

Minot Downtown Gathering Place Public Meeting

December 5th, 2017

Shannon Straight started the meeting with a brief outline of the meeting and the purpose of the meeting.

John Zakian explained the NDR award and the contract with the City of Minot and HUD. He talked about how the award covers 6 million for the downtown gathering place and that he will make sure we follow these HUD regulations and the approved action plan. He stated the site must be approximately 2 acres and it also needs to be downtown. He also said the ultimate decision will rest with the city council with input from the technical review committee. John Zakian said the public input is extremely important and we will have the questions and answers from tonight posted on the city website for the public's view in the next week. He explained that this meeting was to choose a site and after a site was chosen, the public would have a chance to provide input on design.

Robert Davis then went into his presentation on how the 3 sites were chosen and the criteria and scoring points the technical review committee will follow.

John Zakian said sometime tomorrow there will be a public survey open for voting on the city website. He then went into how the voting will work tonight; place the blue card in the box that corresponds with the property where you would like the gathering place. He then went into details how the scoring will work. He stated this is a HUD requirement and that the City wants this as neutral as possible. He said all the criteria Robert Davis showed are all the criteria that HUD required.

Question and Answer

Q: Will the slides be on the website?

A: John Zakian said yes.

Q: Has the City Council had their doubts on any of the properties?

A: John Zakian said there are different aspects of each site. Each site has its positives and negatives.

Q: Who owns each of these properties?

A: John Zakian briefly went into the ownership of the properties. Trinity owns site 1, there are multiple owners on site 2, and site 3 is owned by one person

Q: Is Trinity donating a lot?

A: John Zakian stated we do not know this information yet.

Q: Are these all the same size, and are they drawn to different scales?

A: John Zakian said these are not to scale drawings, they are draft renderings. He said these are just visions and possibilities. Robert Davis said they were just drawn at different times. John Zakian also said they are all approximately the same number of acres.

Q: Which portion of Site 2 is the actual gathering place?

A: John Zakian stated the property lines that we would want to acquire. Robert also pointed to the areas on the map.

Q: Who makes up the technical review committee?

A: John Zakian listed the committee members: Shannon Straight-Alderman, Robert Davis-Planning Director, John Zakian- Disaster Grant Manager, Tom Berry-City Manager, Lance Myer-City Engineer, Chris Owen-Federal Compliance Officer, Melissa Ziegler-HUD Compliance, Leslie Bean-HUD Compliance, One representative of Parks District, One representative of Downtown Business Association

Q: Do any of these have any specific environmental issues?

A: John Zakian said we won't know until a site is selected and an environmental assessment is completed.

Q: On sites 2 and 3 what is the proximity to the rail road tracks, in case of derailment?

A: John Zakian stated he isn't sure of the exact proximity but there is an idea to do an iron gate or something similar.

Q: What speed limit does the train go through these neighborhoods?

A: Some people in the audience stated 15mph. The city will confirm the speed limit.

Q: Do you have enough money to acquire?

A: Shannon stated we reached out to each property owner to make sure that the City can acquire this property and according to the assessed value, we have enough money to acquire and make improvements.

Q: Is there a reason why the rendering for site 2 is different and has been shown around town differently?

A: John Zakian said you may have seen a rendering not done by the City.

Q: What is the goal of the amount of people we want at events and how many people to fit into this place?

A: John Zakian said it is not quantified this way in the action plan (stated the action plan is also on the website). He said it is envisioned as a resilient location that can really develop a sense of community for the City of Minot. In previous meetings it was discovered that people would like to see farmers markets, concert venue, fountain, and even craft fairs at this location. There are no specifics to be the primary draw. It is also envisioned to be a year-round place and create more foot traffic for the businesses downtown. Shannon said the concept renderings are just a starting point.

Q: What are the building restrictions? This looks like a park that we already have a lot of? Looks like a repeat.

A: John Zakian stated this idea goes back to the action plan that we have with HUD and the many public meetings that were held prior to submitting the application.

Q: Historical development - is that considered a positive or negative?

A: John Zakian said as part of overall assessment we must do a deep dive into historic review. A site may have historic designation, or we can look at a site that can also be improved with this investment.

Q: Someone stated they are not a fan of Site 1 because of the business opportunity.

A: John Zakian said this is why we have discussions and public meetings. He also said we have done small cost assessments and these 3 sites have been chosen because they seem to have low demolition and relocation costs; although we won't know for sure until we do a deeper dive. Once we pick a site, the first thing we have to do is an environmental assessment. Once it is done then we can start the process of design/appraisals/ and the detailed process of URA. We are required to follow all URA rules.

Q: Do you have a spokesperson for each site, that we can go to with specific questions?

A: John Zakian said no but if the public wants to do this we can. The City must be neutral.

Q: Hasn't it already been decided and funded; we just have to pick which one we'd like to see?

A: John Zakian said yes. We have to stick to the action plan since these funds were awarded through a competition and it was approved by HUD

Q: Someone made the statement that you are just trying to get us to pick the spot we like most and later we can provide input on the what goes into the place.

A: John Zakian said yes.

Q: Can you tell us of the 3 sites which ones of these are paying the most property tax income and the least?

A: Chuck Barry gave an estimated guess that site number 3 pays the most and Trinity pays the least.

Q: What is the right of way along the railroad; is it 50 ft.?

A: Shannon Straight said we can find out this information.

Q: Is site 3 considered flood elevation and what might happen if it floods?

A: All of these sites are outside of the flood inundation area.

Q: How are the public supposed to decide if we don't know anything about these sites?

A: John Zakian said this is whatever site you personally prefer. We want as much public input as possible; this is your opinion on which site you like.

Q: Will there be more input on what the property will look like? How could this information be put out to the public?

A: John Zakian said yes this meeting is just to choose the place; the design will come after. Shannon said we appreciate the input.

Q: When it comes down to the finished product, who pays for the maintenance?

A: John Zakian stated what is envisioned is that we will begin to have discussions with the park district.

Q: Can you tell us what will happen at the meeting on the 18th?

A: This presentation and question and answer will be same thing on the 18th. We want to reach more people by having a meeting on 2 different nights.

Q: For the technical review committee will it be posted or public as well?

A: John Zakian said it will be on the website and we can set it up to be public.

Q: Is site 3 in the 500 year flood plain?

A: John Zakian stated that HUD does not require public facilities to be outside a 500 year flood plain. The city focus is that all projects including the Gathering Place site be outside the FEMA identified flood inundation area which is the new draft FEMA 100 year flood plain map with the reason being that federal flood insurance requirements apply to being within the 100 year flood plain.

Q: For HUD Rules can we leverage a public private partnership?

A: After a site is acquired, we can discuss the possibility of a partnership.

Q: Site 1 has the bus stops? Will those be considered in each site? Is this not part of the HUD plan?

A: Robert Davis said it is possible. Shannon Straight stated that it is just in the initial rendering that was completed when there was a possibility that a bus stop would be on site 1. A follow up suggestion from the audience was to remove it from the drawing.