

**Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council**

**Tuesday, June 2, 2020 7pm**

**ZOOM meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81774159817>**

Phone 877-853-5257 Meeting ID: 817 7415 9817 Password: 813525

Attendance: Caroline Arcure, Joseph Arcure, Chuck Bultman, John Chamberlin, Jeff Crockett, Don Duquette, Peter Honeyman, Steve Kaplan

CAC Liaison: Ray Detter

Guest: Susan Pollay

CAC members were asked to share their experience as downtown residents during the past months when downtown was effectively shut down due to the pandemic. They used phrases like “ghost town” and “nothing normal about it”, and also described how they were coping with being homebound using Zoom to connect to others and venturing out to parks where they could spend time outside. One CAC member said he and his wife had purchased a stack of gift cards to local businesses as a way to support them, knowing that this gesture might be risky if the business were to fail anyway.

Susan provided an update about downtown street closures to support physical distancing, noting that the initial areas will be smaller than the footprint approved by City Council. It was interesting to note that some businesses welcome the opportunity, while others don't support street closures because they've refocused their business to takeout/delivery.

The primary topic of the evening was examining possible changes the pandemic may bring to downtown. Some felt it may encourage people to value local businesses more deeply. Others acknowledged how much is now being purchased using Amazon, and local businesses will need to follow their lead and create a stronger on-line presence to provide greater convenience. We speculated the popularity of Zoom may encourage business owners to forego downtown office leases, but if so, their employees may increase their use of coffee shops so they can be near other people. One CAC member suggested architecture may change including discarding the “open floor” concept and returning to individual offices, and the construction of one-person bathrooms versus those that serve many people at a time. The success of Literati's Go Fund Me campaign suggested an opportunity for businesses to ask for community support through donations in addition to purchases. CAC members noted the temporary street closures may encourage more permanent street closures in the future.

We ended the meeting by talking about DDA project updates, and the latest news from the University of Michigan about holding classes on campus and whether UM football would be held this fall.