

Mayor's Downtown Task Force

November 1, 2019

10:00 a.m.

City Hall, Abilene, Texas

Basement Conference Room

Members Present:

Mr. Regi McCabe-Gossett, Ms. Alex Russell, Ms. Yvonne Batts, Ms. Trish Dressen, Mr. Scott Dueser, Ms. Jessica Cantu

Members Absent:

Mr. Brandon Osborne and Ms. Erma Rodriguez

City Staff Present:

Mr. Robert Hanna, Mr. Michael Rice, Mr. Mike Warrix, Mr. Stanley Smith, Mr. Greg McCaffrey, Mr. James Rogge, Mr. Max Johnson, Ms. Melissa Farr

Others Present:

Mr. Charles Wolfe, Mr. Doug Williamson, Mr. Mason Mathews

Call to Order

Ms. Yvonne Batts called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. Melissa Farr noted the above members present.

Approval of Minutes

There being no deletions, no additions, and no corrections, Ms. Alex Russell made the motion to approve the minutes for the previous meeting held on September 23rd. Ms. Trish Dressen seconded the motion. The motion to approve prevailed by the following vote:

AYES: Dressen, Russell, Cantu, McCabe-Gossett, Dueser, Batts

NAYS: None

Discussion and Possible Action on Review of Center City Growth and Development Plan

This item was not discussed.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Realignment of On-Street Parking in the Downtown Area

Mr. Michael Rice presented the pros and cons of one-way and two-way streets. Some advantages of one-way operation are faster access to on-street parking, improved traffic flow from simpler signal timing, and less vehicle conflict points for pedestrians crossing at intersections.

Advantages of two-way streets include the illusion of slower traffic, the perception of greater visibility to businesses, and the comfort of bicyclists. Members discussed the options most advantageous for promotion local businesses and allowing them to be seen when driving on the street.

Mr. Rice highlighted available options for stop controls and signals. Some of the topics included in this discussion were “feelings” of safety and loading and unloading for businesses. The approximate costs of conversions was discussed for each scenario, but members felt the most important criteria in which to base their decision is what is best for the citizens of the Abilene community and downtown area.

All in attendance agreed that focusing on new parking spaces is the current priority. They also agreed to leave Pine Street as is. Mr. Hanna recommended a town hall meeting be held to allow members of the public and stakeholders to ask questions and provide input on maximizing the ability to park in Downtown Abilene.

Ms. Dressen moved to only focus on the goal of parking and not address the consideration of two-way parking at this time. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

AYES: Dressen, Russell, Cantu, McCabe-Gossett, Dueser, Batts

NAYS: None

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Time Limits and Metered Parking Zones in the Downtown Area

This item was not discussed.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Structured Parking Improvements in the Downtown Area

Mr. Robert Hanna proposed questions to the Task Force of whether or not Abilene is ready for structured parking (parking garages) and if the Task Force would support the public project. A potential parking garage would cost approximately \$22,000 per space. The concern is that surface (off-street) parking will never meet the needs of the City, as there are not enough street spaces.

Discussion included the opportunities for additional retail, restaurants, venues, and additional housing in the Downtown District. It was noted that corporate tenants are interested in the area, but parking is not currently available.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Branding and Marketing Downtown Abilene

Task Force members requested information be provided at a future meeting to educate them on Public Improvement Districts and the necessary guidelines. Everyone agreed the branding and marketing of Downtown Abilene must be driven by the business community.

Adjournment

Mr. Dueser moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. McCabe-Gossett seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Ms. Batts adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

APPROVED


Yvonne Batts, Chair

