



# City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council  
Chambers  
44 East Downer Place  
Aurora, Illinois 60505  
[www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org)

## FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday  
April 07, 2021  
6:00 PM

---

**THIS FOXWALK OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING WILL  
BE VIEWABLE VIA  
REMOTE ACCESS ONLINE AT:  
[www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org) or [www.facebook.org/cityofaurora](https://www.facebook.org/cityofaurora)**

**TO JOIN THIS MEETING FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC COMMENT VIA TELEPHONE:  
PHONE NUMBER: +1 312 626 6799  
MEETING ID: 880 6196 3647**

**THOSE WISHING TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT MUST PRE-REGISTER WITH THE  
ZONING AND PLANNING DIVISION NO LATER THAN 3:00 P.M. ON April 7, 2021 – VIA  
EMAIL: [COAPLANNING@AURORA-IL.ORG](mailto:COAPLANNING@AURORA-IL.ORG) OR VOICE MAIL (630) 256-3080.  
SPEAKERS MUST PROVIDE THEIR NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER FROM WHICH THE  
MEETING WILL BE ACCESSED, AND TOPIC OF THEIR COMMENT. THE PUBLIC IS  
ADVISED THAT ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND PARTICIPANT NAMES MAY BE  
VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.**

### CALL TO ORDER

*Chairman Zine called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and Jeff Palmquist stated the following:*

*On June 26, 2020, the Governor of Illinois issued a statewide disaster declaration related to public health concerns. As head of this body, I have determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting otherwise conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act is neither practical nor prudent because of the disaster. This meeting will be conducted by Internet teleconference without the physical presence of a quorum. Prior to the commencement of this meeting, all members of this body were verified and can see and hear one another.*

*I further find that the physical presence of members of the public is not feasible at this meeting due to the disaster, and more specifically, the practical difficulties associated with accommodating the public in an accessible hygienic location that allows for appropriate social distancing. Alternative arrangements have been made to allow the public to contemporaneously hear all discussion and roll call votes live on the City's official website, on Facebook, and via Zoom teleconference. Notice of these*

*arrangements have been given in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The public may address this body consistent with the rules previously adopted and recorded and as adapted by Mayoral order.*

*Jill Morgan, Planner, is physically present at our regular meeting location as those terms are defined by Resolution R20-124.*

*All votes shall be conducted by roll call and a verbatim record of this meeting shall be made and maintained in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.*

## **ROLL CALL**

*The following Committee members were present: Fernando Castrejon, Karen Christensen, Fawn Clarke-Peterson, Brian Failing, Jeff Palmquist and Charlie Zine. Clara Diaz was absent.*

## **OTHERS PRESENT**

*The following staff members were present: Jill Morgan, Ed Sieben and Sue Jackson.*

*Others Present: None.*

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**21-0185**

Approval of the minutes of the FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee meeting on March 3, 2021.

**A motion was made by Mr. Palmquist, seconded by Mr. Failing, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried.**

## **COA REPORT**

[21-0245](#)

FoxWalk Certificate of Appropriateness Report (COA's Approved by Staff - March 1, 2021-March 31, 2021)

*There were no questions on the COA report.*

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **AGENDA**

[21-0244](#)

Design Review Committee Training

*Mrs. Morgan said I will share my screen. As Charlie mentioned, the committee has been requesting some training about kind how all the different planning efforts throughout the year for the downtown relate to the FoxWalk and the DRC and how the two are connected and how they work together with all the different planning efforts. I kind of started with a summary of all the downtown planning efforts, a very general one from the early years, and getting a little more specific for some of the later planning*

