



MINUTES

**Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee
Wednesday, October 29, 2014, 6:30 p.m.
Varsity Center for the Arts
418 South Illinois Avenue**

Mr. Langowski called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Bleyer, Terry, Dr. Pink-Harper

Staff Present: Baity, Price, Williams

Approximately 73 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 three absences and announced a quorum was present.

J. Langowski noted Dr. Pink-Harper had resigned due to complications with her work.

3) Approval of minutes:

J. Langowski asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 15th, 2014, meeting.

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

4) Introductory Remarks:

J. Langowski made introductory remarks.

J. Langowski introduced **John Washburn (Facilitator)**

J. Langowski introduced **Peter Pirmann** to give a presentation regarding the Varsity Center for the Arts view on what downtown should do and how the Varsity can help.

P. Pirmann stated the renovation of the Varsity Center for the Arts should help create a focal point for downtown. The renovated and restored theater will provide a “wow” when passengers exit the train station. The Varsity can help enhance the cultural options of the region, provide a location for cultural events, provide access to performing arts for all ages and incomes, provide a home for the Jackson County Stage Company also known as The Stage Company, and provide a resource for the artistic, cultural, educational and entertainment industries in the area that services the community.

P. Pirmann reviewed some of the events that the Varsity has hosted this year. They had 8 events with the Carbondale Music Coalition, 5 plays presented by The Stage Company, and had 249 days of events in the facility. They actively work with Carbondale Main Street and the Carbondale Park District. The Varsity is currently working to begin having art shows at the facility.

P. Pirmann stated the community has a need to found an Arts and Entertainment Coalition. We must work together to accomplish goals.

J. Langowski thanked **P. Pirmann** for his comments and introduced **Trent Stevens** to present his presentation.

T. Stevens stated he was going to speak about what Carbondale has and does not have as far as arts and entertainment goes.

T. Stevens stated we have the Varsity Center for the Arts, The Stage Company, Carbondale Community Arts and the African American Art Museum. We have the Long Branch which offers multiple types of entertainment. We have Global Gourmet, The Newell House and Tres Hombres. They all offer music venues. We host the Lights Fantastic parade, The Great Pumpkin Race, Farmers Markets and the sunset concerts. He noted the downtown is primarily parking lots. He stated you could change the lot next to the Town Square Pavilion into a gathering area and music venue.

T. Stevens stated the downtown is lacking a downtown museum. The use of SIUC museum resources could help build a museum downtown. We need to have annual events like the Great Pig Out, Art Festivals, Food Events and a downtown farmers market. We also need a bike hostel for the riders of the Transamerica bike trail. We also need to relax our rules regarding outdoor alcohol consumption at restaurants. We must engage the community to be successful. The suggestion of the coalition will help keep the downtown active.

J. Langowski thanked **T. Stevens** and introduced Curtis Conley to give his presentation regarding music entertainment in downtown.

C. Conley, President of the Carbondale Music Coalition, discussed his background and his connection with the Carbondale Music Coalition. He stated Carbondale is a music town. We are the main center for music between St. Louis and Nashville. We

have a large number of live music events and draw national acts to Carbondale. Live music provides for positive memories of Carbondale. We have a very diverse set of musicians that play in our entertainment venues. We have Jazz, Rock, Blue Grass, and many others. Carbondale could host a spring and fall music festival. The City should support the venues. We need a larger venue in downtown to support larger shows. He asked if the SIU facilities could be used more often and could the City and SIU host events together. A solid downtown hotel and a great taxi service or two are needed in the City.

J. Langowski thanked **C. Conley** for his presentation and introduced **M. Bukowski** to present her presentation on Art Streetscapes.

M. Bukowski stated there are 750,000 arts businesses in the United States that employ 3.06 million artists. In other cities she has been to, they took to installing art in places people go to for other uses, such as subway stations. Pittsburg has begun the process of removing old steel mills and turning their footprint into community cultural centers. She recommended that we place an art gallery on the second floor of the new multi-modal transit center the City is proposing. We could also place a large 18th century style lithograph of events in the City's past on the first floor lobby area to great newcomers to the City. We could have an art tour of downtown where the art areas are open and businesses offer spaces for artists to display their work and drive business downtown. We could paint unique cross walks on our streets, we could have unique bike racks downtown that are created by our blacksmithing and metalsmithing schools. We could create public interactive art downtown. The Carbondale Community for the Arts obtaining a permanent location should greatly help the artistic community.

J. Langowski thanked **M. Bukowski** for her presentation and introduced **John Washburn (Facilitator)** to handle the public comment portion of the meeting.

5) Comments from the public

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

Kaylen Hill (audience member) stated he believes Carbondale is a music town. It's a great resource to revitalize the downtown. In his experience, 20% of the attendees at the Hanger 9 productions are local. That means 80% of the people are from a non-Carbondale address and are bringing in new money to the city and staying longer. The Downtown can be a destination all by itself. We need to showcase downtown by having a concert series that includes downtown as a venue.

