



# City of Madison

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

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Thursday, June 19, 2014

5:30 PM

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room 108 (City-County Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 9 - Michael E. Verveer; Ledell Zellers; Davy Mayer; Gregory O. Frank; Mary C. Carbine; Ted Crabb; Thomas E. Hirsch; Matthew J. Covert and Sandra J. Torkildson

**Excused:** 2 - Austin E. McClendon and Adam J. Plotkin

### APPROVAL OF May 15, 2014 MINUTES

Change noted that Alder Zellers was an excused absence.

**A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Frank, to Approve the Minutes.  
The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals.

#### 1. [32474](#) Report of Mall Maintenance, Special Events 2014

Charlie Romines, Parks Division updated the committee on a few projects.

- Plantings should be finished by the end of the month
- Laura Bauer has received a promotion and will be moving to the West Parks Division. The opening will be advertised and hopefully filled shortly.
- They are beginning a project to re-paint the State Street bus shelters. The one near Jamba Juice will be painted first, and 1 or 2 shelters will be painted each year as the shelters have been installed for about ten years. Bike racks, trash cans and benches are also showing their age, and will be replaced as needed. They have a five year plan to have all of the street furniture replaced/refurbished.

The Committee and Staff expressed their sadness that Laura Bauer is leaving, but sends their congratulations to her on her new position. Zellers complimented the Parks Staff, especially Lisa Laschinger, on the job they did installing the lights at the top of State Street. Romines said that they will have to be taken down in 90 days, due to ordinance requirements.

On a motion by Carbine, seconded by Hirsch, the Committee recommended to the Common Council to consider changing the ordinance to allow for city installed decorative lighting to be allowed for more than 90 days.

Zellers noted that there are still several trees in front of the Municipal and City County Buildings that look unhealthy. Romines said that Parks and Forestry continue to try and work on the problem, but the constricted basins that the trees sit in really hinder their growth.

Crabb also noted that the Frances Street fountain wasn't working. Romines said that he believes that due to the construction of the large Hub project, the fountain has been turned off.

Verveer also noted the Peace Park fountain was off and that the lights don't seem to be on in the early evening. Romines said that the lights were on a timer, but that the timing could be adjusted, he will also check to see if a circuit was tripped. The Committee gave a general sense that they think the fountain should be running until sunset.

2. [34132](#) Discussion of State Street Mall/Capitol Concourse service area boundaries and schedule for calculating Mall Maintenance Special Charges

Discussion postponed until later meeting.

3. [34351](#) Street Furniture in the State Street Right-Of-Way

Cnare, Planning Division Staff, briefly presented the staff memo on State Street Furniture.

The Committee started a general discussion on the issue of sidewalk width and outdoor cafes.

Carbine asked if Café owners have been involved in the discussion regarding widening the pedestrian area by about 2 feet. Cnare replied that Vending Staff has been working with café owners for sometime on ensuring that there is adequate room for pedestrian access, and that the Vending Oversight Committee has also talked about the issue at its last meeting. However, Planning Staff has not directly contacted café owners about any potential changes at this time, but noted there would be a public input opportunity before any ordinance changes were proposed.

Zellers said that she has mixed feelings about reducing the width of cafes. She said that she understands that café owners want to maximize their cafes, and that a little congestion can be a good thing. Verveer noted that he has received some complaints from residents in wheelchairs about the lack of space on the upper State Street blocks. Torkildson said that congestion along the street also depends on where you are along the length of State Street, noting the 100 block in particular is very busy.

Frank noted the importance of encouraging a functional retail environment as well as understanding the needs of the cafe owners. Carbine asked about the vendors needing to maintain an 8 foot pedestrian way as well.

Hirsch asked if an 11 foot café vs. a 13 foot café would really change how a café is set up, considering general widths of tables/chairs. Is there a magic number that is optimal for cafes? Does reducing it by two feet actually reduce that much capacity? He would like some more study of the issue.

Carbine said that discussion with affected parties is important, and that affected business owners should be involved in the discussion. Cnare replied that Warren Hansen, Vending Coordinator, has continual discussions with café owners about regulations and issues regarding cafes. Torkildson said that pedestrians, residents and other business owners should be involved as well.

Crabb added that he wants to remind the Committee that the Downtown Coordinating Committee is a good place for these ideas and discussions to start, and that process can start and be developed from their initial general discussions.

Verveer said that that the process moving forward should have the Vending Oversight Committee (VOC) as the lead, as they are really the keepers of Chapter 9, the vending ordinance. The VOC doesn't have their next meeting until August, and suggests that it may be worth thinking about having a joint DCC/VOC meeting.

