

Historic Downtown Economic Meeting

Thursday, February 7, 2019, 5:30 PM

Council Present: R. Scott Phillips

Historic Downtown Economic Committee Present: Jennie Hendricks, Maria Twitchell

Staff Present: Brad Abrams, Danny Stewart

Others Present:

Call to Order: Jennie Hendricks

Pledge of Allegiance: None

Approval of Minutes: N/A because meeting didn't have a quorum.

Public Agenda: None

Business Agenda:

Jennie Hendricks: Since we don't have a quorum, we will just have a discussion today. In talking with Chris McCormick, we discussed Vision 2050 and how we bring the Chambers work with Vision 2050 together with the City's plan to create some actionable items that will move things forward.

Scott Phillips: Well, and the Creative Placemaking Committee and the Historic Downtown Commission are all working on similar things, but none of them are getting any traction.

Jennie Hendricks: I think this committee should be the catalyst with getting things in front of the City Council. We want to go in front of the City Council with some with some low-hanging fruit that won't cost a lot that we can bring in front of City Council right now. I think that we need something that looks like a plan to take in front of the City Council. I'll just start with reviewing what Chris has as top-priorities on his list, and then each of you can review your lists as well.

- Improve the downtown's curb appeal, improve window displays and make them more inviting, purchase pots and plants to help beautify storefronts, add murals and public art. Include all businesses to use blade signs. Remove and improve trees one block at a time. Install more benches and trash receptacles, touch up paint and peeling paint, encourage shops to landscape the back of stores.

A lot of these things we could go to the businesses with because it doesn't cost that much to add couple of nice plants or a bench.

Scott Phillips: We need to get the downtown business alliance or merchants—whatever we want to call it—activated again. They are the core that we are trying to help.

Jennie Hendricks: Yes, I agree; for example, you are not going to get all the stores to come up with enough money to do blade signs. The Downtown Alliance would definitely help with this.

Maria Twitchell: I think that we should revisit the original incentive program that was designed when we did the Hyatt Palma to assist the small businesses with their signage, etc. Is the RDA fund tied up for another two years?

Scott Phillips: Not every dime of it is.

Danny Stewart: This is a pretty low-cost item. I think that for something of that scope we could address it now. I think that we could sit down with Jason Norris and see what we would need to do. I could certainly do this.

Scott Phillips: Let's say we could get \$50,000 in the pot and we could help 20 or more businesses...

Maria Twitchell: We need to address nonconforming signs as well.

Danny Stewart: In 2011, we had four different programs that were introduced, and we found that the two most effective programs were signs and tenant improvement. We had a one for leases and another for bike racks, but these never really caught hold. It was a one-time trial run of \$200,000 with a 20% match from the business. It ended up, in every single case, being at least 60-80% on the tenant side. They just need something to prime the pump. It was very successful. I think we could do a smaller scale one, maybe just for blade signs, until more funds are freed up.

Scott Phillips: It's interesting because I have a meeting tomorrow with the City Planner on bike racks. Two concerned citizens have come forward and have talked with the Mayor and Paul Bittmenn. Where we come into conflict, is that the bicyclist wants good quality reliable bike racks, and the Creative Placemaking people want art as well as a bike rack. The City Planner is behind the idea. Let me know if you have any suggestions on what I should say or not say.

Maria Twitchell: Could we put it under a larger umbrella that includes bike racks, benches, public art, etc.? Shouldn't it fall under Leisure Services?

Danny Stewart: The Parks Department does the maintenance for this type of stuff, so this would fall under them.

Scott Phillips: Another thing I'm proposing is to have more trash receptacles downtown. We wouldn't have to change the design, but I'm suggesting at least ten or more of them. I'm going to request this in the street department's budget for next year.

Jennie Hendricks: Another thing would be to move the benches that are right next to the road on Main Street.

Scott Phillips: I've talked to the City Planner about this, and he seems to be behind the idea. We could fix this with very little expense.

Jennie Hendricks: Please help me understand how this should work. If we agree that we should have plants and pots, etc., what's the process for getting this done? Does someone need to go find the funds and put them in a bucket and come to City Council? How does this work?

Scott Phillips: There are a couple of ways this can happen. We can approach them and give the ask or we can find some match funds with the ask.

Jennie Hendricks: Is it better to find the funds first?

Maria Twitchell: I think that it's better to find some funds first. I think that the money is out there.

Danny Stewart: There are some RDA funds and some discretionary funds that might not get used by the end of the fiscal year.

Scott Phillips: If we can come up with a package deal with a funding proposal.

Jennie Hendricks: I think that if you talk with the businesses downtown, they will want to help as well. What we need are a subcommittee and a deadline.

Scott Phillips: I think that the first thing is to decide exactly what we're going to do as part of this "curb appeal." Is it going to include just the bike racks or is it going to include planters, trash receptacles, etc?

Maria Twitchell: We need to look at it as all, and then see where we can put in the funding. For example, the hanging baskets come out of the Mayor's discretionary fund, so should we include pots or planters as part this?

