



“CBD-Norhtown-Parking Task Force”

Seventeenth Meeting: Monday, April 14, 2008 @ 7:30 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Julie Crnovich, Chuck Foster,
Dave Friedman, Jeanie Janes, Jeff Keller,
Gary Peart, Ric Pena, and Karl Weber

Staff in Attendance: Timothy Scott, AICP, Community Development
Strategist

Opening Remarks

Chairman Friedman opened the meeting at 7:43 p.m. He mentioned to the group that members of the Beautification Task Force were in the Board Room presenting their progress to the Environment and Public Safety (EPS) Committee, and that if time permitted, they would stop by the Task Force’s meeting.

Chairman Friedman stated that the Task Force would review the draft report, receive a meeting update related to a performing arts center, and consider sample images for inclusion in the draft report.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Friedman asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the meetings of March 3, 2008 and March 31, 2008. Mr. Peart made a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Ms. Janes seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Review of Draft Final Report

Chairman Friedman passed out copies of the draft report that included the edits suggested by members to date. He informed the group that he had added an executive summary section but that the text reflected that which was contained in the body of the draft report.

Mr. Weber expressed his opinion that recommendations should lean toward preservation of existing character versus change based on purely economic arguments, characterizing these positions as optimal versus viable, respectively.

With respect to housing in the study area, Mr. Weber added that lifestyle/empty-nester housing would be okay in a location where similar units exist today, such as those units west of Grant Square, but that he would not recommend the development of such housing in completely new locations. Other members suggested that the development of additional residential units in and around the greater downtown area would be beneficial to the community given the potential economic benefit, the meeting of a need for such housing, and that any new buildings would have to be scaled appropriately, styled compatibly, and built with lasting quality.

Beyond potential housing in what was being referred to as buffer areas, the group then discussed ways to buffer existing residential housing from unpleasant aromas, excessive lighting, and non-residential structures. Mr. Scott mentioned the work of the Zoning Code Rewrite Task Force and the potential to include a robust landscape ordinance that could detail distance requirements and landscaping conditions in order to improve buffering between different zoning classifications.

After observations by Mr. Keller and Mr. Weber, the group suggested that an improved streetscape should be the extension of downtown elements into Northtown and along the Ogden Avenue Corridor but that lighting should be the only element used in the purely residential neighborhoods in between the CBD/Northtown and Ogden Avenue.

Mr. Pena inquired about recommendations related to the train platforms. Members of the group discussed the merits of extending platforms, creating a new shelter for commuters where one of adequate length does not exist today, and installing a pedestrian walkway on the north side of Hinsdale Avenue between Washington and Lincoln.

Mr. Peart recommended that the draft report reflect the group's earlier discussions and recommendations that future buildings in Northtown be oriented in a fashion like those of the Central Business District and that an east-west street or other street grid-extension be considered over time in order to make Northtown more downtown-like, should redevelopment be proposed during the long-term planning horizon that is the Task Force's charge.

Mr. Foster suggested that references to the water pipe in the planning assumptions section be clarified to the Flag Creek storm sewer.

Update of Meeting

Mr. Keller relayed to the group that he had met informally with the Salt Creek Ballet to gauge their interest in a performing arts center in Hinsdale. He shared that the idea was very well received by the Ballet and stated that while the troop can sell out 1,000-1,200 seats today, they would still be interested in a theater size of 600-800 seats.

Ms. Crnovich commented that the Ballet, in order to reach a broad audience and avoid cannibalizing other troops' audiences, currently performs regionally in venues such as the Paramount Theater in Aurora, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, and at theaters at Governors State University and College of DuPage. She added that the troop practices in Westmont in a renovated building whose original use was as a grocery store.

Mr. Peart suggested that caution be used in terms of catering to the troop's needs since the Task Force's idea for a performing arts center has been to accommodate several arts organizations. Ms. Crnovich echoed the sentiment.

Sample Images

Chairman Friedman passed out sheets of images so that members of the group could comment on whether or not individual shots would make for good references in the Task Force's report. Chairman Friedman requested that members write comments on their sheets.

Public Input Going Forward

Chairman Friedman again passed out a timeline to guide the group's effort to complete its work approximately with the conclusion of the academic year. In terms of public input, Chairman Friedman suggested the draft plan be posted on the Village's web site and that a town hall meeting be held. To get the word out to the public that a town hall meeting would be conducted, Ms. Crnovich suggested that a banner be placed at Burlington Park.

Next Meeting

Chairman Friedman announced that the next meeting of the Central Business District-Northtown-Parking Task Force would be held on Monday, April 28, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room (located in Memorial Hall, 19 East Chicago Avenue).

Mr. Keller made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Weber seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Scott, AICP