Carbine asked about the restaurant/retail business mix table and wonders if the data is correct. Cnare said that she believed she got the information from a Report from the Mayors' Staff, but that she will look into it.

The committee moved onto the topic of other street furniture in the right-of-way.

Zellers asked about the appeals process, and wondered if the Mayor was the best choice, perhaps appeals should be funneled through the Common Council. Crabb said that the DCC generally reports to the Common Council. Verveer and Carbine agreed.

Hirsch asked about other reasons there are request for removal/relocation of benches. Verveer noted that other merchant vending also requests changes. Cnare said that there was a discussion a few years ago about some benches that were attracting homeless/street people, and that the adjacent business wanted the benches removed.

Mayer noted that it is important for there to be places for the public to sit without having to buy a meal at a café, or purchase a cup of coffee.

Frank said that businesses know what kind of street furniture there is in the way when they decide to start a business, so that the city should be pretty strict about not moving site furniture.

Torkildson asked staff if they get business owner permission before moving furniture. Cnare replied that as a courtesy, she has always sought input and permission before moving furniture to date, and has never moved anything without permission. Although as the space gets fuller, this permission is getting harder to get, and that technically the space is city right-of-way and permission is not needed. Torkildson said that there should be a threshold for the number of benches, trash cans, bike racks etc that we should have as a minimum number along the street. Zellers agreed that it would be beneficial to look at maintaining a certain threshold of amenities as a baseline.

Zellers asked if café owners could spread out beyond their storefront if amenities were in the way. Verveer noted that the ordinance doesn't allow that, as there is often such an issue with second floor restaurants.

Carbine said that many business owners believe that the amenities are meant and designed to be flexible, unlike the old brick planters and benches. Torkildson said that flexible shouldn't mean removable. Hirsch added that he thinks staff is trying to get to a point of being flexible within reason however we might be getting to a point where flexibility is diminished due large amount of cafes and vending along the street.

Crabb noted the importance of balancing public amenities with the private commercial use of the public right-of-way.

**Motion by Consensus**

**After a lengthy discussion, by general consensus of the members, The Downtown Coordinating Committee is interested in the issue between public amenities and private use of the public right-of-way:**

- **There should be a codified appeals process for staff decisions on movement/placement of Street furniture in the right-of-way.**
- **There needs to be a balanced approach to the needs of the public and opportunities for private uses of public space**
- **The Committee would like to continue the discussion with more information on the sizes and uses of cafes, and numbers of amenities in the right-of-way.**
- **The DCC would like to include café owners, pedestrians, retail businesses, residents and other users in the discussion and is also interested in a joint meeting with the Vending Oversight Committee.**

4. [34133](#) Discussion of potential "Parklets/Cafelets" within the public right-of-way in existing parking stalls

Staff handed out the statement from the Business Improvement District Board (BID Board.) Verveer offered an update that Joe Sorge, AJ Bombers, has withdrawn his café/parklet request at this time and that he is willing to wait until 2015 so that the city can determine what kind of parklet policy is possible, considering the kinds of issues that have come up during discussions. He said that leaves the DCC and others time to more fully develop a policy with the maximum input from stakeholders.

Frank applauded that decision, and said that the city needs an overall policy before starting a pilot project, in order to more fully consider parking and other impacts.

Torkildson said that other Business Associations such as Johnson, Monroe, and Williamson, Schenk Atwood should also be included in future discussions. Hirsch voiced the idea that this has a potential for replication in other parts of the city, and not just downtown. Carbine said that the Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Council should also be included as they sounded a real alarm at losing parking. One of the alarms was about a potential ordinance change to allow private use of parking utility land.

Crabb said that he will expect staff to return to the Committee once there is further development of these issues.

5. [33826](#) Committee Member Updates

Zellers noted the potential entertainment complex being proposed near Breese Stevens Field by Frank Productions that could include a 2000 seat theater.

Carbine noted the upcoming events make Music Madison, Rhythm and Booms, Maxwell Street Days and the Art Fair all coming up before the next DCC meeting.

Verveer noted that the Public Restroom Committee has not yet met.

Mayer gave an updated from Capitol Neighborhoods Inc (CNI)

Torkildson said that all of the downtown road and building construction has been tough on retailers. She noted that she believes that approximately 10% of parking spaces are being taken for construction season, both public road projects and private development projects.

Cnare gave a staff update on activities at the top of State Street including the installation of twinkle lights and some chalkboards to encourage positive activity in the area.

Crabb wanted to note that he is very excited to see the progress of this Committee and believes that their discussion have been really productive and contribute to all of the activities downtown.

## ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Covert, seconded by Frank, to Adjourn at 7:20 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**