efforts. I tried to kind of summarize them and then talk about where there are some similarities between that and the FoxWalk and the FoxWalk guidelines, where there are differences and how they kind of all work together. The early planning efforts, here are some downtown planning efforts from the 70's, 80's and 90's. Just kind of a refresher, Comprehensive Plans and Master Plans are kind of meant to be updated every 10 to 20 years, so they're not, as you see a lot of them through the years, it's not actually being redundant, we are just trying to kind of update them. The thought is to build on some of the previous plans, so you don't just throw them away. You kind of build on them. Hopefully some of the ideas from plans, some of the recommendations, have accomplished in that 10-20 years and won't need to be included in the new planning efforts. Also some of the visions may have changed in the past 10-15 years, so that would have to be updated. Then there are some concepts that are really kind of mentioned in almost every planning effort because even if you improve on it and you work toward it, they really can always be better improved and some of those you will see throughout, like marketing, business attraction, economic development, kind of are touched in every planning effort. So some of the previous plans recommend civic development, market rate housing, access improvements, pedestrian improvements, essential organizations, central allocation of funds, business growth and property improvements, capital improvement projects, attract downtown anchors and complimentary businesses, marketing plan, create a safe, secure, clean, and hospitable environment. Many of those recommendations were accomplished in the 1990's to early 2000's. Again, some of them are ongoing, like attracting downtown businesses, creating that safe environment and façade improvements. I listed some of kind of the accomplishments. I know we could go on for a lot longer than on what was accomplished in our downtown. Thankfully, we've done a lot. I know Charlie and Karen and all of you have been around longer than I and could add a ton to these. Some of the ones that Ed and I were thinking about were some of the great façade improvements where you have a lot of buildings wrapped and these pictures kind of show some of the before and after. The Farmers Market was mentioned in them. That's still thriving. That central downtown organization kind of has been created. Allocation of funds, we created some TIF districts, some downtown grants and in the past (inaudible) in on those 90's and early 2000's. Some major capital improvements, we had some bridge restorations happening, the streetlights came in, just the creation of the overlay and the guidelines. Building redevelopment, some great ones are the GAR, and the Fire Museum. So just a lot has happened that came from those earlier downtown planning efforts. The next kind of planning efforts really happened, in 2006 through 2008 a lot seemed to be happening in Aurora for downtown planning efforts.

We have the 2006 Seize the Future Master Plan. This was meant to guide development for 10 years. The area, as you can see in the map, encompasses more than just like the FoxWalk, or even more than just like a core downtown. It encompasses some of the neighborhoods as well. This plan is broken into chapters. The main goal was outlined as wanting to create a thriving, hospitable, mixed urban, live-work-learn-shop-play centerpiece that unites and energizes the city. Many of the recommendations envisioned outlined in the Master Plan did come to fruition, such as reintroducing 2 way traffic, strengthening public security programs, upgrading technology infrastructure, completion of the Paramount Theater expansion, finalizing of the library and Sci-Tech expansions, the new pedestrian bridge, that's a more recent one, the Riverview Park, we call it RiverEdge, Waubesa Community College, a move happened on the rehab of those buildings and that rehab, again, was a more recent effort of that accomplishment. Some of those ongoing ones that we see throughout are recruiting developers, encourage redevelopment of buildings and improving

*marketing you'll see come up in our later, more recent planning efforts. Residential redevelopment and the gateways kind of comes up again in later ones as well.*

*The next one is the Aurora Riverfront Vision Plan. This was also in 2006. This was meant to serve as a Master Plan kind of for the Riverfront. The plan covers less than all the downtown of the previous Seize the Future and goes along the river a long way north and south from what we consider the downtown core. The vision of the plan was to identify the riverfront as an economic engine of the city's future, to restore the health of the river, to return the river to the heart of the city, to maximize tax base, facilitate job growth and enhance access and recreational use of open space along the river. Some of the guiding principles of the plan do overlap with the principal of the FoxWalk. The FoxWalk guidelines, which were done later, kind of takes these general ideas and builds on them in more detail and how to really accomplish them. For instance, it talks about cutting edge architecture that is environmentally friendly, but also compatible with the historic buildings and the FoxWalk guidelines go into very specifics on how that can be accomplished. Buildings should create a front façade to the river. The guidelines really emphasize that as well. It talks about incorporating street furniture, decorative lighting, which the FoxWalk guidelines really get specific on how that should look in order to keep our historic character of the downtown. Then there are other principles, obviously, that are unrelated to the built environment, including increasing public open space, public access, view of the river, conservation techniques should be implemented, create a transition from the river to the neighborhoods and use that as needed open space, higher density housing, more density. Another point mentioned was no surface parking along the river, which the FoxWalk also takes about. Many of the concepts also recommended in the plan gets into detailed scenarios. This one shows one example of, it kind of actually does a layout of some areas and how that can look, especially with some residential housing adjacent to the river.*

