

**Downtown Revitalization
Business Advisory Team
Meeting Notes ~ April 6, 2009**

Business Advisory Attendees: Les Depperschmidt, Bryan Derreberry, Kimberly Edmunds, Jody Horner, Steve Martens, Abel Perez, Phil Ruffin, Harvey Sorensen, Jim Walters, Tim Witsman, Jack Huber, Meredith Warren, Michael Pottebaum, Jackson Hill III, Paul Rosales, Jeff Fluhr, Mary Eves, Allen Bell, Debbie Gann, Bill Roy, John Ek, Sheryl Wohlford, Dick Honeyman, Don Sherman, Jason Dilts, Craig Simon, John Todd, Chris Ruffin, Barby Jobe, Mike Loveless, Lyndon Wells, Vera Bothner, Tracee Adams, Carl Brewer, Wayne Bell, Larry Weber, Scott Knebel, Charlie Claycomb, Jason Van Hecke, Rob Harmon, Marlon King, Gary Calkins, Keith Lane, Cristi Howell, Christina Weber, John Andrade, Collin Allen, Jeff Blubaugh, Antione Aherfield, Dan Wilson, Martha Linsner, Cathy Holdeman, John Schlegel, Suzie Ahlstrand, Angie Elliott, Craig Gable, Steve Anthemides, Hoyt Hillman, Van Williams, Diane Longfellow

Welcome & Purpose of the Meeting

Mayor Brewer welcomed everyone and thanked Harvey Sorensen and Jody Horner for their leadership on the Business Advisory Team. The purpose of the meeting is to begin the dialog about our vision for downtown, to determine the direction we need to go and how to get there.

Case for Downtown

Jeff Fluhr presented information on the Case for Downtown. It included information on what is currently going on in downtown and the opportunities ahead of us.

- We are building our identity
- We have a lot of “wins”
- We are building upon our investment
- We need to determine how to keep moving forward; how to connect the assets we have built – Old Town, INTRUST Arena, River Front, Water Walk
- We need to identify strategic development initiatives
- We can learn from other communities such as Chattanooga, Louisville, Raleigh, Kansas City, Oklahoma City
- We need to create the environment businesses can build upon
- The goal is how to take a 20 year vision and make it happen in 10 years.

Invitation to Dream

The Mayor invited everyone to share in dreaming about Wichita’s downtown. We recognize that there are challenges similar to those we have had in the past. But we need to position ourselves now and prepare for the future. He challenged everyone to help move Wichita forward. He asked for participant’s input and

expertise. There is no timeline. In the past perhaps things were not done correctly but we want to learn from the past and get it right for the future. Everyone was asked to come on board and help us as we move forward.

Comments & Discussion

- Rainbow over the River – can be traveled over – take the Wizard of Oz identity and build upon it in a positive way – build on courage, brains and compassion
- Q – Are we requesting money from the federal government?
A - Right now we are not requesting funds. We are looking at a plan – what are we going to be?
- Need a financial commitment – mortgages for residential
- Tram for downtown that would eventually expand to the suburbs
- There are no children downtown – we need pocket parks and green spaces to bring families downtown
- Do more with bike access from downtown out to the suburbs
- The biggest green space downtown – WAMPO is looking into improving
- Everything so far is geared toward 20s and 30s – to get the city involved we need to take in to consideration all ages
- Transportation system for downtown – something to attract people from the outlying areas – there will be more development along the river as we do these things
- We have distinct districts downtown – key element to retail is to have an anchor – we have this opportunity in the arena & Waterwalk – a key piece is Waterwalk – the city needs to get behind this project – the potential is great
- Difficulties in past with the city being more interested in control than success – they need a willingness to talk to developers and the public

How can we encourage & increase business investment downtown?

- To attract residential need to have grocery store and retail – it's a chicken and the egg situation – how do we encourage people to live downtown?
- A grocery store might require a subsidy – may need public support until the private sector can take over
- Give people things to do throughout the week – this will attract people downtown
- Challenge peoples perception of parking downtown – finish diagonal parking along Douglas – this creates a visual that downtown is alive and walkable
- It's confusing to come downtown because of all the one-way streets
- There is no foreign art or film venue downtown
- Create a plaza like Santa Fe or Kansas City – where people park, walk and shop
- Q – Where did you come up with the 2500 residents needed for a grocery store? Dillon's at Waco had more than that but closed.
A – We are not looking at a Dillon's but a more scaled to urban market grocery that would fill daily needs

- We need a downtown development plan
- Q - How do we use a downtown development plan?
A – It lays out the blueprint giving us benchmarks to measure our projects – brings together partnerships we haven't had before – enhances what we are doing – the plan would help in potentially securing federal and state funding
- Historical board get in the way of downtown development
- Arena – Old Town – Waterwalk – success of each one is dependent on the success of all – there is a connectivity issue – need some form of transportation to support all three
- Q – What can business do to help move this forward and get the plan done?
A – Identify what we would like to see – go out to the community and gather information – consolidate information then put the plan together
- Private sector – what has worked well? What can we do better? There is no short cut – we have to engage the community & design groups – have to go through the process
- How do we determine the value of residential in downtown? Do we need a bond issue – some incentive to drive people to want to move downtown?
- Right now position ourselves for when the market turns – cities are escalating their planning – we have to look at our market and what works here
- We need to meet with those who have been in downtown a long time – ask what are the problems – what are the needs
- Need well paying jobs downtown – a new industry downtown
- Downtown development plan a good idea

Harvey asked for a show of hands in support of a plan. The response was overwhelmingly in support of developing a new master plan for downtown.

Adjournment & Thank You

Invitation to Dreams cards were given to attendees. Everyone was encouraged to complete and return these cards.