MINUTES
Downtown Development Authority Meeting
Wednesday, July 2, 2003

Place: Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI  48104
Time: DDA Chair Bob Gillett called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Rob Aldrich, Fred Beal, Ron Dankert, Bob Gillett, Rene Greff, Leah Gunn, John Hieftje, Lorri Sipes, Dave Solo

Absent: Dave DeVarti, Dave Fritz

Staff: Susan Pollay, Executive Director
       Joe Morehouse, Deputy Director
       Adrian Iraola, Project Manager
       Sarah Armstrong

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Hieftje moved and Ms. Gunn seconded the approval of the June 4, 2003 minutes. Mayor Hieftje asked that the minutes be amended to reflect that he had in fact cast a nay vote against the DDA’s statement on downtown building heights.

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

The amended motion carried.

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

Mr. Fritz enters.

4. CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Citizens Advisory Council was pleased with the dedication ceremony and celebration that took place last evening at the University of Michigan Museum of Art to recognize the installation of another seven transparent frames in the Downtown Ann Arbor Historical Street Exhibit Program.

The general theme that unites these new frames is the important close relationship of town and gown in Ann Arbor over the course of 163 years. President Mary Sue Coleman, along with past University Presidents James Duderstadt and Robben Fleming joined Mayor Hieftje, State Senator Liz Brater, State Representative Chris Kolb, former Mayor Ingrid Sheldon and DDA Executive Director Susan Pollay in the dedication events. All of us were very excited by Susan Pollay’s surprise announcement that the International Downtown Association will present the DDA with an IDA Merit Award for the program at the annual meeting in Cleveland this September.
Without the early and continuing support from the DDA, the Street Exhibit Program would not have been possible. This award is well deserved.

On Monday the Citizens Advisory Council devoted further time to a discussion of the issue of bicycle and pedestrian safety in the downtown. Our members feel very strongly on this issue. Public safety in the downtown is one of our major concerns.

As a group, we are committed to trying to make Ann Arbor the most pedestrian-friendly city in the country. We are also committed to encouraging the use of alternative transportation and want to make this city a place where bicycle use is encouraged and safe for all riders. Unfortunately, there are some locations where pedestrian and bicycle interests are not exactly the same and, in the interest of public safety, new patterns of use should be tried.

Two-way traffic is about to be introduced to the State and Liberty area. Norm Cox of Greenway Collaborative is preparing to develop proposals for the State Street Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that the DDA Board has commissioned. Apparently, the DDA now feels that it needs more statistics on bicycle patterns before undertaking any major plan for bicycle paths in the downtown area. Based on DDA feedback and input from this spring’s public workshop, however, it is clear that the State/liberty intersection area would benefit immediately from limiting bike riding on sidewalks and the accommodation of bikes with auto traffic on what will now be less than 25 mph streets. The optimum time to make this change is now-- at the same time that two-way traffic is introduced and the publicity surrounding that change can also include new instructions to cyclists and motorists.

We should not miss this opportunity. We don’t need more study to make this change on Liberty between Division and State and on State between Washington and William. Pedestrian/bike accidents are prevalent at this location. Signed should be placed immediately asking bikers to walk their bikes if they are on the sidewalk in this area. This is a public safety issue! The danger is real! We believe this change has the support of our Mayor. The Chief of Police is prepared to enforce it if signs are installed. In all likelihood, pedestrians themselves will actually be the chief enforcers of the change.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Pollay asked if the Board wished to cancel the August meeting since that has been the practice in previous years. By consensus, the board decided to cancel the August meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Mr. Dankert reported on the highlights from the May financial statements. TIF expenses show an increase against our fixed asset budget due to Liberty Park Plaza expenses. Parking revenue is below budget by about $7,000 but is still up from a year ago by 3%. Meter bags and meter revenue are doing well, and this is the first month we can compare actual meter numbers with last year. Parking expenses are under budget by $36,000 for the month but over budget year-to-date by 5%. Parking expenses were reduced by $460,000 due to an accounting correction by the City. Parking expenses were also reduced due to a timing issue, as the First & Huron parking lot improvement and repair project was moved to August which pushed expenses into the next fiscal year. Mr. Dankert moved and Ms. Gunn seconded approving this financial report.

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

Mr. Dankert reported that the Committee met with Johnson Hill Land Ethics Studio representatives to discuss their study of the Farmers Market. Some preliminary recommendations are taking shape, such as encouraging activities during non-Market days, and finding solutions for customer and vendor parking problems. Mr. Dankert reported that the Committee is pursuing a parking rate study, as this was included in the resolution which approved the new half hour parking rates. The Committee hopes to complete its work by the end of the year. Mr. Dankert thanked Republic Parking for the great job they did with the May wash downs of the structures, as well as other seasonal maintenance and repair projects.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Beal announced that next summer we will try to figure out what other City departments are doing downtown because this year you can’t go anywhere without falling in a hole. All laughed. Mr. Beal said that every effort was made to coordinate projects, but there was a lot of work underway this year.

