MINUTES  
Downtown Development Authority Special Meeting  
Wednesday, May 24, 2000

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

Time:  The Chair, Lorri Sipes, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

[1. Roll Call]

Present:  Fred Beal, Ron Dankert, Maria Harshe, Lorri Sipes, Skip Ungrodt
Absent:  Rob Aldrich, Neal Berlin, Dave DeVarti, Dave Fritz, Bob Gillett, Leah Gunn, Karl Pohrt

Staff:  Susan Pollay, Executive Director  
Present:  Sarah Armstrong, DDA  
Joe Morehouse, Fiscal and Administrative Manager

Audience:  Paul Dannels, CAC member and Chapin St. Neighborhood Association  
Ray Detter, Citizen Advisory Counsel  
Cathy O’Donnell, Ann Arbor News

[2. New Business]

Proposed Storm Water Detention Amendments

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

Resolution Asking City Council to Delay Changes to its Storm Water Management And Soil Erosion  
and Sedimentation Control Ordinance Until An Impact Analysis Can be Conducted

Whereas, Members of the DDA share a strong commitment to improving environmental conditions in the downtown and throughout our community;

Whereas, Chapter 63 of the City Code was set forward to protect and improve the effectiveness of storm water management systems within the City, including controlling sources of water runoff, and improving water quality;

Whereas, Changes have been proposed to amend Chapter 63, Title Five, of the Code of Ann Arbor;

Whereas, These proposed changes seek to increase restrictions in an attempt to further diminish the negative impact on water quality and quantity resulting from development and impervious surfaces;

Whereas, These changes include the provision for development projects containing more than 5,000 square feet of impervious surface being required to provide on-site storm water detention systems up to and including detention of the first flush, bankfull and 100-year storm event;

Whereas, These changes include the provision that impervious surface calculations will include sidewalks or impervious surface areas provided for the purpose of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act if impervious surface additions or removals and replacements are greater than 750 square feet;
Whereas, These changes would have a significantly negative impact on future major renovation, expansion, or development projects in the downtown;

Whereas, These changes would allow alternate methods of storm water detention within the DDA district, such as payment of an equal or greater amount of money to the City in lieu of providing the degree of detention called out by the proposed changes computed at a cost of $2.00 per square foot for residential sites and $2.50 per square foot for commercial sites or the donation of land suitable to be effectively used for storm water system improvements within the same watershed; alternatives which are very expensive and may prove detrimental to future downtown development;

Whereas, The impact of these changes, particularly on the future development of downtown, have not been calculated or considered;

Whereas, The DDA district is downstream in the Allen Creek Watershed area, and downtown developments only minimally impact the volume and speed of water runoff in the Creek, as most water runoff is created upstream, and the DDA area has served as the historic central business district, and as such, has little remaining pervious surface from which soil erosion could present a problem with sediments entering into storm sewers;

Whereas, Proposed changes have gone through first reading before City Council without feedback from the public;

RESOLVED, The DDA requests that City Council defer consideration of the proposed changes to Chapter 63 for a minimum of 180 days to conduct a study which would measure the potential financial, environmental, and other impacts of such changes;

RESOLVED, The DDA requests that prior to voting on this amendment, City Council elicit input from downtown stakeholders who will be directly impacted by these changes, including downtown developers, Washtenaw Contractors Association, representatives of the downtown, the Huron Watershed Council, the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner, the Huron Valley AIA, the DDA, and others.

Ms. Pollay said that amendments to the Storm Water Management Control Ordinance would be voted on June 5th and members of the DDA had expressed concern that they hadn’t been notified of proposed changes and thus had an interest in asking Council to allow time for additional debate on this issue.

Mr. Beal said that from the contractor’s side there is concern that whenever there are changes, prices go up which discourages development. He feels the Board should look at this and see if they feel it’s a good idea and whether or not it addresses the concerns. It would be very difficult to implement the changes proposed in the downtown area. Planning staff received some comments on the proposed amendments but the Planning Commission did not receive those concerns and so they passed it without having this information. Council should know that there are concerns and that additional time is needed to give people opportunity to comment.

Mr. Pohrt enters.

Ms. Sipes suggested they go around the table and each member comment on this issue.
Mr. DeVarti enters.

