

Downtown Area Advisory Committee (DAAC)

October 23, 2014

Basalt Regional Library, 3:45 to 5:30 p.m.

Committee members present: Tracy Bennett, Chris Touchette, Steve Chase, Greg Shugars, Julie Kolar, Ted Guy, Gerry Terwilliger, Charlie Cole, Cathy Click

Staff present: Mike Scanlon, Susan Philp, Denise Tomaskovic

Others present: A list of the public signing in for this meeting is available for review at Town Hall.

3:45 to 4:15 p.m.

During this time the Committee Members reviewed drawings submitted by the Design Community earlier in the year.

Agenda Item 1: Approval of minutes from October 16, 2014 DAAC meeting

Committee members Touchette and Terwilliger suggested some additions and changes to further clarify their statements as presented in the draft minutes of October 16th.

M/S Guy and Touchette to approve the minutes of October 16, 2014 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 2: Committee Discussion on Goals/Vision for Our Town Area

Scanlon said he'd had a number of calls and questions from the community about the DAAC process so far. One of the questions is, "Why wasn't having only a park on the Pan and Fork parcel one of the options?" Another common question is, "Why are there only three options?" Scanlon explained how the 300+ submitted drawings had been reviewed by a professional architecture firm and common elements from those drawings distilled into three different options that included the most desirable features.

Referring to an article about decision making [see attached], Scanlon said that research has shown that giving people too many choices has a negative impact on the decision making process. Winnowing down the 300+ ideas into three different options was an effort to avoid having an abundance of choices. He reminded those present that Option 2 isn't the final design but it likely received the most votes because it contains the most commonly desired elements from all the submissions. Thus, it makes sense that the Committee is considering Option 2 as its basis for deliberations.

Scanlon went on to say that 'either/or' thinking divides the community. There is no reason to go down that path when we have a lot of choices that allow 'both/and' options to be considered.

Shugars agreed that we don't want to have 40 options on the table but, he reminded the group, a ballot question in 2008 asked the community to vote yes on purchasing the Pan and Fork MHP parcel for parks and open space. The vote failed but it was a close vote. In his opinion, this would seem to substantiate having an option that retains the entire parcel as a park. Some Committee members disagreed with Shugars about what the 2008 ballot was trying to accomplish. It was pointed out that the Town ended up buying the portion of the parcel along the river to make into a park. [The developable portion of the parcel is still owned by the Community Development Corporation (CDC).]

Touchette expressed confidence that the DAAC members are capable of working together (despite some of their personal preferences) to come up with a plan to present to the Town Council.

Scanlon suggested that the Committee keep the big picture items in mind and start with the most obvious. He asked if those present would agree that the most dense development should be put on the Clark's Market and Aspenalt property. An audible, "Yes", was heard from the Committee members and those in the audience.

Noting that the final product is supposed to be a report submitted to the Town Council, Cole asked what type of plan can be submitted that would be considered 'tamper proof' or acceptable to the Council. Scanlon said he didn't know the answer to that and he encouraged the Committee to just come up with what it thinks is the best scenario to present at their meeting with the Town Council in November. There's a danger in getting stuck on details. The Committee needs to be thinking more along the line of, "What are the ideals that are the most important?" These need to be included in the report. It's not expected that the Committee will arrive at the perfect solution.

Scanlon added that at the November meeting, the Committee will also need to ask the Council if any pieces are missing that should be included. Also, the Committee may want to ask about the next steps.

An audience member asked Scanlon to state the goals and vision (of Agenda item 2) in one sentence. Scanlon summarized what he had heard in the previous comments, noting the emphasis regarding the need to increase options for residential living in the downtown area.

Agenda Item 3: Break out session – Break into 2 groups to work on map to show what Committee Members would like to see in the Our Town Planning Area

Philp said that Touchette and Guy had agreed to guide the drawing process. She then handed out Touchette's Core Values summary and a submittal by Kolar entitled, "What Makes the Best Small Towns." (See attached.)

To begin, the Committee gathered around one of the tables where Touchette (referring to his summary and a map) suggested that the Committee start with considering the big things and work down to more details. The broad-based themes are:

- 1) Don't lose our small town charm;
- 2) Bring the rivers to the forefront of the Town's identity; and
- 3) Promote vitality and sustainability (physical and economic).

