



MINUTES

**Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee
Wednesday, October 15, 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Eurma C. Hayes Center
441 East Willow Street**

Mr. Langowski called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Members Present: Boeckman, Carter, Clow, Cole, Colombo, Gorton, Gregory, Langowski, Ramseyer, Dr. Reddy, Schachel, Sheffer, Sigler

Members Absent: Bukowski, Stevens, Bleyer, Miller, Terry, Dr. Pink-Harper

Staff Present: Baity, Price, Williams

Approximately 60 persons in attendance.

1) Bring to order:

J. Langowski made his opening remarks.

2) Roll Call and member/facilitator introductory remarks:

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

3) Approval of minutes:

J. Langowski asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 1st, 2014, meeting.

K. Gregory made the motion and **G. Sheffer** seconded the motion and all were in favor.

4) Introductory Remarks:

J. Langowski made introductory remarks.

J. Langowski introduced **Kevin Baity** to give a presentation regarding the sign regulations and provide a vision of updates to the sign code.

K. Baity stated the city updated its sign code in April of 2013. The sign code brought signs that are installed into scale with the rest of downtown. It prevents large commercial

signage from overwhelming the area. The city also added a section to the code that allows for A-frame signs or sandwich board signs.

K. Baity reviewed some of the required spacing to place sidewalk sales and sidewalk seating. For a sidewalk sale, six feet of clear space is required between the curb and the sale area. There has to be an additional three feet of clear space for a walking path. For tables or patio cafés there is a minimum six foot setback from the curb.

K. Baity stated the City Council is currently considering several suggestions made by the committee and is close to implementing some of the items suggested. In particular, they are currently reviewing allowing the serving of alcohol on the City's right-of-way in the area by that business only. The city is currently working on 15 to 18 items to bring to the City Council for their consideration.

J. Langowski thanked **K. Baity** for his comments and introduced **John Washburn (Facilitator)** for this meeting.

J. Langowski introduced **M. Cole** to present **D. Terry's** presentation.

M. Cole stated she was giving this presentation for **Mr. Dan Terry** who was unable to present tonight. She would be stating his opinions and thoughts on the matter. She read the purpose of the sign code. She recommended a maximum 5' overhang for signage over the sidewalk. This would allow for the signs to not interfere with the existing street trees. She also recommended that there be a control over how bright a sign can be. The signs on the rear of a building should not count towards the overall sign square footage of the building. Signs should be a minimum of 9' off the ground to prevent vandalism, to allow for snow removal by equipment, and to create uniformity to the community. There should be a minimum required distance between signage. Both sides of a sign should be counted as part of the total architectural signage requirements. Signs that extend over the sidewalk should be limited to one sign of that type per building side. All new businesses should be given a copy of the regulations that pertain to them. All buildings should be required to have street numbers plainly posted on the building. Most owners don't take time to read the ordinance and complain about things they can do. This is an education issue.

J. Langowski thanked **M. Cole** and introduced **J. Clow** to give his presentation regarding business and directional signage in downtown.

J. Clow discussed Carbondale's pros and cons. He discussed how the following towns slowed traffic and how they streetscaped: Charleston, West Virginia, Effingham, Illinois, Portland, Oregon, Albuquerque, New Mexico and Rosemont, Illinois. He discussed the techniques used by these towns to calm traffic and add life to the downtown. He discussed the poor design of Carbondale's sidewalks and the large quantity of parking along Highway 51. He discussed the addition of Solar Trees to the downtown area. He also suggested making biking a more integral part of our transportation plan. He suggested adding seating spaces, rocks that act as benches, and small park spaces. He also felt the city needs to add directional signage at the Amtrak station. Directional signage needs to be map based with logos of the businesses on top of the business

location. These signs could be funded by the local businesses advertising on them.

J. Langowski thanked **J. Clow** for his presentation and introduced **M. Cole** to present her presentation on effective streetscape opportunities and kiosks.

