

Report on DAC Meeting #5

Focus on Signs and Streetscapes

DRAFT

**Meghan Cole
Jeremy Clow
Kristin Gregory
Dan Terry
October 25, 2014**

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Summary of Public Meeting.....	3
Summary of Concepts Generated.....	5
Concept Voting Results.....	7
Tally Results.....	8
Future Direction.....	10
Meeting Minutes.....	11

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Summary of Meeting

The Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC), commissioned by the Carbondale City Council, met for the fifth time on October 15, 2014, at 6:30pm at the Eurma C. Hayes Center. The DAC meeting was Chaired by Jack Langowski, and facilitated by John Washburn. Jack Langowski called roll; thirteen out of nineteen members were present.

The committee unanimously approved the minutes from the meeting held October 1, 2014. Jack Langowski introduced Kevin Baity, who gave a presentation regarding the sign code, which was updated recently, in April of 2013. He stated that the City Council, as well as the Liquor Advisory Board, were looking into changes to the code to allow sidewalk seating and sales.

Jack Langowski introduced Meghan Cole, and explained that she would be presenting for Dan Terry. Ms. Cole read the purpose of the sign code, and then highlighted several suggestions that Mr. Terry had outlined, including some changes to the regulations, and also that every new business should be presented with a copy of the sign code and be required to have street numbers plainly posted on their buildings.

Jeremy Clow presented what he considered to be “pros” and “cons” of Carbondale. He also discussed traffic calming measures and how these should be implemented into our streetscape. He suggested the use of solar trees, adding small seating areas, rocks that would act as benches, and other affordable measures. He recommended better signage, with advertising opportunities for downtown businesses.

Meghan Cole presented the definition of a streetscape, and provided some examples of what other communities have done to improve the look of their downtowns while increasing the economic viability of their cities. She focused on Lancaster, California, where the city spent \$11.5 million and generated 52 new

businesses and 800 housing units in the last five years. She said, “We have the opportunity to dream big”.

Kristin Gregory discussed several case studies, focusing on tangible results that streetscaping had generated. She highlighted both Normal, Illinois and Kent, Ohio, and several other communities. She discussed the return on investment associated with streetscaping and traffic calming measures.

Jack Langowski turned the meeting over to John Washburn, who laid ground rules for public commenting and opened the floor to the public. The committee heard many public comments: streetscape as a means for health improvement, marketing the downtown to students, the need for better City maintenance, using the railroad as inspiration, using pervious concrete, burying the power lines or moving them to the backs of lots, and more. Jerry Mulomby, President of Keep Carbondale Beautiful, presented results from a town meeting in 2013 which outlined many suggestions for streetscaping, many in the downtown. Other public comments included using a tariff to finance the burying of the lines, year-round lighting, painting the curbs, using crowdfunding to raise money for improvements, and using art displays behind buildings to beautify our train-scape. The full minutes of the meeting (which can be found in this report, on page 11) include all public comments in detail.

John Washburn began a recess at 7:58pm; he called the meeting back into session at 8:04pm. All of the committee members present made comments, mostly reflecting on public comments and echoing the need for a better streetscape and better signage throughout downtown. All committee comments can be found in the full meeting minutes (page 11 of this report).

Jack Langowski asked all of the committee members to vote on their top 5 comments or ideas, generated from both public and committee comments, collected by John Washburn.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm.

