



**DOWNTOWN COMMISSION
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014**

The Downtown Commission convened in a meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2014, at 301 W. 2nd St. in Austin, Texas.

Chair Bart Whatley called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Downtown Commissioners in Attendance:

Bart Whatley (Chair), Heather Way (Vice Chair), Martin Barrera, Jude Galligan, Dale Glover, Dan Leary, Rich MacKinnon, Sunshine Mathon, Jim Nix, Joel Sher, Own Snell

City Staff in Attendance:

Michael Knox, Mona Sanchez, Economic Development Department
Jorge Rousselin, Planning & Development Review Department

1. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

There were no citizens signed up to speak on General Communication.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 19, 2014 MEETING

The minutes from the March 19, 2014 meeting were approved on an 8-0 vote on Commissioner Galligan's motion, and Commissioner Leary's second with Commissioners Mathon, Nix and Snell abstaining.

4. AISD AND GROWING DOWNTOWN POPULATION

The Commission heard a presentation from Beth Wilson, Assistant Director of Planning, AISD. No action was taken.

5. 619 CONGRESS HOTEL (C14-2013-0158) ZONING CHANGE FROM CBD TO CBD-DURE

The Commission heard a presentation from Richard Shuttle, Armbrust & Brown.

A motion was made by Commissioner Galligan with Commissioner Glover's second to support as presented with the following recommendations:

- Support items 1 – 5 on Jeffrey Howard’s list of adjacent property owner’s concerns.
 1. Keep alley and sidewalks open at all times during demolition, construction and occupancy
 2. Keep parking spaces on Congress Avenue available during demolition and construction; no construction trucks parked in Congress Avenue spaces during demolition and construction
 3. Exterminate for pests and implement pest control plan prior to demolition
 4. Preserve integrity and structural soundness of party wall and roof structure at 617 Congress. Allow full access for maintenance and repair of "party wall" through 619 Congress property
 5. Conduct demolition and construction activities prior to 6:30 p.m. on weekdays only
- Item 8 on Jeffrey Howard’s list of adjacent property owner’s concerns — direct developer to work with the Design Commission for solutions for the South Façade/blank wall.
- Developer to address the issue of parking spaces for their disabled workers.
- Continue ongoing discussions with the adjacent property owners to address their concerns regarding design and demolition.

The vote passed on a vote of 10-0 with Commissioner Mathon abstaining.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE RULE POSTING FOR PUBLIC PLAZA STANDARDS AS A PUBLIC BENEFIT UNDER THE DOWNTOWN DENSITY PROGRAM (DDBP)

The Commission heard a presentation from Jorge Rousselin, Planning & Development Review Department and Molly Alexander with the Downtown Austin Alliance.

No action was taken.

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2014

The Commission approved the following goals and objectives for 2014.

- Assist with implementation of the Downtown Austin Plan (including the Commission serving as a host for public outreach).
- Continue to work on activating the downtown alleys.
- Provide policy recommendations to the City Council on opportunities for supporting activation and creation of a diverse range of public open spaces in downtown.
- Work with staff on regulatory hurdles downtown and make recommendations on the process.
- Be engaged and support Rainey Street’s planning effort to support quality of life issues and urban design.
- Focus discussion on downtown transportation, parks, downtown’s interface with UT and State properties, public safety and general quality of life. Consider the Commission serving as a “bully pulpit on public realm issues.”
- Document accomplishments of the two current Working Groups: Downtown Public Open Space and Downtown Austin Plan Implementation.

8. WORKING GROUPS

A. Report from the Downtown Public Open Space Working Group

Commissioner Way reported that the Working Group will meet again on 4/18/14.

B. Report from the Downtown Plan Implementation Working Group

Commissioner Way reported that they have invited City staff to attend the Working Group's May meeting to provide suggestions of ways to provide some additional objective criteria to for waving Downtown Density Bonus Program FAR ratios.

9. ITEMS OF INFORMATION FROM COMMISSIONERS

- Commissioner Leary reported that through the Congress Avenue Historic District that the Paramount Hotel is reconstructing their blade sign which will be 48 feet high with exposed bulbs that will brighten up that area of Congress Avenue and also replacing the marquee on the State Theatre.
- Commissioner Glover reported that the Republic Square Partners is going before the Parks Board on 4/22/2014 to discuss a management agreement where the Austin Park's Foundation would manage Republic Square.
- Commissioner MacKinnon reported on Project Connect which now has 16 stations and the number of downtown stations has been increased to 3 (4th Street, 7th Street and 11th on Trinity – all of which may be underground). The service criteria is 7 days a week during peak hours every 10 minutes, off peak every 15 minutes and running to 2 a.m. on weekends and midnight Monday through Friday.

10. POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Criteria to for waving the Downtown Density Bonus Program FAR Maximums
- Republic Square Partnership Agreement
- Barriers to Activation of Public Plazas
- Waller Creek Tunnel Update
- Creating a Working Group to integrate the Downtown Austin Plan with CodeNEXT
- Wayfinding Project Update
- UT Medical School Update
- Sobriety Center
- Busking Initiative
- Update from Waller Creek Conservancy

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.