

# **Report on DAC Meeting #6**

## **Focus on Arts and Entertainment**

**Marie Bukowski**

**Meghan Cole**

**Elaine Ramseyer**

**Trent Stevens**

**November 7, 2014**

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## Summary of Meeting

The Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC), commissioned by the Carbondale City Council, met for the sixth time on October 29, 2014, at 6:30pm at the Varsity Center for the Arts. The DAC meeting was Chaired by Jack Langowski, and facilitated by John Washburn. Jack Langowski called roll; sixteen out of nineteen members were present.

Peter Pirmann, the host and President of the Varsity Center for the Arts, began the evening with a presentation on how the Varsity can help facilitate what it can do for the downtown. He stated that arts and entertainment should be a focal point for Carbondale. The Varsity's role is to enhance cultural opportunities and public art. Through the Varsity, Carbondale can access the broadest spectrum of the arts. Pirmann noted that with the renovated and restored façade of the theater, this will be a wow-factor for visitors who exit the train station. He reminded the audience that the Varsity is already hosting events and that there are arts and entertainment activities currently in Carbondale. Pirmann stated that there is a need for an arts and entertainment coalition to facilitate all arts-related events for the community.

Trent Stevens, DAC member, presented information on what Carbondale currently offers and what it needs. He noted that the downtown has The Stage Company, Carbondale Community Arts, music venues, and an African American Museum. He went on to mention that the restaurants around the square offer shows, classes, films, live jazz, and Latin and Soul music. There is an importance to having annual and regular events on the calendar such as Lights Fantastic, The Great Pumpkin Race, Farmer's Market, and Sunset Concerts. Currently, Carbondale is lacking a downtown museum and annual events that showcase the downtown area. He mentioned that we are on the Trans America Cycling Route, and suggested that we could host an annual cycling event and build a hostel for cyclists coming through our area. He commented that community engagement is

a cornerstone of any effective revitalization effort and must be an early ingredient in building a strong downtown.

Curtis Conley, President of the Carbondale Music Coalition, discussed music entertainment. He pointed out that Carbondale is known as a music town and is the regional music destination to see live music on a regular basis. The Hangar 9 is the only downtown concert destination, therefore a larger music venue is needed for larger music venues. He noted that only 16% of the 350 attendees at a recent sold out show at the Hangar 9 were Carbondale residents; he noted that 200 came from over fifty miles away. With better venues and marketing, the City of Carbondale needs to embrace our role as the music capital of Southern Illinois; they could do so by hosting a Spring music festival, like in Austin, TX. He noted that private groups and venues are currently in place and working, but could be improved with further City assistance. He said, "Turning the Strip around would be very expensive. Events would be much less expensive." Successful music festivals could encourage private investment.

He also said, "The Varsity is a big, open, building that's not open a lot; not in the mind of downtown goers. We have a 150 seat theater. What can we do to make the building more functional and draw more people?...We have a 500 seat theater right next door that is unused." Conley recommended bringing larger shows to Southern Illinois University's Shryock Auditorium and the Arena. He also stated that we can use music as a draw to get people to come to downtown Carbondale. A new multi-modal transportation center and downtown hotel would help the music scene. He commented that we could be a "real music town" that would have a big impact on the economy of Carbondale.

Marie Bukowski, DAC member, presented information on the role that the arts has in small cities. She spoke of experiences in other cities that brought the arts directly to the public. In Pittsburgh, PA, art galleries were placed directly above subway stations in the city and suggested that this could take place in the multi-modal transportation center in Carbondale. This transportation center would also be ideal for murals that depicted the history of the city. She also recommended an annual arts event, like what was successful in Ruston, LA, that can take place

downtown as a means for economic development. The event in Ruston grew to have an annual impact of over \$3 million in just ten years. With the number 1 blacksmithing program in the country, SIU has the resources to create unique bike racks and public art works with a music or railroad theme. Painting crosswalks is an exciting and inexpensive way of bringing functional art directly to the public.

