

## **CITY COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE**

### 1. Call to Order; Welcome and Introductions.

Councilmembers Lara DeLaney and Janet Kennedy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

PRESENT: Councilmembers Lara DeLaney and Janet Kennedy.

STAFF: Philip Vince, City Manager; Dave Scola, Public Works Director; Tim Tucker, City Engineer; Don Salts, Deputy Public Works Director; Bob Cellini, Public Works Superintendent; Corey Simon, Sr. Planner; Susan Moller, City Consultant.

### 2. Downtown Matters: Making It Real.

Councilmember Janet Kennedy reviewed the goals of the meeting.

City Manager Philip Vince introduced Susan Moeller, City Consultant, who will facilitate the meeting, and introduced staff.

Susan Moeller spoke about the revitalization of downtown and the City's goal of finding concrete action steps that could be taken immediately. She reviewed the process of Downtown Matters and the feedback that had been received through that process, including new insights on the needs of downtown, priorities, strategies and possibilities. She described the aspects of downtown organization that the discussion and planning would focus on, and summarized some of the comments on the current state and user-friendliness of downtown. She also discussed some of the successful ways other cities were addressing these needs and issues, and explained the concept of flex space.

### 3. Outdoor Dining in Downtown

- ❖ Problems
- ❖ Proposal
- ❖ Policies
- ❖ Funding Options

Public Works Director Dave Scola gave a brief history of how the concept had been suggested and developed in the City. He addressed some details of how this would work in Martinez.

Senior Planner Corey Simon went over proposed policy requirements of size, permitting processes, signage, insurance, and other categories, and reviewed acceptable uses of the spaces.

### 4. Conclusion: Brokering Opportunities

City Consultant Susan Moeller reiterated the importance of public space in the community and the significant opportunity to create a more welcoming space.

Councilmember Lara DeLaney commented on the flex space and noted that very few details had been finalized yet.

## 5. Public Comments

### ❖ Discussion and Feedback

Councilmember DeLaney opened the discussion for public comment.

Paul Craig asked why the spaces would be taken down during the winter. Mr. Scola explained weather considerations and problems with the drainage system.

Harland Strickland, Downtown Martinez, thanked staff for the tours and workshops that had been put on. He suggested other possibilities to make downtown more user-friendly, such as more benches on Main Street, public restrooms, water fountains. He noted that much of the downtown business was driven by employees in downtown, not just by residents, and so it is important to consider the entire day and not just the nightlife, and make sure there are enough downtown jobs. He also stated that it was important to consider results over theory, and understand exactly what makes the 500-block succeed. He suggested leaving the 500-block alone for now and introducing the new flex spaces elsewhere on Main Street, and discussed some options for dealing with the drainage issue. He also commented that other successful cities such as Pleasant Hill and Benicia did not charge for street parking, and discussed issues related to funding and cost of parking.

*\*Councilmember Lara DeLaney left the dais at 7:00 p.m.*

Tim Tucker, City Engineer, clarified that the downtown parking budget goes to maintenance and capital improvements.

Charlene West, Char's Flower Shop, stated that she and other business owners had expected the City to put the parking meters back on the 500-block once the project was completed, and she expressed concern over lost revenue and people exceeding parking time limits. She expressed appreciation that no parking spaces had been lost during the initial experiment with outdoor dining. She stated that she would like to see the pockets on side streets, and she would like to see them also used by non-food businesses, like bookstores. She added that she did not like making the pockets seasonal, especially because of the unpredictable weather, although she understood the problem with drainage. She thanked staff for their work on this project and stated she thought the idea was wonderful.

Dick Duncan, resident, noted that the original pockets had been constructed with donations and volunteer help, and the original goal was a demonstration project for the revitalization of downtown, not outdoor dining for its own sake. He emphasized that Martinez would need to do this project in the way that was right for Martinez, and not just try to imitate other cities. He described some of the factors that made the 500-block work, such as one-way driving and diagonal parking. He suggested that other factors such as circulation needed to be addressed

before rushing forward with this project on the rest of Main Street. He expressed a concern with safety and drainage issues, and noted that he had had trouble getting help from City staff on some safety problems. He also expressed concern about the cost of making the platforms temporary because of the change it would create in the ambience of downtown. He suggested opening up the flex spaces for non-food businesses and allowing more individualization and decoration of the spaces.

Rachael Ford, resident, thanked Mr. Scola for the presentation and for acknowledging the potential for variety in the spaces. She noted that there seemed to be some rivalry between the 500-block and the rest of downtown, and that the 500-block wasn't the only part that was successful. She stated that she wanted to see opportunities to grow extended to the rest of downtown by expanding the flex spaces. She asked for clarification on the cost and financing, because if the restaurants were experiencing such an increase in revenue as Mr. Duncan had suggested, then it would be possible for the City to charge more. Otherwise, it would make sense for the City to focus on just recouping the lost parking revenue. She reiterated her support for the project and City staff's work on it.

Earl Dunivan, downtown property owner, questioned whether the option of keeping the pockets was really possible. He thought they had to come out in order to do the paving, but if flex pockets were offered for the 500 block they should be available for all.

Nancy Harrison, resident, noted that it was the people of the town that wanted the changes to Main Street 10-12 years ago, not the City. She thought that now it is a success, the pockets should be allowed to continue, at least the flexible type.

Ann Mobley, downtown property owner and business owner, did not think it fair for the downtown property owners and business owners to pay for the paving. She commented on the changes to Pacheco Blvd and how hard paving that will be as a result.

Sonja Snavelly, Noodles for Kids, noted that she thought Martinez was very European in its atmosphere. She thought outdoor seating was the one thing that had been missing, but she did not think the businesses should have to pay for the space in these economic hard times. She agreed it would bring sales tax revenue to the City.

Mike Alford said he thought the 500 block has succeeded because of the perseverance of the property owners and business owners. He stated that whatever solution is found should be one that unites the community. He also thought 2-way traffic would be best, especially since there is a vacant lot that could be bought and paved to expand the street. He was concerned that not everyone is given equal access and equal consideration. He noted that he knows many who would come rent space in Martinez if they were given the opportunity.

Debra Johnson, Main Street Martinez and the Martinez Arts Association, read a letter in support of upgrading and updating the pockets and offering them to all qualified businesses in the downtown.

Sonja Snavelly, Noodles for Kids, said she would love to see Main Street more pedestrian-friendly.

Albert Turnbaugh, downtown property owner and business owner, expressed appreciation for the opportunity for public participation. He cautioned against over-analysis, however, and urged action and as much unity as possible. He commended the 500 block for the courage to make a plan and implement it. He also urged baby steps be considered rather than seeking perfection and waiting for it.

Luigi Daberdaku, business owner, commented on his business efforts and success thus far. He also discussed the need for shady places to sit. He agreed the pocket program should be expanded beyond the 500 block.

Gay Gerlack, resident, commented on the effort made this afternoon and evening to cooperate and take action.

## 6. Adjournment

Councilmember Kennedy expressed appreciation to the public for their participation and to staff for a great presentation. She briefly discussed the need for commitment before the City can commit its funds. She adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.