

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
(Joint Meeting with the Austin Port Authority)
November 22, 2005
City Hall Council Chambers
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Rietz, Council Member-at-Large Christopherson, Council Members Hecimovich (also on Port Authority), Nordin, Dick Pacholl, Scott Pacholl, Baker, and McAlister (also on Port Authority)

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Hurm, City Administrator and Port Authority Executive Director. Craig Hoium, Community Development Director.

ALSO PRESENT: Port Authority Members Larry Maus, Jerry Morfeld, Georgette Hinkle. From the Austin Main Street Project: Kate Jordal, Cheryl Corey, Dick Nordin, Craig Byram, Dick Boerger, Belita Schindler, Mark Nagle, C.J. Riley. Other participants of the Main Street Project were also present in the audience. Jon Erichson joined the meeting at the time of the Administrative Report to discuss a sales tax option for flood issues.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

1. Main Street Project presentation – Joint meeting with the Port Authority. City Administrator Hurm introduced Organization and Finance Committee Co-chair Craig Byram who acted as facilitator for the Austin Main Street Project presentation.

Mr. Byram introduced Belita Schindler, who summarized the activities of the Design Committee to date.

Hal Henderson from HGA. Architects made a presentation regarding a vision for a revitalized downtown. He showed buildings as they are now and how they could be under a new vision. He suggested that a new, vibrant area could be south of the Paramount Theatre with green space and new areas for retail and entertainment.

Mark Nagle briefly summarized the activities of an ad hoc committee, which is defining 'Vibrant Mass'. This concept will bring vibrancy back to the downtown by emphasizing retail, housing, entertainment and service sectors.

Dick Nordin brought those present up-to-date on the activities of the Business Development Committee. He explained the importance of supporting businesses

downtown. The committee has been gathering information and undertaking surveys of businesses and building owners. A session is planned in January on assisting small businesses in competing with the large box stores.

Cheryl Corey, co-chair of the Promotions Committee, summarized their work to-date. She emphasized the importance of activities such as the Austin Chili Challenge, which was very successful for a first time. The committee will be working with the new professional theater group to promote the downtown.

Craig Byram then expressed the importance of each committee. The Design Committee must bring a vision of a new downtown to life. The Vibrant Mass ad hoc committee will identify the types of businesses and services that will be needed to go beyond physical attractiveness to make downtown a destination. The Business Development Committee will work with businesses to help them be successful and grow. The Promotions Committee will help to make downtown a fun place in which to work, live and shop.

Mr. Byram then explained the process that will be involved for those building owners who wish to participate in the Main Street Project. First, they will work with staff to fill out a simple Main Street Project application. Second, the project committee will review the request and make recommendations on design and funding. Third, representatives of each of the committees will do a walk-through of the building, offering assistance to the businesses. Fourth, the staff will then report on the results of the walk-through, and the Design Committee will finalize details of improvements with the building owner. Fifth, the Finance Committee will review all the materials and final details of the financial package will be worked out with the building owner and then taken to the appropriate bodies, such as the Port Authority, for approval. The final step is to complete appropriate agreements and to begin the project. Mr. Byram then briefly described the various financial tools that the committees will utilize in putting together financial packages. Finally, Mr. Byram briefly described a proposed financial plan for the Austin Main Street Project, Inc.

Council Member McAlister thanked those who gave presentations for putting a vision in front of them. Mayor Rietz thanked them for all their hard work. Following further discussion, questions and answers, Council Member Hecimovich moved, seconded by Council Member McAlister to recommend that the City Council transfer the remaining \$250,000 in designated Capital Funds for 2005 to the Port Authority for the Main Street Project activities. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Administrative Report. City Engineer Jon Erichson joined the Council for a discussion on flood mitigation and the potential use of the half-cent sales tax for that purpose. He indicated that Representative Jeanne Poppe is planning a public forum on requests for a half-cent sales tax on December 8 at the Ruby Rupner Auditorium at the Nature Center. He presented a two-page report that will be part of the Capital Improvement Program review at the next work session. It identifies local sales tax proceeds as a potential funding source for North Main Street improvements. Specific

projects or good cost estimates are not available at this time, but he estimated the total need to be at \$2.5 million for 2006 and 2007. In 2008 and 2009, he identified an additional \$1.5M in local sales tax proceeds for potential projects implementing a mitigation plan for Turtle Creek. In 2010, \$300,000 is estimated of potential local sales tax revenues for construction of a berm along the west side of East Side Lake. These are very preliminary cost estimates at this time.

Before participating in the planned public information meeting, staff feels it is important to get the consensus of the Mayor and Council on the use of a sales tax for flood mitigation purposes as identified in the Capital Improvement Program. It was the unanimous consensus of Mayor and Council to proceed as laid out in the tentative finance plan with the request for the use of sales tax revenues for flood mitigation.

Council Member Hecimovich indicated that flood mitigation is a top priority issue. Council Member Dick Pacholl said that in talking with people, he feels they would not be opposed to using sales tax revenue for flood mitigation if there is a time limit to the tax.

3. The date for the council retreat will be discussed at the next work session.
4. July 3, 2006 council meeting. One suggestion made regarding having a council meeting during a very busy day of July 3rd is to have the meeting at the regular time and immediately adjourn it to a date certain. This issue will be discussed further at a later date.

There being no further business, Council Member Hecimovich moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Nordin. Motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
