

**AURORA DOWNTOWN
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minutes

March 5, 2015 – 8:00 A.M. – 5th Floor Conference Room B – City Hall

Members Present: Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank), Kim Granholm (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Benjie Hughes (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), John Nachtrieb (at large), and Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

Members Absent (Excused): Jimi Allen (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Aurora Public Library)

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Bill Wiet (COA), Gina Moga (COA), Ed Sieben (COA), Joe Hopp (COA), John Curley (COA), Cadence Peterson (Seize the Future), and Hector Ochoa (Old Second Bank), Karina Garcia (ARHCC)

Meeting Highlights

Call to Order and Chair's Remarks

Kim Granholm called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Karen Kramford made a motion to approve the February 5, 2015 minutes. This was seconded by Doug Cheatham. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham

Doug Cheatham said we are still working the kinks out with the new accountant, so I don't have statements this morning, but to be fair, I only got the last of the information to him for the February statements yesterday, so that's not really his fault. We do need to work with him a little bit on the format that we expect to see moving forward and so we'll need to sit down and do that. Other than that, I think it is going to be a smooth process.

Karen Kramford made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Benjie Hughes seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Old Business

- a. Waubensee Parking Discussion

Kim Granholm said I did want to put this on the agenda, at least for the Executive Committee. I didn't want to put it on the full Board because I wasn't sure of the conversation and I didn't want to take up too much of the meeting with that. I did pass it out. I know Dan had a brief statement about what it was about. Dan essentially came to me the night before the meeting last time and asked that Aurora Downtown take a position on his stance with the parking and Waubensee and the city. I'm going to give you what I think we should do and then we can discuss it. I want to get your feedback and I will support the Board in whatever we decide after this. What I would like to do is come up with something and then just report it to the full Board unless you care to send it as well. Bob and I sat down. I also want to read a statement from Lulu that she sent and get some feedback as well. Let me read Lulu's statement first and then I'll give you my recommendation. So this is Lulu Blacksmith and says "Waubensee Community College was a full participant in the 2008 Parking Study conducted by the City of Aurora and provided the information requested of it in a full and transparent way for analysis by the City of Aurora's parking consultant. Subsequent to the completion of the parking study, Waubensee entered into an agreement with the City of Aurora to accommodate all of the college's long-term parking demand off the city streets. Waubensee paid the city \$400,000 for 360 spaces in Lot W and for 105 spaces for faculty and staff in the Tivoli Parking Deck. Additionally, Waubensee strongly supported the city's enforcement of parking restrictions downtown to ensure that long-term parkers are directed to appropriate locations away from the core of the business district and that violators are ticketed. As a member of the Aurora Downtown community, Waubensee Community College has a direct interest in seeing downtown Aurora thrive with vibrant business and strong institutions. Again, we are committed to continuing to work with the City of Aurora to accommodate the college's long-term parking demand off the city streets." She asked if I would please share that with the Board. So my recommendation, and Bob's as well, is that at this time Aurora Downtown not take a position on this. Although Dan is a valued Board member, his efforts are independent and are not supported or directed by Aurora Downtown. Our Parking Committee will continue to work with the city, Waubensee, and business and property owners to develop and maintain the best parking environment for all involved. That's how Bob and I feel we should approach this.

It was the general consensus of the Executive Committee that this was the stance they should take.

John Nachtrieb said I would make a motion that we accept the response by Aurora Downtown. Doug Cheatham seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

b. Riverwalk Updates Discussion

Kim Granholm said I have asked Mike Saville, who is the Alderman of the 6th Ward, and he has come to us and I passed out the letter last time to ask for our support in getting the Riverwalk up to date.

Bob Reuland said the Riverwalk is not complete. Mike Saville is sort of the father of the Riverwalk and so he is continuing to push for some sort of closure. The request that he has made to us is for completing additional items that are already on the Riverwalk that need attention; railings, bricks and that sort of thing. I think he and Joe Hopp did a walk around and came up

with a list of around \$400,000 worth of improvements that need to be done. What he wants us to do is support that. He's not asking us for money. He knows we have no money, but he asked for our support of him so that he can go to City Council and try to move the Riverwalk issues along.

