



CITY OF CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA



COUNCIL MEMBER AT LARGE

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Planning Committee, Chairperson
Planning Commission
Human Rights Commission
Facilities Committee
Riverfront Committee, Chairperson

Minutes

Riverfront Committee Meeting

Mayor's Conference Room, 5:30 p.m.

January 11, 2005

Mary Jean Davis, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room.

Committee Members Present: Mary Jean Davis
Tom Lane
Charlie Loeb
James Ealy

Others Present: Susie Salisbury
Tom Heywood
Russ Young
Mayor Danny Jones
Allan Twaddle

Charlie Loeb moved to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2004 meeting and Tom Lane seconded the motion.

Chairperson Davis introduced Tom Heywood, the facilitator for the THINK TANK held on November 9, 2004, and asked that he share information gathered during that public forum concerning the community's vision regarding development of the riverfront.

Mr. Heywood stated that more than 130 individuals attended the forum in November. Of these participants, eleven working groups were formed, each of which submitted its ideas and recommendations to the facilitators and the group overall. Each group was led by an individual facilitator and had access to one of the roving architects and

engineers from EDG. After approximately one hour, the groups presented their observations, ideas and recommendations to the whole.

Mr. Heywood pointed out that participants in the public forum unanimously agreed that we can make better use of our riverfront than we currently do. He stated that there exists a general openness to changes and new ideas, but that we should take steps to ensure that changes are implemented in the right way.

Common themes presented during the session included:

- a desire to preserve the history and views of the river
- better viewing sites along both north and south sides of the river
- review of traffic patterns and pedestrian accessibility
- support of light amenities along the riverfront rather than heavily massed development
- creation of additional linear recreational and green spaces on riverfront
- provision of elements to attract people to the river
- mixed use development along former hotel site

A supplemental report summarizing these points and listing the outcomes of each of the small group discussions and recommendations was passed out for review. Chairperson Davis asked Mr. Heywood to prepare a more formal summarization of the forum's recommendations and he agreed to prepare such for the committee.

The direction of the Riverfront Committee was then discussed. It was decided that those present would contact companies who had previously expressed an interest in serving as a professional consultant to the City regarding development of the riverfront. In addition, steps would be taken to collect and review any earlier reports or studies, including the conceptual Central Plan by Charleston Renaissance

It was established by committee members that the common themes presented, as agreed upon by participants in the public forum, would serve as the basis for a preliminary plan that would be flexible and able to evolve over time. Committee members agreed that a professional, focused effort is needed to review proposals already submitted and to collect other existing studies together.

Both Committee Members Lane and Loeb suggested that solicitation of proposals for a professional consultant and the hiring of such should precede a second public forum. It was also decided that the present committee should not meet again until after the hiring of a professional consultant. Member Lane also said that the committee should be prepared to discuss a proposal to close certain sections of Kanawha Boulevard at the next public meeting.

Allan Twaddle, with the Capital Commission, said that he would be willing to serve as a liaison between the committee and local constituents. He also expressed his willingness to review proposals and assist with interviewing consultants.

Russ Young stated that a professional should survey all of the riverfront, maintaining an open mind in order not to overlook any areas not currently included in proposed plans. He also voiced a need to deal with opposition to any development in a respectful way.

The present committee members decided to begin taking steps toward the agreed upon objectives, and there being no further business to conduct, motion was made by Committee Member Lane to adjourn the meeting. Chairperson Davis seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p. m.

cc: Rod Blackstone, Susie Salisbury, Dan Vriendt

MJD/lgj