MINUTES
Downtown Development Authority Meeting
Wednesday, September 6, 2000

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

Time: The Chair, Ron Dankert, called the meeting to order at 12:12 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Rob Aldrich, Fred Beal, Neal Berlin, Ron Dankert, Dave DeVarti, Dave Fritz, Bob Gillett, Leah Gunn, Karl Pohrt
Absent: Maria Harshe, Lorri Sipes, Skip Ungrodt
Staff Susan Pollay, Executive Director
Present: Sarah Armstrong, DDA
Joe Morehouse, Fiscal and Administrative Manager
Audience: Peter Bilakos, Property Owner, Ann Street at Fourth Avenue
Herb David, Herb David Guitar Studio
Ray Detter, Citizens Advisory Council
Bob Frazier, National Garages, Inc.
Bob Henderson, Citizens Advisory Council
Adrian Iraola, City of Ann Arbor, Engineering Division
Donna Johnson, City Planning Department
Cathy O’Donnell, Ann Arbor News
Peter Pollack, Pollack Design

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Aldrich moved and Ms. Gunn seconded the approval of the August 2, 2000 meeting minutes.
A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Aldrich, Beal, Berlin, Dankert, DeVarti, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn, Pohrt
NAYS: None
Absent: Harshe, Sipes, Ungrodt
The motion carried

3. CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

Last night the Citizens Council had its first meeting of the fall season. Our agenda was packed, as yours is packed today, with discussion of exciting developments in the downtown. We can't remember a time when the DDA was called upon to provide more vision and to take more important actions to creatively shape the future of our downtown. We admire the way this board is responding to the need for leadership and we are committed to working with you to assure the future success of the downtown.

As downtown residents the Citizens Advisory Council has a special focus and a clearly defined perspective. We believe an enlarged and enhanced downtown residential environment and a strong pedestrian orientation are the key elements that will provide the downtown with continued vitality, a strong identity and success. The economic success of downtown businesses is an essential part of this residential and pedestrian mix. It is with this focus and perspective--always guided by the Downtown and Central area plans--that we look at all the specific issues with which you are currently dealing.

Our support of increased intensity of use on downtown development sites, as well as our encouragement of mixed use projects, two way streets and parks and greenspace, are all expressions of our commitment to improving the amount of downtown housing and the quality of the pedestrian environment. We hope that your RFQ for the First and Washington site will lead to the building of a mixed-use structure that includes housing, retail and adequate parking as a part of a development that creatively relates the entire block. We still hope that any parking structure built on the First and William site will be carefully related to a vision of future housing either on that site or on the nearby Kline's Lot and the YMCA sites. We believe future developments on the Kleinschmidt Insurance site, on the bus station site, the Brown Block, the Library Lot and on Fifth and Huron...
should all include residential units. We strongly support high-density development of the Olga and NBD sites in the State street area with a large residential component.

Our commitment to downtown housing also includes our support for a downtown homeless shelter. As you know, the Citizens Council has devoted a lot of time and effort to make sure that any Washtenaw County plans for a downtown homeless shelter were the best we could help to make them. Many of us are still concerned about the consequences of the consolidation and centralization of all services in one location. It has been very important to us that plans take into consideration the impact of the shelter upon the downtown and nearby residential neighborhoods as well as the needs of the homeless. My report to you last month indicated that we were fairly hopeful regarding what we thought were the commitments we had received from the County and supporters of the shelter proposal. Two weeks ago, however, the Citizens Council joined many others in recommending that the Ann Arbor Planning Commission not approve plans for the shelter. It should not be passed on for City Council approval as long as the Planning Department continues to believe that “insufficient information has been provided to staff to determine if City requirements for public utilities, storm water detention, floodplain impact and erosion control have been satisfied.” Throughout ten months of discussions the Ann Arbor community was repeatedly assured that the shelter could not be built on the Huron Street floodplain site. If it cannot be built on that site, we strongly oppose the extension of shelter plans to include other properties to the east which were not included in the plans we have helped shape. We particularly do not want the acquisition of the Ellmann property which would encourage what might be a mushrooming negative impact of the shelter even before it was built. The Ellmann property, which currently supports a successful downtown business, should not appear as an integral part of a final site plan for the proposed shelter.

4. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Herb David, owner of the Herb David Guitar Studio, addressed the Board about his concerns that Ann Arbor is losing its identity and is becoming just a part of Detroit. He said that we need to retain the great mix of services that people want they get downtown, and the need for the City to provide the infrastructure, including lighting, parking, and green space. He focused on Liberty Street where his business is located. Specifically he asked for a sign above the intersection of Liberty and Fifth streets defining the left turn and through lanes. His second concern was the preservation of parking at the Library Lot.

Peter Bilakos, who along with his sisters owns property on the Northeast corner of Ann Street and Fourth Avenue spoke about his project converting the property into affordable apartments. He said he was seeking DDA financial support for the sidewalk improvements needed in front of the site, as he had made sidewalk modifications to bring them up to ADA code per the City, but had then received a second response from a different department at the City who wished to see a different modification. Ms. Pollay asked Mr. Bilakos to provide the DDA with a written proposal so that his request could be referred to the DDA Capital Improvements Committee for discussion and review.

Bob Henderson a resident at Courthouse Square addressed the Board about the state of the sidewalks in downtown, particularly on Fourth Avenue at Ann Street and in front of the Courthouse Square Apartments on S. Fourth Avenue. Mr. Henderson said that the Performance Network sidewalk repairs have made it easier to traverse those sidewalks, unlike the work that was done at N. Fourth Avenue at Ann Street, which made it very difficult to walk along that sidewalk. Mr. Henderson also asked for information about the discussions between the DDA and First Centrum Corporation per their request for funding support for the Courthouse Square Apartment building.

5. NEW BUSINESS

None

6. OLD BUSINESS

None
7. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Aldrich reviewed the July financial statements and responded to questions. He reported that five parking operators had attended the DDA facility walkthrough on August 31, 2000. He said that on September 22 there will be a meeting to review bids and on October 11 there will be interviews with selected candidates. All DDA members were welcome to attend these sessions.

Mr. Aldrich said that a request had been received from the Washtenaw Development Council asking DDA involvement in a project involving Acuson Corporation, which is a manufacturer of high tech ultrasound equipment, based in California with a small office in Ann Arbor. The company was considering options to relocate its primary offices between two sites in the Ann Arbor area (and one in Pennsylvania) and would be concerned about the location of parking if the downtown location is selected. Mr. Aldrich stated that there would be some real benefits to having such a company in the DDA district. Ms. Pollay said that there was a meeting later that afternoon between Acuson and Mr. Dankert and herself to discuss further details.

Mr. Aldrich said that the DDA has not been formally approached about the YMCA site and that the Board should wait until the DDA is formally approached with a proposal before it commits itself to involvement in any potential portion of this project. Mr. Dankert wanted clarification that in the discussions between AATA and the City that Ms. Pollay would be representing the DDA only. Mr. Berlin said this was so. Mr. Beal asked if AATA had looked at other possible sites as a true transit center that could incorporate the Greyhound busses and possibly Amtrak. Mr. Gillett questioned whether the DDA wanted a larger transit center in the downtown, as it would bring noise and fumes.

PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

Mr. Gillett reported that the Planning Commission had responded to the DDA resolution on exploring density guidelines, and that he felt their response had been positive.

Mr. Dankert said that the Committee had sent a letter of support for a proposed development on Thayer Street next to the Bell Tower Hotel.

Mr. Gillett said that the Committee met with Mr. Bob Solomon of the First Centrum Corporations concerning a request for either a grant or a “soft loan” of $450,000 from the DDA and the City Housing Policy Board to repair the roof, windows, elevator and electrical systems of Courthouse Square Apartments. The Housing Policy Board will have a recommendation at their next meeting to give First Centrum a low interest loan in the amount of $136,000 to repair the roof, windows and electrical system and that an additional $65,000 would be lent if other funding could be found to repair the elevators. Mr. Gillett said that the DDA would probably be asked to contribute some of these matching funds.

