



## MINUTES

**Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, October 1, 2014, 6:30 p.m.  
Student Health Center Auditorium  
374 East Grand Avenue**

Mr. Langowski called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

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**Members Present:** Bleyer, Bukowski, Carter, Clow, Cole, Colombo, Gorton, Gregory, Langowski, Miller, Dr. Pink-Harper, Ramseyer, Dr. Reddy, Schachel, Sheffer, Sigler, Terry

**Members Absent:** Stevens, Boeckman

**Staff Present:** Baity, Price, Williams

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**1) Bring to order:**

**J. Langowski** made his opening remarks.

**2) Roll Call and member/facilitator introductory remarks:**

**J. Langowski** called roll and noted two absences and announced a quorum was present.

**3) Approval of minutes:**

**J. Langowski** asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting.

**A. Miller** made the motion and **M. Cole** seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**J. Langowski** asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 meeting.

**A. Miller** made the motion and **M. Bukowski** seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**J. Langowski** asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting.

**M. Cole** made the motion to approve and **A. Miller** seconded and all were in favor.

#### 4) Introductory Remarks:

**J. Langowski** made introductory remarks.

**J. Langowski** introduced **John Washburn (Facilitator)** for this meeting.

**J. Langowski** introduced the Associate Director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, **Delio Calzolari**.

**D. Calzolari** spoke about the upcoming events the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute will be cosponsoring. He also discussed a survey sent out to all of the Alumni about their feelings regarding the downtown and Carbondale in general. They have received more than 4,300 responses. He stated they will make the data available to the committee.

**J. Langowski** thanked **D. Calzolari** for his time and information.

**J. Langowski** introduced **Kevin Baity**, City manager for the City of Carbondale.

**K. Baity** spoke about the interaction between the City and Southern Illinois University (SIU) and the City and Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH). He discussed the different groups in which he is a representative of the City and how those groups have created many synergies. He discussed how SIH's decision on how to handle future office needs can have a large impact on the city. The University and the City Manager's office meet once a month to discuss any topics that need coordination between the two groups. Mr. Baity suggested the construction of a hotel downtown that is ran by the hospitality students from SIU and used by visitors and hospital staff. The 1990 downtown plan included this idea. The developer that had agreed to construct had to back out and it never was completed. As part of that, a downtown hotel study was completed and is available on the web site. This plan has generated several inquiries by potential developers. This plan could answer what the city may be willing to help with to offset the construction costs of the hotel downtown.

**J. Langowski** thanked **K. Baity** for his presentation and introduced **Dr. Randy Dunn, President of SIU**, to give his presentation.

**Dr. Dunn** stated he loved the interfacing theme and that the university has a positive outlook. The university has an open mind regarding the project and is willing to help where possible. He stated all members that are impacted by this plan must be equal and willing participants for it to succeed. If you have skin in the game, you should be an active member of the discussion and implementation of the plan. There are four main points he wishes to make.

- 1) Creating and implementing a plan to improve downtown is integral to the success of SIU and Carbondale. The downtown is the first thing visitors see and the university needs a "wow factor" downtown to attract new students. The plan needs to pull the university down into the downtown area.

- 2) The 1990 plan accomplished alot. This master plan must have a stronger focus

on the business owner, entrepreneurs, developers, and how the community can help them to improve the downtown. The codes must be streamlined and the city needs to take chances. The community must help to guide developers and help them overcome obstacles.

3) Other places in this country have revitalized their downtown, we can too. The President's staff has been looking at how other cities have accomplished the revitalization of their downtown. The university has established a Business Leaders Network. Leadership is what makes these types of plans come to fruition.

4) Don't lose the willingness to be bold. Fight the tendency to water down ideas. If we don't reach for the bold ideas now, it may never happen.

**J. Langowski** thanked **Dr. Dunn** for his presentation and introduced **Rex Budde, President and CEO of Southern Illinois Healthcare**, and asked him to give his presentation.

