

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

Attendance: Caroline Arcure, Joseph Arcure, Chuck Bultman, John Chamberlin, Chris Crockett, Jeff Crockett, Don Duquette, Peter Honeyman, Steve Kaplan, Ethel Potts, John Splitt, Ilene Tyler, Norm Tyler

CAC Liaison: Ray Detter

Guest: Susan Pollay

Given that he was still healing from a car accident, Ray announced that Steve Kaplan has agreed to help lead the CAC. Steve lived downtown, and now lives just steps outside the DDA.

Norm Tyler was the featured speaker, and he gave an in-depth update on the Center of the City Taskforce. Having gathered public input they are now putting forward concepts for the public to respond to. All are invited to their next presentation on January 15th. Norm outlined various alternatives and CAC members had an excellent and engaged discussion about them. In particular the group discussed whether strategies for the full block should be considered or only ideas to use the top of the garage. No one is clear yet on what a “commons” is, what funding sources may be available, or what kinds of activities might take place. Their final report will go to City Council at the end of February. CAC members urged that the Taskforce should not give into the temptation to create a short-term answer with a narrow scope. Because so much around the garage is in flux, the CAC urged the Taskforce to think broadly and take time to arrive at concepts that will inspire us.

The group also talked about a proposed Historic Sound District. This would amend the existing noise ordinance, raising the acceptable level exponentially and extending the hours when noise is allowed. CAC members agreed that creating an Historic Sound District is an interesting concept, but there must be concern for the impacts on downtown and near downtown residents who are trying to sleep. This will be particularly challenging for residents in older buildings who are not able to mitigate noise impacts. We believe that sound from entertainment venues should be contained within buildings and not be allowed to spill out. There is room for compromise to modify this proposed amendment taking into account the needs of thousands of downtown residents.