



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved DOWNTOWN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Thursday, June 20, 2019

5:30 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 206 (Madison Municipal Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 9 - Michael E. Verveer; Patrick W. Heck; Kathy L. Marks; Adam J. Plotkin; Ted Crabb; Zachary Henak; Davy Mayer; Sandra J. Torkildson and Lori J. Henn
Excused: 1 - Gregory O. Frank

APPROVAL OF May 16, 2019 MINUTES

A motion was made by Plotkin, seconded by Marks, to Approve the May 16, 2019 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

1. [54361](#) Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2019

Chad Hughes, Parks Division, gave a brief report on Mall Maintenance staff activities. Crabb asked if the homeless were sleeping more at the Library instead of the Top of State Street. Hughes says that he believes that is the case, and added that the Library block is just outside of their service area.
2. [32598](#) State Street Report and Updates

Lucas Henning, Graft Restaurant, registered to speak about issues at the Top of State Street. He gave a brief recap of the activities in a single week including: someone urinating in the alley, an intoxicated person blocked the door making a restaurant guest leave through the back door, a person walked into the emergency exit and urinated into the window well where guests could see him, and a guest who needed to leave for a moment was asked for money in a threatening way so she had to sit in the Silver Dollar for an hour before she could come back. Henning added that this is the first year that they have not applied for an outdoor patio permit, and they could lose as much as \$50-75,000 in revenue because of it. Drug deals happen all of the time in the alley of the restaurant.

Crabb asked if this was a typical week. Henning said the week he described was a bit more than usual, but there are 2-3 major incidents every week. Henning said that the urinating during diner service is becoming more frequent, as there are not as many businesses open at that time on their block. Henak asked if he had any suggestions to improve the situation.

Henning said that moving or adding a camera might help, as the glass of the bus shelter obscures the cameras. He added that drug dealers use scanners so they know the minute the police are called.

Heck asked about the potential for a public restroom. Verveer gave a brief history of the different restroom ideas and pilot programs over the past several years without success.

Police Discussion with Captain Jason Freedman

Downtown Police Captain Jason Freedman was available to answer questions. He said that there are two priorities for the downtown this summer: the 600 block of University and the Top of State. There has been a significant investment over time through a regular dedicated State Street officer, as well as overtime and Police operations and initiatives. Freedman said that enforcement can often tamp down issues in one area, but the same issues will often rise back up in other areas. He assured the Committee that the police know that homelessness and the negative behaviors experienced downtown overlap very little, and that most of the behavioral problems come from people who have homes. Police are doing a survey with business owners about the issue that they are facing when it comes to disturbances.

Verveer said that he has recommended the removal of some benches to the Mayor's office. He added that the Planning Director asked for a Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) study of any proposed changes of the Top of State Street, but that some small changes might need to happen sooner than a RESJ study can occur. Verveer also said that he would ask the Parks Division to work with the Police to extend their abandoned property policy to the Library.

Freedman said that the Police did a site assessment with the Library to address issues and have added some extra patrols when it is closed. Freedman added that cameras do not seem to be that much of a deterrent to many of the issues, as they already relocated a camera to N Carroll Street.

Torkildson said that the N Carroll block seems to be darker than others, noting that it may be because there are not a lot of open businesses. The Committee asked staff to contact Traffic Engineering about the lighting levels at N Carroll Street. Heck asked about the cost of a police camera. Freedman said that the cost is about \$6,000-7,000 installed, and that they require a fiber network. He added that cameras are in the Information Technology budget, not the Police budget.

Heck also asked about the abandoned property in the bike racks, as that belongs to the homeless. Freedman said that abandoned property is a security issue and is a matter of public safety. Verveer said that Catholic Charities doesn't have room to deal with storage. Plotkin asked about other social service providers - which ones have been working well? Freedman said they work with the Off the Square Club, a veterans group, Salvation Army, the Beacon, and others who all provide an array of different services, but everyone has capacity issues. Freedman stressed that mental health and substance abuse are the two vital areas that could make a dent in some of the problems. Freedman said that Deputy Mayor McClay has also been looking into ideas surrounding focused interruption and deterrence models as the worst behavior is being committed by a small subset of individuals. The Mayor's Office is also continuing to look for storage solutions for persons who are homeless.

Marks said it seems like there are many groups helping, but there is not a good database or listing of the different support that is out here. Marks said that it has been challenging to find a leader to put together a package of services available. Crabb suggested reaching out to United Way as a potential leader. Plotkin suggested inviting a group of service providers to a larger meeting, and that perhaps Community Services could arrange a group to talk about all of these issues together. Henn asked if there was a document or program out there that has data on the homeless in the City?

Retail/Business Discussion - Dan Kennelly

Dan Kennelly, Office of Business Resources, was available to answer questions about retail issues in the downtown. Torkildson asked if city staff talk to businesses to find out why they are closing. Kenney said that affordability continues to be an issue, as well as business owners who do not have a good succession plan. Kennelly said that existing business need help planning for the future, and that there needs to be incubation opportunities for new businesses, perhaps something like the market ready program. State Street needs to remain a viable environment for a successful retail district. Torkildson asked how the City can facilitate these things? Crabb noted that there are many empty storefronts, like the first floor of the James, that have been vacant for over two years. Kennelly said that some cities have a more proactive approach to first floor vacancies. Some cities have vacant building registries, with financial incentives to rent out spaces, and penalties for leaving properties vacant for long periods. Many of the city's property owners have a large enough portfolio of property that it does not hurt their bottom line to have retail vacancies.

Torkildson wondered about public cooperative models like the community pharmacy. Heck asked about who owns what properties. Plotkin asked Kennelly to bring back some research on these issues. Verveer also noted the pedestrian counter data encouraged the Cheese Mart to open a store on State Street. Staff was asked to send a link to the pedestrian counters and the 2014-2016 State Street retail inventory to the Committee.

Madison's Central Business Improvement District 2019 Renewal - Request for a Letter of Support from Downtown Coordinating Committee

The Committee discussed the proposed letter of support for the Business Improvement District renewal. Heck asked about the reauthorization five years ago. Tiffany Kenney, BID Director, said that in order to be re-authorized, the BID needs to have ballots returned from at least 50% of the BIDs total square footage, and 50% of the votes need to be in favor of authorization. Five years ago. The BID received votes from the owners of 11,000 of the 19,000 square feet with an 86% approval rate.

A motion was made by Crabb, seconded by Verveer, to Approve the letter and asked staff to provide a copy to the Business Improvement District for distribution. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

3. [55926](#)

Amending Section 28.127(4) of the Madison General Ordinances to extend the effective period of the Alcohol Overlay District.

This was not an official referral, however, Alder Verveer asked that the Committee be briefed on this item. Verveer said that this ordinance extends the sunset date for the overlay district until the City can finish a study on the effects of alcohol licenses.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Crabb, seconded by Plotkin, to Adjourn at 7:52 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

Upcoming Meeting: July 18, 2019