**R. Budde** stated he thought it was a wonderful idea to integrate the hospital campus with the downtown. The hospital contributes 75 million dollars in payroll to its employees. It spends 83 million dollars in supplies purchased. It donated 7.2 million in charity care and 34 million in Medicaid care last year. They saw 10,500 inpatient persons and 33,088 Emergency Room visits. The hospital is currently in the middle of a 52 million dollar modernization project. They have added 18 new doctors to the hospital providing a wide range of new services to the area. They are building a 25 million dollar cancer institute in our area. They provide medical services to a wide region and would love to have the hotel downtown as mentioned earlier. The hospital sees a large need for community interaction. The hospital wishes to do what it can to help support the revitalization of the downtown community.

**J. Langowski** thanked **R. Budde** for his presentation and introduced **D. Gorton** and asked him to give his presentation.

**D. Gorton** discussed the Gigabit City. The era of the downtown area being primarily student housing is over. Housing downtown is in a crisis. The professionals are living in our outlying areas because of poor housing conditions. D Gorton discussed statistical data regarding the population and income of the area's residents over the last several decades. The city has one of the highest concentrations of post secondary educated people in the state. The city's housing stock is ripe for rehabilitation and restoration. The city has a large amount of fiber optic utilities, their capabilities and we should be capitalizing on these. The populations coming into Carbondale from other cities want faster internet speeds. He provided an example of Highland, Illinois which issued bonds for 20 million dollars to build their gigabit network for its residents. The city needs to provide a wireless internet connection to the downtown area.

**D. Gorton** introduced **Steve Mitchell, IT Manager for MANTRACON and Corporation Connect SI**.

**S. Mitchell** stated he advocates for broadband infrastructure all over Illinois. He is excited by the diversity in the group working for the downtown plan. The Governors Community Gigabit Challenge is trying to get gigabit internet to most communities in Illinois. He obtained a grant to install fiber optic into the city for this purpose. Mediacom, Clear wave, and Frontier all have extensive fiber optic infrastructure in the City. The area stands poised to make a profound impact on the local economy.

**D. Gorton** introduced **James Meyer** from Meyer Technologies.

**J. Meyer** discussed the benefits to having a free wireless system downtown, how a wireless network would work in the downtown and offered his companies services to get a network up and running for the city. He feels a wireless system downtown is a critical portion of the plan as the majority of visitors will have a digital device that needs internet access. He is offering his company's services free of charge to assist the downtown area.

**D. Gorton** discussed creating an overlay district to allow for accessory dwelling units over garages and business spaces along the Gigabit infrastructure. He suggested creating a downtown historic district and potentially creating a TIF district to support the restoration of the city's historic properties. He stated some of the tax benefits of designating an historic district. He wants the community to assist in recruiting developers to help rehabilitate the older apartment complexes in the City. He stated we should support the active downtown areas. He suggested adding a skate park or some other area to accommodate the active persons in the community. He said we should deploy inexpensive movable security cameras in the downtown. He feels the City's soul comes from the social offerings, the openness of the community, and the aesthetics of the community.

**D. Gorton** suggested creating an SIU-SIH Neighborhood committee sponsored by the City of Carbondale that is a standing committee.

**J. Langowski** discussed the fiber optics in the city and recessed the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

**J. Washburn (Facilitator)** brought the meeting back to order at 7:45 p.m. and offered a mental aerobics exercise.

## 5) Comments from the public

**J. Washburn (Facilitator)** asked for public comment at this time.

**Von Gathes (audience member)** stated the city has a crime problem. He referenced the "It's on us" campaign recently started by the university as a way to help fight that crime. He asked if the city and community were going to participate in that campaign.

**A. Miller** described the "It's on us" campaign. He responded that he helped launch that campaign and at this time, the City is not participating but he welcomed the city to participate.

**Patricia McKissack (audience member)** She stated she is the President of the American

Institute of Architecture Students Carbondale Chapter and she felt the campus community connections were not as strong as they could be. The students lack a knowledge of available city services. She feels the students could help design and clean up downtown and assist with other service projects. There could be architectural installations used as traveling art pieces. Empty parking spaces and fields could be used as temporary dog parks or soccer fields.