*The revised FoxWalk/Riverwalk Master Plan in 2007. Prior to this, there were a lot of sections of the Riverwalk that were completed, Fountain Plaza, the staircases on New York Street, the enclosed walkway that crosses the west channel just north of the Galena and Rotary Park. In 2007, the federal and state regulatory permits expired, so that kind of led to the need for a revised Riverwalk plan, hence this plan. The objectives of the Master Plan are to provide, at a minimum, at least one primary connection to the Stolp Island along the east and west channel. Previous efforts talked about two. This one is let's focus on getting the one done as well as facilitate water access to the river. It also mentions the ADA and the laws trying to make sure we have ADA accessibility. The plan does acknowledge some overlap with another plan that was done the same year, the RiverEdge Park Master Plan that talks about trying to make sure there is a coordinated effort. This plan focused specifically on creating the Riverwalk. It has maps of different areas. This is just one example that identifies specific areas for bike path ramps, walking paths, canoeing, crossings, and dam modification. It also talks about specific recommendations for sites and what can be done, like the Waubensee Community College, Swimming Stone Plaza, and the Fox River Trail Gap. The plan recommends some of the same guidelines of the Riverfront Vision Plan concerning buildings and streetscapes, but again, that is kind of more outlined in the later FoxWalk guidelines. The Master Plan for the RiverEdge Park focused on promoting the park, but also as having it as a catalyst to unify the surrounding neighborhoods and the economic impact the park would have on surrounding areas. It does talk about promoting the performance venue, but to also improve the surrounding neighborhoods, so not just the neighborhoods that are adjacent to it, but it also talks about having that bridge and how the neighborhoods*

*adjacent on the other side of the river could be impacted.*

*The most recent planning effort was the Master Plan for Downtown Aurora. It began in 2015 and was completed in 2017. I know a lot of you were probably involved with all these planning efforts. CMAP helped Aurora create this Master Plan. The Master Plan is an overall vision for the downtown that includes the general idea of promoting historic buildings, as well as a lot of others. As you can see, again, on the map, a slightly different area that this plan talks about. The goal of the plan was to build on those previous efforts and I kind of mentioned some of what the previous efforts were, so build upon that and then to continue forward with the context of Aurora's historic downtown to create a more livable, walkable, vibrant core. The plan is divided into 6 areas, the downtown experience, revitalizing the downtown economy, activating the downtown through arts and culture, the heart of the downtown: the Fox River, transportation and building the downtown community. So how the recommendations of the plan are carried out still have to adhere to the previous planning efforts, and specifically have to adhere to the FoxWalk guidelines. For instance, many of the recommendations included promoting historic buildings, but how to officially accomplish that has to adhere to our guidelines. The Master Plan called for better signage and that led to the city doing a signage plan and trying to show people where the parking is. If you remember, I think it was last year, the signs that came before the DRC to approve. The plan does also reference the Riverwalk Master Plan and does reiterate some of the same recommendations of that plan, such as ecological design, restorations, de-modifications, and infrastructure improvements. But the Riverwalk Master Plan still kind of holds because it has focus on specific areas, what to do in specific areas to make the Riverwalk connection, while the downtown plan, this downtown plan, also talks about beyond the Riverwalk and focusing on things like education, events, signage, and collaboration. Another recommendation is public art installation that the plan focused on, strategic location, and how that's implemented. Again, it has to adhere to the FoxWalk mural guidelines, and we've seen a lot of those come through the past year, the past couple of years, as well as either city staff approving the FCOA's like the little musical sculpture that was installed at Mundy Park. Other recommendations, obviously, have no direct impact to really historic buildings or anything the FoxWalk guidelines really are involved with, like control and techniques, growing businesses, technical assistance, streamlining development processes and increasing engagement. There are areas, like transportation, which generally don't overlap, but sometimes do, like better signage, Riverwalk accessibility, ADA. The Public Works Department works closely with staff any time there are any type of transportation/public works projects that kind of grew out from the FoxWalk, or from the Master Plans, that impact the FoxWalk. We had to help encourage residential. We did some additional parking, if you recall, and that came before the DRC. So that's really all I have. I kind of tried to summarize all the planning efforts and how they relate. Hopefully that is kind of what you guys were looking at. This doesn't have to be the only training session. I think we did one in 2019 as well, so we can keep doing these, adding additional ideas if there is anything more the DRC wants. Are there any questions? Feel free to add to anything. All of you were heavily involved in all these planning projects as well.*

