

Minutes

Downtown Development Authority

Work Session

Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Main Street Office

118 E. Front Street

1. Roll Call

Present: Chairperson Rick Floraday, Vice-Chairperson Frank Wszelaki, Treasurer Mary Gail Beneteau, Doug Chaffin, Janet Berns, Gabe Martin, Cheri Weakly, Barry Kinsey, Kimberle Daniels, Ken Wickenheiser

Excused: Mayor Worrell, Michelle Cloutier

Staff: Andrea Jones

Guests: none

Ms. Jones stated that the purpose of the Work Session is to discuss the Goals and Objectives for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year. She requested that each board member write down the top two priorities that they feel the MSM/DDA should work on.

Ms. Jones reviewed the items submitted and prioritized them by number of votes:

Businesses

Recruit Businesses-3

fill buildings-1

business development-1

Parking/Circulation

Parking-2

Slow traffic-1

Traffic Re-direction-1

Capital Improvements-2

Façade Grant-1

Marketing-2

Collaboration with other government and support agencies-2

Incentives for attraction-2

Clean Downtown-1

Entranceways-1

There was discussion regarding how the economy could influence the goals. There was discussion regarding the opportunity of recruiting new businesses and investors in downtown.

Several of the items listed can be combined or listed as strategies under other goals.

There was discussion regarding the mix of business in downtown and who that would attract. There should be a focus on specialty shops that are already successful at one or more locations.

There was discussion regarding how events affect downtown.

Possibly put together a brochure with business tips in it to help businesses be successful. Possibly offer additional business incentives, classes, advice, etc. to help businesses. There was discussion regarding how businesses downtown are advertising and promoting themselves.

There was discussion regarding:

- absentee landlords and other issues when looking at available spaces and the rentable condition.
- options for improving dilapidated buildings downtown.
- fire hazards within dilapidated buildings and how that could affect the entire block of buildings.

There was discussion as to tools to recruiting businesses and letters that Board members have received from other communities to move their business. The Board discussed selecting two or three buildings to actively recruit business to.

There was discussion regarding shuttle services and parking issues that need to be addressed.

There was discussion regarding the need to work within our capabilities and work with property owners that have rentable spaces available instead of taking on a challenge that would be more difficult or take longer to achieve.

The Board discussed categorizing the available properties by condition. Possibly send a letter to properties on the list and state that the Board will select three properties to actively push and ask for proposals from the property owners on how they will support that effort.

Mr. Kinsey, Mr. Chaffin and Mr. Wickenheiser excused themselves from the remainder of the Work Session.

There was discussion regarding:

- business hours and not being available when the customers want to shop.
- the lack of information about what businesses we have downtown and all of the services that those businesses offered.
- how to get more businesses involved in advertising and promoting themselves when they are so busy operating their business.
- how to get more businesses informed and involved in the events taking place downtown so that businesses are open late to accommodate customer demands.

There was discussion regarding the negative perception of downtown and how that affects people and businesses coming here. There was discussion regarding how the Monroe Evening News does not accurately depict downtown.

Vice-Chairperson Wszelaki excused himself from the remainder of the Work Session at 9:30 am.

Due to lack of quorum, the Work Session concluded at 9:30 am.