

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

AUGUST 20, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman John Kevern. Committee members present were: John Kevern, Rick Rettig and Barry VanHoozen. Also present were Mayor Mike Olmstead, City Administrator Bridgette Kabat, and Planning and Zoning Administrator Brody Walters.

DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

Mayor Olmstead said that since the last Economic Development Committee meeting, an Open House was held as well as several meetings with citizens both for and against the proposal. He said some changes were made to the original plan in response to comments received. Mr. Walters reviewed the changes made which include modifying the boulevard and replacing the street trees with lower ground cover, adding darker spots on the pavement to signify pedestrian safe zones, and pavement marking and lighting for an advance warning signal to indicate that pedestrians are using the crosswalk. This includes LED lights embedded in the pavement that can be actuated by pressing a button on the sign post. Mr. Walters stated that this plan will have a net increase of 25 parking spaces by changing the orientation of the parking on Second Street. He also said the Administration is in contact with property owners in an effort to secure restroom facilities.

Mr. Kevern stated that the Mayor has asked the Economic Development Committee to consider the Downtown Infrastructure Enhancement proposal. He said that the committee usually considers offering limited incentives to qualified businesses looking to relocate or remain in Perrysburg, providing or retaining jobs. As a committee they view the Mayor's initiative as a quasi-fit to true economic development but have agreed to solicit the pros and cons and pass them along to all City Council members. He then opened the floor to public comment.

Phil Dombey, 110 West Second Street, said that he canvassed the downtown businesses from the railroad tracks to Front Street and out of 39 businesses, 33 are against the plan. He said we will have another Levis Commons downtown and there should not be a roundabout in historical Perrysburg. He said the money would be better spent on fixing problems including parking and lack of restrooms.

Andy Langenderfer, 26721 Nawash Drive, said he is a design engineer and has designed over twenty roundabouts and is in support of this project. He said that the safety rating for roundabouts is off the charts. Accidents in general decrease 40%, injury accidents reduce by 75%, and fatalities are reduced by 90%. He said that is why roundabouts are being installed all over. Lucas County is installing fifteen and the City of Toledo is putting in eight. Mr. Langenderfer said the reduced speeds make it safer for pedestrians. Other benefits include fuel savings and reduced electrical costs. He stated that in Golden, Colorado they converted four of their downtown intersections to

roundabouts and installed a boulevard. In the first five years, they saw a 60% increase in sales tax while the rest of the area remained flat.

Katina Holland has a business at 218 Louisiana Avenue. She said that Louisiana Avenue is a state route and the renderings don't show semis or a lot of traffic. She stated if you take away the state route, it will take away business. Mr. Walters noted that the roundabout does accommodate semis.

Ryan Reiter, Seventh Street, said that he read the City is interested in financing the project. He said he would think the City has enough cash on hand for projects like this that he would consider non-essential. He said that we have enough roads that need to be fixed and water issues and considering the financial outlook, he wondered if there are other priorities such as fire staffing levels.

Jon Orser, 125 E. Front Street, said that there are many things wrong with this project; the roundabout is ill-conceived. He said that we have an extremely successful downtown so why do we want to change it. He stated the traditional downtown would be gone and we would have another Levis Commons, which is not successful. He encouraged the Committee to not proceed with this project. Mr. Kevern stated that we feel Levis is successful. Mr. Walters said that with regards to why a roundabout should be installed, it is one of the only ways, if not the best way, to get to and leave the Hood Park area. Mayor Olmstead said that one of the complaints he hears from residents is that the elected officials do studies and then put them on a shelf. He said this plan takes some common principles such as pedestrian friendliness and riverfront access from those plans.

Katina Holland said that this is being done for the riverfront. She said that if the City could have legally put in a road along the riverfront, they would have already done it.

Carol Shepard said that she has personal experience with roundabouts in New York, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and Cape Cod. She said that they are intimidating, confusing and she got lost.

Jane Worth, 103 Louisiana, Ragazza, said that City Council and the Mayor have a different vision for Perrysburg than the merchants. She said her customers are upscale, thirty to eighty year old women who are well dressed and in high heels, and they don't want to walk to Second Street from a parking spot. She said that if the City chooses to turn downtown into Portside with t-shirt and fudge shops, they will have to leave because that's not what their clientele is looking for. Ms. Worth said that although she works in Perrysburg, she lives in Sylvania and she goes through two roundabouts. She said they are great if you live in the country because sixteen year olds can't drive eighty miles an hour through them.

John Naylor, owner of 100 to 115 minus 105 Louisiana, said that his tenants have expressed an extreme desire to not have the roundabout. He said that this plan will take four parking spaces on Louisiana and the money could be more wisely spent on

restrooms. He said that this should be a later phase and the restrooms and parking should be done first.

Ms. Kabat noted that in the 2015 budget City Council will see dollars budgeted for Second Street parking. She also said that the Administration is reviewing the terms of a lease for restroom facilities.

Diane Bishop, 231 W. Seventh Street, asked what the costs are for the changes that have been made. Ms. Kabat said that the parking will be a separate line item and will not be added to the cost of the project. Ms. Bishop asked about the costs for the changes to the crosswalks and the LED lighting. Ms. Kabat said that it is factored in the original amount as a built-in contingency. Ms. Bishop said that she is opposed to it. She said people don't know how to drive through the little roundabout at Levis Commons. She said she understands a roundabout for extremely congested areas, but that does not exist here. She expressed concerns about Native American remains in the hillside, and she thinks the money would be better spent dealing with water issues.