Mr. Dankert said he felt that the amendments were more concerned with the residential development but that the ordinance would encompass all kinds of development, so we need some kind of an impact study. Ms. Harshe commented that she felt the DDA resolution was good. Better decisions can be made if we have more information. Perhaps the ordinance is relevant to the downtown and we could take it a step further in that if the tabling does occur, the DDA should consider taking a position on how the downtown should be treated. Mr. Ungrodt said he had no comments.

Ms. Sipes said she had some hesitation in that the resolution was written from the development side and it should look not only at the development costs but also the environmental costs of not making the changes. Mr. Pohrt asked if there was any language she would like and Ms. Sipes said including mention of the Drain Commissioner and the Watershed District in the final resolved would satisfy her. Mr. DeVarti said he supported this resolution and would like more information.

A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Beal, Dankert, DeVarti, Harshe, Pohrt, Sipes, Ungrodt
NAYS: None
Absent: Aldrich, Berlin, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn
The motion carried.

Downtown Shelter
Ms. Sipes passed out information on the shelter being proposed at the W. Huron Street site. She stated her involvement and brought the Board up to date on what has been happening, both past and present, and asked for comments.

Mr. Beal said he believed the Board should not engage in the debate over the location of the shelter, and that at quick glance he did not feel that the proposed Shelter design was compatible with the neighborhood because it doesn’t look commercial enough. He said that he did feel that having all services in one location makes the most sense and will decrease the impact on downtown because it cuts traffic at the other sites.

The Board talked about the construction cost and some felt it was at the high end. Mr. Pohrt said that there were social costs in not moving forward, and that it would be beneficial to do a cost benefit analysis. Mr. Pohrt said he felt the design had a suburban feel to it. Ms. Sipes said the setback responds directly to the house next door and matches the face of that building. The building had been designed in response to the neighborhood to the west and not to the commercial district to the east.

Ms. Harshe said she would hold this program and process to the same standards to which the City held others including the DDA and that there should have been a public process involved in the decision whether there should be a downtown shelter and if so, where should it be located. She said she felt that the DDA should say that if there is a shelter built in the downtown area there are some things the DDA wants to see as part of the program. She said that major concerns would be ongoing maintenance and sufficient ongoing funding. She asked that construction and operational funding be in place before moving forward.

Mr. Ungrodt asked where many homeless individuals came from, stating his concern that many people were coming from outside Ann Arbor, lured by a lax pan handling ordinance and enforcement, as well as the variety and quality of services that were provided. Ms. Sipes stated her understanding that 50-75% of those receiving services were people from within the County or people with family or other connections in the County. Ms.
Pollay added that a number of people participating in the food programs were working full time but at minimum wage jobs that did not provide adequately for rent, food and other essentials.

Mr. DeVarti said that this might be the first time the community has been able to mobilize adequate resources to invest in a way that is healthier for the community. Consolidating several activities onto one site will lessen the issues that currently come up throughout the downtown. He said he felt now is the time to move on this. He said he felt the DDA should have a role in this, and he would like the DDA to support the County and their proposed site.

Mr. Pohrt said that an impact study should be done if it hadn’t already, and that the project should be held to the same high standards that other projects have to adhere to. Although he could understand the “not in my backyard” feeling that many neighbors have expressed, he would like to see that neighbors have the power to shut the shelter down if there are major problems in the neighborhood.

Ms. Pollay offered to draft a resolution for the next regular board meeting. Mr. Beal stated his support for a downtown homeless shelter, and said that in fact he would like to see two separate resolutions at the next meeting. The first would say that regardless of any concerns about consolidating services at a single homeless shelter or about a specific site, we as a DDA do not support the use of the Ann/Ashley parking structure for a shelter location. The second resolution would state that if the DDA were to support this shelter, we would want to see certain criteria met. Ms. Harshe supported this concept. Ms. Pollay said she would draft these resolutions for the next Board meeting.

Ms. Harshe asked Mr. Detter to give them an idea on where the Citizen’s Advisory Council stood on this project. Mr. Detter stated their position, including their frustrations with much of the process. Ms. Harshe asked if he would put this information in writing for the Board. He stated that he would.

There was a brief discussion on the flood plain/flood way issues.

### 3. Adjournment

As there was no further discussion, upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Secretary