

GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD MINUTES
Thursday, April 8, 2010
248 S. 4th Street, Grand Junction, CO
7:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Harry Griff, Peggy Page, Bonnie Beckstein, Scott Holzschuh, Bill Keith, Steve Thoms, PJ McGovern, Kevin Reimer

STAFF: Heidi Hoffman Ham, Diane Keliher, Kathy Dirks

GUESTS: Kathy Jordan, Bennett Boeschstein, Rich Englehart, Trent Prall, Steve Reimer, John Shaver, Paul Brown, Patrick Eidman, John Schlerr, Kristin Ashbeck

CALL TO ORDER: Steve called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Scott made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 25 meeting; Peggy seconded; minutes were approved.

FRIENDS OF THE DEPOT - This group has been meeting for two years regarding restoring the Union Depot. They would like to thank the DDA and Colorado Preservation Inc. for their support. The group initially approached the Museum about buying the Depot and eventually formed a group interested in restoration. The building has fallen into disrepair and has been designated as a “threatened” building by preservation professionals throughout the state and region. This has brought attention to the Depot. The architect is very famous as this is one of the only railroad buildings he built. The Depot could play an important part in the tourist industry. The group is excited to be involved with the building. It is currently owned by Alpine Bank.

The Friends have a grant pending that would address the “critical deficiencies” identified in the structure assessment report. This is a matching grant and the Friends group will need to do some fundraising if it is awarded. The building is structurally very sound. It has a vaulted ceiling and a beautiful stained glass window. With the increased popularity of the California Zephyr, Amtrak is interested in coming back to the Depot as a tenant. There is a potential buyer and people interested in locating there. It would be a multi-use building and focal point of Downtown. There has been an effort to look at how the building could connect to Downtown. There needs to be a crosswalk to the parking lot across the highway. This could mean re-aligning the I-70 business bypass. The train station would then become a connection to Two Rivers Convention Center and Main Street. This opens up the opportunity for development in South Downtown. Paul Brown presented a limited-edition print of the Grand Junction Railroad Depot to the Board and once again thanked them very much for their support.

Harry thinks that this concept has great potential as a catalyst project and would restore an entire blighted area. Scott asked about the history of the building. PJ feels that the DDA should have some ownership in the project if it moves forward. The group was thanked for their presentation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – The five organizations involved with the Catalyst project met yesterday and have contacted PUMA for assistance in forming a draft IGA for consideration by the boards of all organizations. PUMA will be coming back to discuss this with the group.

Heidi has spoken with the Museum about renting the entire building. The staff needs more room to work. The Museum would leave the monthly rate and terms the same although there would be more utilities expense. Heidi would like to do that in the short term and then make some decisions about long-term arrangements. The East Wing would still be available to rent. The Museum staff has moved to Cross Orchards.

400 BLOCK OPTIONS – Rich explained that his role today is to discuss the results of the recent meeting with City Council. He noted that Heidi has done an excellent job of communicating the DDA goals to the City and that there is much support from the Council for the project. The City does not want to compromise the goals of the project, but Rich has been directed to come back to the DDA Board with some options for increased parking in the 400 block, given the pending threat of a lawsuit on that issue. The City Planning Department did some more research and has put together some drawings.

There are currently no handicapped parking spaces in the 400 block. There are 11 handicapped parking places in adjacent lots and the parking garage. Rich presented three options for removing handicapped parking spaces on the 400 block. Bonnie wondered if the group threatening the lawsuit could possibly be satisfied with any compromise. PJ suggested surveying landowners based on square footage.

Harry feels the DDA needs to decide what is best for Downtown. Heidi added that she feels taking away handicapped parking would be difficult from a public relations standpoint. Peggy made the motion to refer the issue to the City Council with the support of Alternative 1 to add four more parking spaces to the 400 block; PJ seconded; motion carried; Harry opposed.

Peggy made a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purpose of discussing the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer, or sale of real, personal, or other property interest under C.R. S. Section 24-6-402(4)(a); Harry seconded; the Board adjourned into executive session at 8:40 a.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-REAL ESTATE: Bonnie left the meeting.

ADJOURN – Harry made a motion to adjourn executive session and return to regular meeting; Peggy seconded; the Board reconvened at 8:56 a.m.

Harry made a motion to approve the contract for purchase of the Scheisswohl Building including details on the use of the front parking lot as recommended by the Real Estate Committee; PJ seconded; motion carried.

Kevin made a motion to adjourn; Peggy seconded; the board adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

APPROVED _____

DATE _____

SENT TO CITY CLERK _____

DATE _____