

**AURORA DOWNTOWN  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Minutes**

**August 6, 2015 – 8:00 A.M. – 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room B – City Hall**

**Members Present:** Jimi Allen (at large), Dan Hites (at large), Karen Kramford (at large), Eva Luckinbill (Aurora Public Library), Terry Michels (Hollywood Casino), and Bob Reuland (ex-officio)

**Members Absent (Excused):** Doug Cheatham (Old Second National Bank), Kim Granholm (at large), and John Nachtrieb (at large)

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** None

**Meeting Highlights**

**Call to Order and Chair's Remarks**

Terry Michels called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes – 6/4/2015 and 7/2/2015**

Karen Kramford made a motion to approve the June 4, 2015 and July 2, 2015 minutes. This was seconded by Eva Luckinbill. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report – Doug Cheatham**

The Treasurer's Report was tabled as Doug was not at the meeting.

**Old Business**

a. LaSalle Street Grant Update – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said the Friends of LaSalle Street are holding the \$75,000. What I was lead to understand is that the money is being held by Joe Dispensa and Sandy Spang in an account. I think that with kind of the demise of the Friends of LaSalle Street or transferring over the leadership of the auto show to the VFW that we should ask for the money back and we will hold it and we will honor the request that it be done to modernize LaSalle Street, but I don't think that they should be holding the money. Kim and I are going to meet with Joe Dispensa and Sandy Spang and voice our opinion that we think the money should go back to Aurora Downtown.

Terry Michels said I thought we had a conversation that the city was talking about possibly creating an account they were going to hold it in for them.

Bob Reuland said that would be acceptable. That would be just fine with us too. We researched the minutes. The minutes in the years past said that they had to be doing work each year. They were done in \$25,000 increments and that they had to be doing some work or making some progress toward their goal. That really never did occur either.

Jimi Allen said the only trouble I have with it is if something is just done in haste because they want to spend the money and the street needs more than just to do something like a coat of paint. However you think it needs to happen that the money is just held until there is a clear project because the project that was, I think, originally spoken about has not materialized and there is a lot more to do than just putting in more lights. The sidewalks are cracked. I know in front of my building there is this broken concrete and we've got vault issues and it doesn't make sense to just spend \$75,000 on new LED lighting when we've got things underneath it that are wrong.

Eva Luckinbill said and once they start, they are going to find even more. That's what happened at the library. I'm a little concerned about even letting the city hold it. I think there needs to be a document more legalized that says the \$75,000 is restricted to LaSalle Street and a point at which it makes sense to spend the money and somehow invest it because it is not going to happen in the next year or two.

Dan Hites said I would agree with that considering how the state has kind of swept all the accounts into one. If the city ever gets into that point, they'll just sweep it into their account.

Terry Michels said could we move it back to our account?

Bob Reuland said we would move it back to our account.

Terry Michels and do the same designation as you are talking about?

Eva Luckinbill said yes, a restricted account and it just sits there and accumulates until at such point whoever is in charge on both sides agree that this is the time to use that money. Maybe it will sooth LaSalle Street to know that it is a restricted fund and can't be used for anything other than LaSalle Street.

Terry Michels said what if you run into resistance from them that they don't want to write a check back?

Bob Reuland said then Kim and I would consider legal counsel.

Further discussion followed on how to approach the Friends of LaSalle to help this project move forward to get this money in a controlled account.

b. New Logo/Branding of Aurora Downtown – Bob Reuland

Bob Reuland said the branding and logo is coming along. Rory is working on that. Kim and I have seen nothing and neither has the Marketing Committee as yet. At the last Marketing Committee meeting, he said he was working on it. He had several good prospects, but nothing concrete.

### New Business

a. CMAP Discussion – Dan Hites and Jimi Allen

Dan Hites said CMAP is the Chicago Metropolitan Area Planning Board and basically they are doing an initiative right now to put together regional plans, part of which, of course, is the Aurora area. They are putting together public forums to basically develop a sort of a master plan under certain guidelines that CMAP would be pushing forward, not necessarily the master plan for Aurora, but pulling together their ideas on how to plan things out for the region, but Aurora has naturally broken itself off as a segment of that. What we are proposing doing is Aurora Downtown come in with its plans of what we should do and incorporate this into the CMAP project so that it is part of the general plans for the area. For instance, Jimi can do an idea plan of how to involve technology in the development of the downtown. We have the Arts and Entertainment District. We can finish that off and put that in as bringing in an Arts and Entertainment District. We can get you to kind of do an overview of the real estate and how to more appropriately get it ready for the future or market it for the future. So the idea is to take different segments, have different people that can represent them as participants in the CMAP process and push this into a general plan.

