

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council
Tuesday, February 4, 2020 7pm City Hall Basement

Attendance: Caroline Arcure, Joseph Arcure, Chuck Bultman, Chris Crockett, Jeff Crockett, Don Duquette, Joan French, Peter Honeyman, Steve Kaplan, John Kotarski, John Splitt

CAC Liaison: Ray Detter (Steve Kaplan reporting for CAC)

Guest: Susan Pollay/DDA

The first topic of the meeting was a report on the Garnett project. This PUD was resubmitted to the Planning Commission, and many CAC members support it because they believe it's a good project and well- designed. We talked about whether this was an example where zoning should be changed, or if it was better to pursue PUDs like this one because these projects bring more community benefits.

The group revisited our discussion about the proposed Historic Sound District ordinance, which would increase the acceptable noise level and extend the time when loud noise is permitted. To demonstrate what 85 decibels sounds like a boom box was played. It was deafening. The CAC represents downtown and near downtown residents and we believe that sound should be contained within entertainment venues, and not be allowed to impact nearby neighbors. We understand that City staff want new ordinance language that is more data driven, thus we ask the City to prove that 85 decibels is the existing sound level before proceeding. And we ask that the benchmark be whatever sound level where someone can sleep undisturbed in their apartment across the street. Ambient sound – e.g. ambulances - are expected downtown. But loud music playing for hours is different. There is technology that prevents light pollution; the City should investigate technology that prevents sound spillage.

Finally, the CAC also talked about the use of City parking lots for affordable housing. These lots have nearby constituencies who don't want the parking eliminated. But parking can't be looked at within a vacuum. Parking issues can be worked out and shouldn't be an obstacle to creating a substantial number of new downtown affordable housing units. Diversity is an important community value.