Ms. Pollay reported on the status of the RFQ for the First and Washington site. She stated that the revised document would be ready for review by the Committee at its next meeting and the final draft would be provided to the DDA at the October meeting.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Mr. Beal moved and Ms. Gunn seconded the following resolution:

RESOLUTION SELECTING THE DESIGN CONSULTANTS FOR THE STATE STREET AREA PROJECT

Whereas, DDA Plan includes the objective to undertake improvements to existing downtown streets and public utilities in order to stimulate new private investment in the area;
Whereas, The DDA determined that it would undertake improvements within the State Street Area and began by commissioning a comprehensive study from the University of Michigan, which generated a great deal of information about the area including an Urban Design Workbook;

Whereas, The next step was the selection of a consultant team to oversee State Street Area Project design;

Whereas, Over forty Requests for Qualifications’ were distributed, and seven complete proposals were received and reviewed by a panel including DDA members and the City Building Department Director;

Whereas, Four groups were interviewed by this panel over two days;

Whereas, After much consideration, this panel recommends to the DDA that the project team of Sasaki Associates Inc., Pollack Design Associates, Washtenaw Engineering Co. Inc., and Neil Adams Inc. be selected;

Whereas, The project team set forward a total estimated fee to provide schematic and conceptual design for the State Street Area project as $228,604.00, which will include all professional fees, land-based detail site survey, and reimbursable expenses;

RESOLVED, The DDA shall approve the selection of Sasaki Associates Inc., Pollack Design Associates, Washtenaw Engineering Co. Inc., and Neil Adams Inc. as the project team overseeing the design of the State Street Area Project, with a not to exceed project design cost of $228,604.00.

Mr. Aldrich asked about the Sasaki Associates, Inc. and Peter Pollack responded that he and Sasaki had a long standing relationship and that they were a larger firm with very deep resources. Mr. Gillette said that while there are four firms listed the contract is with one, Pollack Design.

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

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

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE INTERIM REPAIRS AT THE FOURTH & WILLIAM PARKING STRUCTURE

Whereas, The DDA authorized general repairs, deck coating, lighting, new parking office and restroom, and miscellaneous architectural improvements for the Fourth & William Parking Structure at its August 2, 2000 meeting;

Whereas, These repairs will not begin until spring 2001;

Whereas, The Construction Committee seeks to minimize corrosion and deterioration at the structure until such time as they can be addressed next spring;

Whereas, This would involve spot repairs at open slab delaminations, installation of joint sealants in limited locations, and removal of loose ceiling/beam/joist concrete;

Whereas, Carl Walker Inc. has provided an estimate of $50,000 for these repairs;
Resolved, The DDA shall authorize $50,000 for interim repairs to the Fourth & William parking structure.

Mr. Beal informed the Board that while there are plans underway to do a major renovation at Fourth and Williams, these repairs need to be done before winter to minimize further deterioration.

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

Mr. Beal presented computer-generated pictures of the Fourth and Williams structures with a proposed eighth floor. He said that upon further research, the DDA had received a revised cost estimate to construct the eighth floor and that this estimate had increased to $3.5 million, and at more than $28,000 per space this would make the additional floor a less attractive option than it had first appeared.

Mr. Aldrich asked that there be some aesthetic improvements on the lower, pedestrian level of the Fourth and Williams structure when repairs are conducted. Mr. Beal stated that the designer is working on items that would improve the street level. Mr. Aldrich also stated that the facility is the most profitable structure and deserved to be upgraded.

Adrian Iraola reported that a scope of services has been developed for the Fourth Avenue streetscape improvements.

PLANNING COMMITTEE
Mr. Aldrich moved and Ms. Gunn seconded the following resolution:

RESOLUTION TO AWARD CHALLENGE GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT BICYCLE PROMOTION RESEARCH

Whereas, The DDA Plan directs the DDA to provide for bicycle parking facilities and other alternative transportation options downtown;

Whereas, Dr. Jonathan Levine, Associate Professor and Coordinator of Doctoral Studies at the University of Michigan has proposed research to study successful experiences of bicycle-use promotion throughout the U.S. in an effort to determine whether and how these lessons could be adapted to Washtenaw County;

Whereas, Dr. Levine has secured funding from the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA), the University of Michigan (UM), and the Washtenaw Drain Commissioner;

Whereas, Dr. Levine has asked for the balance of funding from the DDA in the amount of $5,000;

Whereas, Whereas the DDA recognizes the role of the City of Ann Arbor Bicycle Coordinating Committee (BCC) in efforts such as this, and wishes to participate in partnership with the BCC, in addition to the AATA, UM, and the County; and

Whereas, The DDA wishes to address those issues that will be called out in this study as barriers to bicycle usage;

RESOLVED, That the DDA will provide $2,500 in funding for this research program if the City of Ann Arbor matches these funds through its BCC;
RESOLVED, That if matching funds can be secured through the BCC, the DDA will provide an additional $2,500 toward the cost of implementing programs identified by the study as being needed to encourage increased bicycle usage.

