



**City of Dallas  
Urban Renewal District Advisory Committee  
Council Chambers - City Hall  
March 6, 2012 - 5:30 p.m.**

Present: Chair Dave Shein, Mayor Brian Dalton, Jim Fairchild, Randy Hunter, Joe Koubek, Craig Pope, Rich Rohde, Wes Scroggin, LaVonne Wilson, and Bob Brixius.

Absent: Nancy Adams, Ken Jacroux, Richard Long, and Chelsea Pope.

Staff: Community Development Director Jason Locke.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Dave Shein called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Joe Koubek pointed out that he was missing the letter "t" in some of the words on his copy of the minutes, and noted it could just be his copy. Chair Shein added that a space was missing after the "800" and before "and" in the first paragraph under OLD BUSINESS. He asked that the corrections be made to the minutes and declared the contents of the minutes from the January 3, 2012, meeting were approved as presented.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Shein called for public comments. There were none.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Locke presented a conceptual drawing of the 800 and 900 block of Main Street showing the improvements discussed at past meetings and to give the committee some perspective on how it would look. He discussed a future public meeting and stated that Visual Media center would be putting together some visual aids.

Chair Shein asked about stopping short of the intersection on the west side of Main Street and Mr. Locke explained that it was for traffic reasons.

Mayor Dalton asked about the smaller trees on the west side of the 800 block and Mr. Locke said they were smaller, more decorative trees, explaining that Polk County has an interest on that block. The smaller plantings **would highlight the visual resource of the façade of the Court House and the grounds.** Mayor Dalton suggested that this created asymmetry and it appeared that something was missing on the west side of the street, noting there was more symmetry on the next block. He informed everyone that his studies of urban planning revealed that trees add a lot of value to property, especially large trees. With removal of the trees in front of the buildings along that block, **there was an idea that the façade of buildings would be rebuilt.** He **explained that it was a sobering experience to see the façade of the buildings without the trees.** Unless a plan to work with the owners to fix up the buildings was in place, the bigger trees would be more valuable for many reasons.

Joe Koubek asked if the County had provided input and suggested that there would be a desire

to keep the east side of the street open. Bob Brixius noted that after removal of the previous trees he had heard from County Commissioners over the years that they would never want them to come back. Craig Pope shared that he had invited Mr. Locke to make a presentation to the Polk County Board of Commissioners. He explained that bringing in trees would add more work and maintenance for the already limited County staff and was counter to what the previous **Board's concept for design had been**. He asked about long term planning for the trees noting that there were issues along Mill Street. He stated that when they adjusted the tree grates, the removal of the iron had caused scratches to the bricks and rust damage from what they left behind. He also brought attention to the trees that had grown into the signage and overhead wires had caused an ongoing problem for the businesses along there. Mr. Pope noted that he loved trees and brought the questions forward only as property owners. Mr. Brixius added, as a business owner, that the trees should not block signage above first floor level.

Joe Koubek added that trees along the sidewalk in front of the Courthouse would hide the building. He suggested putting the trees on the west side of the street and the street lighting on the east side to allow for a visible courthouse lawn. He informed everyone that the Courthouse was the second oldest working courthouse in the state, the view was critical, and that should be a major focus for the open house.

Wes Scroggin suggested leaving the corner trees. Mr. Locke recalled the original Greenworks design that showed a promenade of trees lining both sides of the sidewalk. Acknowledging Mr. **Pope's concerns, Mr. Locke stated that because both sides of the street could be different**, we could create a design on that block while working within the confines of the issues the County had brought up that would minimize maintenance and enhance the grounds.

Rich Long suggested using evergreens as a solution. There was discussion of which tree species to place along there. Mayor Dalton stated that timber built the courthouse and those trees would represent that building. Jim Fairchild stated that he would like to see consistency on both sides because it would continue all the way down, similar to McMinnville. LaVonne Wilson stated that continuity would be required to enhance that block and a lack of continuity would take away.

Wes Scroggin asked about how the light posts were staggered on the drawing. Mr. Locke explained they were more offset from one another than staggered, which could be changed.

Chair Shein reminded everyone that this was the brainstorming stage and there would be more input coming in, including an open house, before the design would be finalized. He also noted that blocking the **view of the courthouse was a "red herring"** noting that with this design it showed only a 25% blockage from the trees leaving a 75% view.

