

Notes Mayor's Brown Bag Lunch – Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

June 20, 2013

City Hall Room 207 12:00 – 1:30 PM

Attendance: Approximately 20 members of the CAC were in attendance. Mayor Stephen Buxbaum, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and CPD Director Keith Stahley were also in attendance.

1. It is the responsibility of the CRA to review the work done by “Imagine Olympia”, coalesce the vision, and take action.
2. Create a master plan; CRA is the implementation component to the “whole” work done to Imagine Olympia.
3. Identify the desired outcomes of the CRA. Leverage the work already done.
4. The CRA is about the financing (economic analysis) to make the vision happen. Create a business plan and determine what is going to kick-start the west side, downtown, and east side.
5. This is an action planning group, not visioning.
6. The CRA will be one “tool” for the City to use in order to remove blight to specific properties.
7. The CRA will help to implement the other plans currently under consideration in Olympia. (SMP, etc)
8. Olympia needs to develop an economic development strategy
9. We are not about visioning; we are interested in getting facts of what will make Olympia attractive for investments.
10. We can help to remove roadblocks to the development of property in Olympia. Does it make sense? What is the incentive?
11. The role of CRA includes communication to the community. Communicate available tools to investors, i.e. what funds are available for buildings public and private partnerships, etc.

Other Comments of actions:

- Celebrate incremental successes!
- Create a flow chart of the teams and the information they have gathered
- Develop west side property to generate revenue to improve downtown

Other notes:

Parking as a utility.

Create a revolving fund for remediation.

How does the CRA vision fit into the larger vision for the downtown and the community?

We must plan first. What is the level of scale? What leads?

West side development is the economic engine that supports the city's revenues. Funds generated on the west side help to support efforts to revitalize downtown.

Need to look at the results of the Imagine Olympia process. Continue the outreach to property owners.

Need a downtown Master Plan. The CRA is an implementation tool.

Look at what the City of Bothell did.

Ultimately we need a 20 year community redevelopment plan. We need to make sure that our plans pencil and are supported by strong economic analysis. CRA is about the tool box.

Still confused about the CRA and hope that it's not another visioning exercise.

Downtowns develop incrementally. We have a vision as defined in our 1994 Comp Plan that is still valid. The CRA is a tool for addressing blight and it appears that we have blight. The isthmus is blighted.

The CRA can add value to the SMP and to the Downtown Master Plan.

To enhance credibility we must care about what the business community thinks. A community is more than just its residents it is also its businesses. Olympia needs an overarching economic development strategy.

We are not doing visioning. We do need facts: fill, pollution. Make downtown more appealing to investment.

Remember who owns the property and create fewer roadblocks to reinvestment. We need incentives to get people to improve their property.

Look at the Cunningham Building and the work that Brian Kolb has done. The greenest development is redevelopment. How can we encourage more of it. What's the cost per square foot of rehabilitation verse new construction.

Old buildings can be challenging, but the costs tend to be about the same. Use of historic tax credits can help tip the balance sheet in favor of redevelopment.

What's the sense of purpose? How do we notice the public and do outreach and information?

We don't need a vision we need a business plan with a real development pro forma. It will take bold leadership at an elected level to move in this direction. Can't be afraid of investment and people making a profit.