Meeting Minutes
City of Davis
Downtown Davis Plan Advisory Committee Meeting
Senior Center Activity Room, 646 A Street
Thursday, June 20, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Committee Members: Meg Arnold (Chair), Michelle Byars (Vice Chair), Josh Chapman, Judy Corbett, Mary DeWall, Chris Granger, Cathy Forkas, John Meyer, Sinisa Novakovic, Ted Parks, Eric Roe, Randy Yackzan

Liaison Members: Cheryl Essex, Matt Williams, Lyuba Vosheva

Not Present: Catherine Brinkley, Darren McCaffrey, Deema Tamimi, Matt Dulcich

City Council Liaisons: Brett Lee

City Staff: Ashley Feeney, Eric Lee, Brian Abbanat

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
   Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM. Cathy Forkas attending as alternate Old East Davis Neighborhood representative. Lyuba Vosheva attending as new BTSSC liaison.

2. Approval of Agenda
   Agenda moved by DeWall. Seconded by Yackzan. Approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes
   The May 2, 2019 meeting minutes were reviewed. Staff noted corrections requested by Guenther. Byars noted correction. Forkas noted corrections. Granger noted clarifications. Minutes with requested corrections and clarifications moved by Meyer. Seconded by Granger. Approved unanimously.

4. Brief Announcements from Chair, Committee Members, or Staff
   Staff announcement regarding the Amtrak Depot Study and reminder of the user survey which would be open until June 30.

5. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
   None.
6. Regulating Plan Map Edits

A. Staff presented the memo and slides prepared by Opticos Design and reviewed the Regulating Plan Map edits and DPAC recommendations related to them.

DPAC clarifying questions on the Neighborhood Medium Zone and building height included:

- Clarifications that the DPAC recommendation on the Neighborhood Medium Open Sub Zones would be reflected in the draft plan;
- Question whether a 5th story in the Neighborhood Medium Transition Zone would have the same stepback as the 4th story;
- Clarification that there is no 5th story in the Neighborhood Medium Zone;
- That the stepback is measured from the plane of the building;
- Clarification about earlier options and slides presented on allowable heights, the 3 story versus 4 story building heights, and that next to Rice Lane neighborhood, proposal would allow 3 stories be next to 1-story building and 4th story 30 feet away.
- Clarification on flex district in the G Street area and definition. DPAC to review the public draft plan and this is not the last chance for DPAC and City Commissions to weigh in on recommendations.

Staff responses included:

- The current proposal allowing 4 stories is consistent with Opticos’ original recommendations and that Opticos’ memo describes further differentiation beyond just the stepback through additional massing standards that address concerns they have heard from community and DPAC. There was an error in the table presented in the February meeting that indicated the 3 story height limit.
- The flex district definition will be provided. Intent to allow for more flexible uses, more labs. The form is prescriptive, but uses are flexible. Draft Form Based Code will also be available for public review with the Draft Specific Plan and will provide additional details.

B. Staff reviewed DPAC comments about development intensity around Central Park and areas west of the downtown core for DPAC discussion.

C. Public Comments.

The following people commented: Mark Grote, Rhonda Reed, Doby Fleeman, John Johnston, Alan Miller, Ray Burdick, Tia Will. Their comments included:

- There is a staff change to plan to allow 4 stories and public should speak up;
- Support for 3 story limit next to residential and concern for creating 30-foot wall of development around downtown, increasing density and height west of B Street is disruptive to neighborhood; don’t use term “half-story;” 4 stories is too high; Natural barrier to Old East is the railroad tracks; Commend current
status of plan and desire to reinvest in downtown; Downtown is most logical place to densify and go up.

D. DPAC discussed the item.

i. No DPAC comments about the Neighborhood Medium “Open” Sub-Zone.

ii. On the Neighborhood Medium Transition Zone item.

DPAC comments about development intensity and building height in the zone included:

- Should keep the most intense development downtown.
- Worry about Old East and historic housing. Consider 3 story limit, maybe even stepback for 3rd story. Worry about domino effect if go too extreme. Worry about good faith issue with that neighborhood. Impression from earlier meeting that we had settled on a 3 story limit.
- Direction DPAC gave for the transition was a tradeoff that allowed other areas to be higher. It is important to have something in this plan as a model for transitions from four to two stories.
- Four stories goes against Opticos’s design fundamentals for gradual transition; it creates a wall between neighborhoods and downtown.
- Not opposed to building up, but prefer to look at downtown as a whole and not piecemeal. DPAC’s charge was to densify downtown.
- Developing in downtown is much more difficult than on farmland. Trying to create opportunities for people to live and work downtown.
- The changes will affect the value of the properties. Most building types are not feasible according to BAE analysis.
- Better to avoid dispute within DPAC to be able to advocate for the plan and get community support.

