Minutes
Downtown Development Authority Meeting
Thursday, February 13, 1997

Place: Guy C. Larcom, Jr. Municipal Building (City Hall) Council Chambers, Second Floor, 100 North Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

Time: The Chair, Karl Pohrt called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M.

1. Roll Call


Absent: Maria Harshe, Deanna Relyea, Edward Shaffran, Lorri Sipes, Paul Ungrodt

Staff
Present: Susan Pollay, DDA Executive Director

Audience: Ray Detter, DDA Citizens Advisory Council
          Susan Froelich, Ann Arbor Street Art Fair
          Barry Lonik, Potawamami Land Coalition

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gunn made a motion and Mr. Gates supported that the Board meeting minutes dated January 9, 1997 be approved with the following correction:

All motions should reflect that Mr. Gillett was absent.

A vote on the motion showed:


NAYS: None.

Absent: Harshe, Relyea, Shaffran, Sipes, Ungrodt.

The motion carried.
3. DDA Citizens Advisory Council

Mr. Detter presented the following report:

Last night’s Citizens Council meeting was devoted to further development of goals and objective statements on the integral downtown issues of housing and parking. As downtown residents, we are convinced that the future of our neighborhood is linked to its capacity to achieve and sustain visible, varied, and well-maintained housing. At the same time, we believe that full spectrum residential use of the downtown area requires investment in planning for assured parking.

Maintaining and increasing the use of the downtown and near downtown areas as a residential neighborhood is of prime importance to the success of your Downtown Development Plan – and to the implementation of the Downtown Plan of 1988 which we understand is now in process. We applaud the burgeoning interest in loft space development in the last few years that has led to forty-nine units of market rate housing completed or in process. Equally encouraging to our long-standing advocacy of broad spectrum housing are the nearly two-hundred units of more affordable housing that have already been occupied or are soon to be available to persons of low or modest income (Avalon, YMCA, Courthouse Square). We note that Courthouse Square now has applications for at least 50% of its senior low-income units. However, we are disappointed that they have had to turn away significant numbers of applicants whose incomes were judged to be too high to live there. This information, combined with the conclusions of several surveys conducted in the last decade (Library Lot, DDACC Questionnaire, Main-Packard Survey of 1996), confirms our belief that there is a currently unmet demand for downtown housing at all income levels.

To varying degrees, those who live in the downtown now, or who contemplate living here, will need well planned public or private parking facilities. The Citizens Council believes we must continue to retain the existing parking in the downtown or we will fail to meet those present and future needs. At the same time, we are committed to finding and developing future alternatives to bringing cars into the downtown. We welcome any requirement that large new construction for downtown residential purposes include well planned parking facilities. We urge the DDA and the City to provide every possible encouragement to such developments. But occupants of existing structures, and the single and multiple dwellings long used as downtown residences, continue to own and operate cars and require places to park them. We must be prompt in providing necessary parking system replacements and improvements or we will undermine present housing stock and our hopes for the future of our downtown residential neighborhood.
The Citizens Council strongly believes that a fully functional downtown is one in which people live, go to work, push baby carriages, shop, carry groceries and walk dogs. Such activities, commingling with those generated by offices, stores, and restaurants, help to create a prosperous and lively urban environment. Also, important to downtown health and well being is the stabilizing effect of the retail outlets and services stimulated by the needs and requirements of permanent residents. We have all noted that in the last few years there has been an influx of restaurants, coffee houses, bookstores, galleries and other establishments in the downtown. This has brought with it a level of vitality very different from the retail activity which at one time characterized the downtown. We recognize that many areas of perceived downtown vitality are in fact quite fragile. Much office space remains empty and retail businesses struggle to meet the costs of high rents and the need for more customers. Adequate parking facilities are essential to maintaining and encouraging downtown commercial vitality even as we work to find alternatives to bringing cars into the area. But the Citizens Advisory Council believes that providing attractive and varied downtown housing for all people at all income levels is the most important key to maintaining and building the vitality of our downtown. This is particularly true in the permanent support it would provide for weak areas like retail.

Providing more homes and greater variety for those who choose downtown living must be a major goal of parking system improvements. Adequate downtown parking is essential to the area's commercial vitality, but it must be developed and maintained with a long-range vision for the downtown's future that puts major emphasis upon the support and encouragement of existing and future housing in the area.

It is for these reasons that we believe that all fees for short-and long-term parking should not only pay for the cost of the city's parking supply but also fund maintenance and improvements. Furthermore, we believe, to the extent possible, a portion of revenues from parking fines should be allocated to the parking system. The DDA and the City government must act together if we are to avoid repeating the inadequate support for our parking system that has led to the problems we face today.

