MINUTES

Downtown Development Authority Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 1997

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

Time: The Chair, Karl Pohrt, called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

1. Roll Call

   Present: Neal Berlin, David Fritz, Bob Gates, Leah Gunn, Maria Harshe, Karl Pohrt, Deanna Relyea, Ed Shaffran, Lorri Sipes, Skip Ungrodt

   Absent: Dave DeVarti, Bob Gillett

   Staff
   Present: Susan Pollay, Executive Director

   Audience: Joe Arcure, Citizen's Advisory Council
             Ray Dettler, Citizen's Advisory Council
             Donna Johnson, Planning Department
             Andrew Kinchen, National Garages

2. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Gunn made a motion, and Mr. Shaffran seconded, that the Board meeting minutes dated September 11, 1997 be approved.

A vote on the motion showed:

   AYES: Berlin, Fritz, Gates, Gunn, Harshe, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffran, Sipes, Ungrodt
   NAYS: None
   Absent: DeVarti, Gillett

The motion carried.

Mr. DeVarti and Mr. Gillett enter.
Last night the Citizens Advisory Council continued to work on development of our Goals and Objectives Statement for Public Safety in the Downtown. This is the last of our revised goals statements, and we hope to have it in your hands by next month. Last week you should have received a copy of our Goals Statement for Transportation and Traffic Management in the Downtown. We hope you have taken the time to read it carefully. Like all our goals statements, it is based upon our particular commitment to the downtown as a residential and pedestrian environment supportive of a broad spectrum of housing and retail opportunities. Like all our goals statements—housing, parking, pedestrian improvements, public art, historic preservation, and now public safety, our views on transportation issues are also our attempt to specifically relate these goals to the objectives of the Downtown Plan of 1988 and the Central Area Plan of 1992. Both of these plans were approved by the Planning Commission and the Downtown Development Authority, and adopted by City Council, as the official policy guides for planning and development in the DDA district.

The Citizens Advisory Council is pleased that copies of the Final Report Summary of the Ann Arbor Downtown Plan will be circulated to all members of the DDA Board before your October 30th retreat. They are also pleased that Leah Gunn and Neal Berlin will be dealing with the question, "How can the DDA support the Downtown Plan?" as part of their preparation for discussion at your retreat. At the Citizens Council meeting last night I asked members what their priorities were in relation to what they might like to come out of the DDA retreat. Their answer was that the most important thing that can come out of the DDA retreat was a reaffirmation of this body's commitment to the Downtown and Central Area Plans. These are not "pie in the sky" or outdated plans. They are very specific and very current plans that should provide us all with a common focus with which to address present and future downtown issues and development. They tell us why we should not cooperate with Mr. Stegeman in his desire to tear down an historic structure on the corner of Forest and Hill for temporary commercial parking. They tell us why we should not put parking in the first floor level of Courthouse Square. They advise us on the design of the two new parking structures we are now committed to build. The Citizens Council hopes that everyone will carefully read the Summary of the Downtown Plan before the October 30th retreat. We know that some members have already read not only the complete Downtown Plan but also the complete Central Area Plan and that they were impressed and inspired. I hope we all come away from the DDA with a common commitment and focus that is also equally impressive and inspiring. The Citizens Council is committed to cooperation with the DDA in all your goals for downtown development. We would be glad to give any and all of you additional copies of our goals and objectives statements if they might be helpful in your task.
On a related matter, the Citizens Council would like me to ask you again to work closely with Mr. John Stegeman on the possible development of a public-private housing and parking structure in the South University area. We recognize, as many of you do, that there are too many problems to overcome to expect that his earlier plan for a combined development of housing on Willard and Church is going to become a reality sooner or later. However, that does not keep the DDA from working with Mr. Stegeman on a joint effort to develop the property he owns on Forest and Washtenaw. A combined housing-parking development there would be in the best interests of the South University area as well as the entire downtown. The BRW, Inc. Report that you had prepared for you in July of this year recommended a new structure in the S. U. Area, but stated: “Reconstruction of a new structure on the existing Forest Street structure site is not recommended to avoid eliminating all parking in this area for approximately a one-year construction period. In addition, the Forest and Washtenaw site appears to have better regional connections with access to Washtenaw Avenue.” (p. 14) We might add that it is also within the DDA area. Captured funds from the construction of a joint public private effort at parking and housing, and perhaps other multiple use, would flow back to the DDA for other developments in the downtown. It could even be called S. University Place. The existing site of the Forest Street structure could then be sold to a housing developer who could bring additional residents and parking space to the area.

