make us too optimistic. It is our impression that they have so far failed to involve the community in the development of their master plans for the future, even though they give lip service to the value of public input. I have asked Susan Pollay if I can include in your next months’ packet a copy of a four page letter that Mike Garfield of the Urban Environmental Alliance wrote to The University of Michigan President, Lee Bollinger, several months ago. In that letter Garfield discussed many of the Ann Arbor issues that the University should address in a public planning process that helps shape the University Master Plan. Lee Bollinger, or others, have never answered the letter. The City of Ann Arbor, particularly, the downtown and nearby neighborhoods, will be affected by the University Master Plan. We should be involved in its development.

Finally, members of the Citizens Council will be present this evening at the meeting of the Historic District Commission. We are giving congratulations to both the Commission and Bob Gates and the architect for First Martin Corporation for the creative progress they have made in their efforts to preserve the limestone façade, the canopy and the sign pylon of the historic Ann Arbor Bus Depot at 116 W. Huron. Their cooperative discussions are producing a refined building design that combines the old and the new in a structure that will be a welcome addition to the core area of our downtown.

Although the major part of the old building must be removed as a result of the developer’s plans to provide underground parking, we are pleased that plans for the interior space provide a style and an environment consistent with the original bus depot. We are also pleased that First martin has made a further commitment to preserving the historic identity of this site in its plans to continue to use the new building as a location for bus transportation and ticket sales. This is extremely important to our goal of maintaining the desirability of the downtown as a residential neighborhood. This too is a commitment to preservation. We hope there will be a residential component within the new structure.

It is an added bonus that First Martin plans to display images of the history of this terminal site, and of transportation in general, in the lobby of the new building. Members of the Citizens Advisory Council, through the Downtown Ann Arbor Historic Street Exhibit Program, are anxious to work with First Martin in making these displays an important part of their contribution to preserving the history of our downtown.

3. **Audience Participation**

Gurvinder Singh described the renovations underway at the Embassy Hotel. He asked the DDA to install brickwork and lights on the hotel’s Fourth Avenue sidewalk, as it had done further down the block. As part of its renovations, the Hotel would fill in the vault under the sidewalk, thereby making it possible to do this installation. He also asked that the DDA consider installing a tree on E. Huron in front of the Hotel, as there are trees similarly placed elsewhere on that street. Mr. Shaffran referred Mr. Singh to the Fourth Avenue Subcommittee for a recommendation.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Harshe moved, and Mr. Pohrt seconded, that the minutes of the December 10th and 14th, 1998 meetings be approved.

A vote on the motion showed:

**AYES:** Dankert, Fritz, Gillett, Harshe, Pohrt, Shaffran, Ungrodt

**NAYS:** None
Absent: Berlin, DeVarti, Gunn, Relyea, Sipes

The motion carried.

5. **New Business**

Mr. Shaffran described the events that transpired during the first week of January after the major snowstorm and the process by which it was decided that the DDA would pay for snow removal in the downtown. Invoices for $28,000 had been received to remove snow from the curbs and sidewalks in the primary downtown pedestrian areas, as well as from DDA parking facilities. Ms. Harshe asked that a by-law amendment be made to provide guidelines for emergency expenditures. Ms. Pollay asked Ms. Harshe and Mr. Gillett to assist with the first draft for these guidelines.

Mr. Pohrt moved and Mr. Gillett seconded a motion to ratify the expenditure of up to $28,000 to remove the snow in the downtown area. Ms. Harshe moved to include a friendly amendment, asking the City to reimburse the DDA for this amount. This motion was seconded by Mr. Ungrodt. There was discussion, whereupon it was decided to omit this amendment, returning to the original motion.

A vote on the motion showed:

**AYES:** Dankert, Fritz, Gillett, Harshe, Pohrt, Shaffran, Ungrodt  
**NAYS:** None  
Absent: Berlin, DeVarti, Gunn, Relyea, Sipes

The motion carried.

Mr. Pohrt reported on a lecture series and national town meeting on sustainability, and urged DDA members to attend.

6. **Subcommittee Reports**

**Finance Committee**

Mr. Morehouse noted the major items contained in the audit report from Price Waterhouse Cooper, LLP. Mr. Morehouse then explained the items contained in the proposed budget for the fiscal year 1999/2000.

Mr. Dankert moved and Ms. Harshe seconded a motion to approve the budget for the fiscal year 1999/2000.

A vote on the motion showed:

**AYES:** Dankert, Fritz, Gillett, Harshe, Pohrt, Shaffran, Ungrodt  
**NAYS:** None  
Absent: Berlin, DeVarti, Gunn, Relyea, Sipes

The motion carried.

Mr. Morehouse explained the variances between the actual income and expense on the financial statements, and the budgeted income and expense for the TIF and Parking funds.

**Parking Operations**

Mr. Dankert summarized the most recent subcommittee meeting and explained that there were some questions with the National Garages’ 1999/00 budget, notably the insurance expense. Mr. Frazier explained that Allright Parking had its insurances out to bid, and that final costs would be known soon.
Main Packard
Mr. Gillett related the latest elements in negotiations concerning the proposed development by Syndeco/Kaplan.

Ms. Harshe leaves.

Downtown Shuttle
Ms. Pollay reported that AATA had applied for a grant to provide funding for free bus passes for downtown employees, the details of which was explained in a memo in the board packet.

Allen Creek
Ms. Pollay reported that a meeting was being scheduled with the County Drain Commissioner and others concerning this project. Mr. Allen explained the Chamber of Commerce would seek to assist the City develop a zoning and site plan for the City-owned land in the Allen Creek flood plain.

Parking Construction
Mr. Shaffran explained that a Special DDA Meeting would be held on February 18th to approve selection of the contractor for the Maynard renovations. The Fourth & Washington project is proceeding despite the cold weather. Mr. Shaffran reported that the University and the City were still negotiating on the Forest project. Ms. Pollay stated that the University Regents, City Council and the DDA Board were expected to review and approve a conceptual agreement at their February meetings. Mr. Shaffran also thanked Ms. Pollay for her efforts on the snow removal work.

GT Products/First & Williams
Mr. Shaffran reported that he has had conversations with GT Products concerning possibly building a new parking structure at the corner of First and William.

Executive Director Report
Ms. Pollay asked for feedback on holding the board meetings at noon and received positive remarks on continuing the meetings at noon. Ms. Pollay announced that she would be participating in a visit to Chapel Hill, NC in early February with representatives of the Washtenaw Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, University of Michigan and others.

7. Adjournment
As there was no further discussion, upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Pollay, Executive Director
Secretary