

: OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS :**: OF THE CITY OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS :**

A Regular Meeting of the City Council was held November 11, 2003 at 7:09 P.M., at the Peoria Civic Center, 201 S. W. Jefferson Street , Exhibit Hall B, Peoria, Illinois, Mayor David P. Ransburg presiding.

ROLL CALL

Roll call showed the following Council Members present: Ardis, Gulley, Morris, Nichting, Sandberg, Spears, Teplitz, Thetford, Turner, Mayor Ransburg – 10; Absent: Grayeb - 1.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ransburg requested a moment of silent prayer and then he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PETITIONS, REMONSTRANCES & COMMUNICATIONS**(03-632) PRESENTATION of the FINAL HEART OF PEORIA PLAN Provided by
MR. ANDRES DUANY on Behalf of DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK.**

Director of Economic Development Dave Dobson welcomed citizens to the presentation of the final edition of the Heart of Peoria Plan. He said the process began in May, 2002, and the plan had now gone through several levels of review with Mr. Duany presenting the final version at this meeting.

Director Dobson thanked the following companies for providing in-kind contributions: Enterprise Car Rental, Pere Marquette Hotel, The Hick'ry Stick, Jimmy John's, Peoria Chiefs/O'Brien Field, Haddad Restaurant, Sullivan's Pub, Peoria Charter Coach, Holiday Inn City Centre, Sully's Pub & Café, The Grill on Fulton, Old Chicago Pizza, Community Action Agency, Lindsay's on Liberty, Avanti's, Pizzeria Uno Chicago Bar & Grill, and Randolph Terrace Historic Bed and Breakfast.

Director Dobson also thanked the following for their funding contributions: Ameren-Cilco, Peoria Civic Center, Caterpillar, Inc., David and Zan Ransburg, L. R. Nelson, Peoria Public Library, CityLink, Methodist Medical Center, Tri-County Regional Planning, and State of Illinois Representative Ricca Slone.

Director Dobson said copies of the plan would be available at A & E Blueprint, Graphic Express and Kinko's. He said CD's were \$5.00 each, a black and white copy of the plan was \$25.00 and a color copy was around \$125.00.

Mayor Ransburg thanked those citizens who participated in the Charrette last year. He gave a brief history of what the Charrette was about for those who were unable to attend. He said once this plan was adopted by the City Council, the City would be moving forward with the plan. He stated that Mr. Duany would give his observations in the presentation and everyone would learn the principals of the plan.

Mr. Andres Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk indicated there were approximately 400 people present. He said this presentation would be different from the last presentation because the project and manual were now finished. He said the manual took about 15 months to complete and contained more information than what was presented to the public in the past. He said following the last presentation, the plan was reviewed on several different levels and by representatives of Peoria and was now a precise document. However, he said, it would be up to the citizens of Peoria to become the experts on the document and contribute toward the plan and move it forward.

Mr. Duany said he would present less than half of the plan in his presentation because of time restrictions. He added it was difficult for him to determine the most important part of the plan because each community had to determine their own priorities. He added that the plan had a great amount of diversity.

Mr. Duany gave an overview of the executive summary and the map showing geographic locations. He said the plan would assist in helping the City to understand how Peoria should be projected to the world. He said the City needed to provide good reasons for people to decide to move to Peoria or, why those who lived in Peoria should stay.

Mr. Duany said he was told Peoria was not growing but when he drove to the suburbs, he realized that was not true. He said Peoria was growing at a tremendous rate at its outer edges, but there was no growth in the center of the City. He said Peoria needed to redirect their growth so that a portion of the growth occurred in the inner-city. He said open air malls were very popular and the open air mall on Route 150 and 91 should have been built in the downtown area. He said the attraction of suburbs had paled for young people compared with the attraction of downtown. He said currently young people wanted to live where the action was, and the downtown area was not a good investment at the present time. He added this plan would show how to level the playing field, and would show what assets were in place and what assets needed to be added.