*Chairman Zine said I'll start out by saying having been doing this, I know Karen and Jeff have been involved in this for decades as well, it really is amazing to see the transformation that's happened so far, the signage, the standardization or all the street furniture, like the lampposts and the benches and the trash receptacles. There is a lot of stuff that we can see that are the results of this and all these plans, I think, worked. I know a lot of people complain about all we do is plan, but you have to make the*

*plans and then the staff works on implementing the plans and the Council approves them. So I think all this has been working very well. The one thing I do want to point out though is a few years ago, St. Charles did a Riverfront Redevelopment project and I was up there at one of the ribbon cuttings and it was exactly what they told us we could not do in Aurora when our first 10 year Riverfront plan expired and it was up for renewal. And what they said we couldn't do were all the hard edges, which is why today Waubonsee has all that green earth and natural plantings, which I do like. I saw Pat Kelsey at the St. Charles meeting. I said Pat, this all the stuff they told us we couldn't do in Aurora and St. Charles just did it. He told me they changed all that. They went back to the old way. So I think one of the big things that we need to look at from this point going forward is what were those changes and how can we recognize those changes and move forward. So I've walked the Riverfront with Dave Dibo from the Mayor's Office of Economic Development, with Trevor Dick from Planning and I see many improvements that are possible now if we are going back to that old plan where you can have hard concrete edges in the urban area. I think that's something that we can look at to continue to expand the Riverwalk. My biggest example is on the east bank, if you are coming from RiverEdge Park, you come down the bike trail and you hit the staircase at New York Street. That's okay for pedestrians. It does not work well for bicyclists, but if you look at the New York Street bridge, that very first bay on the east bank, instead of having arches like they have in the rest of this segment, it is a squared opening so you could actually go underneath the New York Street bridge along that wall behind Tavern on Broadway and then hook up again right around Rotary Plaza and then you would have a non-stop continuation of the Park District's Riverfront trail on the east side that goes right through downtown, and you can do that now because of those revisions back to the old plan because that would involve hard edges and concrete. I talked to Trevor about that and I think that's something that if we're talking about planning we need to keep that in mind that this reversion back to the old rules gives us opportunities that were taken away from us.*

*Mr. Sieben said Charlie, how recent was that St. Charles?*

*Chairman Zine said that's a good question Ed. I don't recall. I was trying to remember if it was before or after 2017 when we did the last update. I think it was after 2017. You can't quote me on that, but when I went there, I was amazed. They literally put concrete in the river and made a concrete wall and did everything that was in our original Riverwalk plan that the Army Corp denied and the 10 year plan was up and it was time to renew it and that's why we shifted to these soft edges, and that's why the Waubonsee Riverfront looks the way it looks now. I don't mind the Waubonsee Riverfront. I'm happy with that, but for other areas like on the east trail, getting that through downtown, you're not going to do that without using concrete and hard edges. Now with RiverEdge Park and 8,000 people in the park all trying to exit at the same time, I think the idea of not having to cross New York Street, but to be able to walk under the bridge and get all the way to downtown restaurants and bars and where you parked your car, I think that is a very important thing that we really have the opportunity now to plan for.*

