

Summary Minutes

Infill and Revitalization Steering Committee

City Hall- Pikes Peak Room (107 N. Nevada Ave., Colorado Springs)

Monday, July 6, 2015

1:30 p.m.

Members Attending: Pico, Beck, Harris, Nelson, Gaebler, Day, Seibert, Bishop, Shonkwiler, Donley

Members Absent: Craddock, Nicklasson

Staff Present: Schueler, Nunez, Tefertiller, Geitner, Mike Miles, Bob Cope, City Economic Vitality

Guests: Rick Hoover, CONO; Dave Munger, CONO; Kevin Walker; Marla Novak HBA; Zane Wilkerson, G.J. Gardner

Call to Order/ Adjustments to Agenda/Opening Discussions

Ms. Gaebler called the meeting to order, and the hard copy agenda packet was described.

Priority Areas and Activities Update

Mr. Schueler presented a brief PowerPoint on the topic of prioritization to follow from last meeting's discussion and as context for Mr. Cope's presentation which was next on the agenda. It was noted there would be limited time for discussion in order allow time for Mr. Cope's presentation.

He summarized the content of the current draft regarding area and activity priorities. At this point recommends Downtown as a cornerstone priority followed by high priority corridors such as North and South Nevada Avenue and Academy Boulevard. Higher priority activities include the "catalytic projects", mixed use, high density etc. Discussion followed, subject to the time limit.

Chuck Donley suggested there be no identification of priority areas (only priority uses) so as to not pick "winners and losers", at least not at this stage. Others including Ms. Gaebler and Ms. Harris suggested areas were important, although there was some discussion as to the proper

point to make this determination. Mr. Pico suggested the determination of area priorities probably needs to be made, but via other planning processes and not by this Committee. Mr. Shonkwiler suggested older neighborhoods that have a miss-match with current zoning, should also have a priority. He also noted (below) that places like Denver identify priority areas and then allocate resources to them sometimes for decades. Mr. Seibert asked what the purpose of all the different priorities might be. Would these be for investments, incentives, expectations? What is expected the hierarchy of priorities and particularly the relationship between activities and areas? Discussion followed. Mr. Schueler noted the question of exactly “what does it mean to be a priority should be considered by the Committee. However his sense is the relative priority would have to do with how many factors a particular project is consistent with. Mr. Seibert noted that one of the big ways areas become priorities is if they have ‘champions’ as Downtown has. By comparison, areas like South Academy Boulevard do not have champions that are as clear and empowered. In the case of urban renewal, a particular champion ordinarily emerges from the development community.

Although there was by no means a consensus, a majority of the Committee viewed spatial priorities as important. Discussion of this topic continued as part of Mr. Cope’s presentation.

Infill Tools and Incentives- Bob Cope

Mr. Cope presented from a PowerPoint (see website), but also responded to numerous questions during his presentation. When asked about a an infill-related example of a project that got an incentive, he pointed to the Mining Museum which has a sales tax sharing agreement with bookends and tied to a Return on Investment (ROI). These agreements need to be approved by City Council. There was follow-up discussion as to why this project qualified whereas the moth-balled Interquest Hotel project thus far has not. Mr. Pico suggested more defined written criteria in order to reduce the “grey areas”. Mr. Cope agreed the City could benefit from a written economic development strategy aligned with infill and redevelopment objectives (among others) but also allowing for the necessary discretion to address the unique aspects of situations that come up. Ms. Nelson stressed the importance of having a market, market studies and clear public expectations in order to align tools with her projects. Mr. Shonkwiler noted that City-wide, redevelopment has not been a focus, and there needs to be more of one. Mr. Wysocki noted the absence of priorities can dilute efforts to the point where a lot of resources are expended without clear demonstrated benefit. Ms. Harris noted that Fort Collins has a public investment plan tied to a redevelopment framework. Mr. Bishop stated that there is a private group called the Denver Conservancy (note: might be the Urban land Conservancy) that promotes public projects and values. Mr. Shonkwiler observed that different groups are talking more with each other. He notes this occurring in the context of the Urban Renewal Authority.

Dave Munger agreed with Mr. Cope's statements on special districts, noting the importance of assisting mature areas with creating districts. Ms. Beck suggested subsidizing Interquest is not what we want to do if we are looking to support infill.

When asked about what other communities do, Mr. Cope responded they all invest in themselves. They create public spaces and places that the private sector can invest in conjunction with. The spaces and projects can be big or small. Different mechanisms are available and/or used in different places but tax increment financing (TIF) or its equivalent is almost always an element.

Peter Wysocki commented that other communities have the equivalent of a Regional Business Alliance that focuses on more than just primary employment. They have a common vision. City of Colorado Springs also tends to be short on resources.

Mr. Cope said he was supportive of designating priority areas.

Updates and Announcements

There was limited time for updates and announcements. Carl note there will be a staff level technical group meeting in late July. He will incorporate member comments into the shortened version to the recommendations summary. Members should focus their attention on that shortened summary and the now somewhat condensed Plan text.

Next Steps and Meetings

The next meeting will be Tuesday, July 21, 2015, 1:30 p.m.

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