

**Minutes of City Council Workshop  
2015 Downtown Action Plan  
Monday, October 5, 2015 – 5:00 P.M.  
City Council Chambers**

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Mayor Latham called the workshop to order at 5:00 P.M.

The following City Council members were in attendance:

Mayor:	Charlie Latham		
Council Members:	Lee Buck	Keith Doherty	Chris Hoffman
	Bruce Thomason	Phil Vogelsang	Jeanell Wilson

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Also present were City Manager George Forbes and City Clerk Laurie Scott.

**Purpose of Workshop**

The purpose of the Workshop was for the City Council to discuss the 2015 Downtown Action Plan.

**Presentations and Discussions**

Mr. Forbes began the workshop by explaining the downtown project in which the City will be making improvements on the streets and avenues east of A1A from Beach Boulevard to 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. He announced that an Open House on this project will take place on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015, from 6-8 P.M. in the Council Chambers at City Hall. They will be discussing the plans with homeowners and citizens to receive their feedback on the projects prior to going to bid. The project will take approximately 18 months to complete. The project will begin next year.

Mr. Forbes reviewed the PowerPoint presentation on the Downtown Action Plan [slides on file]. He reported that the workshop would be covering the following categories of the Downtown Action Plan, *Public Spaces, Transportation, Public Safety, Commercial Spaces, Entertainment and Events, and Quality of Life.*

He reported the following “Public Spaces” projects are out to bid with a late October opening. Construction to begin shortly after that.

- Oceanfront Park restrooms – constructing a four stall, unisex restroom, and outdoor shower station.
- SeaWalk Pavilion multi-purpose renovations - to include restrooms, performer lounge, and storage/hospitality space.

Mr. Forbes discussed the long-term potential for public-private partnerships by working with a private developer to potentially build a mixed-use project including a hotel, commercial space and parking structure on the Latham Plaza parking lot site.

Mr. Forbes discussed the pier parking lot hotel, restaurant, and retail development. He suggested the constructing of a hotel on the oceanfront property might be the best use of the property.

Mr. Forbes discussed the construction of a surface parking facility on CRA – owned land on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, including the 2,500 square foot facilities to store police equipment. The surface parking lot would add 90+ parking spots. He offered that in the future, the City could add additional parking spots by adding a three (3) story parking garage at that location.

Mr. Forbes proposed preparing an RFP for consulting services to begin planning for a parking garage on the Ritz lot with commercial development along 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and 1<sup>st</sup> Street. He suggested this development be divided into three phases.

- Phase I – Develop the surface lot on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North.
- Phase II – The construction of a parking garage with commercial development on the Ritz lot.
- Phase III – A hotel on the Pier parking lot.

Ms. Hoffman asked if the proposed development would be constructed within the 35' height limits. Mr. Forbes acknowledged they would be built to meet the 35' height restrictions.

Mr. Doherty stated that he supported the idea of building in phases. It would have less of an impact on residents and businesses livelihoods.

Mr. Forbes explained his goal was to build a parking lot/commercial facilities on both sides of downtown and remove the big parking lots permitting people to walk freely among them. He stated the parking garages would be staffed, and users would be charged a fee for parking per day.

Mr. Buck pointed out that this would be a good time to stage development while the market is good, and that the market is expected to be good for the next five to seven years.

Mr. Doherty stated that the key to improving Downtown was to bring in hotels. He stated that the City is currently short on hotels. He stated adding one or two hotels would be beneficial to the City.

A discussion ensued about attracting four-star and five-star hotels for the oceanfront, leasing the property instead of selling the land, and offering incentives to bring hotels to the City.

Planning & Development Director Bill Mann discussed the on-going FDOT pedestrian safety study being conducted for A1A in Jacksonville Beach.

Deputy City Manager Trish Roberts discussed the plans for adding decorative bicycle racks, way-finding signs and bollards at selected locations in Downtown. The custom bike racks would be tied to ocean life/beach themes. New bollards would be installed to delineate the roadway and pedestrian spaces to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow. She discussed the potential areas for sculptures,

murals, pod-type seating and shade structures. She stated we are preparing an RFP to hire a consultant to ensure all these features incorporate the same ocean life/beach themes.

