



**DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2017 AT 12:00 PM**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Public Comment

*(Each regular Task Force meeting shall have a public comment period not to exceed 30 minutes. Every speaker is entitled to speak for up to 3 minutes. To be considered for public comment, complete a public comment card at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. The Chairperson will randomly draw from the cards submitted. Public comment is a time to give comment. It is not a question and answer period, and the Task Force Committee does not respond to public comments. Speakers who engage in threatening or disorderly behavior will have their time ceased.)*

4. Consideration, review and approval of Minutes from the October 24, 2017 meeting
5. Adjourn

DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

109 EAST OLIVE STREET; BLOOMINGTON, IL 61701  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2017 AT 12:00 PM

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Buragas called the meeting to order at **12:05 PM** and asked Ms. Hon to call the Roll.

2. **Roll Call**

**List who was present of the Task Force:**

Committee Member Kim Bray, Committee Member Carlo Robustelli, Committee Member Justin Boyd, Committee Member Bobby Vericella, Committee Member Joe Haney, and Chairperson Amelia Buragas

**Staff Present:**

Melissa Hon, Assistant to the City Manager; Steve Rasmussen, Assistant City Manager; Katie Simpson, City Planner; Izzy Rivera, Assistant City Planner; Austin Grammer, Economic Development Coordinator; Tricia Stiller, Downtown Development Coordinator and Jeanne Hamilton, Library Director;

3. **Public Comment:** Isaac Thorne, Josh Barnett, Tim Tilton, Bobby Castillo, Mike McCurdy, Carol Koos.
4. **Minutes:** The Committee reviewed the October 17, 2017 minutes. Committee Member Robustelli moved to approve the minutes; Committee Member Boyd seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously by a voice vote.
5. **Review, discussion and vote on the Downtown Task Force Final Report.**

- Committee Member Bray thanked Chairperson Buragas for putting together a great product, presenting it and gathering all the input we have received from the community as well as our task members. She stated she appreciated the public comment that the committee has received but knows that there is public comment that goes the other way, as well. Committee Member Bray stated that as a member of the Downtown Task Force she has received a lot of information from others that have different views about a location of the library. As a Task Force, we have had some opportunity to talk about some of these things and perhaps get consensus on some things. She felt that two pieces, in reviewing the report, that we do not have full consensus would be the location of the library and the hotel. Her recommendation for an amended change to the Downtown Task Force report would simply be to say “and/or” when

mentioning both of those projects. Committee Member Bray felt that would reflect the flavor of the report and the information that has been gathered together from the Committee as well as the public input, not only in person but from those who have reached out separately to members of the Task Force. She felt that gives the City Council the information they need about some possibilities, particularly on page 13, Tier 1, "Develop the Market Street garage into a mixed-use facility including parking, transfer station and/or a public library". That is reflective of much of the input received and shows that this is an issue perhaps for further study, but we do not have 100% consensus in our Downtown Task Force. She suggested an amendment on page 15 that reads similarly in regards to the Tier 2 project that mentions the hotel, "Explore more aggressive options for acquisition and/or development of vacant properties in downtown area such as Front and Center and T2 East. Continue to pursue a hotel and/or conference center development near the arena".

- Committee Member Robustelli commented to that amendment, the one thing he would point out is the recommendation for Tier 1 is coupled with a descriptor and in the descriptor it says in the final sentence "If inclusion of the library in this project is not feasible or desirable, the City could alternatively consider a mixed-use facility including housing or office space". As a Task Force, we have not been fearful of ideas or concepts and have tried to use our Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Strategy, which has received extensive public input. As a group, our job is to put forward what we think would work best and what we think would be the best project. This is the Tier 1 location, these are the components, and should it not be feasible or desirable, then of course, the City should look at alternatives including a mixed-use facility, housing, or office space. He stated he was very comfortable with the language as is and is not sure what the "and/or" accomplishes.
- Committee Member Bray stated as a group, we have worked together and this would be a report that would emanate from the Task Force. Because there is not full consensus on the idea of placing a library with the Market Street Garage, the "and/or" reflects that. The narrative, as you point out, then explores why it is an "and/or", and so that would be the reason for the change. Committee Member Bray stated that is more reflective of the work of the Task Force, as well as, all the public input they have received and input from the Library Board. She stated we want to posture this in a way that is most palatable for our City Council and our Library Board to work with and postured in a way in which it is a definitive statement. Without "and/or", it makes it sound as if that is the package deal. Words matter and I think that these words should be inserted, "and/or".
- Committee Member Vericella stated he had been on the streets talking with multiple people downtown and had not heard any negative talk about moving the library. He wondered what were some of the things that Committee Member Bray had heard.
- Committee Member Bray replied that the location of the library is a very

