



# DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE

## MEETING SUMMARY 5

Marshalltown, Iowa

April 18, 2019

1:00 PM

The Downtown Steering Committee met at City hall to continue developing a new downtown master plan. The meeting was facilitated by design consultant Bob Kost who joined the meeting via web.

### 1) Downtown Master Plan Outline, Revised

- a) Bob provided an overview of work to date regarding the final plan production and the desire for it to be a user friendly, action-oriented document. Organization/highlights include:
  - i) Chapter 1: Introduction includes vision statement, planning horizon, and goals
  - ii) Chapter 2: Downtown Tomorrow
  - iii) Chapter 3: Catalyst Project Recommendations – removed boutique hotel from projects, Design standards, Implementation + funding
  - iv) Chapter 4: Establishing the Vision includes background on key findings
  - v) Chapter 5: Downtown Today
  - vi) Chapter 6: Appendix
- b) The Committee agreed that this is a good format/outline

### 2) Draft Text Review

- a) Vision + Value of Good Design write up: The previous meeting had a few comments about the Vision but it has not been updated as no formal suggestions have been made. Suggestions and comments here include:
  - i) The second to last paragraph on page 2 about being proactive is very important to convey to the community. Bob suggested this paragraph could be highlighted or in a color box within the plan to emphasize it.
  - ii) One committee member reported being very pleased with the whole thing
  - iii) Taking it beyond generalities would be useful; a story would be good. Detail such as a touch point to tell a story about a particular building or a block in a similar project in a similar community would be effective. The average person will not read this in depth and people will look at the pictures. Good information but where is the story? Is there an example to share that could tie everything together? Bob translated this as a desire for a case study as anecdote or story to apply what is discussed as a real world example- a case study of a place that is similar in size and demographics. Bob suggested this could be achieved and graphic/images could be used to convey this. The committee suggested a one page pullout would be useful to illustrate the applicability to Marshalltown.

- iv) Bob noted that Ricker Cunningham is developing implementation related materials that is easily digestible and attractive.
  - v) The London Architecture table either needs to be updated, reconfigured or placed in the Appendix; the headings on the table are somewhat unclear. It was decided to include the table in the appendix.
- b) Recommendation for Design Standards
- i) Development standards and guidelines: key points are that there are two sets of recommendations (one for the central business district and one for the historic business district) and there should be a design manual set up to support the administration and application of the standards. These were developed with administration in mind – consultants have a concern as to what the city actually administer given current staffing.
  - ii) The committee requested clarification about the provision of draft design standards as part of the document. Bob thought that a full set of draft design standards deserved to be part of a more lengthy, detailed process, and could potentially derail the plan approval. Committee members pointed out that the project scope calls for the development of draft design standards and there is concern these are needed on a short timeframe. It was decided that draft design standards would be advanced further to provide a strong framework to set the City up to finalize design standards that -with more civic engagement and buy-in - would be supported by council and property owners following adoption of the downtown plan. Further work will be required to develop the set so they are adopted and enforced, and any necessary updates to the zoning code can be made. The Downtown Plan will include the recommendations for final standards, description of standards and an example of sample standards. SEH will provide a set of draft standards shortly after the Master Plan is adopted (July or early August.) The City will undertake development of final design standards and the recommended design manual separately apart from the Downtown Master Plan.
- c) Recommendation for SMMID:
- i) Based upon the comments received during the planning process greening and improved livability are top priorities and a SMMID would be a way to make that happen especially in light of limited City and Main Street staff capacity. Committee members discussed the Fort Dodge downtown plan and SMMID that was recently adopted. Everyone agreed there has to be a way to maintain / take care of downtown improvements and a funding source to pay for this is needed. The committee expressed concern that this specific recommendation has already failed several times, and they would like to see it presented as one solution amongst other available options to fund downtown improvements. It was acknowledged that having the SMMID included in the Downtown Master Plan would provide better context and clearer purpose than may have been provided in the previous efforts. Other options to explore/present include Tax Increment Financing, General Fund appropriations (other cuts to the general fund would have to be made), or a private donor. This section to be amended. Detailed background research on SMMID will go into the appendix where it can be useful.

### **3) Draft Recommendations for Other Plan Elements**

- i) Other draft plan recommendations were reviewed and the following feedback/suggestions were provided:
  - (1) Transportation + Parking
    - (a) Change “implement” to “explore” in the shared parking strategies rec.
  - (2) Organization + Management
    - (a) Propose a Community Development Corporation rather than a Downtown Development Corporation.
    - (b) Committee unfamiliar with a Parking Management Program, which was explained to be a program developed by a parking management organization that works together with business and parking lot owners to establish a uniform set of rules and regulations so all the downtown parking is available to everybody under a common set of rules. Concern was raised regarding how downtown residential parking would be managed. It was concluded that a soft recommendation to explore alternative parking strategies should be included, but not a parking management program.
  - (3) Activities + Events
    - (a) Permitting for outdoor seating: Public use permit currently required, with a deposit. Need to ask for certificate of insurance. Bob to tweak current wording of this recommendation with help from Michelle.
    - (b) Weekly/evening events: There already is a weekly outdoor summer music event at the Orpheum. Take this out of the recommendations.
    - (c) Allow busking: not sure if there are existing ordinances against it or permits for it. City staff to look into it, but would like to support it.
    - (d) Farmers market: the new farmers market manager would like to enhance the site and do more things that they haven’t been done before, so this is a good recommendation.

### **4) Next Steps**

- i) Design standards recommendations will be revised
- ii) Draft Design Standards will be developed
- iii) Make edits discussed today
- iv) Start the draft plan – Bob to send a couple of chapters at a time to Michelle.
- v) Early June Open House: post the draft plan online, community meeting presenting recommendations, with formal presentation if needed. Hold the meeting June 5th or 6<sup>th</sup>.
- vi) Present the plan to council on the 10th for approval.