



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
[www.cityofmadison.com](http://www.cityofmadison.com)

## Meeting Minutes - Approved DOWNTOWN COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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Thursday, July 19, 2018

5:30 PM

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

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

**Present:** 6 - Ledell Zellers; Gregory O. Frank; Adam J. Plotkin; Ted Crabb; Sandra J. Torkildson and Lori J. Henn

**Excused:** 3 - Michael E. Verveer; David Ahrens and Al Martin

### APPROVAL OF June 20, 2018 MINUTES

A motion was made by Crabb, seconded by Plotkin, to Approve the June 20, 2018 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

None

### DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

#### 1. [50087](#) Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2018

Mark Kiesow, Parks Mall Maintenance Staff, followed up with information on ongoing maintenance issues with the downtown fountains. Kiesow brought a clogged elbow pipe, and some images of a clogged filter to illustrate some of the issues.

Kiesow said that the Badger fountain on Frances Street runs very well, and that he would continue to work with other staff to find solutions and improve the maintenance of all downtown fountains. Crabb added that the flow features of the Capitol fountains are really great when they work, and he hopes we can figure out better long term maintenance solutions.

Kiesow also reported that staff is working with traffic engineering on being more easily able to turn off and on the outlets connected to the street lights. Staff is repainting the light pole bases, and worked with Olbrich on the tropical display plantings. Staff is also evaluating and replanting perennials and shrubs where needed in Lisa Link Park and elsewhere.

#### 2. [48742](#) Downtown Police Update

Lt. Brian Austin, gave a report on police activities in the downtown. There have been 10 special operations regarding criminal behavior at the Top of State Street so far this year, resulting in about 20 arrests. The Police have been working in tandem with Mall Maintenance Staff to try to alleviate some of the abandoned personal property throughout the downtown area. Police are supportive of the efforts of a staff team to look at physical

changes, as well as more programming to the Top of State Street.

Torkildson asked about the status of lockers for people to store their belongings. Jason Ilstrup, Downtown Madison Inc., said there are 5 lockers at the Methodist Church that are maintained by Briarpatch. Austin said that there is some funding available for new lockers, but that it has been difficult to find a site for them, adding that storage is a large problem for the homeless population. Zellers asked if there has been food provided at the Top of State again? Ilstrup said that there are 2 groups providing food Saturday at 5pm and Sunday mornings.

Zellers asked about the no trespassing signs on the wall of 30 W Mifflin Street. Austin said that the signs were put up by the owner when they discovered that the property line is six inches away from the wall. Zellers asked if the same thing could happen to the Wisconsin Historical Museum wall? Frank suggested that it may depend on where exactly the property line is located.

Zellers ask if staff was power washing the Philosophers' Grove like they have been across the street? Frank said that they have been washing both sides on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Henn said that the panhandling and behavior seems more aggressive this year than in the past, people have been more brazen, demanding and aggressive against staff of nearby businesses. Austin said that if there is an aggressive situation, that her staff should call the police, as aggressive behavior may be disorderly conduct.

Crabb asked about the balance of State Street and about how guns fit into all of this. Austin said there is an uptick in activity at N Frances Plaza, and that area attracts groups of people from out of town. Austin said that he is more concerned about weapons in the lower State Street area near the 600 block of University. The downtown safety initiative program staffs 15 extra officers in that area on weekend evenings. The Parking utility has been receptive to changes to help manage the flow of people, and Police have also worked with the Streets division to try to do a street sweeping/clearing at bar time, but that it is a difficult assignment for Streets personnel. Police have been working with the ALRC and bar owners to start a program where there is no entry/re-entry after 1:30 am. Police have also been looking into piping in music - but there are some royalty questions and legality issues that have to be sorted out before it can be more seriously considered.

Henn asked if there is much gang activity? Austin replied that there is some gang activity, but it is also a popular place to be.

**3. [32598](#)**

**State Street Report and Updates**

Top of State Street Discussion regarding recent activities and proposals for changes to the Top of State Street Area including:

- Update on topics at recent meetings of Property Owners
- Proposals for physical changes to the Forum Area
- Proposals for additional programming efforts

J.T. Harrington, Madison, applauded the efforts of staff and property owner in making positive changes to the area, but noted that there are a lot of vacant storefronts where people loiter. He hopes that the proposal for the new hotel will help alleviate that problem. He asked about enforcement on doorways issues. Austin said that enforcement on loitering in doorways is dependent upon someone calling the police to complain.