Summary of Concepts Generated

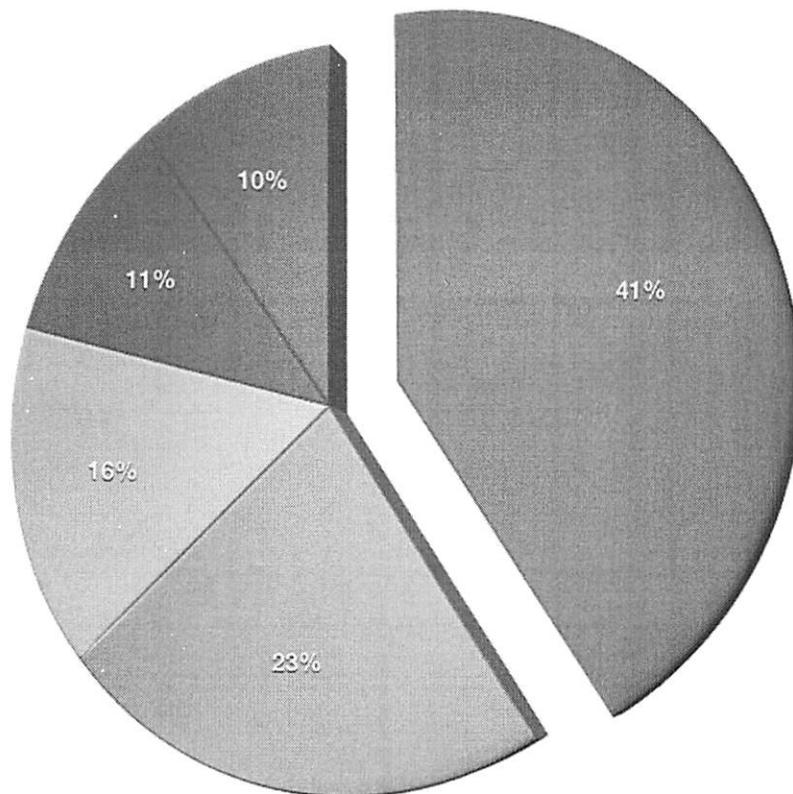
Through public and committee member comments, facilitated by John Washburn, the following twenty concepts were generated from the DAC meeting on Signage and Streetscape issues:

1. Lessen distance a sign can extend over a sidewalk from 6 feet to 5 feet.
2. Maximum brightness for signage to bring clarity and guidelines.
3. Extend minimum clearance from sidewalk to signage extending over sidewalk from 8 feet to 9 feet.
4. Set a minimum distance between signs that extend over sidewalk.
5. Allow one sign per building per side of building.
6. Send signage letter to new businesses with signage and landscape codes.
7. Make sidewalks more accessible – level and remove stairs.
8. Need directional signage/maps to show where businesses or events are located both within the downtown and beyond (wineries, Shawnee Forest Trail; apply “way finding” technology
9. Install fountains.
10. Be cognizant of streetscapes effect on health and safety.
11. Streetscaping should be cognizant of serving SIU student market.
12. Maintain existing and new signs; too many are angled.
13. Repair the pavement on East Jackson and North Washington.
14. Make landscaping and signage attractive for railroad passengers.
15. Consider Washington Street along the railroad tracks as a public space for children and adults.
16. Adopt the recommendations of the Complete Streets Program.
17. Use recommendation of “solar trees”. (same as 23)
18. Consider a pervious concrete ordinance.
19. Bury the overhead utility wires and finance with a utility bill tariff or other similar mechanism.

20. Place murals on buildings and at the entrance to the city.
21. Be cognizant of how pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicle drivers get to and from the downtown.
22. Use appropriate lighting in the downtown to make it brighter (lower the lamp to spread out the brightness).
23. Consider the use of solar trees to conserve power. (same as 17)
24. Consider student – downtown interface (both walkways and bike paths) as a destination area.
25. Use colored squares like the train station along the tracks as you approach Carbondale.
26. Consider solar-powered streetlights and within parking lots.
27. The city ordinance for signage is too strict and needs more flexibility to cater to the human element.
28. Consider an internet application that would represent a “talking” sign for businesses.
29. Install phones in the downtown area for visitors to request help or directional assistance.
30. Establish large signs at the entrance roads to the city and the downtown area showing home of SIU and SIH and along the railroad tracks.
31. Create and install signage along the bike paths.
32. Before we can beautify the downtown, we need to take care of major infrastructure issues, such as storm water drainage, uneven sidewalks, etc.
33. What’s the brand for downtown Carbondale?
34. Consider colored sidewalks, coded to represent different types of businesses.
35. Install secure bike racks in the downtown area.
36. We need a proactive city staff that makes frequent recommendations to the city council.
37. Adopt the “railroad heritage” theme into future signs.
38. Mount security camera in the downtown area.
39. Paint curbs and crosswalks in the downtown area.

