

**Downtown Development Authority
Board Workshop
Thursday, January 9, 2003
Whitman School, 248 South 4th Street**

PRESENT: Doug Simons, Bruce Hill, Becky Brehmer, Harry Griff, Gregg Palmer, Larry Botkin, Pat Gormley, PJ McGovern, Harold Stalf, and Sue Schore.

ABSENT: Janet Terry and Bruce Bengé

GUESTS: Josh Comfort and Laura Williams of Josh Comfort / Lawrence Group Architects, Denver; Jody Kohl and John Collier of the GJ Housing Authority

CALL TO ORDER: Doug Simons called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m. He extended congratulations to Bruce Hill and Gregg Palmer for entering the race for the City Council.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING: Jody Kohl distributed handouts and informed the Board of her discussions with Harold regarding the feasibility of housing developments in the downtown area, discussed funding resources and how the two groups could work together. She indicated the best source of money is from equity investor groups that are enticed by low-income housing tax credits. According to the latest housing assessment for the Grand Junction area, there is a current deficit of 1,600 units for workforce housing, with a projection of an additional 1,000-unit deficit by 2005. She indicated now might be the best time to do a market study for downtown housing to identify the needs for for-sale / for-rent property. This study would cost approximately \$18,000. Doug asked if there had been any major negative impacts due to the affordable housing units that the Housing Authority had built in Orchard Mesa. Jody responded that the Police Department's reports showed no higher incidents there than in other areas of town. The Board showed enthusiasm for further exploration of the project and Harold suggested having a joint meeting with the Housing Authority Board to discuss this further, emphasizing that it's important to rekindle and restructure a partnership with the Housing Authority.

JOSH COMFORT / LAWRENCE GROUP: Josh Comfort introduced himself and designer Laura Williams from the Josh Comfort / Lawrence Group who will act as the managing architects for the façade renovation of the Reed Building. Josh explained that the past twenty years of his practice have been devoted to working with the core downtown area of Denver, and the last few years also working with a Phoenix partnership dedicated to bringing market rate housing into downtown Phoenix. Josh indicated the information provided by Jody fits closely with the redevelopment activities in and around downtown Denver and stressed the importance of looking at the successes and heartaches of other communities before stepping out on a new endeavor of this nature. He believes that adding housing in downtown brings a wonderful opportunity to invigorate an area. Josh showed pictures of some of their major projects and provided additional information on each project regarding whether retail space was added in housing blocks and descriptions on what was done to incorporate parking. All of this followed in line with what the Board had been discussing as a possibility for something similar in downtown Grand Junction.

DDA / DTA MOU: Gregg Palmer had reviewed the proposed MOU provided by John Shaver of the City's Legal Department and expressed that, although he had not had an opportunity to discuss this with Janet Terry, he believes the MOU between the two agencies should be a more general document focusing on the working relationship between the two. A second MOU should then be written to follow the guides of a financial agreement between the three agencies as the DDA and DTA move into the Main Street Program, which would focus on the DDA / DTA / CITY in protecting the City's financial interests. It will also be important to address the working relationship between the DDA and the DTA after the three-year period when the "Partnership" expires. Bruce Hill suggested that, in order to simplify things for the legal department, the Board provide bullets identifying what must be included in the MOU.

Harold read to the Board the letter he recently received from Barbara Silverman notifying him that Grand Junction DDA/DTA had not been accepted into the Main Street Program due to "dissention between the three entities." Response was very strong, due to the fact that the application showed a written commitment on the part of the DDA to assist the DTA in this effort; the downtown retailers and businesses and made written pledges of financial support to the project; and the City Council had submitted a letter of support and resolution committing \$75,000 per year to the program. After some discussion Board members agreed that it's important to move forward because the unity of the groups has been established. Harry reminded the Board that when representatives go before City Council it would be important for Council to know if the DTA retailers are still committed to their financial pledges. If the DTA and the DDA have committed to move forward, then it's important to know if the City will commit the funding to the program as it had previously agreed. Harold said that the Downtowners / Retailers group would be meeting that night and that they would be apprised of the status and would again be asked for a signature of commitment to move forward with the program. He added that it would be possible for the group to take membership with a national Main Street group that would provide many references for assistance with the program. Gregg Palmer recommended that the DDA should be proactive and inform the media that it will not be participating in the Colorado Main Street Program, rather than waiting to respond to rumors.

Doug Simons adjourned the meeting at 9:18 a.m.