Tony Stubblefield, Cleary's Popcorn, Madison, said that the behavior downtown is killing their business. The panhandling has become more aggressive, and drug dealing, drug use and prostitution seems to have increased. It seems to increase at 4-5 in the afternoon when

the Beacon closes, and he doesn't believe that downtown is a safe destination at night. He said that the police patrols aren't helpful as the drug dealers have lookouts. He suggests that the police do some additional bike patrols, or more undercover operations to stop the dealing.

Luca Henning, Graft Restaurant, Madison said that their restaurant has not been putting their outside café out because of the criminal activity in the adjacent bus shelter. When they do put out the café, no one wants to sit there, or if they do, they quickly change their minds. He says that he believes that the shelter is just out of camera reach. Henn asked if they people are harassing their patrons? Henning said that it's not just aggressive panhandling, but that they smoke weed and drink heavily. Henn added that a sidewalk café is also a great advertisement, even when people aren't sitting there to bring more attention to the restaurant. Torkildson added that sidewalk cafes have brought such a great life and vitality to the street. Cafes also bring eyes and ears to the street to make it more welcoming.

Maria Milsted, Brooklyn, owns several buildings on State Street. She has a real concern for safety and the behavior continues to be a business interruption. She said it is hard to rent apartments when it looks like skid row outside. She is also concerned about the people leaning up against the large plate glass window, and fears someone could get injured.

Dan Milsted, Brooklyn, added that every morning there is a urine stream running down the sidewalk in front of his business entrance. He finds feces and urine inside the drop slot used for tenant to pay their rent and drop off rental applications.

Zellers asked about no-trespassing signs and about who has standing to call in a loitering complaint. Lt Austin said that the police give building and business owners free no trespassing signs, and that a business owner, tenant, or building owner can call in a trespassing complaint to the police. Torkildson thought that a no-trespassing sign was enough, she still needs to call? Austin said that the police prefer that building/business owner call in a complaint.

Lt Austin added that the police cannot arrest their way out of these problems, and many of the behavioral issues are deep rooted in social justice and mental health related societal issues. He added that municipal citations used to "go to warrant" if they were not paid, but that practice has been discontinued. It doesn't take long for people who get citations to realizes that nothing happens when they don't pay them.

Zellers asked about undercover police and also about camera placement on the bus shelter. Austin said that he would look into the camera issue at the bus shelter, and that the cameras really act as the undercover police office for much of the downtown area when there are not active operations/investigations going on. Crabb added that of all the problems, the police function is limited, and that this committee needs to continue to look for other programmatic and physical design changes for State street.

Cnare gave a brief update on the Top of State Staff team work that was outlined in the report attached to the Legistar file. This includes a staff team considering additional programming ideas, as well as a team looking at longer term physical changes to the space. Henn said that public bathrooms are still an issue not being addressed. It was noted that the city has funded portable toilets in some of the parking garages.

Cnare introduced Karuna Bhat, City of Madison Planning Intern to present a proposal for a new temporary art installation at the Top of State Street. He briefly described the existing flamingo wings and introduced the Hodag Claws installation that would accompany the wings on the side of the museum wall.

Frank said that 1000 small solutions like the Hodag Claws help bring positivity to the downtown. The Committee agreed that the Hodag Claws was a nice addition. Henn

mentioned that we need more temporary art like this proposal and the Bucky on Parade, that brings different people downtown. Zellers also asked staff to look into ownership and encroachment leases/agreements for the two overhangs.

Torkildson said that there are a lot of people who don't see downtown issue as important, and that DCC members need push back and explain that some of these issues are for the whole city to help solve. Just because you don't see people with mental health issues on the far west side doesn't mean that they aren't in need of a larger city wide solutions. Crabb said that the downtown is very important to the rest of the City. Without an active and vibrant downtown, the whole city would suffer economically and socially. Frank agreed and added that we can't confuse the behavior and criminal activity with homelessness, and he has empathy for the people and businesses that spoke this evening, as they are in a tough situation.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Crabb, seconded by Zellers, to Adjourn at 7:25 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

Upcoming Meeting: September 20, 2018