

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/CITY COUNCIL
JOINT ANNUAL MEETING
December 3, 1992 4-7 PM

Present: Bill Petty, Joe Skinner, Bill McCurry, John Bennett, Larry Timm, Ed Chamberlin, Glen Dennis, Pat Gormley, Conner Shepherd, Mike Shafer, Mancel Page, Mark Hermundstad, Mark Achen, DDA Director, Barbara Creasman; DDA Secretary, Wendy Schade.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Petty called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

DDA MISSION AND PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT - Bill Petty

The DDA was developed in 1977 by the City of Grand Junction after voter approval was received. The mill levy was to fund the DDA. Later, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) would be used to fund capital projects. 5 mill tax levy was to be charged to those within the DDA boundaries. The DDA also receives state and federal grants and carryover.

The purpose of the DDA is to support economic development, preserving a 60 block area. Monthly meetings are held by a 9 member board.

In 1981 the DDA prepared a Plan of Development, which is still in effect. It continues to be a viable plan, however some adjustments have been made during the years. Expansion of the boundaries has been done on a volunteer basis from 7th Street towards the river. In 1982 the West End Development Plan was adopted.

Recently, many owners are renovating their properties, much of which has been completed in the 500 block. Only two regular store fronts are empty.

Public parking is an investment, which offers a healthy return, bringing shops into the downtown area. Temporary parking lots are being developed at 3rd & Main through a trade with The Bank of Grand Junction.

Because Grand Junction has many parades downtown, restaurants and other businesses benefit from the increase in population for such special events.

Older buildings, such as the Avalon Theatre, are being reused.

DDA receives continuous inquiries from businesses and individuals interested in relocating.

Grand Junction is a community with pride, having done an excellent job avoiding problems other areas have.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS - Joe Skinner

As part of the Plan of Development, Johnson and Johnson & Roy did an extensive study. Analysis were made on a block by block basis. The result was the Downtown Development strategy, which outlined direction and approaches that should be taken.

The map drawn of the downtown area in May 1992, showed Main Street as a commercial renovation district. The Plan of Development recognized influences which were outside of the black line district, such as the West End where the jail is located. The area to the east of the district is residential and Whitman Park has a people focus.

Certain recommendations have been made, understanding that people attract people. Growth and revitalization would be a dynamic process, but would require a continual dialogue. With additional growth, there is also a need for housing rehab.

Traffic pattern must be improved so that it is easier to get around.

Materials used in the construction or renovation of buildings located in the downtown area is important. Brick exteriors and glass located at entry level are beneficial. Some revisions to zoning ordinances are needed.

The State Office Building was a big issue, as it is people centered and provides unity. The presence of a State Building as well as where banking institutions are located provide vital anchors.

Infrastructure - It was necessary to vacate alleys and underground utilities for City Market.

With fractional individual size ownership, it is not easy to acquire large amounts of land. In the downtown area there are a lot of small, narrow, long parcels.

A variety of businesses and Performing Arts provide for continual use of the downtown area, including evenings and weekends. Need to overcome visual impediments, so distance between two points would not seem too long.

TIF Development is expected to increase tax revenues. The first and second bond issue resulted in over \$2 million available.

When first established, the commercial renovation district was able to have some tax abatement. This is no longer applicable due to a change in the tax laws.

PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS - Barbara Creasman

A lot of progress has been made with the project list of 1981, but not everything has been completed. The vote for TIF was done at the time of the boom. Funds are still available from the \$1.3 million bond issue (Fall 1990), but most will be expended by 1993.

The first renovation included new shelters and kiosks. Alleys were improved on both sides of Main. Many streets were one way, making it easy to find oneself getting further and further away from downtown, so Rood and Colorado were returned to two-way.

Lighting and landscaping are important factors, which draw people downtown. Lighting is most crucial in winter, when it gets dark earlier; landscaping, which provides shade, is most vital in the summer.

5th Street was not addressed, since it is outside the district, but recently the importance of it as an entrance to the city and downtown has been targeted.

The Downtown Shopping Park, which was a Public Works project, expanded in 1988 and 1989. DDA had acquired the property City Market now owns. After purchasing the property, it then put it back in private hands. There was relatively good cooperation for finalizing the acquisition.

The Credit Union and City Market project helped to solidify the West End. Alleys had to be vacated in order to provide underground utilities.

There is a lot more walking traffic from events at Two Rivers. The visual connection brings people downtown for shopping.

Whitman Park receives a fair amount of use by tourists in the summer, but needs to have better parking access.

As part of property acquisitions, six lots behind the Avalon Theatre were purchased and designated for parking development.

The DDA was very helpful in the Museum's use of the Penneys building in June 1985.

Retail - The trend in the 60's was for larger retail stores. However, by the early/mid 80's, small businesses had developed.

The Art Center has the ability to use the entire Mercantile Building, including the basement and second floor. This is something most regular businesses would be unable to do.

The DDA purchased the property at 531 Main, tore down the building, and provided a walkway, thus removing a problem building and providing access to public parking.

Although the DDA does not have marketing dollars like Mesa County Economic Development Council, there is quite a lot of activity. The Fashion Bar, listed for \$130,000, just sold for \$117,500. This was much closer to the asking price than properties selling three years ago. Two parties are considering buying the Regis. Capps is vacant, but wasn't available until the last few weeks.

1993 GOALS AND ACTIVITIES - Bill Petty

Continue West End Redevelopment

This is still a major priority. There is a need for an anchor in the 200 Block, preferably a hotel/motel. We have thus far received a response from one developer and two hotel/motels, expressing some interest.

Plump and Luscious is the only property left to acquire. The problem is not price, but rather environmental issues. Once acquired, the DDA will own 2nd Street to Raso on Main and to Superior Alarm on the Colorado side. 3 1/2 acres are available.

Support Cultural Activity

AOTC is a successful program, which increases every year with improvements in quality.

Infrastructure Improvements

DDA did a study regarding parking needs, recording actual number of cars parked at certain times.

Would like better marriage between Pitkin & Grand on Fifth Street. Additional signage is needed. A lot of people can turn and never know there is a downtown.

North 7th Street is the corridor to Horizon Drive; West Main and South 7th are the corridors to the Riverfront.

Marketing of the Downtown Area

This is a continuous process. Packets are provided to inquiries. Barbara works closely with EDC, Visitors Bureau, etc.

Other Activities in Process

Plans for restrooms are close to bid. Although unable to beat the frost, construction is scheduled for Spring. Voluntary land owners will be reviewed in January.

The DDA is assisting the Avalon Theatre to determine public support for the project. To date, four performances have been held. Donations in excess of \$6,000 have been received from just one mailing, which is substantially better than AOTC donations.

Tree replacement is a topic, which was discussed several years ago. Most of the trees in the Shopping Park were planted 30 years ago. Since the average life of a tree is 60 years, replacement of damaged and aging trees should begin on a gradual basis, even though there will be people who will voice their disapproval.

Location of the bus terminal at the entrance of downtown is not the best choice. We are hoping to move the terminal further south.

Parking has been discussed considerably as part of property acquisitions. Six sites behind the Avalon Theatre are designated for parking development.

The Art Center is capable of using the entire Mercantile Building, including the basement and second floor. This is something which no regular business is able to do.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.