



CITY OF
TOPEKA

TOPEKA PLANNING COMMISSION

Monday, February 15, 2021

6:00PM – via video conference

CASE MINUTES

Members present: Brian Armstrong (Chair), Corey Dehn, Marc Fried, Wiley Kannarr, Jim Kaup, Ariane Messina, Katrina Ringler, Matt Werner (8)

Members Absent: (0)

Staff Present: Bill Fiander, Planning & Development Director; Dan Warner, Planning Division Director; Mike Hall, Current Planning Manager; Kris Wagers, Administrative Officer; Mary Feighny, Legal; Stephen Wade, COT Budget Director

Presentation and discussion on the draft Downtown Master Plan

Mr. Fiander introduced and presented the draft Downtown Master Plan and concluded by explaining that the plan is really a collection of visions. It is not about what will or must happen but rather feasible visions, some of which are ground in market study and others more aspirational, especially in regard to 10+ years sections.

Mr. Armstrong noted that the commission has previously received presentations on many of the specific hubs and he appreciates how it is all put together. Mr. Werner agreed and stated he likes the term “collection of visions”. He especially likes the Office and Catalyst district and thinks that with the historical district currently starting to develop, he sees this as the next logical step. The Civic and Cultural Districts that relate to the Office & Catalyst District also make sense. Mr. Fiander added that the historic district is already on-going and it is not the intention of the plan to divert attention from that.

Mr. Fried asked if the plan calls for access to the river as a recreational destination. Mr. Fiander explained that there is absolutely a desire to activate the river. The River North and River South districts attempt to diversify “why you’re down there”. He anticipates the Riverfront Advisory Council having more specific, “granular” plans for access. We are hoping to answer some of those questions with a State grant we are seeking for new bikeways connections on the Kansas Ave bridge and north levee area.

Mr. Kaup asked if the presentation slides shown tonight are available online. Mr. Fiander explained that the draft document, the presentation slides and a public survey are all available at the Topeka.org Downtown Master Plan main page. Each district has its own page, again accessible from the Downtown Master Plan main page. Information presented this evening is also available at TopekaSpeaks.org.

Mr. Kaup asked if this evening’s slide show would be presented again at the public hearing. Mr. Fiander explained that, similar to how Neighborhood Plans are presented, an overview is presented as a discussion item and the focus at the public hearing is more on implementation and priorities. Mr. Kaup stated he believes the slideshow and narrative were very good.

Mr. Dehn complimented staff on the plan and asked questions about plans for the Polk Quincy Viaduct and the possibility of adding residential space. Mr. Fiander said that while that area is not an immediate

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priority for housing, more is projected in the area to support the innovation district idea. Mr. Armstrong invited everyone to visit www.polkquincy.org to learn more about the status of that project.

Mr. Fiander stated that while public comment is still being taken on the plan, staff at this point intends to bring it to the commission for a public hearing at the March meeting. He asked commissioners to contact him if they have any concerns.