Finally, the Citizens Council took note of the letter in your packet from Mr. Bob Salomon, Vice President of the First Centrum Corporation, asking for your help in making Courthouse Square a success. Although the Citizens Council supports any efforts for pedestrian improvements in the area that would benefit that project as well as the downtown, many of our members felt that other requests by Mr. Salomon dealt with internal problems with Courthouse Square and were not the responsibility of the DDA. However, Courthouse Square is having problems, and we should help where we can if it fits into our commitments to housing and development of parking alternative for office workers in the downtown. Last night Courthouse Square residents asked me to repeat our request of last week. Courthouse Square needs your support to succeed. Downtown residents need your support. You are adding 100 more spaces to the Fourth and Washington structure. We believe that a major portion of those new spaces should be allocated to permit parking for present and future downtown residents in the nearby area—at whatever price the structure demands—on a first come, first served basis. It is a wise policy that should be announced as a part of the programs that emerge from your upcoming retreat.

4. Audience Participation

None.
5. New Business

Chairperson Pohrt asked that election of new officers be held. He had enjoyed his year as Chair, and wished to share the excitement and challenges of the role with others. Ms. Gunn nominated Maria Harshe as Chair, Mr. Berlin seconded. A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Berlin, DeVarti, Fritz, Gates, Gillett, Gunn, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffer, Sipes, Ungrodt
NAYS: None
Absent: None
Abstain: Harshe

The motion carried.

Ms. Gunn nominated Skip Ungrodt as Vice Chair, Neal Berlin as Treasurer, and Susan Pollay as Secretary. A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Berlin, DeVarti, Fritz, Gates, Gillett, Gunn, Harshe, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffer, Sipes, Ungrodt
NAYS: None
Absent: None

The motion carried.

6. Subcommittee Reports

Executive Committee Report
Ms. Pollay reported that planning for the annual retreat is well underway. All DDA members have been asked to help prepare 10-15 minute group presentations on such topics as "Doing Business Downtown," "Residential Life Downtown," "Moving People From Here To There," and "Working With Other Governmental Agencies." Presentations are intended to be informative and interesting, and will be followed by a brief question and answer period. Various members will describe their work to that point to help clarify the purpose to the exercise.

Ungrodt asked if the retreat could be moved to a different location, as he has recently purchased the beautifully-restored Hoover Mansion at 2015 Washtenaw. After brief discussion, it was agreed to move the retreat site. Pollay reminded everyone that the meeting will take place from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m., with dinner to follow.
Pollay reported that the Planning Commission has invited the DDA to attend its work session, on October 14 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The agenda will include a discussion of possible RFP criteria for the sale of the City-owned land at Main and Packard.

Mr. Ungrodt leaves.

Parking Committee Report
Mr. Shaffran reported that waterproofing at the Ann & Ashley and Liberty Square parking structures has been delayed until next summer, as there aren’t sufficient parking spaces this fall for contract parking patrons displaced by repairs. AATA had agreed to provide a shuttle during repairs, and had also offered to provide marketing assistance to promote park & ride lot and other options. Many DDA members commented that AATA had "really stepped up to the plate" in their offer to assist patrons displaced by repairs.

It is anticipated that work can take place this winter for the First & Washington parking structure, and it is anticipated that repairs will set aside only portions of the facility at a time. Ms. Harshe asked that the Parking Committee meet soon to discuss the repair schedule in hopes that the Board can vote on a specific multi-year repair schedule.

Mr. Pohrt reported that the State Street Area Association has asked that the DDA consider adding more floors to the Liberty Square parking structure as well as a possible speed ramp, before beginning significant repairs to the Maynard structure. Mr. Shaffran commented that he believes the Liberty Square structure site might be too small for the construction of a speed ramp, and without it, adding additional floors to the structure might be inconvenient to patrons.

Mr. Shaffran reported that getting an architect aboard for the new Forest structure is among the DDA’s most important priorities. An effort will be made to “fast track” the project through the City, while also allowing adequate time for public input into the design. If the design can take place quickly, concrete could be precast off-site minimizing the amount of the time the area would be without a parking structure. Mr. Pohrt reported that he and Pollay had met with Jack Stegeman and two other SUAA board members to discuss the development of a temporary surface parking lot for use when the structure is demolished in 1999.