Jennie Hendricks: I don't think you'll get the businesses to take care of flowers, but if they could be maintained by the same people doing the hanging plants...

Scott Phillips: I know that the maintenance would be an issue because personnel is already an issue for the Parks Department. But maybe it's part of our budget proposal?

Maria Twitchell: I think that for this to be cohesive it has to all be part of the whole package.

Scott Phillips: Maybe we make it part of the budget proposal.

Jennie Hendricks: I've got bike racks, benches, pots, flowers, and trash receptacles. Are murals and signs included in this?

Scott Phillips: No they would be separate from the others in the category. These would be one priority.

Jennie Hendricks: Who is going to find the money for this?

Maria Twitchell: I think that I can find the money for this priority.

Jennie Hendricks: How long do you think that it will take for you to do that? One or two months?

Maria Twitchell: It's going to take me longer than that.

Scott Phillips: We need to put a proposal together because the City budget for next year is starting to be formed in March. We will need a presentation in the middle of March.

Maria Twitchell: I can identify where to find the money by then.

Jennie Hendricks: So, Maria's going to get us a spreadsheet, so we can put together a proposal for the City Council work meeting by the 3rd meeting of March. If the City is willing to do this stuff I think that we have an excellent platform to approach business owners to encourage them to spruce up their businesses. Is there a downtown business group leader?

Maria Twitchell: The Downtown Business Alliance has dissolved. Bruce Hughes was the accountant that set up its nonprofit status.

Scott Phillips: I think that you and Heather Richmond need to get together and reactivate the Downtown Business Alliance. This is important because when we get to the point where we want to sponsor musical festivals and other downtown activities, it will be nice to have their support and sponsorship.

Jennie Hendricks: I'm going to say that Heather Richmond would be awesome at helping with this.

Scott Phillips: The Office of Economic Development has an intern working on gathering a list of business owners for the downtown.

Jennie Hendricks: Next item on Chris's list, increase parking capabilities downtown, encourage Cedar City to take over Main Street going west, consider angled parking in the middle of Center Street, add angled parking on the east side of 100 West south of Center. I think that all of those are maybe possible in the next year. What are your thoughts?

Scott Phillips: I can give you some updates. We've had several conversations with the UDOT of the idea of taking over the maintenance of Center Street. UDOT would be happy to do this and brought up some of the projections of the costs involved. I met with the regional supervisor, along with the Mayor and Paul, and the answer was no. The City doesn't want to do this under any circumstances. That could change with a different administration, but that's the current administration.

Jennie Hendricks: So, why don't they want to do this?

Scott Phillips: They think it's a no-win situation, and extra costs for the City with no benefits. Now, with that said, Rick Torgenson, the UDOT regional supervisor, said that they could do other things for us on the street. I asked him about angled parking, and he didn't close the door on it.

Maria Twitchell: I think we need to pursue the idea of two lanes with bump outs, angled parking, and bicycle lanes, which were mentioned in all the reports.

Scott Phillips: Part of getting people downtown is creating the right corridors to the downtown.

Maria Twitchell: We need to look at low hanging fruit as what we'll accomplish in the next two years, and then look at the larger picture as well.

Scott Phillips: We are still looking at angled parking on 100 West on the East side of the street. We've run into a couple of roadblocks, but none that we can't overcome. Apparently, there is an ordinance that requires the owners requesting the angled parking to be responsible for signage and maintenance of the parking spaces. I don't know what that is exactly.

Maria Twitchell: Can it fall underneath the downtown parking authority?

Scott Phillips: I'm going to have to dig a little deeper and find out about this. That's the other question. This might mean that the owners on the block might be assessed a fee every year.

Maria Twitchell: Maybe, it's something that we work out with Southern Utah University and the Shakespeare Festival because the parking benefits both of them?

Jennie Hendricks: Would it be beneficial for this committee to put something together for City Council?

Scott Phillips: It would be much better if it came from this committee.

Jennie Hendricks: I think that this should happen at the next work meeting.

Scott Phillips: Should we do these together with the other recommendations? I don't think that you'll want to come to the City Council month after month.

Jennie Hendricks: Okay.

Maria Twitchell: I was thinking of negotiating public parking with the Southern Utah University lot and the Leavitt lot. Maybe a lease option with the Downtown Parking Authority?

Scott Phillips: What do you mean?

Maria Twitchell: So, the Summer Games Building has the lot behind it that is sitting empty with a sign that you can't park there, and then next to it is the Leavitt lot, which employees park there, but it isn't necessarily a public lot. Could we negotiate a public lot with these two entities? Could we put up a sign that says public parking?

Scott Phillips: Why would they want to do that?

Maria Twitchell: It would alleviate some of the congestion in other areas such as next to Image Pro, etc.

Scott Phillips: I've heard that the lot that the Leavitts have for their employee parking could possibly be another location for their Shakespeare Cottages.

Maria Twitchell: If that's true, then parking will be even more of a premium, and we could go to SUU and ask if they would allow public parking in their space.

