MINUTES
Downtown Development Authority Meeting
Wednesday, May 7, 2003

Place: Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Time: DDA Chair Bob Gillett called the meeting to order at 12:11 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Fred Beal, Ron Dankert, Dave DeVarti, David Fritz, Bob Gillett, Dave Solo
Absent: Rob Aldrich, Rene Greff, Leah Gunn, John Hieftje, Lorri Sipes
Staff Present: Susan Pollay, Executive Director
Present: Joe Morehouse, Deputy Director
Adrian Iraola, Project Manager
Sarah Armstrong

Audience: Jim Corbett, Republic Parking System
Brandt Coultas, Chamber of Commerce/Get!Downtown Program
Ray Detter, Citizens Advisory Council
Mark Hodesh, Downtown Home and Garden
Donna Johnson, City Planning Department
Cathy O'Donnell, Ann Arbor News
Ethel Potts, Citizen

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Fritz moved and Mr. Solo seconded the approval of the April 2, 2003 minutes.

A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Beal, DeVarti, Fritz, Gillett, Solo
NAYS: None
Absent: Aldrich, Greff, Gunn, Hieftje, Sipes
Abstain: Dankert
The motion carried.

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

4. CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

At the Citizens Advisory Council meeting last night, members asked me to speak on two very important issues.

First, we wish to express our support for the efforts of the DDA Partnership Committee in developing a plan for three important sites on the West side of Main Street—First and Washington, First and William, and the Kline’s lot on Ashley and William. We believe that a concept and a plan should be developed for these three sites that would integrate them as a group into a downtown neighborhood that would satisfy our desires for a mixed-use area that supports housing, retail, parking and pedestrian amenities.

Second, the Citizens Advisory Council wishes to express its opposition to any attempts to impose temporary or permanent height limitations on downtown buildings except as prescribed by developing standards that move in the direction of implementing the Downtown Plan of 1988 and the Central Area Plan of 1992.

The Citizens Council has always supported implementation of the Downtown Plan. Recently, we supported the proposal to amend City Zoning to require a minimum building height of two stories for all new principal use buildings in our city’s downtown Core areas. That proposal was approved and, although too limited in its geographic scope, partially achieved an objective of the Downtown Plan. We need to expand that requirement over the entire downtown area.

We agree with the DDA’s position statement that the height of a new building in downtown Ann Arbor should be considered in the context in which the structure will be located. The Downtown Plan does not recommend a maximum height, yet it suggests height flexibility with emphasis on guidelines and incentives (premiums) to avoid
undesirable massive and tall buildings. Protection of downtown characteristics, including a comfortable sense of scale, pedestrian orientation, and the stability of neighborhoods on the edge of downtown are all encouraged.

The Citizens Advisory Council wants more mixed use development in the downtown—more housing, more retail, more creative designs for new structures in a pedestrian friendly environment—but we are not going to get any of that if we foolishly impose a temporary or permanent limitation on building height.

Ms. Gunn and Mayor Hieftje enter.

5. NEW BUSINESS
Mr. Gillett wanted to acknowledge that John Hieftje's daughter passed away and asked for a moment of silence in her memory.

6. OLD BUSINESS
None.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Mr. Dankert reported on the highlights from the March financial statements: The TIF fund balance reflects the annual $200,000 contribution to the DDA Housing Fund. The gross revenue for the parking system is up about $22,000 or 2.3% over last year, however, much of that is due to meter and meter bag revenue. The $137,500 recompensation to Freed is included in the month's expenses. Maintenance is considerably up, but this is due to a series of unexpected repair needs. In February or March the City and DDA went to another utilities provider, so the utility cost decline is attributed to a timing issue. The $10,000 owed to the Chamber for its Housing Coordinator program is shown in the Housing Fund accounts for the month. Mr. Dankert moved and Ms. Gunn seconded that the report be accepted.

A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Beal, Dankert, DeVarti, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn, Hieftje, Solo
NAYS: None
Absent: Aldrich, Greff, Sipes
The motion carried.

