

Council Committee on Economic Sustainability Meeting Notes

Attendees: Council Member George Cianciolo (Chair), Mayor Pam Hemminger, Council Member Michael Parker, Council Member Donna Bell, Council Member Ed Harrison, Council Member Nancy Oates, Roger Stancil, Dwight Bassett, Mary Jane Nirdlinger, Rae Buckley, Meg McGurk, Steve Brantley, Jeanne Brown, Catherine Lazorko, Kristen Smith, Fred Lampe

8 to 10 a.m. Friday, November 4, 2016, Chapel Hill Public Library

Goal: 1.b.1 - Work to enhance downtown's attractiveness to help in encouraging future projects that provide employment opportunities. Downtown Report

Rae Buckley (Manager's Office) provided an update on the Downtown 2020 Work Plan www.townofchapelhill.org/downtown2020 including engagement efforts and alleyway improvements. We have planning-conflicting goals among various Town plans including the downtown commercial district, neighborhood conservation district, and historic district. Chapel Hill is working to take its place on the map with Seattle, Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Diego, Boulder, Austin, Madison, Ann Arbor, Pittsburgh and Cambridge as cities recognized for cutting edge technological development.

An update from Meg McGurk (Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership) highlighted business changes: Tanya's Cookies at 405 W. Rosemary St., Might As Well sports bar at 206 West Franklin Street, Trolley Stop Hot Dogs at 306 W. Franklin St., Franklin Street Yoga at 431 W. Franklin is opening a retail boutique, new coffee shop at West Franklin on corner of Mallette, Cuban Revolution Express at 401 West Franklin Street, new outdoor area for La Residence at 202 W. Rosemary, Launch expansion at 321 W. Rosemary St., Blue Dogwood Public Market at 306 W. Franklin, and Southeby's Realty at 140 West Franklin St.

An RFP for a downtown transportation/mobility study is pending, and an engineering analysis of current conditions is anticipated by the end of the fiscal year (June 2017). This will examine on-street parking and circulation in downtown.

Discussion focused on better parking signage and visual paint pavement direction so that people can locate parking. The Town is considering a private contract with McLaurin, a parking management company based in Raleigh, to assist Chapel Hill with its parking operations.

Things we heard and learned from Boulder – Discussion

Business start-ups: The accelerator/incubator component in downtown is crucial. Build loyalty so they remain in community. Businesses need places to locate and expand. Boulder's incubators are run by business community. How do we engage our business community to encourage this?

Transportation: Providing better transportation infrastructure that allows workers to easily come into city and their workplaces. Address traffic going in and out of city.

Long-range Planning: The city's ability to formulate and articulate a long-range vision is important. Be intentional about how we want sections of downtown to function, and communicate this vision. Think

about Ephesus-Fordham District and how this relates to Downtown Chapel Hill. Long-term vision of land banking is promising (in Boulder), and we (Chapel Hill) have good beginning in Northside Neighborhood.

Partnerships: Encourage a cooperative system among Triangle cities, rather than competitive. Our ability to tap our local wealth to achieve public goals is a consideration going forward.

Goal: 2 - Work becomes part of The Life of The Town

Business Retention – Report

Dwight Bassett (Economic Development) reported that we are planning three business development events at the Carolina Inn. One will be held this fall with 50-70 attendees, and two more are scheduled for spring. Economic Development eNews is active and growing in subscribers with a 33-36 percent email open rate. Twitter is an important focus area. Website is being used to promote and answer interest.

Ephesus-Fordham property owners received an update on the Town's plans for the district on Aug. 31.

Business Retention: Lack of space is our greatest challenge. Parking is another issue.

Report from the Economic Sustainability Council Subcommittee

Subcommittee discussed incentives with the County, and when to formalize its draft protocol.

Interest in the Wallace Parking Deck is being pursued with a RFI that may be ready for Council consideration at its next meeting.

Discussion about uses for \$100,000 for economic development outreach, including grants, loans and marketing activities. Dwight Bassett is reviewing marketing firms that can help tell our story and assist with marketing. Define the elements that tell our story, and make this relevant to the audience we are marketing to. Communicate what we are going to be in 5-10 years. What would it take to bring them here from other places?

Consider as an incentive rental assistance – either deferring cost or lease time commitment. Potential locations to target may be Europa and Exchange at Meadowmont.

Committee recommended that a proposal for use of the economic development funds be drafted for Council consideration related to telling and framing our story. This would include the allocation of \$60,000 to fund agency work to shape this conversation.

Next Meeting: December 9, 2016