Touchette added that these can be obtained through the use of the following Guiding Principles:

- 1) Connect the Town to the rivers
- 2) Preserve significant physical and visual access to the rivers
- 3) Improve Lions Park
- 4) Allow density to drive revitalization
- 5) Provide a "There-There" destination for residents and guests alike

Chase thought it would be best to create a vision for the Pan and Fork and Lions Park parcels first since they are more or less the "blank slates." The Clark's Market parcel will most likely receive the bulk of the density. Scanlon added that there is a lot of interest in the parcels and the DAAC's work from potential investors.

Agenda Item 4: Groups Share Ideas with Each Other

The DAAC decided to keep the discussion going as one group instead of two groups.

Agenda Item 5: Guiding Principles for New Development - Are there Consensus Items on Which the Group Agrees

Using the Guiding Principles above, Touchette explained to the Committee members how the principles relate to the maps that will be used in the mapping exercise. Some of the ideas voiced by the Committee members during this discussion were:

- Maintain views of the river. DAAC members identified areas on the map where they thought it was important to be able to see the river.
- Ensure open view planes that go down the river, especially from the area around the Midland Ave. and Two Rivers Road intersection and where Midland Spur intersects with Two Rivers Road.
- There needs to be a place where activity happens that can be easily seen and accessible by people floating on the river, driving by, and easy to get to for pedestrians and bicyclists so it functions as a draw into downtown.
- Need density in terms of beds, whether those beds are residential or hotel beds.
- Provide residential options for 20 to 30 year olds.
- Schermer Hall at Anderson Ranch was mentioned as an example of a gathering space with retractable doors that slide up, allowing people to spill out onto the lawn.
- Keep in mind the question, "What is the highest and best use of the land?"
- Build a combination of residential options downtown, from studios to three-bedroom units that will appeal to a broad market; not just second-home owners.
- Attract employers that pay good enough wages for their employees to afford live locally instead of lower paying jobs where employees have to live with their parents and commute from Silt.

Agenda Item 6: Citizen Comments

Before the meeting concluded, citizens were asked for their comments. Paulina VanderNorden and Mary Holley spoke about the need for a theatre in the mid-valley that could seat 500 to 600 people. At a middle school concert last week there was standing room only (this is a very common occurrence) because the middle school auditorium is too small to provide seating for all the family members who want to attend the shows.

VanderNorda is on the RE-1 Facilities Master Plan Committee and she said that Basalt High School was considering building a performing arts center by the high school but after various discussions, has expressed interest in partnering with the Wylie and the Town to build a performing arts center downtown. Local performance groups like the Santa Fe Ballet and the Aspen Choral Society, to name just a couple, need that size of a stage and auditorium and have said that they would love to be able to perform in Basalt but there are no facilities large enough to accommodate their productions at this time.

Holley added that there are other opportunities to maximize current facilities such as turning the existing auditorium at BMS into a rec center which would be convenient for students and families. Another thought is to relocate the baseball field (to the area where the buses are currently parked) and turn that area into a drop-off area for both elementary and middle schools to relieve congestion at the schools' front doors.

The women reiterated that there is a lack of large-capacity facilities. The proposed downtown performance center would be a shared-use facility. It's very possible to create a flexible space that would allow retail/commercial space on the ground floor and performing arts/community arts on the upper floors.

Cathy Markle said that she was encouraged by this discussion and urged the DAAC members to designate areas for certain uses. Don't do what Aspen did by creating so many rules that it's impossible to do anything. In the downtown core, density is your friend.

Philp said she will regroup with Scanlon about the October 30th meeting agenda. Bruce Kimmel is scheduled to come to the meeting to discuss ways to fund facilities. She added that BACH is currently scheduled to make a presentation to DAAC at that same meeting to make sure that the affordable housing piece is not ignored in the formulation of this plan.

Bennett said that every day she hears from visitors and customers what a great main street we have. They say it's adorable and they love it. She thinks it's important to remember the western-style architecture as we plan for new facilities.

Cathy Markle urged Basalt to keep in touch with Eagle County in this process. The County gets a lot of tax revenue from this side of the mountain and it could be a potential funding partner as the plan moves forward.

It was suggested by an audience member that DAAC member comments be circulated by email to all attendees. Philp responded that pertinent information would be posted on the Our Town Planning website which can be found at www.ourtownplanning.org.

Touchette asked the group to keep reviewing his handout and provide comments at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned.