

# Council Questions/Comments and Staff Responses Report for December 9, 2013

*as of December 9, 2013 at 6:59 am*

## CONSENT AGENDA:

**Alderman:** Rob Fazzini

**Item 7E:** Ratification of Contract with Police Benevolent Labor Committee – Telecommunicators

### **Question/Comment:**

1. Why is “other than sick leave” eligible for Shift Trading?
  - a. **Staff Response:** 1. Telecommunicators are not allowed to use all other forms of benefit time "other than sick leave" to cover a shift trade. The language in Section 8.6 clarifies that "because of the nature of the services provided by Telecommunicators, the City must ensure adequate coverage at all times". Other forms of benefit time is planned and/or prescheduled. This is not generally the case with sick leave. Shift Trades are an agreement between two TCMs to work each others' shifts. Planned and/or prescheduled leave time should not be taken into consideration. 2. This is the language as it appeared in the Tentative Agreement and was signed off on and ratified by the Union.
2. Under Tuition Reimbursement should the word “department” be replaced by the word “city”?
  - a. **Staff Response:** This is the language as it appeared in the Tentative Agreement and was signed off on and ratified by the Union.

## REGULAR AGENDA

**Alderwoman:** Judy Stearns

**Item 8B:** Solid Waste Program and Text Amendment to Chapter 21. Refuse.

### **Questions/Comment:**

1. The plan for the city pickup location south of the library is critically important and needs to be defined as a part of this plan. Many, many citizens are extremely concerned about this.
  - a. **Staff Response:** The current proposal does not recommend changing the current operations of the City’s drop-off program.
2. The small apartment buildings scattered throughout the older neighborhoods will pay at least double and often 3 or 4 times what their neighbors pays for the EXACT SAME AMOUNT (as defined by the cost per receptacle). Whether you think this is fair or not, you must share this reality. An in order to have recycle pickup, it appears they MUST be in the City program. This is an arbitrary charge just because they have more than one “family” and has nothing to do with the amount of their garbage. The double or triple, quadruple, etc. charge is independent of whether they have one container or not. And since they are paying for more than one container, should they not be able to get that number of containers? What if you have a rooming house full of roommates? Such as a house for several college students? Will they be charged PER STUDENT?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Apartment Buildings are currently charged per unit. The Modified Proposal does not seek to amend current policy regulating apartment buildings.

**Alderman:** Rob Fazzini

**Item 8B:** Solid Waste Program and Text Amendment to Chapter 21. Refuse.

### **Questions/Comment:**

1. Should we eliminate the \$3 sticker for additional bags because it defeats the purpose of the one drive automated truck concept?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Staff would recommend no.
2. Should we consider the Bulk Waste recommendation weekly as staff recommends?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Staff would recommend yes.
3. Is there an additional fee for cart size changes, if the cart size change is a decrease in the cart size?
  - a. **Staff Response:** The proposal only recommends a charge for carts size increases, not cart size decreases.

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4. Where is there no mention of the fate of the dump site to the south of the Library?
  - a. **Staff Response:** None.

**Alderman:** David Sage

**Item 8B:** Solid Waste Program and Text Amendment to Chapter 21. Refuse.

**Question/Comment:** When we recently talked about this during a Council meeting, I stressed a strong desire to for a phased-in fee increase. I have some concerns that the latest proposal does not include a phased-in structure.

**Staff Response:** The latest proposal developed by the Mayor and several Aldermen is similar to the so-called "Fast Transition" scenario contained in the Raftelis report dated October 8, 2013.

**Alderman:** Rob Fazzini

**Item 8C:** Downtown Bloomington Strategy

**Question/Comment:**

1. On page 22 should there be more emphasis on Murals throughout downtown and a Visitors Center in the Museum of History primarily to attract visitors and secondarily for our citizens to enjoy?
  - a. **Staff Responses:** City Staff was directed to look at the three issues that were the most controversial in the draft plan, i.e. Form Based Code, BID (Business Improvement District) and the Couplets. The Downtown Streetscape Plan that was presented to City Council in September will incorporate a proposed "Mural" program within the plan, but the Visitor's Center at the Museum of History was not addressed. Staff will carry out the Council's policy direction regarding this item.
2. On page 60 should there be more emphasis on Murals (again) and Outdoor Cafes for our citizens to enjoy the atmosphere and to help attract visitors?
  - a. **Staff Responses:** See answer above.

**Aldermen:** David Sage and Jennifer McDade

**Item 8C:** Downtown Bloomington Strategy

**Questions/Comment:** Today, I received an email with concerns about the proposed strategy. I've attached a section of this email. Referenced will be the Downtown Strategy, Draft February 24, 2010.

