

**Downtown Development Authority
Board Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2003
Whitman School, 248 South 4th Street**

PRESENT: PJ McGovern, Karen Vogel, Becky Brehmer, Pat Gormley, Scott Howard, Harry Butler, Bruce Bengel, Harry Griff, Doug Simons, John Shaver, Harold Stalf, and Sue Schore

ABSENT: Larry Botkin

PJ McGovern called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

Karen Vogel moved that the minutes of the November 6 meeting be approved. Second by Becky Brehmer. Approved.

RATIFY RESOLUTION: The Board reviewed a Resolution for Bonding for approximately \$3 million. By roll call vote, all Board members present approved the resolution.

7TH STREET IMPROVEMENTS: Harold reported that City Council is considering a request to include 7th Street as part of its capital improvement project of \$1.4 million. The Colorado Department of Transportation has \$350,000 for city or county projects for 2006 – 2008. The County has approved the Monument Road bike trail and City Council has tentatively approved 7th Street upgrades. Harold and Jody Kliska are writing a grant request to CDOT for partial funding. As it stands, if approved, \$700,000 would come from the DDA, with \$350,000 each from the city and county. Harold's proposal identifies improvements from Grand to Pitkin on 7th and 7th to 8th on Main.

NEW BUSINESS: Harold reported that there will be a Regional Transportation Open House next Tuesday, December 10th and encouraged all Board members to attend. The Committee is close to making the final determination to include the Ute/Pitkin change in their plans and, if anyone has any positive thoughts regarding this proposed change, you should express them.

The Colorado Historical Society has nominated the Reed Building for a restoration award. Presentation of awards will be in Denver sometime in February and Board members are invited to attend for the presentation.

Enterprise Zone – Harold has been working with officials of the Incubator Center in a request to reinstate cultural entities such as Art on the Corner and the Avalon Theatre. Botanic Gardens were approved for the operating fund, as well as Habitat for Humanity. The local Enterprise Zone board approved the request to reinstate the AOTC and the Avalon, which the Mesa County Commissioners also approved. Final determination by the state should be made public before the end of the year. This is wonderful news for

people waiting to purchase sculptures or for those wanting to make donations to the Avalon.

The DDA / Downtown Partnership office will be closed on December 26 and January 2. The Cinema at the Avalon started well; however attendance now is very low. There definitely is a need to do more advertising.

Karen Vogel moved that the meeting adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing real estate. Bruce Benge seconded the motion. Passed. The meeting adjourned to executive session at 11:20 a.m.

At 11:40 a.m. the Board reconvened for lunch and a parking study report by consultant Donald Walker discussing the highlights of his study, an update of the October 1999 study. Almost 4900 parking spaces were identified in the downtown area, but 3000 of those spaces are private--owned by businesses and not open to the public. The City had 1800 spaces with 53% occupancy. In the nine-block core area of downtown, there was a 400-space deficit in parking availability, likely because people don't want to walk. Harry Griff asked if any adjustments were made from Christmas to summer, and Donald responded that a 20% adjustment accounted for that. Walker emphasized that there still was a deficit in that core area and he listed alternatives in the report, from most economical to most expensive. In downtown Grand Junction there is very limited opportunity to restripe lots to add additional spaces. Discussions focused on the feasibility of structured parking, different size options and site selection recommendations in a four-block area. The strategy should be to build a parking structure for employees to use, which would then open spaces on the street for customers. The recommended size is 300 spaces. Walker recommended building for a portion of what you think the deficit is so that the structure will be well utilized. The question arose regarding the need for a second parking garage south of Main Street, but he indicated that right now the demand isn't there. Right now there is more employee demand for parking north of Main rather than south. 80 – 85% of vehicles coming to downtown are short-term visitors. Brief discussions centered on incentives to get employees into a structure, perhaps employers compensating the monthly fee.

According to Harry Griff, sometime in the future the DDA will want to do something with a parking structure south of Main, with shallow retail. Discussion ensued on oversizing the footings and columns to accommodate future expansions, as well as probable costs on various sites. Harry Griff asked about the time frame and costs associated with having a consultant architect come in and identify what could be built on this site and what could be built on that site and stressed the need to really look hard at the options. Walker's scope of services would do that for one site and it could be expanded for additional sites at an approximate cost of \$3-5K per site. Harry Butler recommended doing a survey among downtown employees to determine how far they would walk to work. Generally 1-2 blocks was found to be the answer for Colorado Springs. Donald Walker stated that the City's parking enforcement is currently lax and that adds to the problem. The recommendation should be to have all short-term parking in the core area and long-term (more than 3 hours) outside of the core area.

Doug Simon's recommendation was to build the structure on 4th and Colorado, thereby creating retail parking on property we already have, emphasizing that public perception is important. With a structure elsewhere, people will think we still need parking on Main Street. 4th & Colorado will do more for downtown than a structure in any other location. An informal pole was taken on various recommended sites. Another point brought forth was the necessity of getting money from the parking fund to subsidize the project. Doug suggested one option of asking the City to buy the land and giving it partial revenues for its investment.

PJ recommended waiting to see the responses from the published RFP, present them on the 8th, discuss the top two and then contract with Walker to do a study and have some final recommendations for discussion on the January 22. Additional discussions focused on cost and recommendations of going one level or ½ level underground. Harold stated that Josh Comfort has indicated an interest to work with Walker to assist with urban design and aesthetics. He has some creative ideas he'd like to share with us like he has done in Denver. Harry Griff asked about income stream and said the Board should be cognizant of this community and what people would be willing to pay for monthly parking. The eventual goal is to get employees off the street. Long-term meters now are \$16 per week and Norm Franke at Alpine Bank is charging as high as \$50 per month for some of the parking that he is providing. Ongoing expenses per space are \$15 through \$20 per month. Then there is maintenance, and utilities are a primary expense. Donald conveyed that the average life expectancy design is for over 50 years. He added that parking in the garage should be at a lower cost than on street; on-street parking should always be the most expensive.

Walker's final comments noted that parking structures are always user-friendly because they target more space for the shopper. Management is the key to the whole thing. The trend is for cities to have a parking department to do the enforcement and adjudication for tickets. Moneys from tickets then go back into the parking fund. PJ recommended looking to the Aspen solutions as being really innovative in dealing with parking.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.