Terry Michels said is this being undertaken by the city?

Dan Hites said to a certain level. The city has been asked and has willingly set up a local organization to handle local input.

Terry Michels said so who sanctioned the study? Is the city asking for CMAP to do that or did CMAP come to the city?

Karen Kramford said CMAP is a regional group of people that get together. There are different districts within CMAP. There are people who are appointed to the Board of Directors by the Governor, by local officials. Kane County is one of the regions for CMAP. It is not the City of Aurora. Kane County is one of the regions for CMAP. Mayor Weisner is that representative for the CMAP Board. He is a voting member of the Board. Part of their goal is to look at planning from a regional point of view as compared to from individual municipalities or counties.

Terry Michels said are they looking at Kane County as a whole or are they looking at Aurora?

Karen Kramford said they are looking at the entire region, northern Illinois.

Dan Hites said if you look at the website though, there is an Aurora CMAP, so it has been broken down also to the level of Aurora.

Karen Kramford said there is that level. There is also when you look at the information for the CMAP, board members are by appointment for CMAP itself. The Governor appoints board members. Local officials appoint board members.

Terry Michels said so your input for Aurora Downtown, are we kind of getting out in front of it to go to them to say we want input, or have they come to us to ask us that they'd like some of the stakeholders that are involved in that to...

Dan Hites said they've done a tour of downtown Aurora. Kim had been invited to go on a tour and a few other people. But what I propose that we target this and starting in September they are having public forums where the people from the public can come in and give their suggestions and ideas and hopefully get those incorporated into the plan.

Jimi Allen said there is a web page for it that's a downtown master plan for Aurora, stay up to date on the Aurora project through social media, and then it says the planning process, development in the collaboration with the City of Aurora involves 3 phases and it gives a timeline for public engagement. The public will have several opportunities to participate in the planning process. The City of Aurora in participation with CMAP will embark on a series of outreach meetings with city leadership, business representatives and the community to solicit and incorporate local input to the planning process. We also invite your participation through various social media outlets, but then it says May/June 2016 there is a public open house. I guess the reason we are bringing this up is we had no idea there was a public open house and it will focus on the downtown. There is a public kickoff meeting scheduled in September.

Karen Kramford said is that separate from, is that district CMAP that you are talking about or are you talking about the regional CMAP. These open forums sounds like the Kane County District.

Jimi Allen said this says a downtown master plan for Aurora, so that's what we're talking about.

Karen Kramford said have we talked to our district board member about what the process is and how we can participate?

Dan Hites said I'm not aware of this. I gather from some feedback that at this point the city is using the CMAP process to push a couple of projects that are probably worthy, but I'd rather see this be more of a general push for a general plan than specific smaller projects. I think the city is going to be pushing the change in the Transportation Center, the moving of the buses from the west side of the Roundhouse to the north side, so smaller things like that.

Karen Kramford said when they are talking about the master plan, is that not also, and the reason I'm asking is because we also know the Seize the Future is starting the initiative to put together a new master plan as well, so is what you were referring to off the website part of that whole initiative to look at the City of Aurora and then with the link to CMAP pushing it up into the Kane County District, which would then go to the greater metropolitan area?

Dan Hites said I can't say.

Jimi Allen said I think at this point we are wondering when the master plan is being developed and know we can be a part of that.

Dan Hites said this is basically a few people having heard this and saying that Aurora Downtown needs to get involved because this is a direct tie into what Aurora Downtown does and that without proper force on the CMAP and Seize the Future we are being squeezed out of what we should be doing.

Jimi Allen said I think what we are proposing is that we want to discuss and dialog about what we think might be a next step and asking the question is there a methodology for us to put proposals forward for ideas that we might have so they get included in this public forum for a master plan for downtown?

Dan Hites said and in the meantime September is coming up fast and if we are going to put any proposals in we need to start getting them developed.

Karen Kramford said I would suggest that we go to Stephane and talk with her, we should have someone approach her and understand what the process is so that we can update this group about how to approach it.

Jimi Allen said I'll reach out to Stephane. We want to find out the dates so that we can talk among ourselves like what is our vision for downtown and then find out the format for presenting that.

Terry Michels said I would suggest this. Why don't you go and get the information from Stephane and then once we get the information and we get a document or proposal together, is that something we propose to her that she presents as part of the whole plan for the city and/or do we have an opportunity to present that to this public forum that happens? If that timeline happens and she's got the information and September comes then I would say that we encourage Kim to call a special meeting of this group prior to that time that we can discuss it so that we've got something ready to go to be able to present and we don't miss that opportunity.

