

Feb. 9, 2010 minutes

Attending: Neil H., Rosemary C., Kim Keehner, Alex Campbell

Kim gave a brief overview of planning for a "First Friday" event, to launch May 7. Will be looking at using open storefronts; want to invite businesses to "program" spaces. Requested Neil H. if Dark Horse and/or Dark Horse artists might be involved. Neil said, depending on timing (vs. free comic day) may be possible on May 7.

Rosemary C suggested a quarterly dinner for downtown retailers to help folks know "who is who", with an eye towards information sharing and supporting each other through word of mouth.

Alex C presented on current zoning use restrictions in downtown, particularly very strict requirements for first floor retail, no services, no office. Suggested City staff was considering introducing some flexibility to consider, on a case-by-case basis. Rosemary argued very forcefully in favor of the current restrictions. Neil and Alex both pointed out vacancy could be the result, which is not a good result either.

Discussion turned to a recently established use, primarily storage, on Main Street. Alex said Code Enforcement/Planning is working on it, trying to bring a reasonable solution, have the authority to do that. Kim suggested importance of educating property owners about both requirements and goals. This spurred further discussion of a possible invitation to property owners; possible topics: LRT schedule and leasing decisions; recent developments as far as new businesses in downtown; Riverfront Park and treatment plant status; urban renewal, etc.

Alex presented summary of all space available in/around downtown that City will be updating, regularly.

Reviewed draft work plan. Neil and Rosemary both highlighted making progress on usability and quality of City-owned off-street parking.

Discussion turned to committee member recruitment. Property owner and retailer events discussed above would be important. Key next step is re-engaging folks who have participated in the past. Rosemary committed to contacting Katy Lyons. Alex committed to splitting up roster and assigning phone calls.