Last night two new members attended our Citizens Council meeting - Andrew Wright, a student at the University, recommended by Student Assembly President Feona Rose, is a resident of the State Street Area. Jake Radcliffe, who is the chief baker at Zingerman's as well as owning a house on Chaping Street off Huron, has insight into both the Main Street and Kerrytown areas. That brings our membership to 17 and moves us further in the direction of making the Citizens Council as broadly representative as possible of downtown residential areas and concerns.
4. **Audience Participation**

**Potowanami Land Coalition**

Barry Lonik, Executive Director of the Potowanami Land Trust, gave the Board an overview of the Potowanami Land Coalition which advocates for preserving farmland from rampant development which contributes to the urban sprawl Michigan is experiencing. He distributed information about the coalition, and requested that the DDA join it. The coalition will be conducting a public forum on March 3, 1997, at the Washtenaw County Farm Bureau, at 7:30 P.M. They will address issues relating purchasing and development rights.

**Ann Arbor Street Art Fair**

Susan Froelich, Executive Director of the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair addressed the DDA. She stated that the Ann Arbor Street Art Fair Board of Directors are requesting that the parking structure located at the corner of Willard & Forest Streets receive priority treatment from the DDA. There was a letter in the Board package regarding her request, dated February 5, 1997.

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5. **New Business**

**South Forest Street Structure**

Ms. Pollay reported that the DDA is continuing to talk with the UM about transportation and parking ideas as they relate to the South Forest Street structure. Also, there will be a full report of the Carl Walker study findings in April.

**Maintenance Pedestrian Improvements**

Mr. Fritz referred the Board to Attachment #1 of the Board Information Package, regarding “Swat Team” and Downtown Maintenance Program. He gave the Board an overview of how the maintenance program will work. The original swat team idea has been temporarily delayed while under consideration by a DDA subcommittee. It is anticipated that its’ recommendations will be presented to the Board this summer. Meanwhile, this spring, members of various City departments, the DDA, Downtown merchants, and residents will be asked to walk through the downtown and assess maintenance needs.
There was discussion regarding the City maintenance program. Mr. DeVarti added that he will submit written documentation regarding the DDA's appropriateness in the matter of maintenance downtown.

Finance and Planning

No report.

First & Washington/Fourth & Washington

No report.

Housing

No report.

6. Subcommittee Reports

Executive Director Report

Ms. Pollay informed the Board that the DDA has been invited to meet with the City Planning Commission to discuss the Downtown Plan, and other related issues. She asked the Board for their availability. The meeting has been scheduled for April 8, 1997. Also, there will be a joint viewing with City Council and the DDA to watch the video tape "Back from the Brink" to see if there are planning ideas that can be used from it. The viewing has been scheduled for March 13, 1997 at 7:00 P.M. Mr. DeVarti requested that three or four showings of the video be scheduled on Public Access Television for individual viewing.

Ms. Pollay reported that the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors' Bureau is preparing a "Shop Ann Arbor" package (a tote bag) that will be sold to visitors coming into the City. The Visitors' Bureau has requested that the DDA provide parking passes as part of the package. Funds received for the passes will be fully reimbursed to the DDA. It will encourage shoppers to come downtown.

It has been recommended that as a memorial for Reuben Bergman, a small plaque be placed on one of the planters on Main Street.

The DDA is on the City Council agenda for its next meeting to request changes to its parking lease. Two resolutions will be up for consideration.
Public Relations Committee

No report.

Parking Committee

Ms. Pollay informed the Board that the Parking Committee will meet on February 27, 1997, to discuss parking rate increases.

Pedestrian Improvement Committee

No report.

Housing

Mr. DeVarti reported that the Housing Committee met and discussed the following issues: Washtenaw County Homeless Taskforce; a proposal for a housing study; and an evaluation of housing needs downtown. The committee plans to ask University of Michigan faculty and students to assist with the evaluation. Also, they discussed exploring ways to create a funding mechanism for affordable housing downtown. Mr. Pohrt added that he has arranged a meeting with a University of Michigan School of Social Work professor to discuss related issues. He requested that Ms. Pollay and other DDA Board members join the meeting. Also, the Housing Committee would like for the DDA as a whole to provide ideas related to housing downtown.

Finance Committee

Mr. Gates reported that the Finance Committee has meet three times since last month. Ms. Pollay gave the Board an overview of the recommended 1996/97 budget. There was discussion regarding the impact that an income tax would have on TIF tax revenues. Mr. Berlin stated that he would look into the matter further, and report back to the Board.

Ms. Gunn made a motion and Mr. Gates supported that the recommended 1996/97 DDA Budget be approved.

A vote on the motion showed:


NAYS: None.

Absent: Harshe, Relyea, Saffran, Sipes, Ungrodt.

The motion carried.
Mr. DeVarti - exit.

Financial Report

Mr. Gates reviewed the revised financial reports for December 31, 1996, (handed out at the meeting). The January 31, 1997 report was distributed, and will be reviewed and discussed at the March 1997 Board meeting.

7. Other DDA Business

Ann Arbor News, Letter to the Editor

Mr. Gillett asked about the letter to the editor in the February 12, 1997 edition of the Ann Arbor News. There was discussion regarding the letter.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting adjourn at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:

Susan Pollay, Recording Secretary