D. Gorton asked how does the concert series work?

Kaylen Hall (audience member) stated the city provides permits and a small budget for support. If we create the energy, people will get on board. The concessions and sponsorships could pay for the concert series. If it is done correctly, people will get on board and support it.

Kathy Livingston (audience member) stated we should revive Buckminster Fuller's

ideas. We are the only city that can claim him and we should use him to promote the town. People around the world already associate him with Carbondale. We should build an interpretive dome downtown so the community could learn about his ideas and concepts. It could also provide a “wow” factor for downtown. We should also provide for more film showings. The community should all support one another.

Patricia Preston (audience member) stated she has worked for years with underprivileged youth. We must consider the young person when dealing with the arts. She felt art has the ability to change a person. It has the ability to touch the soul. We need to bring family events into town to help expose the entire family unit to the art work. We must involve the schools and help provide easy access to the art and entertainment offered in Carbondale. We should consider offering free, or very low cost, art shows. We need to consider diversity in our art and music offerings. A Gospel concert would be a wonderful addition to the music scene.

Nancy Stemper, Executive Director Carbondale Community Arts (audience member) stated the city does help the arts community by providing funding to the Carbondale Community Arts to use grant funds to local artists. They do partner with the Varsity and The Stage Company. They are moving to a building one building off of S. University Avenue on West Walnut Street. She would like to revive the “Stars on Main” program. It promotes local people and provides a method to teach about Carbondale’s history. She discussed upcoming events that are hosted by Carbondale Community Arts.

Jane Adams (audience member) stated the community needs a permanent building to host the farmers market in. This building could be a multi-use building and host music events, winter farmers markets, art festivals and many other events. There needs to be more unstructured teen activities in town. One activity could be to provide a world class skate park.

Beth Martel, SIU Special Collections (audience member) stated she has set up some exhibits in the SIU museum in Fanner hall regarding Carbondale’s history on Halloween. She also discussed upcoming exhibits.

John Davie, President of the Buckminster Fuller Dome Home Preservation Project (audience member) asked the committee to use the Buckminster Fuller dome as a branding device. He also announced upcoming events that would be occurring at the Buckminster Fuller dome.

Cody Roach (audience member) stated we need to empower the people who live here to participate and express themselves creatively. We need to remove the red tape and allow more events downtown.

6) Brief Recess

John Washburn (Facilitator) began a recess at 8:15 pm.

7) Comments from the Committee members

The meeting was called back into session at 8:20 pm by **John Washburn (Facilitator)**.

T. Stevens stated he did not know about all the things Hanger 9 does.

E. Ramseyer stated we need an arts coalition for the city. A place for art in this town is needed. Arts and Entertainment is the real economic engine that can drive this town.

K. Schachel stated food can be an entertainment source. Having a food fest could generate a lot of interest in downtown. There is also a program to help at risk youth that provides personal discipline and conflict resolution through martial arts and dance and other creative means.

J. Langowski stated this meeting had many great ideas. He gathered the main idea was the community needs to come together to allow for larger events.

M. Cole We need to advertise our downtown more. We need to take pride in our downtown and our art and entertainment scene.

N. Colombo stated the streets need to be made appealing to the eyes and ears. We should encourage more street performers and fill our streets with sound.

D. Gorton stated the group must turn in its vision statement on the 15th of November. The community partnerships are vital in order to make any plan work. How do we define our statements and ensure the ideas are understood?

K. Gregory stated we need a larger venue that is either privately owned or city owned. We must make diverse events available through community partnerships.

J. Clow stated we need a movie theater downtown to allow for a “date night” activity. All of the museums in town should be in one building to allow more publicity and partnerships between the museums. We should have year round Friday night fairs. We need a downtown carnival. He thinks the crosswalk ideas could be done immediately.

S. Carter stated she loved the idea of public art. It should be coordinated with the School of Art at SIU. It would allow SIU students to produce and install the art and have a sense of ownership of downtown. We should have our own regional event. We should continue the Sunset Concert series into fall so the students can attend.

G. Sheffer said the partnerships are required for this plan to function. The downtown won't work without events and we need an area for them. All of the arts should be pulled together in coalitions. Parking is vital to the downtown. With 80% of the customers coming from outside Carbondale, there has to be a place to park or they won't come. When all these ideas are pulled together in a final document, it must be usable and valuable.

J. Langowski stated there is a solid plan in place to provide for summation and a valuable report to City Council.

G. Sheffer stated we must be able to pay for the plan as well.

Dr. Reddy stated we need a master calendar of events for Carbondale and copies need to be in every downtown business. He felt the City should convert the old Horizon Inn into a concert venue. The city needs festivals. There is a large international population in Carbondale and we need to allow for them to have events. There should be a theater here that shows international films.

8) Adjournment

J. Langowski announced the next meeting. It will be at the Carbondale Community High School on November 12th, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

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

S. Carter made a motion to adjourn the meeting

G. Sheffer seconded; all were in favor.

J. Langowski closed the meeting at 8:50 p.m.