Kim Granholm said if we decided to support him, I'd like to hear his presentation and hear exactly what he is asking for and how much he wants us to support him for, but we have to keep in mind that this all comes from the TIF District and so if we want other things downtown, other things that might be more of our vision and our focus, that this is going to take away from that, so I just wanted you to keep that in mind when he does come to speak.

Further discussion followed on the Riverwalk improvements.

New Business

a. Existing Building Codes Seminar Update – John Curley

Kim Granholm said this morning we have John Curley from the City of Aurora.

John Curley said the City Council accepted the decision package that stemmed from a conversation of a sub-committee of Aurora Downtown about trying to utilize more of the tools that are available in the Building Codes. Aurora actually has a very strong strength in using these tools and we've been frustrated by the opportunities that we have for coming on to a project so late that the opportunity really doesn't make sense any more. So the Council accepted a decision package to leave a little money for us in 2015 to make the presentation to design professionals and I wanted to do a couple of presentations I thought I'd kind of go through what the plans are for this year. The handout I gave you is entirely residential in nature, but it exactly describes the process and half of the procedures available for commercial. What I'm envisioning are two presentations; one geared more for property owners and stakeholders in downtown. These tools apply everywhere, but obviously there are a lot of downtown buildings that would benefit from this. I think it would be an hour or two hours long. It would describe the prescriptive tiered compliance like the IRC. Essentially half of the existing building code is trying to make the compliance requirements for existing buildings proportional to the scope of the work that is desired by the owner, meaning that you could actually pair back the project into smaller chunks and then only have to deal with things in smaller pieces, which is one of the large problems we have in downtown. An all or nothing approach is actually the reason why the existing building codes exist in the first place. So this is one of the tiered compliance provisions that are an opportunity to teach everyone about. The other is a performance stage compliance, which is Chapter 34. We've helped about 60 buildings. We've used the Chapter 34 tool quite a bit to demonstrate existing buildings downtown that don't need to be sprinklered per se, but it is more of a performance based approach. We've been busy trying to highlight the historical information on codes on our website. We'll continue to keep doing that. The reason that's important is you need to understand kind of where we came from in the past. It is important to have a perspective on what actually should have been or would have been accepted in a building versus what was done without any approvals before and really be able to differentiate between the two and then try and make a decision on whether something should be left in place or not. The other thing that is really important and really the reason why I thought it was important to

even ask for this money in the first place was we need willing design professionals to do this. I'd like to have a meeting for design professionals. The reason we have the money is I'd like to bring in a consultant so we can give them CEU (Continuing Education Units) and attract a larger crowd. With that I'd be able to report back to anyone who is interested. That's what I envision talking about in the smaller meeting, maybe 1 or 2 hours. In the full day one it will be a lot of nuts and bolts. In addition to the above, we highlight all those items above in more detail. Again, we'll generate a list of design professionals who are using it and have been trained on it. We also will be highlighting the fact that we have been taking no charge permits for this process on the front end, so in other words, the owner will have the comfort of knowing the determination that's been made without the full set of documents being done that's written and recorded so that you have some comfort moving forward that that's actually the determination that's been made. We are also contemplating requiring design professionals to use the tiers that are there. On a commercial remodeling, if it comes in with those tiers identified on the front end, like the State of Wisconsin requires, that will also help us in contemplating change in our intake forms so that they have to be designated whether or not you've used the full blown tool or not. It will force you to at least learn how to figure out which of the 4 tiers you are in so that, again, we can be the most help to everyone. That's kind of the goal of the program that I had suggested and we've been granted some money to work on this year. I also want to highlight a couple of things. We are working on some contractor licensing changes this year as well. We've created something we call the Star Contractor Program. Essentially we are creating a lower 50% tier and a higher 50% tier based upon how they pass their inspections. I'll be asking for a decision package to get the online tool for our contractor licensing program so that we can then publish that information to everyone. We also hoping to convince some more contractors to volunteer at some of our low mod housing non-profits, so there is a small discount we are discussing for licensing for that. Information about the seminars I'm hopeful you would all find helpful and will help redevelopment of our existing buildings.

Further discussion followed on the building code updates.

