



APPROVED: January 20, 2016

CITY OF ALBANY
Central Albany Revitalization Area Advisory Board
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street SW
Thursday, November 12, 2015

MINUTES

Advisory Board Members present: David Abarr, Rich Catlin, Bill Coburn, Floyd Collins, Loyd Henion, Rich Kellum, Sharon Konopa, Ray Kopczynski, Mitch Langjahr, Dick Olsen, Mark Spence, Maura Wilson

Advisory Board Members absent: Russ Allen (excused), Bessie Johnson (excused)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rich Catlin called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

Peggy Burris, representing the Albany Downtown Association (ADA) and its Board of Directors, expressed support for the streetscape program presented at the last meeting. They are looking forward to the next phase to improve Second and Third Avenues. This is a positive direction, and it's exciting to see the downtown revitalized in a way that will help develop and bring in more businesses, customers, shoppers, and diners. She offered her support in working with downtown merchants, especially through the construction phases.

Matilda Novak, Novaks Hungarian Restaurant, said several businesses on Second Avenue would love to see their frontage looking like First Avenue; however, in the doing of that, they would appreciate parking being taken into consideration. The hope is that as the downtown is being made beautiful, it can also be made more accessible. She has requested that parking be added as an agenda item on the December 2 City Council meeting. She hopes there is a way to add pull-in parking, and lots of it, to accommodate people that the businesses are bringing downtown.

Mark Manley expressed appreciation to the CARA Advisory Board for the tremendous impact they have had in creating what is now a blooming downtown on First Avenue. Ten years ago, when he and his wife were looking at two thoroughly deteriorated buildings, it was a hard decision to get involved in something so comprehensive, expensive, and risky. What pushed them to make that investment was the City funding. They and others came in and renovated buildings, and there is the potential now to repeat that on Second and Third Avenues. He supports the Board in its efforts.

Rod Bigner said he is a downtown resident and business owner. He expressed appreciation to the CARA Advisory Board for putting investment into the downtown. He and his wife came here a few years ago because they wanted to live and work in the historic downtown, and now they are doing both. They are excited to see the streetscape work begin on Second Avenue.

Bill Ryals, 935 Jones Avenue NW, said the CARA Advisory Board is responsible for an amazing turnaround downtown and he is happy with the direction things are going. He wants to throw out a general idea about how to move forward. He referred to the Woodwind Apartments project, a unique project which included an experienced owner who came to him to ask how best to do the project in Albany, understanding his job is to understand and implement the vision. Similarly, he said, it is the job of the CARA Advisory Board to understand that the bosses are the people who pay taxes, to translate their wishes into direction, and to expect that the consultants will make that vision work.

Streets Project Design Details Presentation

Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director Kate Porsche said this is a follow-up to last month's meeting when George Crandall and Don Arambula presented an overarching set of designs for downtown streets, and the CARA Advisory Board had a lot of good discussion and directed staff to bring back details related to design, planning, and phasing for a set of identified street projects. She expressed appreciation to Public Works Engineering staff, including Engineering Manager Staci Belcastro, Civil Engineer III Chris Cerklewski, and Engineering Associate Lori Shumacher, for the significant amount of work in putting together the details. She noted Transportation System Analyst Ron Irish was present to provide information related to parking, and George Crandall was present to answer questions about the consultant's proposal.

Schumacher gave a presentation entitled "Albany Downtown Streetscape Preliminary Estimates and Scenario Cost Comparison" for the priority downtown streetscape project areas of Second and Third Avenues, Broadalbin Street between Second and Third Avenues, North Ellsworth and Lyon Streets, South Ellsworth and Lyon Streets, and Fire Station 11 Frontage Improvements. The presentation included examples and information about project elements and options, including lighting and banners, street furniture, landscaping improvements, and public infrastructure improvements, as well as ongoing costs. Porsche noted that maintenance and ongoing costs would be a decision point for the City Council going forward.

Schumacher reviewed staff-identified concerns with some of the proposed decorative elements: large banners and catenary lighting pose an obstacle for the Fire Department; the Police Department will be consulted on the final bench selection and placement; and traffic calming planters pose a maintenance challenge for City street crews. She then reviewed design elements and cost estimates for base improvements and additional options, and CARA Advisory Board decision points for each project area, as detailed in the presentation.

