



MINUTES

Carbondale Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
Room 108, 6:00 p.m.
City Hall/Civic Center

Mr. Lebeau called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Anz, Field, LeBeau, Lilly, Litecky, Love, and Bradshaw (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Barke, Schachel, and Sheffer

Staff Present: Taylor

1. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Litecky moved, seconded by Mr. Love, to approve the minutes for February 10, 2016.

The motion to approve the minutes passed with a unanimous voice vote.

2. Citizen Comments or Questions

There were none

3. Report of Officers, Committees, Communications

There were none

4. Public Hearings

Downtown Master Plan

Mr. LeBeau declared the Public Hearing open at 6:01 p.m. and asked Mr. Nik Davis of Houseal Lavigne Associates to present the Downtown Master Plan to the Commission.

Mr. Davis gave a presentation on the process in creating and the content of the Downtown Master Plan.

Mr. LeBeau asked if there were any questions from the Commissioners for Mr. Davis.

Ms. Litecky reiterated concerns regarding Mr. George Sheffer's comments at the previous Downtown Advisory Committee meeting regarding the need to include specific businesses targeted for downtown and the need for a business incubator downtown. Ms. Litecky asked if any progress has been made regarding these topics.

Mr. Davis referenced the section in the Plan which discusses a downtown business incubator. Mr. Davis also elaborated on the types of businesses which should be targeted, with the note that until downtown improvements are made, the vision of what businesses should be targeted has yet to be realized.

Ms. Litecky also noted that she was under the impression that Houseal Lavigne would actually complete the branding for Downtown Carbondale.

Mr. Davis stated that the original plan for Houseal Lavigne was to brand the plan itself. The branding for the downtown was not a part of the scope of work. Houseal Lavigne did, however, develop a branding strategy.

Ms. Litecky stated that she was glad to see that the planting of native species was prioritized in the plan. However, the species of trees proposed do seem to be those banned by certain cities and are better suited for a different climate than Carbondale.

Mr. Davis stated that it was not the intent for all of these trees to be native to the area as some native species may not be suited for roadway settings due to the amount of salt that would be present in the soil during Winter months.

Mr. Anz expressed his concern that there are not more specifics regarding development types. Standards regarding occupancy, parking, and building sizes, etc are not in the plan. Developers will need these items explained.

Mr. Davis agreed that these standards are important. However, he did not believe the intent of the Downtown Master Plan was to set those standards. The zoning code should be the tool used to develop and enforce those regulations.

Mr. LeBeau asked if there were any further questions from Commissioners.

There were none.

Mr. LeBeau asked if there were any questions from the public.

Mr. Gail White stepped forward. Mr. White stated that he owns property on the north side of the Historic Town Square. Mr. White explained the history and improvements of this downtown area. Mr. White stated that there is some concern about the availability of parking in the area needed to maintain the viability of businesses in the area. He stated that there has been some discussion regarding the removal of some parking in the Town Square and urged that property and business owners be included in any future discussions on this topic. Mr. White also warned against the potential vandalism that may accompany open recreational areas. Before concluding, Mr.

White recognized Frank Butterfield who was in attendance representing the Landmarks Illinois organization.

Mr. Mike McNerney stepped forward stating that he also owns property in the Historic Town Square. Mr. McNerney stated that he seconds Mr. White's comments stating that careful attention needs to be paid to both historic preservation and the parking need for the downtown area.

Mr. D. Gorton stepped forward reiterating an item that Ms. Litecky had mentioned regarding the recommended trees noted in the plan. Mr. Gorton stated that the trees in the plan do not coincide with those native and recommended for this area. Many of the trees mentioned in the plan are prohibited and will not survive in this area. Mr. Gorton stated that this section should be gone over much more carefully.

Ms. Jane Adams stepped forward to discuss several items. Ms. Adams stated that, contrary to what the Plan states, the Downtown Advisory Committee did not charge themselves with this work, rather they were given a charge by the Carbondale City Council. Ms. Adams also noted that the Downtown Management Organization referenced in the Plan already exists through Carbondale Main Street. Ms. Adams asked Mr. Davis to explain the recommendation in the plan.

Mr. Davis stated that the wording regarding the charge of the Downtown Advisory Committee is misleading and will be revised. Mr. Davis also stated that the scope of the Downtown Management Organization would go beyond the current responsibilities of Carbondale Main Street. Moving forward Carbondale Main Street should, however, be a part of the process.

Ms. Adams stated that it was her understanding that a parking plan would be submitted with the Downtown Master Plan. With regards to the Town Square, it does not seem there is a specific solution for the displaced parking that would result from the removal of the parking area. Ms. Adams inquired as to the intent behind laying out some alternatives but not getting into the direct implications of the removal of parking and where exactly new parking could be placed in the Town Square.

Mr. Davis pointed out the pages and sections in the plan where additional parking was proposed for relocation. These options included new parking lots and possible additional on-street parking options around the Town Square.

Mr. Frank Butterfield, Director of the Springfield office for Landmarks Illinois, stepped forward. Mr. Butterfield expressed the importance of economic development and historic preservation in the downtown. Mr. Butterfield also noted how Carbondale Main Street furthers these priorities and how the City should consider Main Street's important role moving forward.

Ms. Bradshaw asked Mr. Davis what the next steps were in the process and how people can suggest further changes to the plan.

Mr. Davis stated that the online portal can still be accessed and feedback can be received right up to the City Council meeting scheduled for April 19, 2016.

Ms. Litecky inquired as to how the changes suggested during the Planning Commission meeting would be incorporated. Ms. Litecky stated how she would be uncomfortable voting to recommend a Plan that still requires some adjustments.

Ms. Davis replied that the changes discussed tonight will be reflected in the City Council's final version of the Plan.

Mr. Taylor then read into the record a letter from Mr. Donald Monty expressing his concerns with the Downtown Master Plan draft.

Mr. LeBeau asked if there were any further questions from anyone to anyone.

There were none.

Mr. LeBeau declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:08 p.m.

Mr. Love moved, seconded by Ms. Lilly, to recommend to City Council the adoption of the Carbondale Downtown Master Plan.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – 3 (Field, Lebeau, Love)

No – 3 (Anz, Lilly, Litecky)

Mr. Taylor announced that the result of the motion to recommend the adoption of the Downtown Master Plan to City Council was a tie. Mr. Taylor explained that the Plan would move forward to the Carbondale City Council and is tentatively scheduled for the City Council meeting on April 19, 2016.

5. Old Business

There were none

6. New Business

A. City Council Agendas from February 23, March 8, and March 22, 2016

Ms. Bradshaw reviewed the City Council meetings as they related to Planning.

7. Adjournment

Mr. LeBeau adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.