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, including interest in creating a specific area in downtown to host events, reviving the Buckminster Fuller legacy, a venue for international films, a movie theater downtown, and many more suggestions. The full minutes of the meeting (which can be found in this report, on page 11) include all public comments in detail.

John Washburn called for a 5-minute recess after all public comments were heard. At 8:20pm, Jack Langowski called the meeting back into session. Committee members offered comments, including the need for an arts coalition, having a food fest, more advertising for downtown events, diverse events through community partnerships, year-round Friday night fairs, and a master calendar of events for Carbondale. All committee comments can be found in the full meeting minutes (page 11 of this report).

Jack Langowski asked the committee to review the list of concepts generated via both public and committee comments after the meeting adjourned, and to vote individually on their top five most important concepts to pursue to improve arts and entertainment planning in the downtown.

Langowski announced the next meeting on November 12, 2014 at 6:30pm at the Carbondale Community High School. The focus will be Economic, Civic, and Neighborhood Vitality. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.

## Summary of Concepts Generated

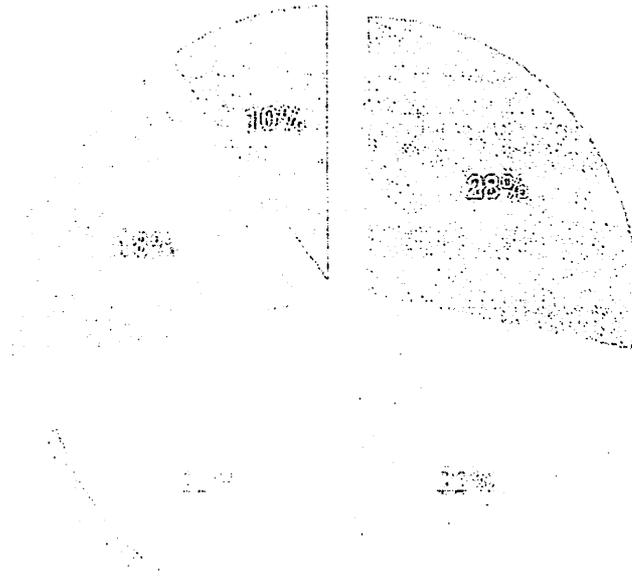
Through public and committee member comments, facilitated by John Washburn, the following concepts were generated from the DAC meeting on Arts and Entertainment issues:

1. Arts & Entertainment as a focal point for downtown – the Varsity as center.
2. Form an arts and entertainment coalition.
3. Place where bands can showcase that are family friendly.
4. Remove selected parking meters.
5. Museum downtown – piggyback off SIU.
6. Annual BBQ competition, street fairs, Taste of Carbondale, downtown carnival, international festival (multiple events).
7. Embrace Carbondale's role as the entertainment capital of Southern Illinois – music festival – encourage outside consumers (music destination).
8. Partner with SIU to use Shryock Auditorium or Arena.
9. Put an art gallery on top of multi-modal transportation center – paint a large mural sharing history of Carbondale.
10. Holiday Art Tour downtown.
11. Artistic bike paths/sculpture/partner with SIU – crosswalks, bike racks.
12. Expand public art in downtown, possibly interactive.
13. ~~Identify Carbondale as a music destination.~~ (Duplicate of Number 7)
14. Revive Buckminster Fuller legacy – interpretive dome.
15. Take into consideration the needs of young people in Carbondale for arts and entertainment.
16. Consider economic and multi-national diversity as an issue when formulating arts and entertainment events.

17. Utilize Southern Arts Fund to engage young people and community.
18. Revive "Stars on Main".
19. Multi-use, year-round farmer's market to draw people downtown.
20. State-of-the-art skateboard park.
21. As we consider art, engage local citizens in the process.
22. Consider food as entertainment.
23. Street performers.
24. Movie theater downtown.
25. Fall sunset concert series.
26. Need a specific area in downtown to host events.
27. Monthly event calendar.
28. Access to movies for international students (screening international films).