*Mr. Sieben said that's a real good point.*

*Chairman Zine said I think the other big change that I've seen is I've always been a dam removal advocate, and obviously in Aurora the dam removal is complicated by the presence of the casino, but the one big game changer in the last several years has been the Fox Metro, the Sanitary District. The only way they can achieve significant improvements in water quality is by dam removal. Since they came to that resolution,*

*Batavia is approved to remove their dam, North Aurora is approved to be removed, Montgomery is much more open than they have been in past. They've always wanted to do a whitewater park there, but they never wanted to pay for it. They wanted the state to pay for it, which the state made clear they will not. So I think part of the planning going forward, we have to look and start planning now on what downtown Aurora looks like if a) the casino moves and b) we take out the 2 dams at New York Street. That really creates a lot of planning potential that could be very opportune for us. So those are the 2 big changes that I would like to see us focus on.*

*Mr. Sieben said okay. Sorry Karen, go ahead.*

*Mrs. Christensen said no, finish this discussion because I have a question that's more specific to the guidelines than to the Master Plans.*

*Mr. Sieben said I was going to bring up another issue, so go ahead Karen.*

*Mrs. Christensen said I think this was very helpful and I think particularly for people like for Fernando and Fawn and Brian who weren't necessarily part of all these planning efforts. They didn't participate in the charrettes or any of that, but my question is I want to make sure, particularly because there's been discussion among business owners about their understanding of the guidelines themselves, the Ordinance, and I know that Jill is going to do a presentation to Aurora Downtown, I believe on April 12th, to businessowners that are interested, but I'm curious because the last time the guidelines were updated, I believe was 2008, and I'm wondering if there's any effort or intention to try to go through the guidelines and look at an updated version. I mean we are looking at a document now that is 13 years old. Maybe it's time to update the guidelines. What brings to my mind, a specific example, I drove by Eltiro yesterday and they have vinyl lettering covering all their windows. That's a violation of the guidelines. It looks really nice. It is really cool, but it is a complete violation of the guidelines in terms of window signage. Jill, I noticed on one of the COA's that you approved by staff that you were restricting the use of vinyl letters. I'm not trying to be a harpie and say why are we not enforcing the guidelines. My question is if the guidelines need to be revisited, let's do it. If there are different design aesthetics and philosophies that are prevalent now, then it was always intended to be a dynamic document. I don't think it was ever intended, with the exception of trying to do as much historic preservation and repurposing of buildings, but I don't think necessarily that the signage or any of those other provisions were intended to just go on forever without any changes.*

*Mrs. Morgan said I agree with you Karen. I think it might be a good time to take a look at it. I know we kind of did that with our residential historic district guidelines and did some updates. It doesn't have to even be a complete like an overhaul, which takes a lot of effort to create a whole new document, but it could be something as simple as doing like text amendments to the current document to update it to make sure it's current, it's what we're really wanting. I think there have been some changes kind of through the years of what really is acceptable and to try to codify some of those variations either that come before the FoxWalk that we keep approving or that staff hasn't really been enforcing because there's nothing wrong them, but it doesn't technically adhere to the guidelines.*

*Mrs. Christensen said well and, you know, a really good case in point is what happened with the approval of the kiosks, the electronic kiosks. I felt like we went through some interesting machinations in order to say that those were okay. I'm not say that they're*

*not okay. I'm just saying they clearly point to a need to revise the guidelines.*

*Mr. Sieben said we agree Karen. We are going to be bringing some things through very shortly. Do you want to touch on that?*

*Mrs. Morgan said so we are going to bring an update through and that focuses more on, I don't want you thinking that those updates really are against what the current guidelines are, but try to like encourage more...*