Mr. Dankert moved and Mr. Solo seconded the following resolution:

RESOLUTION URGING CHANGES IN CITY REGULATIONS REGARDING PARKING METER BAGS

Whereas, The DDA assumed management responsibility for the parking meter system in May 2002, which includes provision of meter bags;

Whereas, After gaining input from the downtown community, the DDA Operations Committee approved guidelines regulating meter bag usage at their March 2003 meeting;

Whereas, These guidelines are prefaced with a declaration that includes the following language: “downtown vitality is dependent on the availability of convenient hourly parking spaces. For this reason the DDA discourages the use of meter bags except when absolutely necessary....”;

Whereas, As part of the approval of these guidelines, it was recognized that the DDA and City must work together to resolve widespread complaints about meter bag enforcement;

Whereas, Current enforcement practice dictates that meter bags must be placed at least 24-hours in advance of the time they are to be used;

Whereas, This takes valuable hourly parking away far in excess of what is actually needed;

Whereas, Many downtown streets have been designated with “no parking 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.” signage to allow for street sweeping, plowing and other maintenance;
Whereas, The DDA parking operator installs and removes all parking meter bags and could ensure installation by 6:00 a.m. seven days a week;

Resolved, The DDA respectfully asks the City to modify its parking enforcement procedures to enable parking meter bags to be placed no later than 6:00 a.m. the day a meter bag may be needed, rather than the current practice of 24-hours in advance.

Resolved, The DDA will assist the City with the installation of additional signage or other tools to help communicate this change.

Mr. Solo explained that current policy requires meter bags to be placed 24 hours in advance of the time they are to be used, which takes valuable hourly parking away far in excess of what is actually needed. If Council approves this change per the DDA’s request, this should address many complaints. Mr. Gillett said he was concerned that part of the problem was that the meter bags were not coming off immediately after the event. Ms. Pollay said that Republic Parking also removes the covers, thus special events don’t need to rely on volunteers to do this as before, thereby shortening the time the covers are on.

A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Beal, Dankert, DeVarti, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn, Hieftje, Solo
NAYS: None
Absent: Aldrich, Greff, Sipes
The motion carried.

Mr. Dankert reported that the Library hired Carl Luckenbach to design a pedestrian drop off on S. Fifth Avenue, dramatically modifying the S. Fifth Avenue parking lot layout. The Committee will discuss this at a later meeting.

Mr. Dankert reported that they reviewed the DDA lease for our office and they see no problem with it.

Mr. DeVarti asked what the status of the union negotiations were and Mr. Corbett, Manager of Republic Parking, reported that they are still bargaining but things seem to be moving in the right direction and they hope to have a contract soon.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE**

**Forest Structure.** Mr. Beal reported they are still closing out the project including the UM final payment. The contractor has completed all punch list items except for a section of concrete repair on the roof level, which must be redone under the warranty.

**Fourth/William.** Mr. Beal reported that all punch list items will be completed within the next week including the installation of gas line for the new emergency generator.

**Fourth Avenue.** Mr. Beal reported it is scheduled for resurfacing next week and the street will be closed to traffic except for busses and exiting vehicles from the parking structure. The DDA will complete its 2002 Fourth Ave. sidewalk repair project by moving the lights at Blake Transit Center across the street.

**State Street Area Project-Phase I.** Mr. Beal reported that Abbott will begin work again on Monday. The electrical contractor has reduced their claim substantially on the installation of street light wiring.

**State Street Area Project-Phase II.** Mr. Beal reported that Doan Construction has begun work on the south side of Liberty Street. They seem to be very efficient and well organized.

**Liberty Plaza.** Mr. Beal reported work has started with the removal of pavers and furniture. The Park is closed to the public and should be completed by Art Fair.

**South University.** Mr. Beal reported that the contractor is to begin work next week. The light fixtures for that project have been ordered.

**Miscellaneous Items.** Mr. Beal reported that the Committee has been asked to take another look at the First/William site. They are getting a much stronger impression that it would be feasible to construct a parking structure on this site. It would, however, be expensive due to the Allen Creek and the Ann Arbor Railroad. They
are looking at costs and have met with the AARR at the site to talk about their situation. The AARR is getting information together so that Carl Walker can re-evaluate what kind of deck could fit there and how many spaces it could provide.

**Downtown Access.** Mr. Beal reported that they have met with City Planning staff and the City Alternative Transportation Coordinator for background information. They have also met with a Chamber Leadership group to learn about wayfinding. They are still exploring possibilities.

**Bike Lockers.** Mr. Beal asked Mr. Coultas, to update the board. Mr. Coultas reported that he, Ms. Pollay, Mr. Iraola, and Police Officer George Patak did a walk around to locate the bike lockers. The next step will be to purchase the units and draft agreements for their use.

**Public Toilets.** Mr. Beal said that the Committee investigated the possibility of installing public toilets, but soon discovered problems. Republic doesn't want to manage them, the Police don't like them at all, and the idea to pilot a program with existing bathrooms was shot down due to their design flaws as public restrooms. If we really want to do this we must spend significant funds to build new bathrooms and then see how they work. The Mayor said that he will direct his interns to research options.