DPAC comments on University Avenue/Rice Lane Neighborhood included:

- Clarification that DPAC actively decided not to touch University Avenue area.
- An outcome from this process was supposed to address large building next to one-story, three stories is already a lot, but can be acceptable. Opposed to going higher.
- Current zoning does not allow apartment buildings in University Avenue area to be rebuilt.

DPAC comments on the Central Park area included:

- Central Park is heart of downtown. Need to deal with neighborhoods holistically. The stepback is based on consultants expertise that upper floors won’t be seen with sight lines if the stepback is enough.

DPAC comments on Old North area included:
Proposal would have 4 stories across the street from 1 story, but not elsewhere.

4 stories on the east side of G Street feels very different from 4 stories across an alley.

Hibbert site backs onto commercial and faces commercial across the street and is already commercial. Sight lines provide transition down to 1 story and 2 story homes, but should have stepback at 3 stories.

Staff comments and responses included:

- The plan is Opticos’ plan and the community’s plan. DPAC being asked to consider staff recommended changes. Opticos uses their own professional judgement in considering staff comments. Opticos will provide more detail and explanation when the plan is released and will address massing and form in more detail. DPAC’s recommendations will be shared with decision-making bodies and differences can be discussed. There may adjustments after public review of the draft plan. Opticos still feels the proposed heights and stepbacks are appropriate in the neighborhood transition area.

DPAC comments and clarification on the process included:

- An official position at the moment is not needed, but DPAC has taken positions on topics at other times. DPAC’s comments are advisory and it is still prior to the public review period. Part of DPAC’s charge was to address densification, particularly in the absence of sprawl and green field development and is also a region-wide issue for the future.

- Prior DPAC recommendation for 3 story building height. Goal is to get a public draft plan that is the least divisive among DPAC as it can be.

Chair commented that at the last meeting DPAC took action to recommend that in the transition boundary areas that heights be limited to 3 stories for reasons discussed at that meeting and previous meetings. One of DPAC’s goals is to have a public draft plan that is as least divisive among DPAC as it can be. Chair proposed another action to reconfirm DPAC’s collective decision and recommendation from the previous meeting.

Motion by DeWall to reconfirm previous recommendation. Second by Novakovic.

DPAC further comments included:

- Desire to hear from property owners who would be affected. If those owners don’t feel strongly, then not worried. DPAC is reconfirming a previous decision, which is advisory. Hope that those property owners and others participate when the draft plan is released.

- Discussion and clarification of what areas are included in the motion.

- Clarification that the recommendation that is for properties in pink color east of railroad tracks and those west of B Street be limited to 3 stories.

- Clarification that EIR would start after the draft plan is released and EIR is the limiting document for what is analyzed.
Clarification by Chair that there are two parts to motion having to do with the scope/geographic location and height.
  o One part has to do with the height. Asking to reconfirm prior decision with respect to height that DPAC preference would be to limit it to 3 stories in those areas identified.
  o Second part has to do with where. As previous meeting, Chair suggested might have an alternate motion that the transition zone would encompass not just Trackside, but various margins of downtown because it applies it consistently across the entire edge area of downtown.

Motion is to reconfirm both the height that DPAC talked about last time and the geography described in words in the minutes and shown on the map for the transition zone that DPAC previously recommended and is shown on this map.

  o Question if motion includes recommendation for 3rd floor setbacks. Clarification that DPAC did not discuss Opticos’ current proposal or setbacks. It would be new issue and is not part of the motion.
  o Question if the 3 story limit only applies to Neighborhood Medium Zone or if it includes Hibbert lot and Coop site. Clarification that the 3 story limit recommendation only applies to Neighborhood Medium Zone. Red line shown on map indicates upper story setbacks, but not 3 story limitation in the zone for Hibbert lot and Coop site which can be taller.

Vote on motion to reconfirm previous recommendation.

Yes: Unanimous
No: None
Abstain: Corbett

iii. On DPAC discussion of development around Central Park and west of Downtown, DPAC comments included that satisfaction with information and answers, but is still a squandered resource.

7. **Financial Feasibility Analysis Review**

   A. Recap of BAE presentation and information from joint PC/FBC workshop.

   Staff introduced the item and commission liaisons provided observations

   M. Williams provided summary and highlights of workshop presentation and FBC observations. The way the fiscal feasibility analysis is presented is one answer with no sensitivity on either side. Some recent projects rent by the bed, but BAE’s analysis assumes rent by unit only. Rent by bed assumption may make a project more feasible. Recommend that feasibility information show all the answers, not just one answer. Some variables if changed may have a large change, others just a small change. One
of asks not provided was what happens if do something about one-time fees. Chiles Road Apartment example spread one-time fee cost of affordable housing over time. City can do that with other fees.

BAE explained what the assumptions were and how they got to the point where most of the scenarios did not pencil out. Also talked about prior projects built in downtown that were smaller than size analyzed and what difference in cost to build out since they were built and BAE scenario is based on current cost. BAE used assumptions that only apply now, such as affordable housing requirements.

