

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89236783899>

or by phone: 877-853-5257

Meeting ID: 892 3678 3899 Passcode: 952148

Attendance: Caroline Arcure, Joseph Arcure, John Chamberlin, Chris Crockett, Jeff Crockett, Peter Honeyman, Steve Kaplan, John Kotarski,

Guests: Susan Pollay, Alan Haber, Chris Grant

The meeting tonight was an opportunity to debrief about the City Council meeting last night, including sharing comments from the phone calls and emails sent from CAC participants to City Council members regarding their resolutions to dissolve the DDA.

The group noted that a complaint about the DDA is it is an unelected board directing the expenditure of public dollars. Yet it was also noted there are ample opportunities to weigh in on DDA planning and projects, as they make every effort to invite community involvement in their work, and they genuinely seek to listen to feedback and concerns. Ironically, the elected don't always make the same effort to be responsive. An example was that really important resolutions to dissolve the DDA were placed on the agenda two days before the meeting with no input or involvement ahead of time from members of the public including the CAC.

It was also noted that some people don't know what the DDA does – the message just isn't getting out there as widely as it could be. For instance, the DDA does an incredible job tackling infrastructure. A good example is the Liberty Square garage which already had concrete falling on cars ten years after it was constructed. DDA fixed it and all the other garages and turned a failed parking system into one that now nets big revenues to the city. The DDA is the City's Golden Goose. The City benefits from the DDA's producing golden eggs, so it should take care not to kill the goose in a short-sighted quest to dissolve the DDA so it can utilize the DDA's funds.

DDA works to make downtown successful. Downtown is similar to the lobby of a condominium building, as it benefits everyone. To help build awareness the group explored ideas like inviting City Council members to future CAC meetings, and expanding the CAC to include members who live outside downtown. These and other ideas will continue to be discussed at future meetings.

At the end of the meeting Susan shared updates, including logistics for upcoming public meetings to provide input into the development of strategies to construct affordable housing on several downtown parking lots.