

**Work Session
November 15, 2016**

Present: D. Bjerkness, K. Kolodge, J. Rock, L. Wilkinson, Mayor Hallback

Absent: S. Langley, R. Maki

Staff: J. Barclay, H. Hansen

Other: J. Lund, Pine Journal

Downtown Revitalization

- Ms. Hansen gave an overview of the meetings held with the downtown and west end business districts to identify critical issues. EDA has the revitalization as their #1 goal.
- Ms. Hansen highlighted the concerns of the business owners of the historic west end which include high number of blighted, vacant properties, properties not being used to their potential, the City possibly purchasing properties to clean them up, signage, monuments, parking, liquor licensing, festivals. There needs to be a reason to bring people down there.
- Concerns of the downtown business district include pedestrian friendly, nothing of interest between 8th Street to 18th Street, snow plowing.
- Ms. Hansen asked for Council thoughts and visions. Discussion on the lack of visibility to the west end and what could be done with streetscapes.
- Question if current businesses will take part in the renovations. History shows lack of engagement. Ms. Hansen thinks the businesses will participate.
- Discussion on signage of the new Ave. C café and how to draw people over there. Recommended to place signage above the building to be seen from the bridge.
- The 1998 sketch plan noted the most important issue of the west end is the architect use of the historic buildings. Staff believes the entire west end district is on the historic register. Federal and state historic tax credits are available however, until the revitalization takes place, the credits are not available. Staff will research this issue further to clarify.
- Most of the studies are cautioning redevelopment due to the historical component.
- Mr. Kolodge questioned whether it would be worth the City buying properties to develop/redevelop?
- Mr. Fritsinger stated the Council will be engaging in Broadway Ave conversation and asked how does this conversation affect that future project? Maybe signage is important to the Broadway project as well as lighting, fencing, landscaping. The current Broadway project isn't doing anything to enhance the visibility to the west end. It will draw attention, but not necessarily draw business.
- Discussion on what could be done with the parking lot on the corner by the old Smokies building.
- The next step will be for the community to voice input as part of a community meeting and be held by Community Development.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian Fritsinger
City Administrator