### Concept Voting Results

#### ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT - TOP FIVE WEIGHTED CHOICES



- Form Arts/Entertainment coalition
- Expand public art downtown: Specific Area to host events
- Carbondale as Entertainment Capital of Southern Illinois
- SIU Museum Downtown

The above graphic shows the top five concepts to be explored, as voted on by the DAC members at the meeting held October 30, 2014. For all results in detail, see the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet found [here](#).

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT TALLY RESULTS

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
1	2	Form an arts and entertainment coalition.	5	25	1	4	1	3	1	2	0	0	34
2	12	Expand public art in downtown, possibly interactive	2	10	4	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
2	26	Need a specific area in downtown to host events.	3	15	1	4	1	3	2	4	0	0	26
4	7	Embrace Carbondale's role as the entertainment capital of Southern Illinois.	2	10	2	8	1	3	0	0	1	1	22
5	5	Museum downtown – piggyback off SIU.	0	0	2	8	0	0	2	4	0	0	12
6	25	Fall sunset concert series.	0	0	0	0	2	6	2	4	1	1	11
6	19	Multi-use, year-round farmer's market to draw people downtown.	0	0	1	4	1	3	1	2	2	2	11
8	6	Annual BBQ competition, street fairs, Taste of Carbondale, downtown carnival, international festival (multiple events).	0	0	1	4	2	6	0	0	0	0	10
8	11	Artistic bike paths/sculpture/partner with SIU – crosswalks, bike racks.	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	4	3	3	10
8	14	Revive Buckminster Fuller legacy – interpretive dcme.	1	5	0	0	1	3	1	2	0	0	10
11	10	Holiday Art Tour downtown.	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	2	1	1	7
11	27	Monthly event calendar.	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	7
13	3	Place where bands can showcase that are family friendly	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	6
13	17	Utilize Southern Arts Fund to engage young people and community.	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	6
13	28	Access to movies for international students (screening international films).	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	3	3	6
16	15	Take into consideration the needs of young people in Carbondale for arts and entertainment.	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
16	23	Street performers.	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
18	9	Put an art gallery on top of multi-modal transportation center – paint a large mural sharing history of Carbondale.	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
18	22	Consider food as entertainment.	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
18	24	Movie theater downtown.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	4
21	4	Remove selected parking meters.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2
21	16	Consider economic and multi-national diversity as an issue when formulating arts and entertainment events.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2
23	20	State-of-the-art skateboard park.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	1	Arts & Entertainment as a focal point for downtown – the Varsity as center.											
	8	Partner with SIU to use Shryock Auditorium or Arena											
	13	Identify Carbondale as a music destination.											
	18	Revive "Stars on Main".											
	21	As we consider art, engage local citizens in the process.											

## **Future Direction**

There was an overwhelming interest in forming an arts and entertainment coalition to initiate and facilitate arts-related events in Carbondale. There was also a strong interest in expanding public art/interactive art in the downtown area as a means of beautification and bringing the residents of Carbondale together. Another idea that generated the same strong interest was creating a specific area in downtown to host arts and music events. This will revitalize Carbondale, bringing people together in family-friendly environments. There was also a lot of interest in strengthening Carbondale's role as the entertainment capital of Southern Illinois. This would make Carbondale the catalyst of economic development in the region. It is recognized that the arts and music can be the economic driver to bring residents to artistic venues and draw visitors to the city for cultural experiences.

The committee should recommend to City Council that these areas are economically feasible approaches to reinvigorating the city through the creation of public art. The City Council should also support the creation of a Carbondale Arts and Entertainment Coalition.



## 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.

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**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

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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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 18<sup>th</sup> century style lithograph of events in the City's past on the first floor lobby area to greet 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup>, 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.