Irish presented information related to parking options. With Downtown Albany streets, there is a 66-foot right-of-way and a 42-foot curb-to-curb width with 12-foot sidewalks. The curb-to-curb width generally includes parallel parking which takes up 8 feet on each side, a bike lane that takes 5 feet, and two travel lanes. On the sidewalks, the 6 feet closest to the curb is generally where you find fire hydrants, benches, poles, signs, tree wells, etc., and the 6 feet closest to the building is essentially dedicated to pedestrian traffic. In comparison, Corvallis has 76-foot rights-of-way and 52-foot curb-to-curb widths. In downtown Corvallis, in areas where they have diagonal parking, bumper overhang often affects the ability to add streetscape elements. Irish reviewed an example parking plan that includes diagonal parking on Second Avenue, noting areas where one would see bumper overhang. He noted the consultant's presentation suggested that diagonal parking on one side would result in no room for parking on the opposite side; however, allowing for 3 feet of bumper overhang in areas, it is possible to have parallel parking on the opposite side although the bumper overhang would impact streetscape elements that could go in those locations.

In discussion and in response to questions, Irish provided clarifying information. The signalized intersection at Ellsworth Street is under ODOT jurisdiction and is shown in the Transportation System Plan as at capacity or beyond in 2030. A plan to reduce to one lane on the approach to Ellsworth, which would further reduce capacity, is not likely to be approved by ODOT. The idea of a forced left-turn lane and change to one lane in the block before reaching the diagonal parking as shown on the diagram would work from a capacity standpoint; however, dropping to one lane would surprise people and some increased crash frequency could be expected for a period of time. Diagonal parking is physically possible, but he can't say whether it is a good idea or not. Brief discussion followed.

Crandall said the diagonal parking would create what is essentially a parking lot in the middle of one of the downtown streets which is not a good idea. Circulation needs to be straightforward and simple, and it's really bad for retail to disrupt downtown circulation with parking. He referred to staff concerns about cables and banners across the street and complications for the Fire Department. He said this has been done in other historic downtowns, including Whitefish, Montana, and the fire departments haven't had any problems. He thinks this is an appropriate and important improvement, and he hopes a compromise can be reached. He said

the presented schemes are not elaborate. The idea is to create an elegant, simple, durable, low maintenance scheme, and all of the suggested improvements together will accomplish that vision.

Fire Chief Jon Bradner said he is willing to have further conversation; however, he noted that Whitefish is a much smaller community with much wider streets than ours, and his concern is the ability to get to someone in an upper window or get a firefighter to an upper story.

Schumacher reviewed CARA Advisory Board decision points for Second and Third Avenue Blocks, and discussion followed with staff providing additional clarifying information about the optional items.

Catlin asked for a show of hands of those interested in the base option plus all of the optional design elements for Second and Third Avenues. One hand was raised. Catlin asked that each Board member state their opinions about the optional items.

Rich Kellum said partial sidewalk replacement may be sufficient if we replace where mandatory and pressure wash and coat the remainder to match. He supports the 3-inch pavement grind inlay if what we have is deteriorating; if we can get more time from what's there, he wants to do that. He supports the double acorn lighting if it's needed for extra light; if it's just for looks, he would prefer to match First Avenue. He thinks lights or banners across the street looks busy and he hears the Fire Chief's concerns. Regarding traffic calming planters or curb extension planters, he understands those would result in the loss of parking when we are hearing from people that parking is needed.

Floyd Collins said he hasn't seen where pressure washed and coated sidewalks come close to matching new, and new sidewalks are needed, especially on Third Avenue. He supports building the model around full sidewalk replacement. He supports the 3-inch pavement grind inlay, and he thinks it's needed to accommodate existing traffic. He doesn't have a strong preference regarding lighting. He understands the Fire Chief's concerns, and he wants to ensure that we have emergency access. He is flexible on the rest.

Loyd Henion said he generally agrees with Collins. He supports a model that includes full sidewalk replacement and 3-inch pavement grind inlay. He doesn't have a real preference for single or double lighting unless double is needed for function. He supports Chief Bradner in not wanting to have things across the street that would impact the ability to put out a fire. He doesn't have a strong preference on the remainder.

Bill Coburn said he likes what was done on First Avenue, and he would like to replicate those improvements. In response to his question, Porsche said the base budget does not include elements that were not included on First Avenue. Coburn said he supports full sidewalk replacement and the 3-inch pavement grind inlay. He agreed with comments that banners and lights going across the street make it look busy.

Mitch Langjahr said, as someone who walks downtown each morning, he knows the sidewalks need to be replaced and he is in favor of full sidewalk replacement. He isn't a pavement expert, but he cares about return on investment; if the 3-inch grind inlay will last more than ten years, it seems satisfactory. As far as the rest of the items, he would like to mirror what is on First Avenue.