Mr. Vogelsang requested the City hire a traffic engineer to look into potentially making 1<sup>st</sup> Street North traveling one-way down, and the same for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North - traveling one-way back.

Police Chief Dooley reviewed the shuttle program for the downtown business employees who utilize parking spaces at the City's O & M Building on Shetter Avenue.

Police Chief Dooley presented an overview of the pilot program seeking to reduce non-resident parking in residential areas where there is no off-street parking available adjacent to Downtown.

Mr. Forbes discussed scheduling more city events in non-peak seasons rather than in the summer months and the addition of more outdoor movies for next year.

Public Works Director Ty Edwards provided an update on the Gum Busters equipment and chemicals used to pressure wash the pavers in the Downtown streets to remove gum, oil stains and more.

A discussion ensued in the matter of revising the Land Development Code (LDC) to allow outdoor seating in restaurants and bar areas under 200 square feet to be permitted uses in commercial zoning districts, with no additional parking requirement.

Mr. Forbes recommended at this time, not to revise the LDC to reduce the parking requirements for restaurants by 50% in the central business district.

Mr. Vogelsang stated he would like to see a revision to the LDC allowing outdoor music for restaurants.

Following the discussion, Mr. Forbes recommended that the change to the LDC would include:

- Outdoor seating for restaurants and bar areas under 200 s.q. would be a permitted use with no additional parking requirement; and
- Outdoor seating of restaurants and bar areas exceeding 200 s.q. would require a conditional use permit, but no additional parking.

Police Chief Dooley discussed changing the alcohol ordinance to prohibit restaurants from removing or pushing tables and chairs aside to become nightclubs. He also discussed considering modifications to the regulations governing the hours of operation for the restaurants with 4-COP-SRX beverage licenses. His recommendation would be to modify the required closing time for restaurants serving alcohol from 2:00 AM to 1:30 AM. Furthermore, the proposal would require restaurants to keep their kitchens open until thirty minutes prior to closing.

Police Chief Dooley also recommended that the language in the ordinance include "any violation of state law or local ordinance, that occurs at any hour of operation, can be applied as a notice of violation

to the individual business – not only the violations that occur during the extended hours of midnight to 1:30 or 2:00 AM.” This would apply to both restaurant and bar vendors.

Mr. Forbes reported that he and Police Chief Dooley would meet with local restaurant and bar owners to get their feedback before bringing a code change back to City Council.

Mr. Thomason recommended if the changes to the alcohol ordinance were to be adopted, he would like to encourage consideration of adding civilians, possibly code enforcement officers to assist Law Enforcement in enforcing the SRX night time closures.

A discussion ensued regarding the issuing and cost of purchasing of bar licenses, expanding the number of licenses that are available for purchase, and minimizing the impact on those restaurants and bars not violating any state laws or local ordinances.

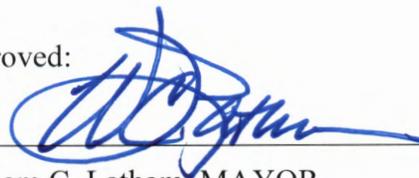
Mr. Forbes summarized the workshop by saying the following:

- The Open House on the Capital Improvement Projects will be held on October 7, 2015, from 6-8 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall
- We will proceed with opening the bids in late October for the Oceanfront Park restrooms and Seawalk Pavilion renovations
- We will proceed with developing the surface parking lot at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street North between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North
- We will prepare an RFP to hire a consultant for the parking garage and commercial development on the Ritz lot. We will also hire a consultant to prepare a concept plan for a hotel on the Pier parking lot
- [Note: An RFP will also be prepared for a consultant to ensure all the bicycle racks, wayfinding signs, etc. for the downtown fit into an ocean life/beach theme]

The Workshop adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Submitted by: Laurie D. Scott  
City Clerk

Approved:



William C. Latham, MAYOR

Date: October 19, 2015