Consultant Report

Bob Reuland said well things are looking up. We have a number of businesses that are applying for our Rent Subsidy Program. I just received another one in this morning's mail. We are getting activity on both the Rent Subsidy Program and also the Business Retention Program. So things are moving along there. Neighborhood Services has reached out to Kim and myself to meet on Friday regarding a Façade Program that they are thinking of doing. That's a real opportunity. I have a conflict of interest and I can't be there, but I'll be there in spirit.

Committee Updates

John Nachtrieb said the BAR Committee is meeting with 2 of the 3 existing Rent Subsidy awardees tomorrow. We are meeting with them quarterly. The committee as a whole will meet next Thursday.

Kim Granholm said I also want to note that at the last BAR Committee meeting I attended as well, we are looking into maybe some more details in the program. A couple of the renters weren't open quite yet and we've been paying the rent for several months, so we had to send out a letter that said we will not be paying your rent if you are not open by a certain time, so we'll be looking into probably putting some in guidelines in place for that too because we're not going to pay the rent while they are not open.

Joe Hopp said the Landscaping Committee had a meeting last week with Debbie. She is getting her final preparations together for planting the flowers.

Karen Kramford said the Legislative Committee did meet in February and there are 2 points that we are going to focus on. One is the Economic Benefit Study of Aurora Downtown Arts and Entertainment District of extended liquor licenses until 4:00 a.m. We've reviewed the document. We have 2 members who are continuing to work on it with a consultant. We may or may not see the final format this month. I'm guessing probably June before we get it to you. The second is in our continuing effort to build close working relationships, we have invited Dave Hulsberg of Seize the Future to our next meeting to sit down for 30 minutes and focus primarily on 3 things. What's his public/private partnership? What does that mean? How does that work? How is it different from the past? How can Aurora Downtown work more closely with Seize the Future? Dave has accepted and we look forward to seeing him. We have invited the Chairs from the Business Attraction and Retention, Parking and Marketing, and also the Chair of the Board to attend that meeting. Our meeting is going to be on March 13th at noon at 52-54 W. Downer Place.

Benjie Hughes said the Marketing Committee met last Thursday. We decide in regard to First Fridays to go ahead and extend the trolley. It seemed to be pretty successful last month that Aurora Downtown paid for, so we are going to do that at all future First Fridays, at least up through the end of the summer through August. We are talking about also over the summer adding a host to the trolley because there is an empty chair and a microphone up front so we'd love to have somebody do sort of a downtown Aurora tour while you are riding the trolley and tell funny stories and point out sites and make announcements. We have Kimber working on coming up with a way to sort of start measuring and tracking First Fridays so we know how many were there and who were they demographically. We are going to do a brainstorm session between this month and next month to just come up with new names for this organization. We are sort of joking about is Aurora Downtown the right name? Is the lady on the pole the right logo? I've asked everybody to just bring their brainstorm list of names for discussion at next month's meeting.

City of Aurora Updates

Gina Moga said I received 2 new special event permits this week for downtown events, things that have never happened before. Both of them are very exciting. I'm in full parade mode right now. I'm working on Memorial Day and 4th of July like crazy. I know you have some plans on redoing the float. I wanted to sit down with you guys and see what you have budgeted and what you were planning to do.

Kim Granholm said can you tell us what the events are that you have planned for?

Gina Moga said one of them is Riverfront Playhouse is going to do Shakespeare on the mall on July 25th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. They are going to do Twelfth Night right out here on the mall. Then the people that organize the Bar Art as part of Frist Fridays at the Roundhouse want to do the bazaar on Water Street on July 18th. It would from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. It is an all day art festival and it is purely art. There is no music. There is no food. It is just artists. They are looking to get 50 artists. The Porta Rican Festival is going on during the Shakespeare on the mall and I there is, I think it is just a Downtown Alive, at RiverEdge during the art show.

Announcements

Hector Ochoa said I just wanted to thank Aurora Downtown again. I'm looking forward to tomorrow night for First Friday. I also hear Usamba is opening tomorrow so I'm looking forward to that. I just want to remind everybody that on Saturday, April 25th, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. is El Dia De Los Ninos outdoor festival on the corner of Spring Street and Lincoln. It is a free festival for all the kids.

Adjourn

Benjie Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.