Mr. Duany said the plan did not encourage demolition of buildings. He explained the plan was measured and was achievable and could be completed within the life times of most citizens. He said the plan would be essentially driven by the private sector.

Mr. Duany proposed a new zoning code that would reduce the suburban atmosphere in the downtown area. He discussed the proposed museum for the Sears Block and he said he had originally objected to a suburban museum being placed in the downtown area. He said after reviewing the current plan, he indicated he could support what was now being proposed for the museum block and he commented it would be a good fit for the future. He said the new zoning code could protect residential housing from undesirable property changes in their neighborhoods, and would address use rather than context. He added there was an unpredictable environment along I-74 and the new code would help stabilize that area.

Mr. Duany said an assessment of the quality of pedestrian walkways was made. He pointed out that there were a lot of good walking experiences in the downtown area, but those areas were not tied together. He said a two block area was about the most lengthy of any of the good walking experiences.

Mr. Duany discussed the proposal that the City should be laid out in a grid and "A" grid streets should receive priority for all the best buildings or businesses being built. He said other types of businesses should be encouraged to locate in the downtown area, but they should be located on "B" grid streets.

Mr. Duany said his team studied the I-74 reconstruction project extensively. He said most of the time high-speed highways took away from living in the downtown area because people could live in the suburbs and still have quick access to the downtown area. He said there was a plan for a boulevard effect for I-74 but it was for a future generation. He also encouraged City leaders to restore the two-way traffic system in the inner-city which was good for commerce. He said the streets in the downtown area were too wide and should be narrowed and slowed by installing diagonal parking on each side of the street. He said this kind of parking also increased parking in the downtown area by 35%.

Mr. Duany encouraged the City to sell the idea to developers that assigned parking spaces would be provided to the developers who presented their development proposals first. He said tall buildings were not justified in the downtown area. He added that buildings should be kept at lower levels. He said the plan did not down zone any property but it would be more logical to build lower buildings.

Mr. Duany continued to discuss the museum block. He said he did not think the museum itself should take up the entire block and he said he did not support any grassy areas because those areas became dormant at night. He said this would be an area that should be a twenty-four hour area. He also pointed out that the Caterpillar parking deck presented a blank, dark wall to Water Street which was a problem. He added he was pleased to see that a condo unit would be located on the museum block which would assist in helping to keep the area alive at night. He said the energy of Main Street needed to flow to the Riverfront.

Mr. Duany pointed out that the River was a prize. He said industry grabbed real estate on the river in the early days of the City, but industry was now gone which made the best real estate available for redevelopment. He said the current structural system of the elevated concrete walkway was not desirable for the Riverfront. He added many development sites had been identified on the Riverfront and he challenged the City to organize a predictable plan where those who bought and developed early would know what was planned for their surrounding area. He also referred to the first floor of the concrete platform and he said the City needed to confront the fact that businesses needed to be developed on that first floor area or the boardwalk needed to be raised. He said the sooner this was done, the better.

Mr. Duany complimented the City on their stock of marvelous brick warehouse-type buildings that could be turned into loft apartments. He said there were many disincentives related to renovations that should be taken out of the current code. He said this was a crisis all over America and New Jersey just passed a code requiring that buildings be renovated and brought up to the code that was in existence at the time they were built. He said this law needed to be adopted in the State of Illinois.

Mr. Duany proposed that screens be placed on the blank walls of the Caterpillar Parking Deck, and that movies be projected on the screen during the summer. He said the movies would provide light and movement and would mask the rough exterior of the building.

Mr. Duany suggested that Kumpf Boulevard should be reurbanized and he made suggestions for a more civil street system.

Mr. Duany expressed concern that people who lived in the inner-city must have a car to shop for daily needs, which affected the older people and lower income people who did not own cars. He said major pedestrian sheds or areas of ten minutes walking distance were identified for locations of small grocery stores, day care centers, post office boxes, police officer stations, café/bar, etc. He said he did not know if these locations would be successful because it would depend upon the types of merchants each location would have.