Mark Spence said he believes full sidewalks are warranted, and he doesn't support patching them. He supports the 3-inch grind overlay which will save on maintenance costs. He has no special preference on the type of lighting. He could support poles and banners in a festival area such as that noted the CALUTS Plan; however, he would be concerned about creating busy sightlines in the middle of the downtown streets. He would like to see very large traffic calming planters.

Sharon Konopa said she supports full sidewalk replacement and feels the 3-inch grind inlay is needed for longevity. She could go with either way on the lighting, but we should probably be consistent with First Avenue. She thinks the decision about traffic calming planters or curb extension planters should be made

based on the best fit for each block. While she appreciates Crandall's vision, she feels that banners and strands of lights across the street may distract from the architectural beauty of our historic buildings. She generally agrees with the idea of keeping improvements on Second and Third Avenues consistent with those on First Avenue.

Catlin said he supports catenary lights as a way to attract the attention of pass-by traffic on Lyon and Ellsworth. He isn't a big fan of banners and cables across the road. He supports curb extensions as a pedestrian amenity, and he thinks they can be designed in a way not to lose parking. He supports full sidewalk replacement. After receiving information from City Engineering staff related to the history of the downtown streets and the ability to ensure some longevity with the 3-inch grind inlay, he is supportive of that option.

Dick Olsen said he supports full sidewalk replacement and the 3-inch pavement grind inlay. Given that our streets are narrower than those in Corvallis, he thinks we can do without bulb-outs on Second and Third Avenues. He originally thought banner poles and cables were a nice idea, but he agrees that our buildings are the main attraction and he now questions whether banners and lights across the streets are needed. He agrees with Catlin that catenary lights near the main roads might draw people's attention. He thinks diagonal parking might be a good idea around the post office; but, given the information presented, he doesn't think it is feasible in other areas.

Maura Wilson said that because it's difficult to see when crossing our downtown streets, she supports curb extensions. She finds that lighting makes a huge difference in friendliness and comfort level, and she feels strongly about the concept of having lights downtown. She recently visited Ireland where there is a lot of lighting which she found to be festive and inviting.

David Abarr said he supports full sidewalk replacement and the 3-inch pavement grind inlay. He would probably support the single lights but the multi-strand lights seem extreme. He thinks traffic calming planters or curb extensions should match those on First Avenue. He is uncertain about banner poles and cables, but he does support something that would attract people downtown.

Ray Kopczynski said he is in favor of full sidewalk replacement, 3-inch pavement grind inlay, and double acorn with single catenary lights. He supports having some type of planters, and he likes the banner poles and cables which could go up when there is a special event. He is not in favor of multi-strand catenary lights. He is interested in further discussion regarding parking options.

Catlin said he heard consensus for the base option, the full sidewalk replacement, and the 3-inch pavement grind overlay for Second and Third Avenues. He called for a show of hands on each of the remaining optional items.

Lighting – Single Acorn Lighting or Double Acorn Lighting with Single Catenary Lights: Following additional discussion and clarification, a majority supported Single Acorn Lighting. Staff clarified that option is included in the base cost and matches what was done on First Avenue.

Traffic Calming Planters or Curb Extension Planters or None: A majority supported no changes to the corners. It was noted that planters or curb extensions could be considered on Broadalbin, between Second and Third Avenues.

Banner Poles and Cables: A majority did not support banner poles and cables.

Multi-Strand Catenary Lights: Public Works staff noted that since the Board opted out of the banner poles and cables, as well as the double acorn lighting with single catenary lights, the multi-strand catenary lights are no longer an option.

Diagonal Parking: There was no support for diagonal parking as a policy decision.

Porsche said the base option, full sidewalk with curb and gutter replacement, and the 3-inch pavement grind inlay would amount to \$1,993,000 for Second and Third Avenues.

The Board then discussed the Fire Station Frontage Improvements base option, additional option elements, and contingencies. In response to questions, Irish reviewed preliminary discussions with ODOT related to the proposed improvements. He said the consultant will firm up the conceptual design within the next week and staff will then schedule a meeting with ODOT for what amounts to a pre-design meeting to determine the precise construction elements.

MOTION: Kopczynski moved to authorize the Base Option of \$380,000 plus the Contingency of \$160,000 for Fire Station frontage improvements. Konopa seconded the motion, and it passed 12-0.

Additional discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

Staff Updates and Issues

None.

December Meeting Schedule

Board consensus to have December meeting.

BUSINESS FROM THE BOARD

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, December 16, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Catlin adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Signature on File

Signature on File

Teresa Nix
Administrative Assistant

Kate Porsche
Economic Development & Urban Renewal Director