Mr. Shaffran reported that next week, he, Ms. Sipes, and Ms. Pollay will participate in an eight-person City/DDA/citizen selection committee to interview architects for the new Fourth & Washington structure. Interviews will be conducted with Hobbs & Black, Mitchell & Mouat/Rich & Associates, Carl Luckenbach, and Albert Kahn. He also reported that at the most recent community meeting it was generally agreed that the current structure will not be imploded, rather more conventional methods will be
utilized to demolish it, including jack hammers and saw cutting. A second public meeting will be presented on October 28 at 7pm to describe the demolition process in more detail, including a proposed schedule.

Mr. Shaffran reported that the Committee has discussed non-construction issues, as well. The Committee recommended that businesses participating in the validation program should pre-pay for validation stamps unless their monthly use exceeds $150 and they will be asked to purchase a minimum of one sheet of stamps (50 stamps). The validation rate will be 50% off the lot rate of $0.80/hour, or $0.40/hour, and a maximum of four hours of free customer parking will be allowable. The Committee had also received a proposal from the potential new owners of 101 N. Main to extend their parking contract to 2009 and increase the number of permits. Both requests were denied.

Upon motion by Gunn, with support from Harshe, the Board voted on the Parking Committee recommendation to modify the validation program and deny the increase in parking permits to the owners of 101 N. Main. A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Berlin, DeVarti, Fritz, Gates, Gillett, Gunn, Harshe, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffran, Sipes
NAYS: None
Absent: Ungrodt

The motion carried.

Pollay reported that the Parking Committee has been asked by the four downtown merchant associations to be a part of a second printing of the downtown walking map. The piece has been widely distributed throughout the parking system on specially-designed map displays, and numerous pieces were distributed by hand at the time the Fourth & Washington parking structure was closed. The Committee has recommended payment of $3,000 toward reprinting the map.

Upon motion by Gunn, with support from Harshe, the board voted on the Parking Committee recommendation to provide $3,000 toward reprinting the downtown walking map. A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Berlin, DeVarti, Fritz, Gates, Gillett, Gunn, Harshe, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffran, Sipes
NAYS: None
Absent: Ungrodt

The motion carried.

Ms. Gunn leaves.
Mr. Shaffran reported that the Parking Committee has been informed by National Garages that the parking system loses approximately $80,000/year to handicapped parkers who were receiving free parking. Given that ADA requirements and State laws did not specify free parking for all handicapped parking patrons, the Parking Committee recommends that the DDA act to modify its policy regarding free parking. Jerry Lax will be contacted to determine if the City policy was based on the State law or on a Council ordinance, and if providing sixty days notice will be sufficient to change this policy. Mr. Gillett suggested that the memo to Council should indicate the DDA’s willingness to discuss this matter more fully if Council requests it.

Upon motion by Shaffran, with support from Gates, the Parking Committee recommendation to modify policies on free parking for handicap permit holders was voted on. A vote on the motion showed:

AYES: Berlin, DeVarti, Fritz, Gates, Gillett, Harshe, Pohrt, Relyea, Shaffran, Sipes
NAYS: None
Absent: Gunn, Ungrodt

The motion carried.

Mr. Gillett leaves.

Finance Committee Report
Mr. Gates reported that parking expense categories were up in July, and he will meet with Pollay to learn more about this. Otherwise, the financial statements appeared to be in good shape.

Pedestrian Improvements Committee Report
Mr. Fritz reported that the Committee has not met recently, and there have been no decisions about future projects.

Housing Committee Report
Mr. DeVarti reported that the Committee has not met recently, but a meeting has been scheduled with Bob Solomon, Executive Vice President of the first Centrum Corporation, to talk about ways in which the DDA might be able to assist Court House Square Apartments. This meeting will take place October 17 at 10am here in the DDA office. Also, he and Mr. Pohrt met recently and mutually decided that Mr. Pohrt will take over chairing the Housing Committee.

Public Relations Committee Report
Ms. Relyea reported that there have been some initial discussions over holiday promotions for the validation program, including newspaper ads and flyers.
7. Other DDA Business

Mr. Shaffran asked the Pedestrian Improvements Committee to consider a “buy-a-brick” program for the State Street Area renovations similar to the program run by the UM Athletic Department. Mr. DeVarti stated that he felt the DDA will need a full-time development staff person to properly orchestrate a program like this.

The Board took a moment and congratulated Karl Pohrt for his remarkable commitment and energy as Chair of the DDA during the past year. All applauded.

8. Adjournment

Upon motion by Shaffran, with support from Sipes, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Susan Pollay, Recording Secretary