

Council members

Attached is the draft minutes of the official community meeting that was held on May 6, 2010. This was the official community meeting that the District Council held to discuss the proposed sidewalk widening. There have been no other community meetings since that meeting. That and the phone messages that came in advance of that meeting was the information that I passed out to you at the City Council meeting on 2-6-2013.

If you read page two of the draft report it mentions Chuck Repke was a presenter for the building owners at that meeting. I resent that John Mannillo would challenge my credibility when what I have done is provided you the factual information, positive and negative comments that had been given about the project at the community meeting and summarized what you can read for yourself, that a majority of residents supported the proposal.

I further object to the ugly insinuations in this comment: "This is where the whole project doesn't pass the smell test. How is it possible for the building owners to make economic sense for handful of additional tables, for a few months of the year, justify this expense. What don't we know about?"

John's bombastic bullying over the past three years has muted open community support of the proposal and to now be making additional ugly insinuations that I don't even understand what in the world he is trying to suggest about either my client or the administration or both says something about more about John and his tactics then it does about anything else. I hope you would take is comments in that context.

Chuck Repke

Contract Lobbyist - Center Ice LLC

CapitolRiver Council
Community Meeting on Proposed Lowertown Sidewalk Café
May 6, 2010

In attendance: Katie Sabaka, Todd Brezina, Andrew Schlack, Phyllis Voight, Kevin Brown, Patrick Heelan, Roy Meixell, Eve Fortney, Kurt Koehler, Connie Nardini, Karen McCauley, Rachel Tschida, Marian Deegan, Joe Wirth, Patty Wirth, Bob Spaulding, Pat Lindgren, Laura Henry, Terry Henry, Juanae Brooks, Tyge Nelson, Sharon Peterson, Richard Masak, John Mannillo, James Buscher, George Kremer, Pat Kremer, Roger Fuller, John LaVine, Thomas Zera, Larry McMullen, Katy Lindblad, Lynn Meixell, Michael Heelan, Brian Tucker, Frank Kozlowski, Laurie Lapore, Mary Barrett, Chuck Woodbury, Ralph Eide, Tim Leary, Greg Peterson, Bob McCullough, Tammy Lehmann, Toni Wilcox, Chris Beckstrom, Kae Peterson, Matt Lokowich, Erin Lokowich, Joe Spencer, Paul St. Martin, Larry Zangs, Julia Schlack, Jewel Hill Mayer, Sherri Kapas, Jennifer Henry, Caleb Jonas.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

1. Schlack, A. welcomed all to the meeting, gave an overview of CapitolRiver Council, and described the process that this proposal has gone through. He noted that the original proposal was heard in January 2010 by the CRC Development Review Committee. A community meeting was held at that time and as a result, a CapitolRiver Council Task Force was formed to further explore the proposal with the City of St. Paul and ensure that resident concerns were addressed in the exploration. This Task Force consisted of several downtown residents and stakeholders and met several times, beginning in January. Schlack identified the goal of tonight's meeting to hear the updated proposal and ensure that community members have the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback. Schlack explained that after this meeting, the proposal will go back to CRC's Development Review Committee for discussion there. Input given tonight will be reported to the committee at that time. If any formal action is taken by the Development Review committee, it will then go before the full CRC Board of Directors at their May meeting.
2. Project Proposal
 - a. Joe Spencer (St. Paul mayor's office) gave an overview of the design concept, and noted:
 - i. The proposal would change the streetscape to include a 20' sidewalk, 11' bus/bike lane, 10' traffic land, and 11' traffic lane.
 - ii. Trees would be moved from the outside of the sidewalk to the inside.
 - iii. A minimum of 6' of sidewalk would be open and maintained for pedestrian travel.
 - b. Paul St. Martin (St. Paul Public Works) noted:
 - i. Impacts on parking and traffic flow
 - ii. The Central Corridor Bike Walk Plan will also affect this street.
 - iii. Metro Transit has the final say on all bus stop issues. Lee Bennett of Met Transit has stated their preference to have stops every other block in downtown, and would like this stop moved to be east of Wall St.
 - iv. The total cost of this proposal is estimated to be \$270,000. This estimate does not include work on vaults or area ways. The total amount would be paid for by property owners by assessment.

- v. If this proposal progresses, the earliest it could get a public hearing in the City Council will be on June 16th.
- c. Chuck Repke (representative of building owners) provided comments, including:
 - i. The Business and building owners were approached by the City to participate in this proposal.
 - ii. The sidewalk café will bring people to the area.
 - iii. Business owners are willing to pay for extra security at night.
 - iv. The sidewalk is currently in horrendous shape and would be repaired as a result of this project.

