

**Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council**

**Tuesday, December 1, 2020 ZOOM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83330687053>

By Phone: 888 475 4499

Meeting ID: 833 3068 7053 Passcode: 608494

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

Guests: Maura Thomson & Susan Pollay/DDA

Susan began the meeting by introducing her colleague Maura Thomson as the DDA's Interim DDA Director. Maura will serve in this role until the new Executive Director has been selected. Susan noted Maura's previous tenure as the former Executive Director for the Main St Area Association which helped her build extensive working relationships with City Councilmembers, and staff, plus she has a great deal of experience working for a board.

The group then talked about their experience as downtown residents living in the city center in the midst of a pandemic. The lack of people on the sidewalk is palpable and unnerving. The closure of Urban Outfitters was bemoaned, and there is fear that more retailers and restaurants may also soon shut their doors. Several CAC participants noted that they make a point to make their purchases from local businesses rather than from Amazon. Unfortunately, cold weather has now made sitting outside unpleasant, so food pickup is even more important. Maura said that a new red meter bag is being used for the parking spaces set aside for food pickup to help dissuade people from parking all day. She also noted that the downtown associations are working together to promote businesses during the holiday seasons, including ads in the A2Observer and on radio, and there is a new website [www.ShowYourLoveA2.org](http://www.ShowYourLoveA2.org) with lists of downtown businesses providing delivery and gift cards. Buying local also includes shopping at longtime community retailers located outside downtown such as Mast Shoes, which is known for providing excellent customer service.

Several people complemented the DDA's new improvements on First St, including the protected bikeway and the lovely new plaza at Liberty St. Maura let the group know that 1<sup>st</sup> St construction is being buttoned up for the winter and remaining work plus construction of the Ashley portion of the project will begin in the spring. Also beginning in the spring will be public input sessions for an upcoming State St project; she promised to ensure CAC members receive invitations to these meetings.

Susan shared that a couple interesting pilot projects are being discussed for the 415 W. Washington site; one would be a temporary walkway sponsored by the Treeline conservancy, the other might be a month-long performing arts series co-presented by the A2 Summer Festival and the Ark next June. There was group consensus that these pilot ideas were wonderful ideas worth supporting.

Finally, the group also talked briefly about the status of work toward developing affordable housing including the recent success of the affordable housing millage, as well as the status of work to assemble a report for the Healthy Streets pilots that were undertaken this summer. The DDA's efforts to encourage public input on all its projects was noted and appreciated.