Concept Voting Results

SIGNAGE, STREETScape AND BEAUTIFICATION - CARBONDALE DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE



*THE COMMITTEE'S TOP FIVE CHOICES -
BASED ON WEIGHTED VOTES*

- BURY UTILITY LINES
- REPAIR MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE
- ADOPT "WAYFINDING" SIGNAGE
- ADOPT "COMPLETE STREETS" PROGRAM
- MAKE SIDEWALKS MORE ACCESSIBLE, INSTALL MURALS ON BUILDINGS AND AT CITY ENTRANCES

The above graphic shows the top five concepts to be explored, as voted on by the DAC members at the meeting held October 15, 2014. For all results in detail, see the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet found [here](#).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TALLY RESULTS

Signage/Streetscapes/Beautification of Downtown

Ranking	Item #	Item	Number of times selected 1	Weighted rank 1=5	Number of times selected 2	Weighted rank 2=4	Number of times selected 3	Weighted rank 3=3	Number of times selected 4	Weighted rank 4=2	Number of times selected 5	Weighted rank 5=1	Overall Rank
	20	Place murals on buildings and at city entrances	1	5	1	4							9
	16	Adopt the Complete Streets Program					11	6	1	2	11	2	10
	35	Install secure bike racks in downtown							1	2			2
	19	Bury the utility lines in the downtown area	1 11 1 11	30			1	3	11	4	1	1	38
	6	Send signage letter and codes to business applicant									1 1		2
	36	Pro-active city staff			1	4							4
	32	Take care of major infrastructure issues	1	5	11	8	11	6	1	2			21
	37	Adopt the "railroad heritage" theme in signage							1 1				2
	15	Consider space along railroad tracks/Washington Street as a public space for children/adults	1										5
	22	Use appropriate lighting in downtown area			1111	16	1	3			11	2	21
	8	"Way Finding" directional signage and technology	11	10	1	4					1	1	15
	14	Attractive signage for railroad passengers					1 1	6	1	2			8
	33	Establish a brand for downtown			1	4			1	2	1	1	7
	10	Understand health and safety implications of signage			1	4					1	1	5
	7	Make sidewalks more accessible			1	4	1	3	1	2			9
	23	Consider solar trees to conserve power			1	4					11	2	6
	34	Colorcoded sidewalks							1	2			2
	24	Consider student downtown walkways/bike paths	1	5			1	3					8
	11	Streetscape aligned with SIU student market									1		1
	30	Establish large signs at the entrance to Carbondale	1	5			1	3					8
	27	Reduce strictness of city code for signage					1	3					3
	28	Internet application as a "talking sign" for business							1	2			2
	39	Paint curbs and sidewalks							1	2			2
	1	Lessen signage extension distance over sidewalk											
	2	Maximum brightness for signage											
	3	Extend minimum clearance from sidewalk to overhead signage											
	4	Set minimum distance between signs hanging over sidewalks											
	5	Allow one sign per each side of a building											
	9	Install fountains											
	12	Perform maintenance on new and existing signs											
	13	Repair pavement at East Jackson and North Washington Streets											
	17	Use solar trees (same as 23)											
	18	Consider a pervious concrete ordinance											
	21	Be cognizant of walkers, bikers, and drivers											
	25	Use colored squares along the tracks as you approach Carbondale											

Future Direction

The committee should recommend to City Council that when implementing a new streetscape design, which is very much needed, burying utility lines should be central to the design. While burying lines, we should also repair other infrastructure issues, like the street drainage system, the leveling of sidewalks, etc., and we should use signage to better direct people downtown. Traffic calming measures were brought up several times during the meeting.

The City Council should explore ways to fund streetscape and infrastructure improvements, but should understand that an investment in downtown is necessary, and that the community is crying out for improvement. We as a community should make a commitment to beautifying and improving our downtown for the future residents and businesses of Carbondale.

At the same time, the City should first do some of the “easier” things to improve our streetscape, like paint the curbs and install cohesive, welcoming signage. These things can signify a start to downtown improvement.



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.