C. Essex provided comments on workshop. Noted that there was good discussion. Focus on what the variables in the analysis that the City has control over. No control over materials cost, real estate value, or rent. City controls affordable housing component, impact fees, sustainability requirements, parking, land use zoning, and certainty of approval. Cannot solve most of these things in the downtown plane, but would like to know if staff is working on these pieces and when they may be done. Not thrilled to have 9 our or 10 scenarios not feasible. I would rather see a specific return on investment calculated because investors decide what’s feasible.

A few things not addressed included: no conversation of fiscal impact of this on the city or economic development potential of land use recommendations and it did not address previous comments about how downtown relates to economic development and how the position of the city can be improved by this plan.

DPAC comments included:
- Comment that FBC has requested an updated fiscal model to show what the impact is;
- Encourage others to view video of the workshop;
- Need economic information in the plan and what this plan would mean for benefitting the city;
- Two important things about parking and density that will be in the plan, which is a direction in plan for parking maximums and density for new building forms to allow smaller units with benefit being more affordable and more density.
- Need to be able to accept a plan without all the answers. BAE can’t model what effect and benefit a lot of new residents can have downtown, which is hard to envision.
- Leveraging publicly owned land can improve feasibility. E Street Plaza is biggest publicly owned land downtown. Plan shows a park, but that is not exactly leveraging it or helping projects move along.

B. Public Comments. None.

8. Downtown Parking Presentation (Brian Abbanat, City Transportation Planner)
A. Presentation by Brian Abbanat on Downtown Parking Management Plan. Downtown Plan will be compatible with current Parking Management Plan and management efforts.

DPAC comments and questions included:

- Whether parking recommendations in downtown plan include unbundling parking costs and managing curb-side parking and if there were any conflicts with Council decisions,
- Comment on use of JUMP bikes and their benefits;
- Parking requirements in the plan and their impact on development and whether the Downtown Specific Plan includes recommendations about parking minimums and maximums. If need additional parking downtown, will there be a provision allowing off-site parking purchases or parking sites. Question whether Downtown Specific Plan will establish specific parking maximums or if it is a recommendation for Council to establish.
- Recollection that consultant would be providing a whole range of recommendations that will be included in the draft plan.

Staff responses included:

- The downtown plan is a policy document and can include explicit parking policies. Parking task force identified best practices. Policies will catch up, but don’t need to be prescriptive.
- Shifting mobility paradigm presents challenges which the downtown plan can help address.
- Parking Management Plan is silent on development. However many people you have downtown, the tools you use to manage parking are the same tools. Will respond from management standpoint whatever materializes in the downtown.
- Consultant is recommending maximums, not minimums. Includes allowing off-site parking and possible sites for parking garage. However, parking maximum is not as much of an issue. Minimums drive the conversation.

B. Public Comments.

The following people commented: Robert Canning. Comments included hope that DPAC comes out in favor of paid on-street parking as way to manage the parking better.

C. DPAC Comments.

Comment about spillover effects, coordinating with City on how to bring more employees out to Old East and creating a parking district.

9. Check in on Previous Meeting Items

A. Previous Items: Sustainability, Affordable Housing, Transportation, Parking.
Brief staff introduction on the items. DPAC comments included clarification on provision of April sustainability discussion items to Opticos. Questions about providing affordable housing and affordable spaces for businesses. Staff responded that there is discussion and language from visioning standpoint, but not regulations for requirements.

DPAC discussion about whether the sustainability recommendation from April were reviewed by DPAC and concern about additional requirements and feasibility for developers and business owners. If ask private developer to internally subsidize affordable housing, it adds to the project cost. It is challenging. Green Building Code will continue to advance sustainability. Clarification that April was a check in meeting between staff, DPAC members of the sustainability group, and some community members. Recommendations were reviewed and made some adjustments made. The full list of items is what DPAC voted on and the short list is what the sustainability group reviewed in April.

Chair identified action item to see what the date on which the item came for discussion and how we handled it and dispensed with it. On affordability issue, City has a separate process underway and encourage folks to engage with that.

B. Public Comments.

Following people commented: Doby Fleeman. Comments included: Comment on the fiscal sustainability of the community and need to get sales tax leakage info from UCD campus and comment on the downtown employment demographics to help provide baseline information.

10. Other Updates
   Staff update on the surveys and historic resources section of the plan.

11. Working Schedule
   Reviewed by staff. Expecting a draft document by end of August for public release for 90-day review period to include DPAC and commission meetings. Council liaison Lee expressed his thanks to DPAC for being part of process and commented that DPAC’s discussion about edge areas is related to the dilemma about projects near residential areas and that DPAC will help City have a cohesive vision and will inform the General Plan process.

12. Adjournment
   Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.