Scott Phillips: When we talk about the angled parking in City Council we will want to make the request a very positive one. "Because of the vibrancy and increase in traffic downtown, which we all want...etc."

Jennie Hendricks: We need people to work on the parking...

Scott Phillips: I'm working on the angled parking down 100 West

Jennie Hendricks: Can you also work on two lanes down Center Street?

Scott Phillips: I could, but I'd rather have a business owner like Mark Baruffi handle it. I'll support it, but Mark should do it because he is a business owner in the downtown.

Maria Twitchell: I think that Steve Nelson should also be involved. I'm not convinced that the businesses are onboard with angled parking and making a two-lane.

Scott Phillips: I know that Artisans and Mark Baruffi are on board

Maria Twitchell: Let's make sure Steve's onboard and then maybe have him pursue it.

Jennie Hendricks: I'll send an email to both of them and let them know our thoughts. I think a lot of this stuff we can do with an email stream.

Scott Phillips: I can bring it up at the next Downtown Parking Authority Meeting in April.

Jennie Hendricks: Our next item on Chris's list is to develop ways to pull people downtown. I don't know how much time we want to spend on this right now. There is a whole list...

Maria Twitchell: I think that these are tactics that are great, but we need to be looking at 30,000 level stuff.

Jennie Hendricks: Develop point of entry signs on I-15 exits...

Scott Phillips: That's underway, Maria's working on that. My question about informational kiosks is what are we putting on these and who is going to put information on them?

Maria Twitchell: We have an informational kiosk already in the works, and it's going to be next to Artisans on the wall. I have committed the Tourism Bureau to maintain them.

Jennie Hendricks: Let's leave that item for now. These items would benefit from getting the Downtown Business Alliance alive again and maybe working with Economic Development to put together recruitment team and put a list of the types of businesses we would like to have come downtown, as well as maintain a list of available buildings, continue to pursue investors for Better City, and expand the Community Reinvestment Area.

Danny Stewart: That's a big list, but let me tell you that, with the Governor's 25,000 jobs initiative, a lot of feedback has been given to bring back the statewide Main Street program. I think that there is a real possibility that this might happen through GOED.

Danny Stewart: As far as recruitment and things, I've talked with Ogden and Provo City, and we have an open invitation to take this group up to tour some the things that are being done in these areas.

Jennie Hendricks: Maybe, we need to start planning that now for the late Spring?

Danny Stewart: I can take on that.

Scott Phillips: I think that May would be the best time. I would like to explore expanding our RDA in downtown, so if someone does start looking at us, we have a spot for them. What do we have to do to do this?

Danny Stewart: I've been working with the state redevelopment association, out of Midvale. You decide what you want to do, and the City redevelopment association will designate the space. There are some administration fees, etc. Another difficulty is that when you create a CRA, the only development tool you have to work with is new tax increment, and sometimes it's difficult to create that new increment value. I would have to consult with the state redevelopment association on this.

Scott Phillips: I think that the appetite is there from three of the council members to expand the CRA downtown.

Danny Stewart: It doesn't need to be an expansion; it can be a separate area. The other thing that we have going for us is that the entire Historic Downtown is in an Opportunity Zone, so if you can pair an opportunity zone with local incentives.

Jennie Hendricks: After we meet together about the Opportunity Zones, let's get together with a few members of this committee and talk about the best way to present what we want to City Council. That's all I have on my list.

Scott Phillips: My list isn't long, so I'm just going to read it in the interest of time:

I liked the Hyett Palma study update —95% of it was right on.

Roger Brooks—common sense, low-hanging fruit.

USU/Charette—great, but a lot of dreaming.

- 1) Expand RDA approx. to Coal Creek to 200 E. to 200 S. and 300 W to 200 S and 200 W to Coal Creek
- 2) More pedestrian-friendly streetscape in downtown including (Main and Center Streets plus 100 W.
- 3) \$ for small business renovations/remodels to encourage continued unique spirit of downtown businesses; tools and advice on how to keep the historic feel and community character.
- 4) Signage - wayfinding in downtown and entrance corridors, leading citizens and guests downtown
- 5) Development of west side of Main and 100 West
- 6) Create reason(s) for nightlife downtown which could include housing projects in the downtown corridor.

Jennie Hendricks: I think that we need to keep repeating the conversation about downtown housing.

Maria Twitchell: I put my list into headers in a spreadsheet, I'll read it here, but I'll share the document with the group as well (see spreadsheet).

Jennie Hendricks: Do you want to add any of your stuff to what we're working on to present to City Council?

Scott Phillips: I think that somehow, we need to get wayfinding signs on the docket. We need to say that wayfinding came up on all three of the reports, etc. We are ready now to step out there and discuss the costs on wayfinding.

Maria Twitchell: I have the wayfinding location map and designs.

Scott Phillips: I think that because we are the ones here this is what we should move forward with. We have to move forward with this.

Jennie Hendricks: I agree, we have to move forward on this. Thank you everyone.