



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
www.cityofmadison.com

## Meeting Minutes - Approved DOWNTOWN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

---

Thursday, May 15, 2014

5:30 PM

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

---

### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 10 - Michael E. Verveer; Davy Mayer; Gregory O. Frank; Mary C. Carbine; Ted Crabb; Thomas E. Hirsch; Matthew J. Covert; Sandra J. Torkildson; Austin E. McClendon and Adam J. Plotkin

**Excused:** 1 - Ledell Zellers

### APPROVAL OF April 17, 2014 MINUTES

**A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Frank, to Approve the Minutes of April 17, 2014. 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

Rebecca Cnare went over the Mall Maintenance newsletter noting the success of the sidewalk cleaning program and the late planting start this year. Crabb asked if it was possible to get some before and after photos of the sidewalk cleaning.

2. Discussion of Downtown Safety Issues with Madison Police Department representative

Lieutenant Detective Tim Peregoy from the Madison Police Department gave a general overview of safety issues including the uptick in robberies throughout the city, likely by the same group each time. Carbine asked if they were targeting isolated businesses. Peregoy said that it appeared more to be targeting businesses that were easy to get in and out of quickly. Peregoy also noted that there has been an increase in broken car windows downtown. McClendon asked if criminal activity has started later this year due to the late spring. Peregoy said that seasonality is very apparent, and criminal activity is very weather related.

Crabb asked about heroin use downtown. Peregoy said that it has been a major problem for a few years now, but hasn't necessarily increased in the downtown area. McClendon asked about school related activity. Peregoy said that once the university students leave, they sometimes have trouble at downtown bars where a different population group moves in over the summer; however the Downtown safety initiative has really helped.

A question was asked about the Mifflin street block party. Peregoy said that it was very quiet

and similar to last year. Verveer added that is more similar to a football Saturday on the street. Covert asked about bike theft. Peregoy said that bike theft has really increased, and that the Madison Police Department is working on starting a bike bait program.

3. [34132](#)

Discussion of State Street Mall/Capitol Concourse service area boundaries and schedule for calculating Mall Maintenance Special Charges

Eric Knepp, Parks Division, gave a brief update on the status of the mall boundaries and billing cycle issues. Knepp said the the report for the DCC isn't quite ready due to some recent Parks staffing changes and desire for a more sustainable system across the whole Parks Division. He added that Lisa Laschinger is getting up to speed on Mall Maintenance issues, and that he has been talking with the Streets Division and the Madison Police Department on their ideas/concerns about expansion of the Mall service area boundaries. He added that the Parks Division is also getting some clarity on vending sites so that it can be codified in an ordinance. Knepp hopes that the report will be finished in time for the June DCC meeting.

Knepp said that he would like to get some feedback from the DCC on moving the billing dates. Currently, the fiscal billing for mall special charges goes from September 1 to August 31 every year, which leaves a tight timeline to get on the city tax bill. He would like to check the DCC's thoughts on changing it to July 1 to June 30.

Covert asked about the current deadline to get on the tax bill. Knepp said that effectively it is November 1, so that means the DCC deadline is October 1 in order to have time for approvals from the Board of Estimates and Common Council. Knepp added that the new finance system should also help streamline the process. Torkildson added that downtown property owners are used to seeing the amount on the tax bill each year, and generally budget accordingly. Covert asked if there was any downside to changing it. Knepp couldn't think of any.

**A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Covert supporting the Parks Division to look at moving the dates for Special Mall Charges from September 1 through August 31 to July 1 through June 30.  
The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

ROLL CALL

**Present:** 8 - Michael E. Verveer; Gregory O. Frank; Ted Crabb; Thomas E. Hirsch; Matthew J. Covert; Sandra J. Torkildson; Austin E. McClendon and Adam J. Plotkin

**Excused:** 3 - Ledell Zellers; Davy Mayer and Mary C. Carbine

4. [33930](#)

Accepting the Downtown Public Restrooms Staff Report on the construction and maintenance costs and placement strategies for public restrooms.

**Eric Knepp noted that there is \$300,000 in the 2014 Capital Budget for downtown public bathrooms. A Staff team was created to look at the issues, and they created the report that is before the DCC today. Knepp noted that the portable toilets in the parking garages seem to be helping, and that they are looking into a pilot project at the State Street Visitors' Center.**

**Rosemary Lee, registered in support. She said that no public bathrooms should be anywhere around the Capitol Square, or the Visitors' Center as visitors and tourist shouldn't have to see them. She said that the parking garages are excellent places for them and that signs could be made to direct people to their location. She added that the BID map could be updated to include information as well. She said that she has friends who live in places where there are public toilets, and that there is often sexual activity, drugs,**

drinking and other issues. She asked who will pay for staffing of these toilets 24/7.

Covert asked about the report's staffing analysis regarding Park Rangers and Mall Maintenance staff, noting that there seemed to be a lot of Park Ranger hours. Knepp said that Mall Maintenance workers are usually finished by 6:00 pm in the summer, and earlier in the winter. The Park Ranger staff could basically extend that shift to cover needs for the toilets, as they have learned that they have to be attended to several times a day, not just once or twice.

Covert asked about building an enclosure in the parking garage. Knepp said that they looked into ideas, but the age of structures, retrofitting plumbing and losing existing parking, among other issues made this option not attractive. Covert added that perhaps the new garage associated with the Judge Doyle Square proposal could be considered for restrooms, as it will be a newly designed building. Knepp added that while that is certainly a possibility for the future, the Staff team is looking for options that could be included in this year's budget. Verveer noted that an ad hoc public restrooms committee has been formed, and includes DCC member Gregory Frank.