A vote on the motion showed:

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

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

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY RESTORE TWO-WAY TRAFFIC IN THE STATE STREET AREA

Whereas, The DDA has committed itself to a streetscape improvement project in the State Street Area and in anticipation of this project, the DDA commissioned an area study from the University of Michigan, including an assessment of its current and potential customer base, its urban design strengths and weaknesses, and the public policy issues that affect the area, in hopes of understanding the basis upon which future streetscape design decisions might be based;

Whereas, Extensive data collection led the UM study team to put forward the recommendation that the City modify its pattern of one-block, one-way streets in the State Street area, specifically restoring two-way traffic along S. State Street, E. Liberty, N. University, Thompson, and Maynard Streets;

Whereas, Restoring two-way traffic patterns along these streets would enable visitors, customers, and others to more readily enter and navigate the area, making it more attractive as a shopping and residential district;

Whereas, Restoring two-way traffic patterns would provide better linkages between the State Street area and other sectors of the University and community, making the area more accessible for alternate transit options, and would strengthen the pedestrian use of the area, as vehicular traffic speeds would be moderated;

Whereas, In a July 8, 1999 resolution the DDA asked City Council to consider the UM recommendation, and to modify the street pattern following a period of public input;

Whereas, City Council accepted this recommendation, and directed City staff to undertake an analysis, to determine the impacts of such a change;

Whereas, This study has been completed and it has been determined that some on-street parking and loading zones would need to be relocated, and that there are some cost factors associated with this change including the need to resignalize the area particularly in the State and Liberty Street areas;

Whereas, Local media has featured information on the issue and a public meeting was held at the Michigan Theater to elicit community input;

RESOLVED, The DDA endorses the UM recommendation that two-way traffic be restored on S. State Street, E. Liberty, N. University, Thompson, and Maynard Streets in the State Street area;
RESOLVED, The DDA recommends that the City make these changes with the highest priority given to N. University, Maynard, and Thompson Streets, and a secondary priority given to S. State Street and E. Liberty Street;

RESOLVED, The DDA recommends that the City work with the State Street Area Association, University of Michigan, and other area stakeholders to determine alternate locations for parking spaces and loading zones if displaced by these changes;

RESOLVED, The DDA recommend that the physical reconstruction needed to implement these changes be timed to coincide with the pedestrian improvements construction project scheduled tentatively in Spring 2001.

Mr. Pohrt stated that the City-sponsored Tetra Tech study only considered such negative factors as how much gas would be utilized while waiting at traffic lights, but didn’t consider the gasoline utilized while driving circuitously through the one-way maze. Other positive factors that were not considered included potential retail and other economic impacts gained through improved access to the area. Members of the Board discussed the cost of installing new signage if two-way traffic was restored, and whether the DDA should offer to pay or whether the City should be asked to contribute this cost as a contribution toward the State Street Improvements. This question was not resolved.

A vote on the motion showed:
AYES: Aldrich, Beal, Berlin, Dankert, Fritz, Gillett, Gunn, Pohrt
NAYS: DeVarti
Absent: Harshe, Sipes, Ungrodt

The motion passed.

As Ms. Sipes was absent, Ms. Pollay reviewed upcoming meetings of interest to the Board, as follows:

October 4, 2000, 3pm-5pm  Walter Kulash presentation at Michigan Theater
October 5, 2000, 8am-1pm  Working together to rewrite the DDA Plan, DDA office
December 6, 2000, 12noon-6pm  Fall Retreat and regular December meeting

Ms. Pollay said the Planning Committee would meet soon to formulate plans for the October 5th and December 6th sessions, and would communicate details as they developed.

8. Other DDA Business
None

9. Adjournment
As there was no further discussion, upon motion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Pollay, Executive Director