Mr. Duany spoke in support of the newly established Med-Tech District. He said this project seemed to be moving along quickly and would encompass eight blocks of West Main Street, and would bring together the hospitals, the medical college and the Med-Tech Center. He suggested that the project not just contain labs but a complete mixed use of businesses which would add to the vitality of the areas.

Mr. Duany further discussed zoning code revisions. He said the current code was confusing and difficult to administer. He suggested reducing the present twenty categories down to six. He said there were many properties in the downtown area that could be redeveloped just the way they were and would not have to wait for large developments to occur.

Mr. Duany said at the end of the book, there were five pages of suggested projects with schedules of when each should be completed. He said this check list included small projects as well as larger, more difficult projects. He urged the Council and citizens alike to adopt this plan and move forward. He said the Director of Economic Development would direct the funding but citizens should support the plan and be willing to be involved in the development of the projects.

A citizen named Janet questioned how Mr. Duany's company came to be chosen to formulate the plan for Peoria and she questioned other aspects of the organization.

Mayor Ransburg explained that State Representative Ricca Sloane was instrumental in bringing Mr. Duany to Peoria.

Interim Director of Planning and Growth Management Pat Landes questioned what the next step was for Peoria regarding the Heart of Peoria Plan.

Mr. Duany urged citizens to obtain the plan and read it. He said he was uncertain as to how the Council would process the plan. He suggested that the Council approve the plan in principal and he urged the Council to deal with one project at a time.

Director of Economic Development Dave Dobson said it was his intent to bring the plan before the Council at a Council Meeting toward the end of November, 2003.

Mr. George Crawford questioned how the City would get to the next level of the plan and how could the people make the inner-city more important. He also questioned how much conversation was held with developers regarding the plan.

Mr. Duany said private sector investment would make land more valuable. He said an asset would be to have a lively downtown where young people would choose to live. He added that most of his time was spent with developers. He said he was a developer himself so he understood the part they would play in the plan.

Mr. Les Kenyon, President of the Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation, spoke in support of the reuse of historic buildings.

Ms. Mary Denny, resident on Forrest Hill, spoke in support of an active downtown and she cited Van Couver British Columbia, as a fine example of what could be done to enliven an older downtown area.

Mr. Ron Crowell, 1630 Glen Oak Street, asked what suggestion Mr. Duany would have for public schools.

Mr. Duany said the plan did not really address the public school issue, other than they were evenly distributed throughout the City. He noted there was some controversy and, in his opinion, the best schools should be downtown. He suggested that the City look into the Milwaukee school plan.

Ms. Angela Anderson, Prospect Avenue, asked if there were any suggestions for bus transportation.

Mr. Duany indicated that nothing had been addressed in the plan regarding bus transportation.

Ms. Jan Deisler, Tiffany Court, member of the District #150 School Board, questioned how schools fit into the plan. She also questioned what was in the plan regarding schools that Mr. Duany did not address in his presentation.

Mr. Duany said there was just general information in the plan regarding schools and he suggested that some work on the schools was needed. He also stated that windows which did not allow natural light into school rooms sent the wrong message to students and citizens alike. He urged the schools to reinstate larger windows.

Ms. Rebecca Carry, an avid bus rider, expressed concern regarding the atmosphere projected by the new bus center. She said the areas between the Bus Center, ICC and the Civic Center should be more open and should be a good atmosphere for pedestrian traffic.

Ms. Carol Schlicker, Uplands area, questioned why neighborhoods should want to be included in the Med-Tech District.

Mr. Duany said neighborhood associations who voted to remain out of the Med-Tech District would not be involved in the decision making process that could affect their neighborhoods. He urged those neighborhoods to reconsider.

Mayor Ransburg thanked Mr. Duany for his presentation and he thanked the citizens for their attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was determined that an Executive Session was not needed.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Thetford moved to adjourn the Council Meeting; seconded by Council Member Turner.

Approved by viva voce vote.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

Mary L. Haynes, MMC
City Clerk of Peoria, Illinois

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