

Downtown Commission
October 9, 2013, 5:30 p.m.
Madison Avenue Meeting Room

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Estimated Time</u> |
|--|-----------------------|
| I. Call to Order | |
| II. Approval of August 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes | 5 minutes |
| III. Public Comment | 5 minutes |
| IV. Discussion: Visit Corvallis Executive Director, Mary Pat Parker | 30 minutes |
| V. Committee Update: Downtown Study Committee | 20 minutes |
| VI. Staff Updates | 5 minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Development Update• Parking Committee Liaisons• DCA Liaison Report | |
| VII. Other Commissioner Updates | 5 minutes |
| VIII. Other Business | |
| IV. Adjournment | |

Next Meeting:
November 13, 5:30 p.m., Madison Avenue Meeting Room

Attachments: August 14, 2013, draft meeting minutes



Community Development
 Planning Division
 501 SW Madison Avenue
 Corvallis, OR 97333

DRAFT
CITY OF CORVALLIS
DOWNTOWN COMMISSION MINUTES
Madison Avenue Meeting Room
August 14, 2013

Attendance

Liz White, Vice Chair
 Kirk Bailey
 Elizabeth Foster
 Brigetta Olson
 Ken Pastega
 Mike Wiener

Staff

Ken Gibb, Community Development Director
 Sarah Johnson, Associate Planner
 Jon Sassaman, Police Chief
 Terry Nix, Recorder

Excused

Heidi Henry, Chair
 Mary Gallagher
 Dee Mooney
 Donna Williams

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

| | Agenda Item | Summary of Recommendations |
|-------|--|---|
| I. | Call to Order | |
| II. | Approval of July 10, 2013 Meeting Minutes | Approved as presented. |
| III. | Public Comment | |
| IV. | Discussion: Downtown Safety and Security Corvallis Police Department | Information only. |
| V. | Discussion: Downtown Study Scoping – First Steps Property Owner Survey, Business Owner Survey | Information only. |
| VI. | Staff Updates | Information only. |
| VII. | Other Commissioner Updates | Information only. |
| VIII. | Other Business | Information only. |
| IX. | Adjournment – 6:45 p.m. | The next meeting will be held September 11, 5:30 p.m., Madison Avenue Meeting Room |

CONTENT OF DISCUSSION

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair White called the regular meeting of the Corvallis Downtown Commission to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF JUNE 12, 2013 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Commissioner Olson moved to approve the June 12 minutes as presented. Commissioner Foster seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously with Commissioner Bailey abstaining.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

IV. DISCUSSION: DOWNTOWN SAFETY AND SECURITY

Community Development Director Gibb introduced Corvallis Police Chief Jon Sassaman. Chief Sassaman is present at the request of the Commission to share some thoughts and answer questions.

Chief Sassaman said that, not including medical-related calls, the Corvallis Police Department (CPD) responded to about 1300 calls for service in the downtown area in FY 2012-13. There were a range of complaints, including animal complaints, calls for public assistance, burglaries, alarms, car break-ins, stealing, child abuse/neglect, and disturbances. There were a fair number of calls related to intoxicated people, noise, and fights, generally after hours. An increase in calls related to people with mental health issues is being seen across the City. He said that no one activity stood out as being greater than the others in terms of calls for service in the downtown area.

Chief Sassaman said that the City Council recently took action to address people congregating and smoking at the Downtown Transit Center. Due to a number of citizen complaints, the CPD drew up a tactical action plan and provided an increased presence at that location for 30 days ending May 22.

Chief Sassaman spoke briefly about staffing levels, challenges associated with having a limited number of uniformed officers on the street, and the need to triage calls for service in order to respond to the most serious complaints.

In discussion and in response to inquiries, Chief Sassaman made the following additional comments:

- Corvallis has the lowest police officer ratio in the state with less than one police officer per 1,000 population. In order to achieve the goal of 1.20 officers per 1,000 population, it would be necessary to hire and train an additional 13 police officers.

- For Part 1 crimes, the national average is 33 per 1,000 population and Corvallis runs at 33.2 per 1,000 population.
- The CPD has maximized the ability to be efficient with technology and partnerships.
- The City entertained the concept of having red light cameras with automatic issuance of violations; however, it was decided that having the CPD retain some discretion in that regard was better for this community at this time.
- Because the number of interactions with people with mental health issues has increased greatly, the CPD has mandatory annual training on that issue. The Willamette Criminal Justice Council has also taken on the issue of mental health. It is a very difficult topic and many people are working to make the system better.
- Employees who have concerns about walking to their cars in the evening can take a number of measures for increased safety. There is increased security that comes with walking with another person and carrying a communication tool.
- Loitering is not a crime. People have the right to hang out and to express themselves. Property owners have the right to control their property and refuse service. If a person is making a business owner uncomfortable, the CPD can come and talk to them. An important part of policing is talking to people and getting to know who is in the community.
- With current staffing levels, the availability of officers for bike patrol is dependent upon what else is happening in the community at any given time.

Commissioner Foster said that concerns have been expressed by members of the DCA about increased aggressive and hostile behaviors in the downtown area. Chief Sassaman said that it is okay for someone who is afraid to call 911. They should be clear in explaining the behavior and in stating that they are concerned for their safety. He noted that there is a difference between just not wanting someone around and that person actually breaking the law.

Commissioner Foster said that perhaps the DCA should host a meeting during which a CPD representative could review safety procedures and explain when it is acceptable to call 911. Chief Sassaman suggested the DCA contact his office to schedule a meeting.

Vice Chair White expressed appreciation to Chief Sassaman for his presentation.

V. DISCUSSION: DOWNTOWN STUDY SCOPING – FIRST STEPS PROPERTY OWNER SURVEY, BUSINESS OWNER SURVEY

Associate Planner Johnson gave an update on the Downtown Study Committee. Based on consensus by this Commission to begin work on the Main Street Downtown Study program, the Committee met on August 5 to consider first steps of the program – to develop and solicit responses to a downtown business owner survey and a downtown property owner survey. The Committee has assigned a member to head each survey development subcommittee. The next step is to develop survey questions and establish a means to distribute the surveys to get as many responses as possible. The Committee also discussed asking other members of the Commission to participate in the subcommittees.

Discussion followed regarding the wording of the survey questions and the statistical validity of the surveys. Planner Johnson noted that the Main Street Downtown Study program is readily available online and the surveys on that website have been developed by statisticians. If the group decides that different questions are important to ask in our community, the City has other statistically relevant surveys available to use as examples.

Commissioners Olson and White volunteered to participate in the survey development subcommittees. The Committee will meet next on September 9, 4:00 p.m., at City Hall.

VI. STAFF UPDATES

Community Development Update: Director Gibb advised of a homeless shelter concept being worked on in the community that would incorporate several services in one location. Two of the locations being considered are in the downtown area. He will advise as more information is available.

Director Gibb said he received a call from a consultant doing work for Burlington, VT, in relation to their downtown housing program. He noted that communities nationwide are looking at housing, including student housing, in their downtowns.

Parking Committee Liaison: There was no update.

DCA Liaison Report: Commissioner Foster advised that Oregon Main Street representatives will be in Corvallis on October 23 and 24. She will ask that this Commission be invited to meet with them.

Commissioner Pastega asked if there is an event calendar for the City. Director Gibb said that the City contracts with Visit Corvallis for visitor services. That organization maintains an events calendar and will add any legitimate community event. There was general agreement to invite a representative from Visit Corvallis to a future Downtown Commission meeting.

VII. OTHER COMMISSIONER UPDATES: None.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.