



FARMINGTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING – WORK SESSION
Council Chamber, City Hall

Saturday, April 2, 2011

A special meeting of the Farmington Downtown Development Authority was called to order by President Rock at 9:05 a.m.

Present: Buck, Cowley, Frost, Higgins, Gajewski (11:30am) Jewett, Rock, Schneemann, Wasen

Absent: Cornwell

Also Present: Annette Knowles, Executive Director
JoAnne McShane, Councilperson
Kenneth Chiara, Traffic & Safety Board
Vincent Pastue, City Manager
John Iacoangeli, Beckett and Raeder, Facilitator

President Rock introduced the meeting facilitator, John Iacoangeli, Principal, Beckett and Raeder, Inc. The purpose of today's meeting is to develop a strategy for parking management and parking improvement.

Parking Management Work Plan

A draft work plan for parking management was reviewed, which included various tactics to regulate parking and to communicate the plan to the various constituents. Board members were asked to identify those tactics that were a priority. The two tactics which board members were most interested in pursuing were creation and installation of wayfinding signage with walkability features and development of a communications plan to inform businesses, residents and consumers about parking alternatives.

Parking Improvement Work Plan

The discussion about parking improvement started with generalized comments. Individual board members expressed that all potential projects should be considered and potential partners (of private lots) approached before narrowing a list.

Criteria that should be considered include improved functionality and increased number of spaces. A conceptual plan will identify costs before an offer can be presented to the owner.

In regard to eminent domain, although some members expressed hesitancy about condemning property, others supported selectively plucking out a private piece that is needed to make a larger project work.

Buck encouraged discussions with existing property owners.

Rock commented that business owners can solve challenges by developing and pursuing their own solutions. The DDA is not in a position to tackle all issues.

The idea of a parking structure was discussed. Consensus was that a parking structure is not feasible at this time; however, it must be planned for and a surface solution created that will support a structure's footprint. A central location would be ideal, not on the outskirts of the downtown, in the viewpoint of the board.

The discussion about improvements continued. Several ideas were presented and categorized by location and timetable. The north lot was determined to be the top priority, yet medium-term.

Mr. Iacoangeli described his experience in improving parking in Dexter, which became a 15-20 year process.

The board members concurred that consolidation of the north lot is essential. They support conversations with property owners, asking how flexible they might be. We need to further develop a conceptual plan and pro forma before approaching the property owners. You may use a closed session to develop a strategy and identify the owners to approach first. A potential redevelopment project would be a plus in the pro forma.

In the more short-term, parking off Oakland Street, in Memorial Park and/or utilization of the Masonic Lodge parking would be alternatives. Businesses could participate in an employee parking plan.

The meeting recessed from 11:10-11:15am for a quick break.

Upon resumption of the meeting, Councilperson McShane advised the board that businesses in the north lot are invited to a meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2011, to discuss opportunities in the north lot. The meeting will be facilitated. With 60-80 employees at any given time, pressures are mounting.

Jewett suggested that non-motorized alternatives could be created and promoted. We have bike racks in the downtown, let's encourage their use.

Researching financing alternatives will come under any category.

Gajewski entered the meeting at 11:30am.

To wrap up the discussion, leads or champions for each approach were assigned, as follows:

Time Table	Tactic	Lead/Assign
1 year	Wayfinding Signage	Design Committee
1 year	Communication Plan	Promotions/Org Committees
1 year	Employee Parking Plan	McShane/Cassidy . north lot; Cowley - overall
6 months to start	Oakland Street/Masonic	Buck/Pastue
6 months to start	North Lot Consolidation	ER Committee

Motion by Higgins, Supported by Schneemann

RESOLVED, that the board accepts the (above table) as a parking strategy for Downtown Farmington.

Ayes: Buck, Cowley, Frost, Gajewski, Higgins, Jewett, Rock, Schneemann, Wasen

Nays: None

Motion carried, all ayes

Board Comment

Buck stated he was impressed by the recent Main Street training program. A 15-minute debrief will be placed on the April agenda.

Gajewski suggested that each committee chair be prepared to discuss 3 things or ideas to possibly implement.

Motion by Higgins, Supported by Wasen

RESOLVED, that the meeting be adjourned.

Motion carried, all ayes.

The work session was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette M. Knowles