**J. Clow** thanked the AIAS for their input and also thanked a subcommittee of theirs, Freedom by Design, for the accessibility help they provided to members of the community.

**Kendall (audience member)** Getting people to interact is important to the growth of downtown. Rerouting Highway 51 would help that goal significantly. He feels the police officers should be on foot and bicycle more in order to form connections between citizens and officers in the community.

**Stacy Swoboda (audience member)** stated she feels that downtown cannot be improved without improving the housing stock around downtown. She felt the university should be paying attention to the areas where its students live and how they behave. She also suggested the university could provide temporary faculty housing options to its staff by restoring older homes in the community.

**Jane Adams (audience member)** stated that she agrees with Stacy. We need to build off of the Comprehensive Plan and its statements regarding the connection of Town Square with the hospital. These areas need to be integrated both visually and how the pedestrian navigates the area. Our designs should make people want to move through downtown.

**Otto (audience member)** stated the mill street and highway 51 intersection needs to be improved. City trees need to have better pruning. Additional trees should be added to the community. The speed limit on Highway 13 is too high. He felt the highways cut the town into pieces. He also felt the heavy traffic should be removed from the highways.

**Greg Went (audience member)** stated he rides his bicycle on poplar and sycamore and there is too much trash on the ground. To him it looks like the inner city. He feels the city could focus on the general cleanliness of the city and that would help a lot. The City might get a grant to provide garbage pails to the landlords to prevent additional trash ending up on the ground. He also suggests dealing more strictly with the landlords who do not maintain their properties.

**Delio Calzolari (audience member)** He hears from people visiting the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute that the hotels are too far away. He thinks that condo's should be an option in the downtown area. He thinks condominiums and hotels should share the same building.

**Jessica Bradshaw (audience member)** stated the northeast neighborhood needs a new connection on the northern end of the city. Could the hospital provide housing assistance to the employees to help them buy a home near the hospital to allow for easier access to the hospital for the employees during bad weather and other emergencies.

**No name given (audience member)** She liked the work D. Gorton has been doing in remodeling and renovating the historic homes in his neighborhood. She wondered if some of those homes could be converted into Bed and Breakfast locations. She thought there should be a way to connect students wanting to have gardens and other temporary uses with the cheap and inexpensive land in the community so they can use it.

**Nana Went (audience member)** stated most people have not experienced riding a bike from one end to the other. She wished we had more visually attractive greenways to connect our community.

**Jack Mayer (audience member)** stated the city is not a bike friendly place. He is upset about the trash in the community and the state of the rental housing. He feels the area should be more pedestrian and bike friendly.

**Mary Palm (audience member)** noted that the university and the hospital draw visiting professionals and they have no place to stay. She also spoke of a need for a place for families that can stay for a short stay place that is affordable. She feels the city needs to fix the pot holes and debris left on the streets after a weekend.

**James Mayer (audience member)** stated he felt there should be stronger rules for landlords who do not maintain their properties.

**M. Cole** stated she is on the board for Keep Carbondale Beautiful and they do weekend cleanups and gave the number to Keep Carbondale Beautiful.

**Jack Mayer (audience member)** stated he felt the community was not using the natural resources we have to draw retirees to the area.

## 6) Brief Recess

**John Washburn (Facilitator)** began a recess at 8:30 pm.

## 7) Comments from the committee members

The meeting was called back into session at 8:35 pm by **John Washburn (Facilitator)**.

**S. Carter** asked what the process was for the e-mailed comments. She had some she wished to relay. The e-mail she read stated the following: SIH should examine how it supports sustainability in the community. SIU should help develop the arts by locating a museum or a satellite museum in downtown. She felt we should have a process to incorporate the e-mails into the discussion.