Rich Rohde commented that his notes said completion of the design portion of this project would be by March 2012, and that construction would begin in May or June of this year. Mr. Locke explained that the project would begin in the summer of 2013.

There was further discussion about the current and past signage, the sign code, and what recommendations this committee could make to council. There were suggestions of universal signage and helping businesses with those costs. Mr. Locke stated that the current sign code was now over 20 years old and was under review.

Mayor Dalton stated the key to downtown is the history and that it is **the City's living room**. This

group is sensitive to that in one way or another and achieving the design balance of not too much clutter and not too modern. Urban Planners have said that downtown has great bones and we have great opportunity. He discussed how Independence worked with their business owners and painted most of their businesses at the same time. Mr. Pope suggested a partnership approach with the businesses, as they should be part of the project. Dave Shein stated there were **façade grant/loan** programs in place. Mayor Dalton stated we could give architectural support to encourage them to do the .0 right thing. Mr. Locke asked if they were suggesting a building enhancement program, stating that because we are making a public investment there would need to be an investment from the property owners. We could probably make a program that would encourage that.

Mr. Locke stated he would like to adjust the drawings and get them back sooner now that we are full strength with our staffing after hiring an Engineering Technician, which would provide an opportunity for more staff time to be dedicated to this project.

Rich Long talked about signage that was on the buildings in Jacksonville displaying the history of each of the buildings, and suggested doing something similar here. Joe Koubek talked about an outreach to the business owners and suggested inviting them to a meeting before going public. Mr. Locke affirmed that was the objective.

## **NEW BUISNESS**

### **Budget**

Jason Locke reported on the budget and stated that the preliminary numbers showed there would be a little over \$125,000 coming in from the Urban Renewal District with an approximate beginning fund balance of \$230,000 for the next fiscal year for this project. He explained there was more funding than anticipated due to the acceleration in assessed value due to additions, remodels, a new building, and a correction of assessment of the telecommunications building on Court Street. Although there was no debt at this time, there was a debt service line item where money was kept in reserve until there was debt in the project.

He reviewed the expenditure side of the budget. He talked about including some of the outer blocks of the District, including the portion of Church Street to Mill Street, and possibly a couple of other areas as well. He reviewed the estimated numbers for Staff and Engineering time, the project for the 800-900 blocks of Main Street, and building enhancement programs. He indicated that the budget was conservative.

In answer to a question, Mr. Locke explained that the amended 2011-12 budget included total spent revenue up through June of 2012, which consisted of the entire Court Street project. He explained the transfer of money from the debt service reserve to the projects line item to cover costs to do the full block of Court Street.

There was discussion about when the 800-900 blocks of Main Street project would begin and under what budget year it would fall. Mr. Locke stated work would probably begin late summer of 2013 and fall under the 2013-14 budget. In answer to a question, he explained that \$145,000 would be set aside in debt services, another \$45,000-\$50,000 would be set aside to build up the reserve to about \$200,000. Because of the smart development concepts on this project, financing would be through the State Revolving Loan Fund and span for approximately 10-12 years. The debt service would be \$60,000 -\$70,000, about half of what would come in through

Urban Renewal. We would do other projects with the remaining equivalent amount.

Mr. Pope suggested making this information clear to business owners and the public in plain English so they understood where the money would be coming from without having to look through the budget documents. Mayor Dalton noted the importance of explaining why we were going into debt for the Urban Renewal project in tight times, especially when the streets were in need of fixing.

### **MEMBER COMMENTS**

There were none.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Mr. Locke reported on plant hangers that would hang from the street light fixtures. He stated that after looking at stock options he began working with Bob Evans from Evcor for a custom design that would incorporate the stainless steel circle used in the benches. Mr. Shein asked if they would hang more than just plants. Mr. Locke noted that the posts already had no-parking signs attached to them and the concept was to keep it simple. With this in mind they would have one plant hanger over the sidewalk to appeal to pedestrians and supports for banners on the street side. He added that he would provide a conceptual drawing at the next meeting.

Mr. Koubek asked about the bid process. Mr. Locke explained there were thresholds and that smaller projects such as this did not have to go through the bid process but larger portions of the project, such as actual construction of the street and the pavers would. He noted that they utilized local businesses when possible and when they did compare prices with an outside vendor, Evcor was 30% lower. Mr. Fairchild commented that it was positive to use a local company and to keep the money local, and reported that the feedback from the community was positive.

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.