Therese Witt, 790 Oak Knoll Drive, asked how many cars the roundabout can handle. She said that the downtown area is classic and there is a charm to it. She said that just because interest rates are low, there are too many negatives. She stated that moving 20 off of Louisiana would hurt businesses and she doesn't think it will be safer for pedestrians because people will jaywalk. She said the Mayor said it won't affect City services, but this is a cost we'll all have to bear. She added that we don't need to beautify downtown because it already is. She instead suggested putting in a walking/biking path to connect the downtown to new neighborhoods or continuing the downtown lighting to Fifth Street.

Gary Franks, resident of the area for over 45 years, who currently lives in the Township, said that the attractiveness of downtown will bring in more people. He said that this adds a very elegant element to downtown. Mr. Franks stated that as an engineer he agrees with the engineer's assessment that a roundabout is safer, and he agrees with rerouting 20. He said that he believes shoppers will still come.

Angel Elden, who has a business at 101 Louisiana Avenue, said that the downtown area has been written up twice in Ohio magazine. She questioned how deliveries could be made if this plan happens. Mr. Walters said that he does not believe that the way deliveries are being done currently is legal, and alleys are attractive for deliveries. Ms. Elden said that she has a woman owned business and she is responsible for unloading deliveries. She cannot, nor can she expect her employees to, go down to Second Street to get her deliveries. She also said that they will lose shoppers because as people drive through town they window shop. She said that she has heard from customers that they don't like Levis and there is nothing like downtown Perrysburg. She added that people enjoy Hood Park the way that it is. She expressed concern about the hit her business would take during the construction and she said she does not see a need for change.

Mr. Simmons, 80 Elm Street, said that he is not aware of any petition from the downtown businesses that they want this. He suggested instead that the telephone poles be removed from downtown and the railroad be re-routed.

Denny Barrett, 514 W. Front Street, asked how much of the \$2.3 million would be for the roundabout. Steve Way of DGL said that it would probably be about two-thirds of the cost. Mr. Barrett said that recently the Toledo Blade had an article rating Main Street of communities less than 100,000 and none of the top 16 have roundabouts in them.

Sylvia Brahier said that she does not drive, but as a pedestrian she has been injured three times at stoplights because drivers are not paying attention. She said that we need to take a deep breath, slow down, and she suggested putting this on the ballot.

Megan McIntyre, 322 E. Second Street, said that she has a business on Louisiana Avenue and she is thankful for the focus on downtown. She said when she saw the plans she was excited about them, but as a business owner she is concerned about parking. She suggested putting in three hour parking limit signs on Louisiana Avenue.

Steve Way, 2167 Coe Court, engineer, addressed some of the issues that had been raised. He said the current diagonal parking is at 75° and has a depth of 18 feet. He said with the proposed median configuration, the 18 foot depth would be maintained which would provide 19 feet for width of the road. So from the end of the stripe to the curbed median would be 19 feet which is required by State design standards. Mr. Way said the roundabout is designed for the largest semi that is legal to be on the road. He said that based on the traffic counts provided to him, the day that this roundabout opened, the level of service would be a C which is a very acceptable level of service. He said the average speed would be 24 mile per hour with an average delay as little as eight seconds, increasing to eighteen seconds during peak hour. He said that projecting through 2034, the peak hour would go to level D which is still acceptable and the peak hour delay would increase to 24 or 25 seconds. Mr. Way said that there is always reluctance with anything new, but with regards to pedestrian safety, the facts support it. He said that initially some motorists may need education so they know how to navigate the roundabout.

Becky Williams, 421 E. Sixth St., said that the Committee has heard a lot from the people that elected them, and she questioned whether this issue belongs at the Economic Development Committee. She asked the Mayor what his priorities are for the City right now. She stated that the P3 plan talks about the riverfront but not a boulevard. She said the riverfront is under-utilized and she can't use the Boat Club but she stills pay taxes on it.

Mr. Rettig said that the main purpose of this meeting was to listen to the residents. He said he took a lot of notes and the Committee and City Council have a great deal to consider. Louisiana Avenue is an axis point that affects the whole community.

Mr. VanHoozen said he also took a lot of notes and it's been interesting to listen to both the engineers and the downtown business owners. He said there is a lot of homework for City Council to do. The Downtown is our signature piece, our beginning and City Council takes this very seriously.

Mr. Kevern said that a lot of items were raised that might not have been considered before tonight's meeting; therefore some minds could have been changed on how they might vote on this. He said there are unanswered questions that we will have to get answers to pretty quickly. He said that he knows the Mayor and Administration would like unanimous support from the Committee on the Downtown Infrastructure Enhancements, but he doesn't think that is feasible at this meeting. He said he believes the best course of action is to defer a vote until the September 2nd City Council meeting when all Councilors will have the same information to consider including the minutes of this meeting. He said although this may sound like an unusual committee procedure, the nature of the request and the somewhat emotional public opinion for or against the project warrants a full Council vote rather than a three man Committee vote against or in favor of the initiative.

Ms. Kabat said that from the Administration standpoint, they will work to answer all questions. She said at the September 2nd City Council meeting the Administration will be bringing two pieces of legislation for a first reading. The first is to move forward with the project and financing, and the second is to authorize soliciting RFQ's for an architectural/engineering firm.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kevern, Chairman
Economic Development Committee

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.