**Forest Parking Structure.** The contractor is resisting completing the final punch list item, so we may get someone else to do it at the contractor’s expense

**Fourth/William.** The gas service and meter are installed, which was the last major item.

**State Street Area-Phase I.** The mast arms are going up and there is still some work to be done along North University which should be completed within the week. All work that can be will be completed before Art Fair. Traffic signal installation and other electrical work will be done afterwards.

**State Street Area-Phase II.** The work is completed and Doan is working on completing a punch list. Mr. Beal reported that the Committee concluded not to have Doan take on the additional alternates that we couldn’t afford as part of our project budget. Rather, we have asked Doan for pricing for next spring and may bring it to the board later on for consideration.

**Liberty Plaza Park.** The pavers are installed and the concrete work is complete. Their work will be done before Art Fair except for the lights, which should be completed after Art Fair.

**Fourth Avenue.** Mr. Beal reported the lights have been relocated and this project is done.

**First/Washington Parking Structure.** The committee continues to discuss the condition of the structure. It appears that the last contractor did not do a good job of inspecting and repairing it, but a new inspector has been hired and the last routine check showed very little loose material or other immediate problems.

**Baker Commons.** Upon approval of our resolution, project details are being worked out with the contractor.

**S. University Area.** Sidewalk work should be done next week. Electrical work and light installation work will be completed after Art Fair.

**First/William site.** We have completed an interior survey of the Allen Creek Drain to make sure we know exactly where it is. We will soon receive reports from the environmental and geo technical soil investigations.

**Access Downtown.** Mr. Beal reported that they have commissioned a survey of 5th, Division, and Huron, and an intern has been hired to study other aspects, as well. There was some discussion as to whether it’s feasible to redirect truck traffic away from Main Street as part of this project, and we are still gathering information.

**Future Projects-Alleys.** There was some discussion and it was decided to meet with Utilities to see if it was possible to join forces on some alley maintenance and improvement projects.
PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE
Mr. Solo reported that DDA members attended a presentation on the Lower Town development. It was a good presentation and a nice looking project. However, the Committee decided that in the absence of a specific proposal, there was nothing for the Committee to respond to. The only suggestion he felt they could offer would be the insight that the project will need a bigger parking structure to support it. Mr. Solo said that the Committee also reviewed a proposal for a project at Kingsley and Ashley, but again there was no specific request to the DDA. Right now the committee does not see a role for the DDA in this project.

Mr. Solo commented on the fact that the clock is ticking on the First/Washington deck so we need to get to work on the replacement deck at First/William. The DDA’s resolution will soon be before City Council. If it passes, the Committee will begin framing ideas for the residential element at the 1st & Washington site. Mr. Solo asked for comments and suggestions on what folks would like to see.

PLANNING COMMITTEE
Ms. Greff reported that she and Mr. DeVarti have discussed a possible role for the DDA supporting downtown artist studio/performance spaces and what the DDA might accomplish with its involvement. She asked that if others want to get involved in this discussion to get in touch with her.

Bike Study. Greenway Collaborative has been asked to expand their study scope. Phase one will include recommendations for elements the DDA can include as part of its work restoring two-way traffic in the State Street area to provide for bicyclist and pedestrian safety. Phase two will include an in-depth analysis of current and potential bike use in the Area including bike counts, as well as a recommendation for improvements. She said that the Committee had been asked to seek a DDA resolution urging Council approval to restrict bicycle riding on State Street area sidewalks, and the feeling of the committee is that if the CAC or any other citizens group were to approach City Council and ask for an ordinance change to take bikes off the sidewalk, the DDA would not oppose it. Ms. Greff said that the Committee felt it would be premature to request this, since there is no data showing that bicyclists will be safe in the streets.

Other. Ms. Greff says that the Planning Committee may have outlived its purpose, as the other three committees all include planning in their work. There is increasingly less board participation and it wasn't clear that we really need this committee any longer. It had led the process drafting the Renewal Plan, and it has orchestrated the annual retreats. But the former was nearly complete and the latter could be undertaken by other committees. Ms. Greff said she would hold on this discussion item until the Annual Meeting, which would take place immediately following the regular July meeting.

8. OTHER BUSINESS
Mr. Solo announced the next Partnership Meeting would be July 23.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION
None.

10. ADJOURNMENT
As there was no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director