M. Cole stated the need to define streetscapes. There are two definitions for streetscapes. One definition is a noun, a pictorial view of a street. It can also be defined as an environment of a street. She then showed a typical European streetscape that was pedestrian oriented and then she showed a typical American streetscape that is car oriented. She stated there must be a plan in place to build a downtown effectively. She shared ideas from Lancaster, California and from Decatur, Illinois. In Lancaster, they invested 11.5 million dollars in a 9 block make over. They created parking in the middle of the street and through lanes that were small. This allowed for small gathering spaces in the middle of landscaped islands in the right-of-way. This generated 300,000 dollars in private investment, 52 new businesses and the construction of 800 new housing units, all within the last 5 years. The street festivals held in this area have drawn tens of thousands of people to the town. The idea of a streetscape is wonderful, but there has to be a plan that guides it all. She stated the need to provide the “WOW” factor that is being sought.

J. Langowski thanked **M. Cole** for her presentation and introduced **K. Gregory** to give her presentation.

K. Gregory reviewed the improvements that occurred as a result of the 1990 downtown plan. She spoke about Kent, Ohio and its 130 million dollar downtown project. Kent added wide sidewalks and open spaces. The project created 700 jobs, opened 50 businesses, 55 million a year in investments in the downtown and increased the taxes from downtown by 12.62%.

K. Gregory discussed Normal, Illinois and its downtown improvement program. Kent used the downtown roundabout as a public space. The city used traffic calming techniques, public arts, buried electrical lines and bike paths to help improve the downtown. It increased the equalized assessed value of the downtown 200 million dollars. She suggested looking at Lancaster, California; Portland, Oregon; Greenville, South Carolina; Cleveland, Ohio; and Indianapolis, Indiana. We must be aesthetically intentional, attractive and viable. The improvements to downtown will help improve the quality of life for all members of the community.

J. Langowski thanked **K. Gregory** for her presentation and turned the meeting over to **John Washburn (Facilitator)**

5) Comments from the public

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

Miriam Link-Mullison, Director of the Jackson County Health Department (audience member) she stated the improvements in the sidewalks and cross walks would greatly improve the walkability of downtown which would improve the health of the

community. If the downtown is visually appealing, people will want to walk and this will make huge health impacts in our community. She provided a copy of the Complete Streets manual to J. Langowski.

J. D. Hagler (audience member) stated he is in marketing and wants the community to think about who our market is and that should tell us how to develop our downtown. He feels the only market for the strip is the students. Most residents do not frequent the strip portion of the downtown, they frequent the malls. He asks how we are able to best serve the student market.

Arnold Taylor (audience member) stated we should take care of the things we have. If we would maintain the signs and existing streetscape, downtown would look a lot better.

Jane Adams (audience member) stated she noted there were no railroad towns noted in the examples provided. The city should be making the town attractive from the train passenger's point of view as well. Carbondale has an opportunity to treat the bike path as a kind of "river walk" and treat it as a public asset. It should be landscaped and made into a very attractive place. The city should find a way to make the railroad an asset.

No name given (audience member) We should focus on the Complete Streets program. The use of pervious concrete should be required. He felt there is not a great path for walkers from Memorial Hospital to come into downtown.

Lee Fronabarger (audience member) stated he feels the utility lines must be buried for downtown to thrive. Parade magazine featured 15 of the best downtowns in a recent article and 14 of the 15 had buried their utility lines. We need way-finding signs downtown.

Jerry Molumby, Keep Carbondale Beautiful (audience member) stated he sent a report to the Committee on the streetscape and landscaping topic that was issued in November of 2013. This report was generated out of meetings Keep Carbondale Beautiful held regarding this topic. The number one issue in the report was to bury utility lines.

Don Monty (audience member) the soils in the area won't support pervious concrete. The burying of the utility lines would be prohibitively expensive. If the city moves the lines to the back of the building, many building owners will have to spend money to rewire their buildings. Normal, Illinois achieved this by placing a tariff on the utility bills to pay for the project. He asked that the committee figure out how to make things practical and affordable.

Jane Adams (audience member) she stated she went to a meeting with Craig Anz's architectural students and they stated that downtown was too dark. She asked how we can make Carbondale and the downtown brighter year round.

J. D. Hagler (audience member) Albuquerque, New Mexico has created some interesting ideas. They have painted concrete. He suggested using crowd funding to pay for projects. Solar trees are a great idea.

G. Sheffer asked what he was suggesting we paint.

J. D. Hagler (audience member) stated he wasn't sure but concrete is ugly. Maybe we paint the curbs to tie areas of downtown together using color and a design language both on the way-finding signs and on the street itself.

Luke Henson (audience member) Lighting is a huge issue downtown. The lack of lighting makes it feel unsafe downtown.

