

## **Downtown Advisory Board Minutes April 25, 2006**

Present: Steve Trevino, Tuddy Dominguez, Kevin Christiansen, Sean Nooner, Mark Sunderman, Evelyne Barbutti, Carol Buttler, Assistant City Manager and Sandra Rodriguez, Meeting Coordinator.

Absent: Jose Najera and Chris Stiegler

Public in attendance: Clyde Haak, James Tschirhart, Aurline Tschirhart, Bill Strait, Terry Teague, Claude Schuehle, John Tschirhart, Vicki Wharton, Juan Hernandez, and David Montgomery.

### 1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 8:52 a.m.

2. On behalf of the Friends of the Courthouse and 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Clyde Haak presented a petition in opposition to close 16<sup>th</sup> Street and build an obstruction in front of the courthouse known as Hondo Plaza at a cost of a million dollars. He stated their opposition should be registered in Section 10A of the grant application. Evelyne Barbutti informed Mr. Haak that the City would only be responsible for 20% of the amount that the State Enhancement Program gives the City. Therefore, the information they were giving the community was incorrect. Tuddy Dominguez stated his concern regarding the petition signatures and stated that they were obtained by providing the community with wrong information about 16<sup>th</sup> Street closure. He also stated that everyone should work together to attract more business to revitalize downtown. Steve Trevino asked if anyone had any alternatives to keep the beautification without closing 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Evelyne Barbutti stated that her main concern was safety. Carol met with Chief Garza & Carl Friesenhahn to discuss the project. Carol stated that when the Downtown Advisory Board started this project, they did not know this money was becoming available. They just knew they had to work on the charge the City Council had given the board to come up with some improvements, enhancements and beautification plans for the downtown area. Some Council Members recommended the creation of a plaza type atmosphere, not just trees, benches, and trash receptacles. The Downtown board has been working with the consultant for at least a year. Carol also stated that the funding that the City is attempting to apply for is due by Friday, April 28, 2006 and the funding cycle only comes around every so many years. Carol also stated that the drawing can be revised.

Citizens also addressed concerns about the City infrastructure. Carol informed them that the City has collected almost \$500,000 in grant money since the year 2000 and just received \$250,000 more for this year to improve water and sewer lines in the northwest and northeast of town. She stated these items are beyond the scope of the Downtown Advisory Board duties. Parking issues were also addressed and discussed.

The following people offered their comments:

Clyde Haak stated that no one shops in downtown because the majority of business is Lawyers, CPAs, Probation Offices, 911 District Office, and a Chiropractor office. No one walks to these offices, they drive. Therefore 16<sup>th</sup> Street is needed.

James Tschirhart stated that he had not spoken to one city policeman that said they would like to see 16<sup>th</sup> Street closed. He also stated that the Hondo Fire Department used to have their street dances on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, but the City convinced them to have it at the City Park this year and it was an absolute failure and a great loss to the Fire Department.

Aurline Tschirhart stated that there can be beautification without closing 16<sup>th</sup> Street. She stated that she is not against beautifying downtown. Just don't close 16<sup>th</sup> Street and cut down on the parking.

John Tschirhart stated that the plaza would just attract kids to come downtown to party all night and probably create more vandalism.

Bill Strait stated that the City should beautify the existing parks and not add more. The City employees can barely keep up with what they have now. He also stated that the City should go out for grants that will improve infrastructure around the city.

David Montgomery stated that there is no need to close 16<sup>th</sup> Street and strongly objects to closing it.

Vicki Wharton stated that the money that will be spent is tax payer dollars and the City should work on infrastructure. The main concern of the people she spoke to was the closing of 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

Terry Teague stated that the City should beautify Highway 90 instead. He also stated that the \$250,000 should be spent on infrastructure that is greatly needed.

After discussion was completed, citizens in attendance and Mr. Haak agreed to support the nomination for funding based on the motion addressing their issues. The board considered all comments presented by the citizens in attendance and believed that it was in the best interest of the project and the community to amend the design concept to accommodate the citizen comments.

Kevin Christiansen motioned to submit the application for funding with the stipulation that the closing of 16<sup>th</sup> Street be removed from the project scope. Evelyne Barbutti second the motion and the board unanimously voted to accept the motion.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes approved June 8, 2006