### **Consultant Report**

Bob Reuland said we have been meeting with Pat Medchill. This is how this has all become to fruition. Pat Medchill had asked Dan and myself to meet with Jimi and Kim and he has a group of people and he is very interested in the downtown still. He is still active and he wants to play an active role in CMAP also and he thought that Aurora Downtown was the venue for this. That's how this has come into being. The 4 of us are fired up for CMAP and for moving forward and I think Jimi actually working with Stephane is exactly the right thing that we should be doing. That's really all I have to say about my consultant report, except I'm really upset about people not showing up at the meetings again. I'm going to start calling our board members and finding out why they don't show up for the committee meetings because that's where the work is being done.

### **Committee Updates**

Bob Reuland said for the Nominating Committee, it is August, so I go to Davis Offutt and get the list of all the building owners and go through and see what has changed because the election is coming and it is time to be doing that.

There was further discussion on whether to get a new chair for the Nominating Committee. Bob Reuland is going to approach Tom Bartlett to see if he could be a co-chair for this committee along with John Galles.

Dan Hites said I think everyone is aware the state and probably city budgets are under pressure and we're probably going to be under pressure too. There are a couple of things that we really need to solidify to make sure that our budget comes out better if the city doesn't come through. We need to again look at Aurora Downtown's contract with the city as far as the provision of how much the city pays us because according to the contract we get the additional little tax that they put on the properties as our base amount, but in addition, the city makes up for the losses in that amount that go into the TIF. In looking how the value of the buildings have increased over the 25 years or whatever, that should be a large component also. My thinking is that that large component that is the second half is basically what the city is throwing in and saying this is our part of the budget that we are giving you. That part of the budget might actually be the contractual second part of our dues. I would like that some lawyer/auditor go and look at our contract as far as the actual legal requirement as what the city needs to be paying us instead of us constantly asking for something above the base that we think we have. We had kind of discussed this briefly with Bill Wiet and other people and nothing smoothly moved along. I think this should be somebody outside the city and outside of Aurora Downtown because we're not accountants. We don't know how the city TIF works that well. We don't know how the budget works. Let's get somebody in there that can look at this contract that isn't part of the city. That's one part of the budget coming up. The other part has been mentioned before. Non-for-profits in the SSA can be required to pay their portion of the SSA levy on the real estate, so Waubensee College, the library and a lot of these non-for-profits could be paying into the SSA. We had requested a clarification from Bill Wiet and haven't gotten that. So that's another component that if there is a potential that our budget is going to be cut we can go back and say cut this amount of our budget, but then force the non-for-profits to make it up with how much they should be paying.

Bob Reuland said I think these are topics for the Budget Committee. I think that that is a good point. I think that we should start the budget process in September this year. They city has no idea what they are going to get from the state and, therefore, we have no idea what we are going to get from the city. I'll talk to Kim about this and move forward on this with Doug.

Dan Hites said let's get the Budget Committee together and start the process.

Karen Kramford said I do have one thing for the Float Task Force. Winter Lights is going to be November 20<sup>th</sup> and we are starting the process on how we are going to participate with Winter Lights.

### **Announcements**

Eva Luckinbill said August 15th's the ribbon cutting for the 2 gardens at the library will be taking place, the Parker Garden and the Juvenile Protective Association Children's Garden (JPA). There are some really wonderful, beautiful areas in there that will just be such an added attraction to this area.

Dan Hites said tomorrow is First Friday.

Terry Michels said 2 announcements on our end from Hollywood. We are sponsoring the rights to the Hollywood Casino Amphitheater out in Tinley Park, which used to be First Midwest Bank Amphitheater by Live Nation. That is a 3 year commitment for us right now. We are doing that jointly with Aurora and Joliet. It is another marketing avenue for us and to get our name out there. We also announced on Monday of this week Penn National Gaming has acquired Prairie State Gaming, which is a gaming entity based out of Oakbrook or Hinsdale. This is a gaming company that provides slot machines to all of the video gaming (VGT) to all of the bars. The casino industry in Illinois is losing so much business to the VGT's. This Prairie State Games is one of several. They have, I believe, 1,100 machines that are placed in 248 establishments throughout Illinois, but we are actually forming a division within our organization now as a Vice President of VGT's. We think that this is going to become kind of a growing trend as states are looking to enhance their budget with revenues, so we've kind of gotten into the VGT business. Lastly, our marque, which I've referred to at the other meeting, we are before the city. They've come back to us and asked us for some further information that they want to see regarding the sign, but we are working with Ed Sieben on that and hopefully within the next month we may have some further direction on doing that. Provided that that happens in that timeframe, we believe we'll be able to get it manufactured and installed before December. It will be a nice enhancement.

### **Adjourn**

Terry Michels made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Dan Hites. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.