Jessica Bradshaw (audience member) she suggested creating a barrier between the railroad and the northern businesses. This barrier would hide those businesses and provide for a space for public art to be enjoyed by the train passengers. She liked the color tiles across from the Amtrak station and suggested something similar for the barrier wall. She likes the idea of solar trees and suggested covering parking lots with solar panel canopies. She suggested looking at Santa Cruz, California. **E. Ramseyer** and **J. Bradshaw** discussed the solar panel canopies.

6) Brief Recess

John Washburn (Facilitator) began a recess at 7:58 pm.

7) Comments from the Committee members

The meeting was called back into session at 8:04 pm by **John Washburn (Facilitator)**.

Dr. Reddy stated he feels the sign code is very strict. He asks for flexibility in the code. He asked for more murals to be used. He wants an app for downtown that would inform visitors and residents where businesses are and what events are occurring downtown. There should be a phone line available downtown to get help when needed. The phones should be placed frequently down the strip. Big way-finding signs should be provided and they should be a unique shape. The same type of signage should be provided along the bike path. Future sign technology needs to be accommodated.

J. Sigler asked what the options are if we do not control Highway 51. Can we fix the flooding along S. Illinois Ave. to protect the future investments to be made? Can the sidewalk layout be changed if we don't control the highway? The infrastructure and base has to be solid before we can start making things pretty. We need to develop a downtown brand.

J. Clow stated SIH has a great pedestrian path into the downtown. The block between N. University Ave. and N. Illinois Ave. along E. Jackson St. is one of the prettiest blocks in the city. What if every new project had to provide green energy? All of our streetscape needs to be cohesive and thought out.

N. Colombo stated we need to make our improvements work to direct people around downtown. Color coding improvements, provide maps and street guides will assist directing people around downtown. Produce utilitarian lighting that is at a lower level to

cause brighter lighting at street level.

K. Gregory stated uptown Normal, Illinois was so successful because they were nearly debt free. This allowed them to take out bonds to assist with the project and their council was very workable. She felt the downtown area needs more bike racks.

J. Langowski stated cities tend to place welcome signs only on the perimeter of the city. We need signs to attract people to the downtown area. He loves the idea of welcome signs along the railroad.

D. Gorton stated on his journeys he has noticed all downtowns are trying to improve. He is happy the City is trying to be proactive and not waiting until the Committee finishes its work to begin putting ideas into motion. He felt our signage should be inspired by our railroad heritage.

D. Boeckman stated utility burying needs to occur. The City needs to work harder on providing better infrastructure downtown. We need to work on our sidewalks downtown to allow for better pedestrian circulation.

K. Schachel stated she feels we need more bike racks in the downtown area. She liked the idea that Greenville, Illinois had regarding the little paintings of people on buildings. Welcome to downtown signs are needed as well as way-finding signage.

G. Sheffer stated the first image someone sees of a town gives them their impression. We should improve our welcome signs, mow the grass along our roads, make the bike trail a destination area and provide safe, convenient parking. The downtown requires local residents to survive. The area needs to be known for something, such as our bike paths. Lighting downtown is important. Provide security cameras downtown. We must support new businesses downtown so others will follow in their footsteps. Success breeds success.

E. Ramseyer stated the businesses downtown must have local people to survive. Downtown traffic needs to be slowed with wider sidewalks. Her block could be used as a model to share with downtown. During the day, the strip could be for locals and residents, during the night, the strip could be for students and nightlife. The City's way-finding signs need to include things that are outside of our downtown. Decorative lighting should be encouraged downtown. Additional bike racks are needed.

Sally Carter stated we should bury the utility lines. We need to clean the debris from downtown and repaint our curbs. Welcome signs should be at all entrances to the city. They should incorporate SIU, SIH, and the city.

M. Cole stated the downtown cannot survive with only students. Students are only here 7 to 8 months out of the year. People come to Carbondale to be entertained. 50% of our sales tax dollars come from outside our City limits. We should also do more than one project at a time so we do not have to repeat work. Retail will come once there is a customer base built.

8) Adjournment

J. Langowski announced the next meeting. It will be at the Varsity Center for the Arts on October 29th, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

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

D. Gorton made a motion to adjourn the meeting

G. Sheffer seconded; all were in favor.

J. Langowski closed the meeting at 8:47 p.m.