3. Input from community members

- a. Resident and employee of Mears Park Place apartments expressed full support for proposal
- b. Resident and employee of Mears Park Place apartments reported that the leasing and management office is in full support of the proposal and believes that the sidewalk café will help them to sell life in Lowertown to potential residents. She also noted that the café would benefit pedestrians on 6th Street by “confining” diners to a specific section of the sidewalk.
- c. Lowertown resident asked when about the timeline if this proposal were to move forward. St. Martin responded that, with Council approval, the sidewalk café could conceivably be built in three weeks, beginning sometime this August. Resident commented that the removal of parking meters would have a negative effect upon downtown businesses and community.
- d. Phillip Voight, property owner in the Rossmor, expressed strong support for proposal and commented that a sidewalk café would raise property values and revenue, would increase on-street activity and therefore be a crime deterrent, and that parking garages would provide ample parking opportunities.
- e. Laura Henry, River Park Lofts resident expressed opposition to the proposal, stating that a sidewalk café would increase undesirable people and activities to the Lowertown Street and Mears Park.
- f. Terry Henry, River Park Lofts resident expressed opposition to the proposal, stating that public money should not fund projects with a private benefit. He stated his belief that the loss of projected revenue from the removal of parking meters would be more than currently estimated. He stated that the City should prioritize rec centers and parks over sidewalk expansions that benefit liquor establishments.
- g. Marian Deegan, River Park Lofts resident expressed support for the proposal and noted that a city must have a vibrant arts scene and nightlife in order to attract successful businesses. Successful businesses increase property values and quality of life.
- h. Chuck Woodbury, River Park Lofts resident, expressed his and his wife’s full support of the proposal.
- i. Betty Herbert, long time downtown resident and retired real estate agent, expressed full support for the proposal.
- j. Karen Caton, downtown resident, asked City representatives to detail how the adjoining blocks would be affected. Spencer and St. Martin explained that 3 meters would be lost on the other side of Wacouta, and 3 meters would be lost on the other side of Sibley. Caton expressed strong opposition to the proposal and stated that the City would be taking public space and making it private, noted that 6th Street is a thoroughfare for trucks, and said that she feels the sidewalk café would be the destruction of a neighborhood.

- k. Jewel Hill Mayer, Mears Park Place resident, expressed support for the proposal and recommended that the City install some sidewalk poetry on 6th Street.
- l. Matt and Erin Lokowich, River Park Lofts residents and owners of The Bulldog Lowertown, expressed support for this proposal. Matt noted that the sidewalk café would benefit everyone and that traffic noise on 6th Street is louder than the sidewalk café noise would be. Erin noted that money earned by the businesses goes back into the community.
- m. Sherri Kapas, owner of Gopher Bar, expressed opposition to the proposal and noted that LRT construction causes traffic congestion that is already a deterrent for visitors to come to downtown Saint Paul, her opinion that additional construction would add to that problem, that her business does not get any money from the City. She also pointed out that the estimated revenue loss for the removal of parking meters does not seem to include parking ticket revenue.
- n. John Mannillo, downtown employee, pointed out that Minnesota weather would cause the sidewalk café to only be usable for a few months of each year and suggested exploration of a seasonal sidewalk café. John said he is also the Chair of Friends of Mears Park and noted that businesses and buildings on that block are successful because of the park and should donate to the Friends of Mears Park.
- o. Jennifer Henry, River Park Lofts resident and Securian employee, expressed support for the proposal and noted that it would add to the vibrancy of downtown, add to her quality of life, and bring more visitors into the neighborhood.
- p. Caleb Jonas, River Park Lofts resident expressed support for the proposal.
- q. Michael Heelan, Great Northern Lofts resident, expressed support for the proposal and noted that he and his wife chose to live in this neighborhood because of its interesting, urban environment.
- r. John Lavine, On the Park Condominiums resident and former Mayor and commissioner, noted that governments have been giving public space for private use since the dawn of the republic. He noted that this would be setting a potentially dangerous precedent.
- s. Toni Wilcox, River Park Lofts resident, expressed support for the proposal. She noted that pedestrians should take priority in planning and suggested that if there is a lack of parking or traffic congestion, that perhaps it would inspire more people to walk.
- t. Patty Wirth, downtown resident, expressed support for the project.
- u. Patrick Heelan, Fitzgerald Condominiums resident, expressed support for the project and pointed out that the sidewalk expansion would widen the pedestrian path from 4' to 6'.
- v. Pat Lindgren, aide to Councilmember Dave Thune, asked if residential buildings across Sibley and Wacouta Streets would be assessed for the work that would happen outside their buildings. St. Martin said that no construction or assessments would affect them; just painting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.