

MINUTES OF THE DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD WORK SESSION
ANNUAL REVIEW OF P-1 DOWNTOWN PRECISE PLAN

June 2, 2010 – 5:30 p.m.
Fourth Floor Conference Room

Pursuant to notice, the Downtown Review Board of the City of St. Joseph held a work session in the fourth floor conference room at City Hall on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Beth Conway, Troy Culver, Carl Kohler, Vincent Lewis, Debbie Mahoney, Josh Royle, Mark Schmitz, Cole Woodbury.

Members absent: Mike Manganaro.

Others present: Mike Kellam, City Planner

Mike explained that the P-1 Precise Plan which governs exterior changes in the downtown area specifies that the plan be reviewed annually, in April, for any necessary updates. Since there was no meeting in April due to lack of business, review of the plan was placed on the agenda in May. At that time, it was agreed that the members of the Downtown Review Board needed additional time to review the plan and it would be reviewed at a future meeting. Because there was no business for a June meeting, staff decided to hold a work session for the P-1 on the June meeting date.

Mike said staff has some clean-up items that need to be addressed.

Previously, the Downtown Review Board (DRB) was authorized by Section 31-179 along with the Landmark Commission. We have now separated those two boards and the DRB is now governed under Section 31-100. That is not reflected in the precise plan.

We recently had changes to Chapter 31 regarding storage and warehousing uses and the fact that they cannot store hazardous materials within C-3, M-1 and M-2 districts. P-1 allows storage and warehousing, so he thinks we should add the same or similar wording to the P-1 that has been added to C-3, M-1 and M-2, i.e., no storage of hazardous materials are allowed.

Mike said we are trying to encourage ecological development (green development) in other parts of the city and he thinks we should include it in downtown. He hopes to work on that over the next year and have it ready for the 2011 review.

Troy Culver had asked about screening for dumpsters on new development. Right now in downtown, most dumpsters are in the alleys, which is public right-of-way. The zoning code cannot dictate what can and cannot be done within public right-of-way. Mike said we could include a sentence in the P-1 about screening trash receptacles that are located on private property (new development or change of use only). This would be reviewed during staff's Development Review rather than being heard by DRB.

According to the Code of Ordinances, alleys are to be maintained by adjacent property owners. The City is currently working on a green alley between the 5th & Edmond surface lot and Felix Street. They hope to have that alleyway completed this calendar year.

Troy Culver mentioned lighting in the alleys. Mike said DRB's main focus is building architectural design review.

Carl Kohler said he would like to see some roundabouts in downtown, specifically at the 5-way intersection near the Pony Express statue. Mike agreed that roundabouts can be very efficient, but for the most part, people in St. Joseph are not interested in having roundabouts. That is something addressed by Chapter 25, Streets.

Several people expressed the need for a grocery store downtown.

Troy Culver asked how the check list is coming along. Mike said that is on his list of things to do.

Cole Woodbury asked if there is anything showing the progress that has been made downtown. Mike said that information is included in the downtown strategic plan that was done as part of the DREAM initiative. Beth Conway suggested setting up a facebook page giving this information once it is complete.

Mr. Woodbury asked about "building coverage" as explained on pages 8 and 9 of the P-1. Mike said that refers to overall lot coverage. In other districts, a building can only occupy a certain percentage of the entire lot, but in P-1 you can fill up to 100% of the lot, but you are not required to do so.

Mr. Culver asked about fencing around private parking lots. Mike said the P-1 does not address that but it certainly can. Mr. Culver said he would like to see uniformity in fencing parking lots. Mike said he would develop some language addressing the fencing. Mike asked what height they think should be maximum height. The general consensus was that 6 ft. should be the max.

Mr. Culver asked if the DRB has any authority in the appearance of abandoned buildings. Mike said the Property Maintenance Division of the City covers that. Page 16 of the Precise Plan discusses mothballed buildings, which basically says they have to be secured with wood painted to match the exterior of the building.

Mr. Culver asked about sign regulations. Mike explained that we made some changes two years ago that follows Chapter 31 as far as size of signs, but gives leniency to having a little more excitement for signs in downtown. Mr. Culver said we do not really want any consistency in signs. Mike said we try to maintain consistency on street signs, but not for individual businesses.

Mike explained that DRB does not regulate color choice. We can address architectural integrity as well as maintaining historic look and feel. He explained that DRB is to use The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Mike also explained that umbrellas used in downtown are regulated by color, as set out in the Retail Use of Public Sidewalks, which is a document from Public Works Dept.

Mr. Woodbury said he can give a program of historic St. Joseph at some future time if anyone is interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.