*Chairman Zine said flexibility?*

*Mrs. Morgan said for more flexibility. That's something that Trevor is trying to bring through. I think next month he is going to bring it through. I think that's definitely something we should look at and maybe instead piecemealing it, maybe it would be better to try to look at it and take some time and do a comprehensive review because you have to take it all the way through City Council. I think trying to get them all together in one lump sum to take through would probably be best.*

*Mrs. Christensen said and you have the benefit of a City Council that has changed dramatically since 2008. When you do the presentation and talk about the need to make revisions and update them, I think you can make a strong argument that you're trying to keep in concert with the plans that were adopted in 2006 with the 2017 Master Plan and also with the aesthetic. There is an overall aesthetic that seems to be coming forward that you want to be coherent with that. I also would recommend, if you're going to undertake it, and I would be in favor of a complete overhaul, if you're going to do that that you also make it a document that is, even though it is an Ordinance, that it is more user friendly in terms of language because I'm guessing that some of the enforcement issues may come from the fact that the language is not always clear.*

*Mr. Sieben said well there's certain technical things that have happened too over the years Karen. Like you said with the window signage, there's some really neat screening technology and things like that that can be very attractive and still allow for what we are trying to achieve. I think that's an example of something. Karen, when you last updated it, you said 13 years ago, I like working with you because you acknowledge it is a changing document. Occasionally, you get some people that think this should never change, but that's not the point. I know you made some nice changes back in 2008, recommend and then they were approved, but that's something that we need to keep focusing on and keep adapting.*

*Chairman Zine said I think one of the areas that we should look at is the prohibition on painting on brick that has not been previously been painted because we've approved 3 projects that painted on brick. I'm not saying those are right or wrong, but that's 3 exceptions to the rule, so is it time to re-look at the rule?*

*Mr. Sieben said yes, good point.*

*Mrs. Christensen said yes, and that also relates to the changes in technology. The products that are available and all of that. I believe that even, and I give credit to the fact that an architectural firm as influential as Perkins and Will was brought in in 1993 when that document was first crafted, clearly the city was looking to an organization that had a lot of experience and was really plugged into what was going on nationally and internationally. In my opinion, it would be worthy to try to bring in, and this is not*

*to diminish the knowledge base or the value of staff, but I think it would be very worthwhile to bring in an architectural firm as a consultant to really look at it and try to insert their opinions in terms of the vision. I think that's an important thing to remember. If you go back and read the whole document, it really was an interesting example of a vision that then tried to make itself an Ordinance. Am I making sense? It was like how do we take this vision and then turn it into a regulatory document. I think the experience of the last several years of planning has kept that vision piece going, but not necessarily made the regulatory language coherent in the same way. I know it costs money to bring in consultants, but I also know, I can't believe that staff has a lot of extra time, you know, just to say okay I'm just going to do a deep dive on this and not pay attention to the day to day responsibilities that I have to handle. I also think it always helps to look at what other communities have done that's to be admired.*

*Mrs. Morgan said I would agree with you Karen. I think if you are doing a comprehensive update, that's nice to bring in people from the outside to get a different perspective.*

*Chairman Zine said I'll add too that one of the impacts of COVID was the recognition that we didn't have a lot of public spaces in the downtown so that people could get out of their houses and dine or walk. We've approved the changes at Beilman Park and now the changes on Pinney Street, but I'm getting all these newsletters. There are cities that are doing tremendous things, like eliminating 75 miles of city streets and converting them to pedestrian ways. I'm not saying we should do that, but I'm saying the spectrum of what is being done is pretty big and an outside consultant could bring a lot of those ideas to us and we could pick and choose what might work because we started doing the parklet before the COVID started. Remember that? We gave the downtown businesses permission to take a parking spot and making it a dining area or anything and that was before COVID. Then COVID hit. The restaurants are dying. They need to have outside dining. People need to go outside. I think those two things coincide. We've got a great opportunity here to update our thinking on that and we should look and see what everybody else is doing.*