**J. Langowski** stated the all emails that the committee receives go to all members of the committee. The presenters for each meeting are to include the e-mailed comments in their presentation for that evening's topic.

**D. Terry** stated it's easy to lay all the problems on the City. It cannot all be the City's

problem to fix. SIU, SIH, the landlords, the business owners on the strip and the City all have to partner to make a better downtown.

**E. Ramseyer** felt there was a need for clean housing for visiting professors and their families, for employees at SIH and for the general community. Bike paths and green spaces should be developed. She felt it was very encouraging that all the major players in downtown are willing to assist in making the area better. She suggested that SIU purchase the Julia building to help create an art district downtown. They could open a learning annex in the building and offer classes to artists and community members. They could also have a museum annex in that building. She asked SIH to deliver on its promise of 2009 to create a large garden downtown. We should also use the resources at SIU to create artwork for downtown.

**M. Cole** stated that having skin in the game would be buying a building and helping out. SIH could help integrate wellness and green spaces into the community. The housing stock has huge issues. The landlords that don't maintain their properties are a huge issue. If you increase the quality of housing, you will increase the quality of life. If you don't improve the housing stock, the quality of life cannot improve.

**M. Bukowski** agreed with SIU purchasing a building in downtown. She also liked the SIH/SIU/City condo hotel idea. She suggested a SIU funded small student business space.

**J. Langowski** stated the Army had bought offsite housing for the soldiers in Germany and that could be done here. Cars don't bring a social environment. We also need to ensure all can get around our city including our handicapped population.

**A. Miller** stated there is violence in downtown and they want to solve as many of those problems as possible. SIU can help by creating stricter admissions guidelines. Students are working with Students to try and make a change. SIU only has funding guidelines until January 1, 2015. Any commitments will be general in nature until they have more solid funding. He suggested trying to centralize the night life in Carbondale. Right now there are two separate areas that are pretty far from each other. They need to be brought closer or a system to connect them needs to be developed. The city must also look at the financial capabilities of the residents and plan accordingly. The area does not have the high paying jobs that those educated persons need to stay in the area.

**J. Clow** agreed with A. Miller and stated housing is not an SIU or SIH problem; it's a home owner problem. Local home owners could do a lot of repair and upgrading to make a huge difference. There are also grants and other funding mechanisms to help home owners.

**D. Gorton** Housing is a large issue. Owners need to do the repair work themselves and not blame others or ask for others to do it for them. He feels the code enforcement should be equal across the city. He said we should keep our ideas to things that can be accomplished, not "pie in the sky" ideas, not fanaticizing about things.

**B. Bleyer** Parents look at the entire town in order to make the decision to send their

children to our school. How do we change our appearance to make them want to send their children here? What are the students looking for in the area? What can the downtown do to attract the types of students? The downtown must be integrated with the community and it will solve a lot of the economic issues that are in our community.

**Dr. Pink-Harper** noted the relationships between the major members and stake holders of the community are all unique. The city will only thrive when all groups work together towards a common goal. All projects have to be cooperative or no one will lead them to get it accomplished.

**G. Sheffer** Presenters spoke in general terms. They did not want to control the process they wanted to help the process. He asked what the students wanted and how the committee could address those issues.

**K. Schachel** She struggles with the committee's purpose. She would love to get the AIAS temporary exhibits up and running.

**Dr. Reddy** would like for the Police Chief to be at the next meeting to discuss security issues. He would like to see a bike police patrol. If money is not invested in the downtown there will be no improvement. The SIU alumni should be challenged to support and donate to the cause. We must market SIU overseas to try and draw students here. We should work to draw large technology firms to Carbondale. The community could use SIU land to build technology firms on and create a cycle of improvement for the community. We have lots of world class professors, yet none of them have a T.V. presence. We should fix that. The SIU and SIH bike paths should be combined.

## **8) Adjournment**

**J. Langowski** asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**A. Miller** made a motion to adjourn the meeting

**G. Sheffer** seconded all were in favor.

**J. Langowski** closed the meeting at 9:30 p.m.