

**(NDRC) NEWBERG DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Newberg Public Safety Building - Newberg, Oregon

WEDNESDAY, August 13, 2008 AT 7:00 P.M.

To be approved at the September 17, 2008, NDRC Meeting

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Rob Felton called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

II. Roll Call:

John Bridges
Lon Wall

Rob Felton
Gail Watson

Kristen Horn

Absent:

Allen Herriges

Corey Zielsdorf

Staff Present:

David Beam, Economic Development/Planner

David King, Recording Secretary

III. Open Forum:

Introduction:

Chair Felton introduced **John Bridges**, who explained the agenda for the evening. Mr. Bridges' presentation began with a historical perspective on the NDRC's efforts to enhance the historic downtown area.

An Urban Renewal District for the downtown area was formed in 2001, but then it was terminated by an initiative vote before any improvements were made. Those working on the short-lived URD discussed unifying the public spaces of the downtown area. Public space amenities were not being coordinated or aesthetically consistent in its purchases of garbage cans, park benches, etc.

After the demise of the URD, the NDRC was formed in 2002 by the City Council with a mission of continuing to work on ways to improve the downtown. One of the first efforts was to bring in some landscape design students from the University of Oregon and asked them to come up with a concept design to improve the public space in the Civic Corridor. The NDRC took the best ideas from all the students, melded these into one coherent plan, and presented it to City Council. The NDRC also hoped the conceived improvements on the Civic Corridor could be used for the entire downtown area. The committee has already accomplished much. The NDRC, in cooperation with groups like GFU, has provided the downtown area with the seasonal banners. It has also created a list of six street trees to be used in all future replacements in the downtown

area. Now, the committee is proposing enhancements to a downtown city block as a demonstration of what the entire downtown area could look like. (The proposed demonstration block was presented in a short digital video presentation).

Public Comments:

Mr. Bridges now asked that the nine citizens share their comments or questions.

Leon Blanchard, a long time resident of Newberg, said that parking a car on 99W in downtown can be difficult because of opening a door into traffic. He suggests that more be done with the public parking area on 2nd Street. (Even though all comments are welcome this evening, Mr. Bridges asked the public to focus their comments on the subject Demonstration Block. He also recounted how NDRC had plans to improve the 2nd Street public parking lot as part of the URD).

Leon Blanchard doesn't like the trees in front of the VFW Hall, and would like to hear what the City's plans are for the Hall. Mr. Bridges said he did not know of any plans for the VFW Hall. The Civic Corridor plans deals only with the public spaces, such as the streetscape.

Eric Hoff, spoke, representing Joan and Jules Drabkin, who are property owners of a building in the Demonstration Block area. He wanted to read a letter from the Drabkins (John Bridges said that the letter had already been received by NDRC). Mr. Hoff had a concern regarding the drainage issue in front of their building at the corner of College and First St. When the rains come, the bark dust from the tree areas runs with the rainwater towards the owner's building, causing undo expenses cleaning up the mess. The faux-stamped concrete in front of the store also looks bad. The Drabkins are in favor of downtown improvements, especially ones pleasing to the pedestrians and customers, but they also want the tenants of their building to be pleased with the improvements as well. One thing they are concerned with is landscaping that may obscure their business fronts. Most of all, they the water/drainage issue resolved. Mr. Hoff has seen the drainage problem resolved in a similar situation in Lafayette. (Pictures from Mr. Hoff were received by NDRC).

Mr. Bridges assured Mr. Hoff and others that the next step will be to develop engineering plans for the Demonstration Block. At this stage, hopefully these problems can be addressed. Such draft engineering design plans should be sent to the Drabkins for them to review and comment.

Dean Brown, asked about the benches in the video. He noticed that the benches faced both towards and away from the street. He cautioned that people sitting on the benches with their legs out, it could become an obstacle course for other pedestrians. Mr. Brown also mentioned that the curb extensions bring the pedestrians closer to moving traffic, so he suggested that some sort of barrier that protects the people from the moving traffic (e.g. bollards) be installed.

Dianne Porcelli is in favor of the improvements and wants people to be able to stay in their town to shop. She would also like to see merchants encouraged to beautify their store fronts as well.

Mr. Bridges responded that some beautification projects have been undertaken via installation of planters, cleaning up before the parades, etc. McMinnville has a Economic Improvement District (EID) that helps pay for some of their beautification efforts. There are other means available to improve the downtown, but they all cost money. Furthermore, past

surveys have found that 60 – 70% of the downtown merchants/property owners don't want to pay the extra costs.

Dana Dooley is a property owner downtown, and she is concerned that the Demonstration Block might become busy island of business at the expense of other businesses downtown. Mr. Bridges recounted how the demonstration block was chosen in a methodical way. Everyone on NDRC hopes that these improvements will spur a movement to spread the improvements throughout the downtown area.

Mr. Bridges thanked everyone for coming, and encouraged them to pass along any other comments they may have to City Hall, using the available comment forms. The pictures presented this evening can be revisited on the city website.

VI. Other Business:

Next Meeting: The next NDRC meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2008.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting ended at 8:20 PM.

Passed by the NDRC Committee of the City of Newberg this 17th day of September 2008.

AYES: 5 NO: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 2 K. Horn
(list names) L. Wall

ATTEST:



NDRC Recording Secretary Signature

DAVID B. KANG, JR

Print Name