*Mr. Sieben said any other comments? I just wanted to, I started working with Karen 21 years ago here, and the picture of the Merchant's National Bank, the façade change, now that was, I think, done before the early 2000's, but there was a lot of other buildings on Broadway especially that several of them were done in the early 2000's. The old Jerry Sears Cleaners at New York and Broadway was a good example. That had the Blatz ghost sign under it. I wish that could have stayed. Just the look of Broadway downtown is just night and day from what it was even 20 or so years ago Karen and your credit of that. We had the exterior and interior grant program that you administered for the 10 years I was here, I think before that even. I briefly carried on with it until the funds ran out of it, but there was a lot of good work done with that.*

*Mrs. Christensen said and I appreciate that. We were very fortunate. We had money and we had staff. Lots of magical things can happen.*

*Mr. Sieben said when you think of the staff, it was pretty amazing.*

*Mrs. Christensen said yes. This is not to say that Jill is not wonderful. Jill is wonderful.*

*Chairman Zine said one of the other things I've observed is since COVID is that the*

*Metra passenger traffic is way down. I don't know if that is temporary, but you keep reading these articles about how companies are now going to look at continuing work from home, if not full time, at least part time. So the question in my mind is what does that do for our parking lots on the west bank of the river that are on the river? We approved those as temporary parking lots. Everybody forgets temporary and they've been there for 20 years now or whatever, but if there is a permanent change in commuting patterns, do we need those? Now they were certainly great for getting us a bridge over the river for bikes and pedestrians, but it is riverfront and we acknowledge that we have a ban on riverfront parking. I think that's one of the areas that we can look at.*

*Mr. Sieben said good point.*

*Mrs. Christensen said well I think that amplifies the notion that I'm hearing, which is let's not do this piecemeal and let's really take a step back and look at what is more than just best practices. What are innovative practices? What are people that are really thinking about the future imagining? Remember too that when the guidelines were initially adopted, they were in response to the building of the casino. It was a reactive document. It wasn't a proactive document. So now we have an opportunity to be proactive. Charlie, even though the Corp of Engineers rules may have changed in terms of soft versus hard along the riverfront, I also feel that we've done a lot to enhance the beauty and the open space that's available at the riverfront by not necessarily doing what the original FoxWalk Plan was. Again, we should be looking to the future. We should be imagining what's possible and not trying to take things back to 1925 or 1955 or whatever year one might choose.*

*Chairman Zine said I agree 100% Karen. The only reason I bring it up is because I didn't hear about this revision back to the old rules through any official channels. I heard about it in a Village, 4 Villages up stream. We wrote our guidelines because of that ruling and the biggest obstacle I see right now on the Riverwalk downtown is the getting the Riverwalk on the east bank through downtown. That has implications for the Transportation Center, RiverEdge Park and the Shodeen property because if the Shodeen property ever gets developed by Shodeen or somebody else, walk to train is going to be a big component of that, and walking along the river is going to be a much more pleasant experience than walking along the highway and so I think it needs to be looked at. Not the whole plan. I'm not saying we go all back to hard edges, but if it is a tool that's available and if it fits a specific area like under New York Street, then I think we should consider it.*

*Mr. Sieben said I totally agree.*

*Mrs. Christensen said I agree. Jeff, you could probably tell us how many iterations of rules from the Corp of Engineers you've lived through in the course of your career.*

*Mr. Palmquist said probably at least 3. Charlie is right, that pendulum has swung back. When I first started out at the Park District 24 years ago, that's really when the soft edge started to emerge because the Army Corp really required best practices, all kinds of soft erosion control and did not allow the hard edge and that over time when they realized that in these places where the bodies of water may be more channelized, the velocity, the softer edges, just weren't robust enough and they weren't working so certainly not every context, but I think that Charlie is correct that the heart of the downtown where you have buildings literally arising from the water that they would permit, allow some of the hard edge to get the Riverwalk in there.*

*Chairman Zine said and I do want to point out that one of the best examples of hard edges is the Park District's rebuilding of the Veteran's Island Beach that the kayakers use. There was a concrete base that's completely hidden now with limestone and natural appearing surfaces. It prevents the scouring of the winter ice from ripping out all of the sand. That is a phenomenal project and it's almost invisible. I watched them build it. I saw how they did it and just is a testimony how you can use these rules, like hard edges, to our advantage and still have this natural appearance. That's a great project Jeff.*

*Mr. Palmquist said thanks. That was where we tried to provide enough control, or strength, to withstand the river because as you know, there is so much bounce, there is so much velocity. It's crazy when it can go from 800 cubic feet per second, which is decent flow, to 3,000 in a few hours and what that does to shoreline and erosion and it's nice that the Corp recognizes that and is coming around the other way a little bit. I'm appreciating where these select areas need something more hard to withstand that.*

*Chairman Zine said and I do think if the dams come out, there's going to be a major change in the shorelines. There may not be water between Blues Island and RiverEdge Park. That may be a wetland, dry much of the time. That's why I think we really need to start looking at that now so that if and when that dam comes out, we've already studied this and we've already looked at possibilities and we know what the impact is going to be because the trend is definitely moving towards that.*

*Mrs. Morgan said we do have Planning Commission at 7:00, so we do need to wrap up for Ed and Sue to jump on over there. Are there any other thoughts, questions or comments?*

*Chairman Zine said I want to thank you for doing this, for the newer members especially. They get a sense of what's going on in the back story and how this thing has evolved. The old timers here remember when there were 27 different light standards downtown and now every time I see these black lampposts, I love that. By the way, let's get rid of the ones on the Riverwalk on the west bank by the new bridge. We still have those old horrible 1970's square lamps. When you've been here for three decades watching this, you really can see the improvements and it is tremendous. We've gone a long way and done a great job.*

*Mr. Sieben said thanks Charlies. Karen, did you have anything else?*

*Mrs. Christensen said no. Thank you.*

*Mr. Failing said I'm just going to say I really appreciated this. Coming from a background of urban studies and undergrad, I've read some of these plans in my time both on this committee and working in Aurora, but it is just nice to see how they all tie together and how they all build on each other. Thank you for putting that together for us.*

*Mr. Sieben said Jill put it together. A great job by Jill.*

*Mr. Failing said thank you Jill.*

*Mrs. Clarke-Peterson said I wanted to say that I'm kind of excited to hear everyone talk about revamping these rules and everything because it sounds like the group*

*that's here right now is looking to be more flexible, I think, and say why not, why can't we do this, rather than more ridged according to rules. I think that's probably a really good thing in the long run for adding interest and a vivacious interest to the city. I think it's great.*

*Mrs. Morgan said just to note, next month we will have a meeting. We believe we are probably going to have to move it up because we have a lot of items we think. I think several murals are coming forward so it might be moved up to 5:30.*

*Chairman Zine said do we have a date on that?*

*Mrs. Morgan said it will be the first Wednesday of May, May 5th.*

*Chairman Zine said do you think that's going to be another remote meeting?*

*Mrs. Morgan said I would say yes. Correct, Ed?*

*Mr. Sieben said I don't know when we're going to get back to in-person. I heard City Hall might be opening up more in a June timeframe. I'm not sure what that means exactly. We'll find out. Maybe we'll know more at our next meeting.*

*Chairman Zine said I don't know if you saw today, but the Paramount just announced that they're not going to open in June. They are going to open in July. Blues on the Fox will probably be moved another year, so July is probably more realistic. Even that's a reach too. We don't know when we are going to be done with this.*

**This training item was filed.**

## **PENDING**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*None.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Mrs. Christensen, seconded by Mr. Failing, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. Chairman Zine adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.**

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR CURRENT AGENDAS:**

**<https://www.aurora-il.org/AgendaCenter>**