Frank said that the Visitors' Center would need to be staffed around the clock if it was to have an open public bathroom. Knepp noted that such staffing would be expensive, roughly \$3,400 a week, as the city wouldn't expect the BID to staff the center off-hours. Currently Parks staff checks the Visitors' Center twice a day.

Hirsch asked why there are non-accessible options included, as accessibility issues are a concern downtown. Knepp said that they are targeting for the needs of a specific population in which young males are urinating in inappropriate places. The staff team studies have shown that woman rarely use public toilets, so that they were trying to meet the most immediate needs first.

Hirsch noted the cold climate here compared to other cities, like Portland, saying that the heating tape proposed for one option wouldn't be enough for our cold winters. Knepp said that Parks Maintenance staff is also worried about exposed plumbing, noting that the city had pipes freeze that were even several feet below ground this year.

Torkildson said that no matter what the eventual solution is, it is important to find the right location, where there is the most demand and would get the most use. It is important to separate design issues from need issues.

Crabb asked if they had done any work talking to Library staff about how many people come in to the library only to use the restroom. Knepp said that they talked to staff, and that there is a significant number of people who do just that. Knepp added that there is significant use in both the City-County Building and the Madison Municipal building for restroom only use as well.

A motion was made by Torkildson, seconded by Frank, to Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval to the COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

5. [34133](#)

Discussion of potential "Parklets/Cafelets" within the public right-of-way in existing parking stalls

Rebecca Cnare presented the Draft Policies and Procedures for Approving Parklets in the City's Right-of-Way. Cnare said that this is only a beginning discussion draft that will still need a lot of input, but that City staff wanted to get the DCC's input on the idea before staff took it any further. Cnare mentioned that a local business, AJ Bombers, wanted to be a test for the idea this summer, and that staff is working with them regarding necessary approvals using a "Privilege in Streets" process. She added that while the "Privilege in Streets" is a staff approval only, an ordinance change to allow private use of a Parking Utility space will need to be introduced and go through the normal process, before any parklet is built. Cnare also pointed out that there are really two kinds of parklets being approved in other cities. Private or commercial parklets which basically act as a sidewalk café in the street is one type. The other type are public parklets, which may be sponsored by a local business, but are open to the public, and do not have waiter service and are not limited to patrons of the adjacent business.

As far as any other potential parklets go (or a larger pilot program), there will continue to be a thorough review of potential policies and procedures that may or may not ultimately result in an ordinance change before any others are approved. A potential ordinance will have to go through a regular approval process with multiple chances for public input.

Hirsch said that there is a lack of a public purpose statement in the draft, and that staff should consider a minimum street width standard to allow room for safety vehicles. Hirsch also said that parklets should not be allowed where there is room for a regular sidewalk café, noting that the draft images show a very wide street terrace that could accommodate a sidewalk café.

Frank said that the draft only talks about process, but not policy. He said that may be important to limit how many parklets could be on one street. Frank also stated concern about making sure it is only a pilot program, and that if it didn't work, it could be rescinded

Joe Sorge, owner of AJ Bombers registered in support. He noted that there is not enough room on either Henry Street or Gorham Street for a standard sidewalk café. He noted the success of many sidewalk cafes on State Street and how they bring visibility to restaurants. He said that while he is only one block off of State Street, it is difficult to pull people away from the main pedestrian way. He said that he is willing to be the guinea pig for this program. He said that he has talked with other businesses on his block and has generally been met with positive comments. The owners of the Plaza Tavern have been the only ones that have been upset.

Crabb asked if chairs would be required to be taken in each night. He also noted the fairness aspect of it for businesses that don't have an opportunity for a sidewalk café. Crabb said that with all of the new apartment units being built downtown, there will continue to be a market for sidewalk cafes. Cnare said that sidewalk cafes are required to take in chairs and tables each night, so that would be a suggestion for consideration in the draft requirements.

Torkildson said that she agrees that it is an interesting concept for side streets, and could really enliven other areas, as outdoor cafes really create a lot of atmosphere and help other non-restaurant businesses as well. Plotkin said that he would like to see parklets in the downtown, and emphasized that uniqueness should be a goal. They shouldn't all look the same every year, and should have an element of creativity to them. Cnare mentioned that other cities' public parklets often include public art opportunities and are moved around from year to year. Crabb said that while parking is in the public interest, so are places for people to gather and enjoy the city. Perhaps public parklets could be charged less than private café parklets.

Verveer said that he promised the owner of the Plaza that there would be opportunity for public input during the proposed changes to the Parking Utility Ordinance, as well as the public hearings for ALRC approval.

**A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Torkildson, that the Committee agree to have staff move forward with the single pilot project, and continue**

**work on developing the policies and procedures for a larger pilot parklet program. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

6. [33826](#) Committee Member Updates

Crabb asked staff to send out updated contact information to DCC members with the newly appointed member information. Crabb also asked staff to look into the Overture display kiosk on Fairchild Street, as it appears to block pedestrian views for crossing the street. Frank asked for a top of State Street issues update at the next meeting. Verveer asked that the materials that Covert sent to him and staff regarding the Badger Volunteers be forwarded to all DCC members.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Hirsch, seconded by Frank, to Adjourn at 7:30 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**