



“CBD-Northtown-Parking Task Force”

Eighteenth Meeting: Wednesday, May 28, 2008 @ 7:30 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Ardie Baroni, Julie Crnovich, Jean Follett, Dave Friedman, Jeanie Janes, Jeff Keller, Gary Peart, Eric Pitcher, and Karl Weber

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

Others in Attendance: Joe Ryne, Hinsdale resident and member of the Beautification Task Force and Bob Saigh, Hinsdale resident

Opening Remarks

Chairman Friedman opened the meeting at 7:38 p.m. He apologized for the amount of time that had elapsed since the last meeting was held and thanked members for attending the evening’s meeting on relatively short notice.

Chairman Friedman stated that for the evening’s meeting, the group would, among other things: receive a presentation of comments from a member of the Beautification Task Force; adopt minutes from its last meeting; review the most recent draft of the group’s recommendations; view new sample imagery for potential inclusion in the report; and schedule its future meetings.

Comments from Beautification Task Force

Attached to these minutes is a copy of the comments of the Beautification Task Force that were supplied to the CBD-Northtown-Parking Task Force members at the evening’s meetings. Mr. Ryne presented these comments and noted the opportunity to work cooperatively for the common good. To summarize, he stated that the Beautification Task Force’s three major points were: (1) retaining the current layout of the Memorial Building pathways; (2) retaining the existing masonry wall that separates Burlington Park from the parking area to the south; and (3) developing a palette of suitable materials for areas such as pathways.

Specifically to the grounds of the Memorial Building, Mr. Ryne stated that the Beautification Task Force would not support a plan that would insert a central staircase extending from the steps of the south entrance or create a formal performance space on the southern lawn. He cited that 53% of respondents to the Hinsdale 2025 survey question related to the grounds of the Memorial Building grounds marked “leave it alone.” Mr. Peart remarked that the idea in the draft report was not to develop typical stairs that might be intrusive but rather to create a terraced effect that could better link the Memorial Building’s grounds with Burlington Park and emphasize the north-south axis that runs through town (cupolas of the Memorial Building and Hinsdale Bank and Trust; orientation of Village Place).

The graphic of the historic landscape plan for the Memorial Building and Burlington Park was passed around for members to see. Ms. Crnovich commented that the original landscape plan should be restored. Mr. Keller referred to the graphic of the original plan and observed that the idea of a genuine village green appears to be central to the plan. He then asked his fellow members if consideration should be given to the larger idea of closing Chicago between Garfield and Washington to integrate the open spaces. Members were certainly interested although a couple of members expressed reservations given what appears to be a dependency on that stretch of roadway by today’s motorists.

Mr. Scott summarized the comments. Given the team approach and the parallel tracks of the two Task Forces, he suggested that members of the CBD-Northtown-Parking Task Force consider framing their recommendation in a manner consistent with a typical request for proposals whereby the Village would clearly outline a scope and establish its expectations for a master plan for the grounds of the Memorial Building. As part of the request, consideration for historical sensitivity and restoration would be underscored (e.g., the elliptical sweep of the pathways of the Memorial Building and Burlington Park). Additional items requested could include specifics regarding integration of the open spaces on either side of Chicago Avenue and contextual sensitivity to the improved streetscape of downtown (that residents appear to admire). While an open process, Mr. Scott named several of Chicago’s preeminent landscape architects who might be among the firms to submit proposals. Mr. Ryne confirmed that the intention of the Beautification Task Force was to recommend the idea of a request for proposals.

Trustee Follett echoed the thoughts and suggested that an expanded streetscape that reflects the established character of the central business district would have as its objectives the following: knit Northtown with Downtown; provide a more pedestrian friendly atmosphere; improve circulation; and coordinate with the aforementioned master plan for the grounds of the Memorial Building.

Regarding the stone wall that separates the parking aisle from Burlington Park, Mr. Ryne spoke of the wall's great patina and that efforts could be made to both fix the cap and perhaps implement some measure(s) to keep motorists from continuing to damage it. Mr. Peart mentioned the declining condition of the wall and the thought that a new wall of similar material and general appearance, constructed a few feet into the Park and slightly taller, would provide for better separation from the parking aisle and trains, be less likely to be damaged, and offer an improved aesthetic. In terms of establishing a palette of landscape and hardscape materials, Mr. Ryne informed the CBD-Northtown-Parking Task Force members that the Beautification Task Force was working toward that objective.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Friedman asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of April 14, 2008. Mr. Keller made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Peart seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. Copies of minutes from previous meetings that were not yet formally adopted were passed out to members of the group for approval at the Task Force's next meeting.

Review of Draft Final Report

Chairman Friedman and members of the Task Force elected to review the draft report page-by-page. Mr. Weber questioned the idea of achieving group consensus given that there is not complete agreement on a recommendation-by-recommendation basis. Mr. Pitcher used a Supreme Court analogy whereby the majority and minority opinions are revealed and offered up the technique for the group's consideration. Trustee Follett noted the repetitive and exhaustive nature of the topics discussed over the group's many meetings and that the process has produced a great deal of agreement on the issues. Ms. Crnovich said that while quoted a lot, the Hinsdale 2025 survey results seem to have been used selectively in the report. Members agreed that the recommendations of the report should cite applicable survey data universally in order to ensure that a fair and balanced approach has been followed throughout. Trustee Follett added that she liked the candid, sincere, and straightforward tone of the draft. Mr. Keller commented that after the group's final report is presented publicly, the text should remain in tact but that it should include the synthesized public comments received in the form of an attached appendix. Members present agreed with that approach.

Theater Field Trip

For those who had not heard his previous summary, Mr. Keller was asked to provide a brief recap of his visit to North Central College's performing arts center. He informed the group of some of the theater's specifications and noted that the funding for the approximately \$40 million multi-purpose facility came from private

contributions including an enabling donation of \$10 million from one party. Mr. Keller added that an old church was renovated as part of the overall project and that it is intended to be used as a venue for Shakespearean theatre. He stated that education-related functions are considered first priority followed by community-related events.

Sample Images

Chairman Friedman passed out two additional sheets of images so that members of the group could comment on whether or not the six photos would make for good references in the Task Force's report. Photos revealed elements of building scale, architectural design, detailing, materials, outdoor dining, pedestrian realm, and streetscape amenities. Universally, members commented that the photos were representative of desirable character.

Next Meeting

Chairman Friedman announced that the next meeting of the Central Business District-Northtown-Parking Task Force would be held on Monday, June 16, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room (located in Memorial Hall, 19 East Chicago Avenue).

Town Hall Meeting

Chairman Friedman stated that a town hall meeting would be held on Thursday, June 26, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall. The meeting is set to include a presentation of the Task Force's report recommendations followed by a question-and-answer session. Mr. Scott said that the Village would consider announcing the town hall meeting in a number of ways, including: e-Hinsdale, the Village's website, a slide on cable access Channel 6, local newspaper advertising, and a banner in Burlington Park.

Adjournment

Ms. Baroni made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Janes seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Scott, AICP