---

**PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE**

**First/Washington.** Mr. Beal reported that they had met with the County Drain Commissioner who said it is feasible to move the Allen Creek Drain out of the path of a parking deck. An initial conversation with the Ann Arbor Railroad was very positive, and a follow-up meeting on-site was also positive. We are now awaiting information railroad clearances and air right costs. It was suggested that the DDA also look at a deck spanning William using the Fingerle lot, as an option.

Ms. Pollay reported that she attended a Planning Commission meeting to provide an update on First & Washington, and there was general support for the DDA planning at multiple sites with a mixed use neighborhood concept. She said she would continue to keep the Commission informed as the DDA moves forward.

The Mayor said he would like to see us explore the possibility of building a parking structure outside downtown at a ride lot to encourage more transit use. He suggested that many would agree to pay for this parking to help cover construction costs. Potential sites were mentioned.

Mr. Solo reported that many have said that the “highest & best use” at First and William would be a parking structure, with an access point on Ashley. A geotechnical study of the soil conditions will need to be commissioned. Mr. Solo moved and Ms. Gunn seconded the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO $17,000 TO INVESTIGATE SOIL CONDITIONS AT THE FIRST & WILLIAM PARKING LOT**

Whereas, Following the termination of the development agreement at First and Washington, the DDA Partnership Committee was charged with the responsibility to consider alternate plans to replace parking that will be lost when the First and Washington structure is demolished;

Whereas, The DDA held a community meeting in early March 2003 to discuss possible options and there was interest in building a public parking structure on the site of the First and William lot, which includes access onto Ashley via a City-owned lot;

Whereas, It is important to understand geotechnical conditions on this site before pursuing more in-depth planning efforts;

Whereas, The DDA Partnerships Committee met with the DDA Project Manager and recommended that the following studies be commissioned: Environmental (Phase II), Geotechnical Assessment, topographical and boundary survey.

Whereas, The estimated cost for these reports will be less than $17,000.00;

Resolved, The DDA Project Manager is authorized to commission an Environmental (Phase II) study, Geotechnical Assessment, and topographical and boundary survey for the First and William and Ashley sites for a cost not to exceed $17,000.00.
A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Beal, Dankert, DeVarti, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn, Hieftje, Solo
NAYS: None
Absent: Aldrich, Greff, Sipes
The motion carried.

Collegian Request. Mr. Solo reported that the request includes assistance for a new water main, some electrical expenses, and relief from meter bag fees. The latter was waived, as the meters had not yet been installed. Last week the Committee met with Public Services and Utilities staff who explained the project history in relation to the water main, and estimated the cost for installation. It was learned that the petitioner’s cost estimates were very high, and included costs for repaving Maynard Street, which is already slated for repaving by the City. Based on the information received from City and DDA staff, it was resolved not to provide any additional funding support for this project.

Baker Commons. Mr. Solo reported that an engineer was hired and a cost estimate is expected soon.

Library request. Mr. Solo reported that the Committee also reviewed the Luckenbach plan. Mr. DeVarti requested the Committee look to move some of the bike racks to other dead space on the site.

PLANNING COMMITTEE
In Ms. Greff’s absence, Ms. Pollay reported the following:

State Street Area Bike/Pedestrian Study. There will be a community meeting on May 21 at noon at the Michigan Theater. All are welcome to participate.

Downtown Building Height Ordinance Changes. Planning Department staff attended the last meeting to inform the Committee about the status of the Planning Commission Ordinance Review Subcommittee’s work considering possible building height ordinance changes. Current thought would set a 3-4 story limit for an interim period, with the exception of Planned Unit Developments. The Committee will work with Planning staff to help provide information to the community for their feedback. Mr. Beal said that he felt current regulations worked well and led to attractive buildings, and that this effort to consider changes was primarily due to a feeling of loss of control over one recent project. He said that he personally liked taller buildings, citing several he felt to be particularly attractive, and said that ironically, most controversial projects had been PUD’s approved by the Commission and Council. Thus zoning changes were unnecessary.

Bylaw Change Regarding Board Member Expectations. Ms. Pollay said that the Committee aims to bring a resolution in June. Mr. Gillett voiced his opposition as it is proposed at this time, saying that he felt that being on the board should not depend on attendance but rather on what we bring to the committee when we commit that time. Ms. Pollay said she would relay his concern to the Committee.

DDA Renewal. There was a good work session with Council at the beginning of April. It was resolved that an action item will be brought before Council at their second meeting in June.

8. OTHER BUSINESS
None.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
None.

10. ADJOURNMENT
As there was no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director