



City of Madison

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

Thursday, May 16, 2019

5:30 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Michael E. Verveer; Patrick W. Heck; Kathy L. Marks; Gregory O. Frank;
Adam J. Plotkin; Zachary Henak; Sandra J. Torkildson and Lori J. Henn
Excused: 2 - Ted Crabb and Davy Mayer

APPROVAL OF March 21, 2019 MINUTES

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

1. Welcome new DCC Members

The Committee welcomed new members Alder Patrick Heck and Alder Zachary Henak.

2. Election of Chair/Vice Chair

The chair asked that this item be referred to the following meeting.

3. [54361](#)

Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2019

Mark Kiesow, Parks Division, gave an update on the status of the fountains. All of the fountains were tested in April and there was severe plumbing damage to all of the Capitol Square fountains. West Washington Avenue required a new access panel to be cut into the granite to access the broken pipes. The East Washington lower fountains are working, but the towers still need some major repairs. The Four Lakes Fountain was working by graduation weekend, and the Overture and Lisa Link Peace Park fountains will be turned on by the end of next week.

Park staff continues to work with Traffic Engineering to determine the breaker/wire mapping for electricity access on the pedestrian light poles. Sidewalk power washing and programmed events have begun for the season, and the flowers have been planted designated areas.

4. [48742](#)

Downtown Police Update

As the Captain and staff were unable to attend due to a conflict, the chair asked that this item be referred to an upcoming meeting.

5. [32598](#)

State Street Report and Updates

- Top of State Street - emerging issues

Tiffany Kenney, Executive Director of Madison's Central Business Improvement District, was available to answer questions.

Rebecca Cnare, Planning Division, gave a brief update of programming, enforcement, physical changes, outreach, art and other efforts at the Top of State Street to date. Cnare said that she and other staff have been keeping the Mayor and her staff apprised of the past efforts and ongoing conversations.

Marks briefed the Committee on the Downtown Madison Inc. logic model that is trying to bring people together to work on these complex issues.

Frank said that there are varying degrees of anxiety building, as well as varying degrees of constructive conversations that have been happening over the last few weeks. He said that the daytime criminal issues have mostly been figured out and a lot of progress has been made, but that the criminal behaviors start to return after 4pm.

Henn said that there has been a noticeable change with fewer people at their back door on Carroll Street. Henn added that we should be talking to the homeless people about their needs, and asked if the city had thought about flipping the conversation so that we ask the homeless to help work in the area to keep it clean and safe. Kenny answered that Operation Welcome Home used to pay people to do some minor clean up and people in the space often help set up chairs for programming events. She also said that the recent Boys and Girls club giveaway left a big mess, and that service providers giving things away should also be asked to help clean up when they are done.

Heck hopes that the new hotel will make a difference on the overall environment. Torkildson said that the design of the cul-de-sac seems to encourage the drug behavior.

- Retail Strategy Report follow-up - recent retail losses and business updates.

Cnare gave a brief update of implementation activities to date as related to the Retail Strategies Report.

Torkildson said that it seems like a lot of retail has closed over the last few months, saying that sometimes people are just closing rather than figuring out a succession plan. She asked Kenney about the recent closing numbers. Kenney said that there were 39 closings (retail, restaurant and service) in the last year, and 20 openings, leaving a deficit of 19 empty storefronts.

Torkildson said that she will be interested to learn if the new policy of fewer events downtown might affect the success of retail. Kenney said that the Retail Strategy report information had data that approximately 70% of all shoppers come downtown because of an event. Torkildson said that she is concerned that the City might have not been considering the larger picture when changing these policies. She added that Maxwell Street Days has lost their exclusive use permit.

Torkildson is concerned that the bars and entertainment uses on the 600 block of University Avenue cost taxpayers a lot of money in police overtime fees, and the bar owners reap the profits without sharing the costs.

Frank added that retail has some endemic issues related to the economy, but there are

some retailers that are adapting, and we need a retail-ready type of program, like the market-ready program to grow more retailers. Torkildson went to an "Empty Storefronts Conference" that showed how cities, even as small as Viroqua have found ways to support new retailers.

Henn added that there doesn't seem to be a push to help retail, and that the events ordinance may actually hurt them, as she noted a change with both Crazylegs and the Pride Parade choosing to move away from the Square and State Street. Henn asked if they lost their legacy status and can never return. Henn added that the loss of the Shamrock shuffle was also felt by businesses. Verveer said that if one of those two events wanted to come back, he could propose a change in the ordinance, but that they lost their legacy status, as they did not have time to get their 2019 application in before the new ordinance was finalized.

Torkildson said it seems like we are on the edge of the wrong business mix for the street, and wondered if Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and having the busses on State Street is worth the loss of the events. Verveer added that there are some options for BRT and that he has heard from many businesses on State Street that the busses are not an asset. Henn said that all of this has an accumulated negative effect on retail business.

The committee agreed that they would like updates on the following items at upcoming meetings:

- BRT briefing from City Staff
 - Briefing from the Office of Business Resources and their information and strategies about loss of retail on State Street
 - Further info on loss of events on the Capitol Square and State Street as related to the cumulative effect on retail.
 - Verveer asked to add the Alcohol Overlay District Ordinance on their next meeting for discussion, even though it cannot be a true referral due to timing.
- Invite to State Street Both/And Sculpture opening at the Confluence: June 1, Time TBA

Rebecca Cnare, invited DCC members to the opening at 3:30 pm, June 1, at the site of the sculpture. Cnare also noted that the Downtown Doors are up and that Kenney said that 24 artists have contributed to artwork on 38 different doors.

6. [33826](#)

Committee Member & Staff Updates

No discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Henak, seconded by Verveer, to Adjourn at 7:05 p.m.
The motion passed by voice vote/other.**

Upcoming Meeting: June 20, 2019