coveted resource in our community to the credit of the library, and I come to you from the east side wherein some time ago folks were very much advocating for moving the library to the east side or they were advocating for disassembling the library services and having multiple satellite locations. When you open the can of worms relating to where the library should be located, you reintroduce that kind of discussion into the situation. Several years back when the Library Board and others cooperated to say well let's leave it where it is, that, in some respects, was a compromise position and I think that we start to lose ground on keeping the library here in this area and, in fact, we start to introduce the idea of relocating the library fully to another location. This report should be about some ideas and some things we were able to obtain a consensus around, and I caution that opening up the debate about the library location will become a debate in this community. In order for our downtown Task Force to move forward, we want to be able to recommend those things that are low-hanging fruit. We have talked a little bit about that in the past and something that could become controversial would not be beneficial to our work, and so that would be why I would recommend the "and/or". It is a very discrete change but I think it is meaningful.

- Chairperson Buragas stated she felt it was important to know that there is a difference between a consensus and a unanimous opinion. We have a clear consensus on the Task Force. A consensus reflects a majority opinion, and that is how we operate. That being said, if there is a minority opinion, there is definitely value in that being expressed and there are many different ways that it can be. The goal of this commission is to work towards the consensus, which is a majority vote.
- Committee Member Boyd stated he felt everyone had brought up some good comments and stated that he would agree if we do recommend, as presented, it will create debate, but where he disagreed is that is a good thing. When it is recommended to Council, it will create some conversation that needs to happen and felt that debate is good, input is good and we need a lot more data. If we start to change the language - "and/or" - we might as well just hand them the Comprehensive Plan back and say do this. Our job was to bring to surface the best ideas that can be implemented the quickest and he felt that we have done that with this.
- Chairperson Buragas commented that she felt to some extent, a robust public conversation is the goal of this Task Force, to get us to think very deeply about what downtown is, what we hope to achieve and what should our highest priorities be, especially when it comes to that catalyst project, which will reflect the higher potential investment by the public body. That is where a majority of the focus has been and it is necessary, but hopes that we do not lose the fact that the majority of this recommendation of this final Task Force report is focused on very easy to achieve, comparatively inexpensive ways we can improve the downtown area in the immediate future.
- Committee Member Haney stated in the "and/or" situation, he wanted to see it

come in with private enterprise investment, not all tax payer investment. We are talking about a lot of money. The city is not well and if we look at what is going on around us, it is not looking like it is going to get any better. When looking at the catalyst project being the library, some mixed use, and so on, then the government or city ends up in direct competition with free enterprise - the building owners downtown - and they are in a situation where it is not a taxable building. As for the parking situation, the garage is going to have to be probably double what it is now. It is going to be a whole lot bigger project because we are going to lose around 300 spaces to start with during construction, and then once it is up you have to take care of what we already need and add what the library has to have. He would like to see us work towards getting investors that want to put money into downtown, grow it, get the tax dollars moving, get income.

- Chairperson Buragas stated those are points well taken. Certainly we are somewhat limited in our viewpoint because we know that there are bigger issues the City faces and will have to take into account when considering these recommendations. Certainly that will be a robust conversation and when it comes to public/private partnerships, this report and the language that it references clearly supports that it should be fully explored before moving forward on any particular projects.
- Committee Member Robustelli stated he felt public/private partnerships are important. What we have heard from many of the experts in the field and one of the reasons we are even having a conversation about a catalyst anchor project is because we know that we need to get more people downtown in order to support some of the redevelopment of the 28 other developable parcels throughout the downtown. What we are trying to do here is look at what is a project that could jumpstart that private development. It may or may not include a library, but it is hard to think of another kind of nonretail anchor that would bring 1000 people a day to the core of downtown. He stated the only amendment he would like to add is the memorandums that the Committee has received from Katie Simpson from the Planning Department and Tom Dabareiner in the Planning Department.
- Chairperson Buragas commented that some of the information in Tom's letter really changed the way she saw catalyst projects and realized she had a misunderstanding of what those were. Tom has offered the professional opinion that when we are thinking about catalyst projects, we really need to focus on those projects that bring people into the downtown area on a daily basis, corporate headquarters, housing, things like libraries that are bringing things to downtown every single day whereas he would categorize amenities like the BCPA or the arena as more as place-making. They have value, they are part of a healthy downtown, but they are different and we need to set our expectations accordingly.
- Committee Member Bray stated with point of order, if there is a motion to significantly add to this report - Tom's memo as well as Katie's work – she

wondered how many folks have read those fully and considered that those were to be part of our report and our vote today. That is a significant change and folks should be given an opportunity to study those before those are considered part of the incorporation. Secondly, you have made mention of consensus and in fact, working towards consensus in my view and I think as generally understood, consensus means everyone at the table can sign on because you have developed something that has all the best work or at least all the work that folks can agree together, so that is a consensus. If you go majority/minority, that is not consensus. I wanted to make mention that as a member of the Downtown Task Force, as well as some folks that are missing, I have been here at every meeting and I have taken the input from many and listened to everyone's comments here. I would like the opportunity to be in consensus with this group and therefore I would ask for these amended changes to be made and if not made, to be given the opportunity to craft an additional paragraph to outline the concerns about the reasons, just a brief descent, about some items that I do not think we have really developed work around. For instance, the hotel was added to one of the pages, and I do not think we have spent any time talking about that here in our group and again, that is what the "and/or" does for us. If there is a desire to stay with the current draft and not add that, I would like an opportunity to add a paragraph or a comment that would be consensus.

- Chairperson Buragas stated we have a motion on the floor and we have a second, so you could offer a friendly amendment to that motion and see if it gets a second, with regards to the changes you would like to make, and then we will see where that goes.
- Committee Member Bray then made a motion that the "and/or" be added on page 13 as described and on page 15 as described. That would qualify the statement about the public library and the statement about the hotel to be possibilities instead of affirmative recommendations.
- Chairman Buragas replied we have a motion to approve the plan as presented with two proposed changes: (1) to add the "and/or" language on page 13 to the Tier1 recommendation, (2) and to add the "and/or" language on page 15 to the Tier 2 recommendation; Seconded by Committee Member Haney. Chairperson Buragas asked if there was additional discussion before the vote. A roll call vote was taken: Committee Member Bray – yes; Committee Member Mathy – absent; Committee Member Robustelli – no; Committee Member Boyd – no; Committee Member Manna – absent; Committee Member Vericella – no; Committee Member Haney – yes; Chairperson Buragas – no. **Motion Failed**
- Chairperson Buragas stated that the motion failed and went back to the original motion to approve the Downtown Task Force plan as presented with one amendment: to add the items from the Community Development Department as an addendum. A roll call vote was taken: Committee Member Bray – no; Committee Member Mathy – absent; Committee Member Robustelli – yes; Committee Member Boyd – yes; Committee Member Manna – absent;

Committee Member Vericella – yes; Committee Member Haney – yes;  
Chairperson Buragas – yes. **Motion Carried**

- Chairperson Buragas stated the motion carried and then asked if there were any additional comments or proposed motions related to the Final Task Force Report.
- Committee Member Robustelli stated he wanted to thank everybody who participated in this process and stated it was a rewarding process and wanted to thank all of his fellow Task Force members, the Chair and the City Staff.
- Committee Member Bray asked if there is an opportunity for her to submit a paragraph in regards to the descent piece or would it be going forward on regular majority.
- Chairperson Buragas stated that it would go forward on regular majority. She would have the option always to make her own opinion heard. She could also introduce a motion right now to be allowed to and that would be appropriate. We need to have one more meeting to approve our minutes from this meeting so perhaps prior to then, you could put together something that you would propose and ask the group to consider at that point in time.
- Committee Member Bray stated she felt that would work.

## 6. Adjourn