



City of Madison

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

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

Thursday, April 15, 2021

5:30 PM

Via Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Michael E. Verveer; Patrick W. Heck; Gregory O. Frank; Adam J. Plotkin; Ted Crabb; Barbara Harrington-McKinney; Davy Mayer and Sandra J. Torkildson

APPROVAL OF March 18, 2021 MINUTES

A motion was made by Crabb, seconded by Frank, to Approve the March 18, 2021 Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. [61242](#) Public Comment
None

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

2. [63692](#) Report of Mall Maintenance and Special Events 2021

Mark Kiesow, Parks Division staff, updated the Committee on Mall Maintenance activities. Trees in Philosophers Grove have been wrapped with lights, pansies have been planted, and staff is working through the Mall damage recovery plan list from last year. Glass for bus shelters/kiosks should be replaced in the coming weeks.

Verveer thanked the crew for their work and asked if staff has found a conservator for the fountains on the Square. Bill Fruhling, Planning Division staff, replied that staff has been in contact with the previous conservator, and is getting additional prices for removing calcium deposits and the ghosted images left after the removal of graffiti. Verveer asked that staff try to get the remaining fountains up and running as soon as possible. Kiesow said that they will try to get everything going before graduation weekend.

3. [48742](#) Downtown Police Update

Captain Kelly Donahue gave a report in current police activities downtown, noting the unauthorized Mifflin Street Block Party that is scheduled for next week. Police have heard continuing complaints about activities on State and Gilman, but noted that none of the

activities are against the law. Chief Barnes has been meeting with community leaders to put together some messaging regarding potential protesting that may occur as the Chauvin trial wraps up.

Crabb asked the Captain about her thoughts on the BID's proposal to close State Street. Donahue said that she has mixed feelings, as she would like to support the businesses but is worried about late night closures as related to loitering in the street after bar time, especially in the 500-600 blocks. Closing the street would mean that there is less visibility and patrol cars that could drive down the street.

Verveer thanked the Captain for her efforts at State and Gilman; he asked about Chief Barnes plan to have each District start working on a strategic plan. The Captain is working with crime analysts to get some data together before they start the strategic plan, but she can pass along the goal statements to Alders when they are ready. Donahue also mentioned that the strategic plan is timed nicely with the Community Based Crime Reduction (CBCR) Grant that their staff has been working on. The CBCR Grant is a 1 million dollar, 3-year grant that is housed in Public Health, and will have 6 months of planning and 2.5 years of program implementation. The grant aims to use evidence based solutions and could include art, music, programming, and other community activities to reduce crime in the downtown area. Plotkin asked if this program included the idea of a community prosecutor. Donahue said that it didn't but that is an idea that would also fit in well with the goals of the grant. Harrington-McKinney noted that public engagement will be crucial to the success of any of these programs. Heck asked about the general break down of funds. Donahue said that in general it includes funds for a program coordinator, UW Population Lab, training, and police overtime; with the majority of the funds used for programming. Committee members were very interested in the grant and would like to be a part of its implementation.

4. [61021](#)

Downtown Recovery Discussion

Tiffany Kenney, Executive Director of Madison's Central Business Improvement District, gave a brief overview of the Transportation Commission discussion about their proposal for weekend closures of State Street. The Transportation Commission (TC) referred their application to a future meeting to address concerns and asked them to come back with a proposal for only the 400-600 blocks. Kenney said that she was surprised since this was the same closure as last year and wasn't sure that the BID was interested in pursuing a smaller project. Kenney said that the BID is a very small operation, 2 full time and one-part time staff, so putting together all of the information that the TC asked for will be difficult. The small business owners on upper State Street are devastated that this was denied.

Frank expressed his extreme displeasure at the TC's response to the BID proposal. Verveer agreed, and reported that the TC was against rerouting busses off the 100-300 blocks, noting that they believed that the 200-300 blocks of State Street are integral to the entire Metro Transit system.

Frank noted that he believed the proposal to close the 400 block on all days would be in addition to the same weekend closures approved last year, and he was shocked that the City could not at least approve what they approved for last year. He said that busses can be re-routed, businesses are suffering, and policymakers have no desire to see what the public wants. If anything, the businesses are suffering even more than last year, and it makes him sad for the whole City. Frank noted that the downtown is a net property tax exporter and accounts for over 10% of City property taxes. Verveer believes that the City is trying to protect the BRT system, which will not be in place until 2023 or 2024, while the businesses are suffering right now.

Torkildson asked if there was any appeals process to the TC decision, as she agrees that

the 500-600 blocks have more chain stores, where the 100-400 blocks are more locally-owned businesses. Cnare said that the Street Occupancy Permit is usually used for construction, however it has been used for Streatery and last year's State Street closure since the normal Street Use Permit Ordinance has some other limitations that prevent its use for these types of projects. She added that after the DCC meeting last month, she sought advice on how the DCC's motion could move forward, and was advised that a Common Council resolution was the best way forward, and could still be used.

Verveer was concerned about another resolution, as he feels that City Hall has turned its back on State Street and Downtown, and does not want the businesses to be denied again. Crabb asked if the DCC could do anything to help. Frank said that the BID is asking the DCC to lead on this issue, but the DCC is unable to help. Verveer and Heck both said that they have meetings with the Mayor scheduled for next week, and that they would express the DCC's position on this issue.

5. [64922](#)

Streatery Discussion

Frank said that he has been supportive of this program and would like to see it continued. The Committee asked to postpone this discussion to a future meeting.

6. [64923](#)

Library Mall Redesign

Cnare gave a brief overview of the project to date. Crabb asked about the status of the fountain, and whether it could be moved. Staff said that all options are on the table at this point. Mayer said that he attended the last public meeting and he is very pro-fountain. Mayer lamented that the fountain has been covered for construction for over 6 of the last 10 years, so that many undergraduates aren't even really aware of it. Staff promised to give continued updates as the project moves forward.

ADJOURNMENT

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