1. As time does not allow a complete review of the entire document, first please consider Part III, Zoning & Land Use Recommendations.
2. Page 36, illustrations, columns 1 & 2 are exactly the same.
3. Page 37, ditto, illustrations and language are the same.
4. Page 38, pictures and charts are the same.
5. Exception at point (7) opportunities to help (rehabilitate and preserve changed to stabilize).
6. Added to point (7) if the district loses a critical mass of properties to demolition, the City should consider appropriate new uses for this area.
7. Page 39, column 1 is the same
8. Page 39, column 2 deletes last section titled Main Street Corridor Form Based Code Overlay. However the preceding section titled GAP Neighborhood form-Based Code overlay that was in the earlier draft not reads GAP Neighborhood Code Overlay. The language is exactly the same. More on this coming.
9. Page 40, illustration and columns 1 & 2, are the same.
10. Page 41, columns 1 & 2, are the same. Same picture. Please note the description at section 2, paragraph 2. This is a description of the FBC type buildings.
11. Page 42, regarding the Warehouse District notes some changes but are of little value to my argument, either pro or con.
12. Page 43, there are no changes.

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13. Page 65, skip to Part VI, Implementation Strategy, see the chart to the right. Physical environment Goals and Actions, “Adopt a zoning code overlay that captures the scale and character of historic Downtown buildings and provides appropriate parameters for new development.” Reference to page 38 which as noted earlier, hasn’t changed in records to the earlier Draft. Noting this, one must wonder what the mentioned zoning code overlay refers to because any particular name or description of this overlay has been avoided.
14. At page 10. Part I, Project Overview, Goals and Objectives, 2. Create a zoning code overlay for Downtown to preserve and replicate desired physical characteristics. (Same language both Drafts.)
15. Page 10, column, 3, Land Use and Development, Objective 2., Utilize a mixed-use building type for the majority of the commercial core of Downtown with retail or office space on the ground floor and office or residential space on the upper floors. (Same language, both Drafts)
16. Page 10, column 3, Urban Design and Aesthetics. Objectives, 2., Create a zoning code overlay for downtown to preserve and replicate desired physical characteristics. (Same language both Drafts.)
17. Page 54, Part V, Transportation Component, middle column, Bicycle Facilities, notes, “Sharrows are the preferred facility type for bicyclists on thoroughfares with posted speeds of 20 mph and 30 mph,,,” noting earlier in the section, “All of the street sections to follow include the use of shared lane markings or sharrows,,, to facilitate greater bicycle use.” This confirms my suspicion that a change to the couplet area is forth coming although not specifically mentioned on this page.

In summary, Dave, what I wish to point out is that much of the language is the same from one Draft to the other. The concepts are the same. The illustrations, pictures, graphs, are the same Although I will admit that I have not had the time to examine the entirety of these two Drafts, most of what I have examined is the same. In relation to the ideology of the form based code being prevalent to this new draft the language is virtually the same concept of the previous proposed zoning changes referred to as form based code. Removing words, form – based - - code has not and will not change the intent. Ask yourself this very important question, “If the form based overlay has been stricken, then what zoning code overlay are they talking about?”

**Mayor Renner’s Response:** The pictures reflect an attempt to represent the types of things people were expressing as part of their vision for downtown (the residents, owners and other stake holders who were the ones at the core of this process). The concepts are similar because that’s what came out of the sessions (This was the essence of a ‘bottom up’ plan). We can, of course, pursue those goals in a variety of ways (and form based code is not advocated). Although, on the other hand, there are some downtown supporters who are not terribly happy that we have removed the form-based code language. They feel we are caving in to a small minority that won’t support the plan anyway. The GAP language was necessary because the GAP neighborhood (immediately adjacent to downtown) embraced and adopted Form Based Code to protect and revitalize their neighborhood. That’s what’s important to note in our downtown plan as our revitalization efforts proceed. The Downtown Strategy Plan was posted on the City’s Website on November 27, 2013.

**Aldermen:** David Sage and Jennifer McDade

**Item 8C:** Downtown Bloomington Strategy

**Questions/Comment:** How long was the Downtown Strategy available on the website for public review? Has there been sufficient time for interested parties to review and offer feedback?

**Staff Response:** It was posted on the City’s website on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Alderman:** Rob Fazzini

**Item 8D:** Downtown Hotel Feasibility Study

**Question/Comment:**

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1. Should there not be mention of the potential sales tax and property tax that would be generated by a hotel?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Economic impact and fiscal analyses would be conducted in Phase II of a hotel study, if further evaluation is deemed appropriate and an applicable contract is approved.
2. Also, should there not be information from the CVB on what the hotel would generate in the form of tourism with figures similar to what is provided for what the Coliseum generates?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Economic impact and fiscal analyses would be conducted in Phase II of a hotel study, if further evaluation is deemed appropriate and an applicable contract is approved.

**Aldерwoman:** Judy Stearns

**Item 8D:** Downtown Hotel Feasibility Study

**Question/Comment:**

1. Will the study look at whether a Downtown hotel would pull business from other hotels, and if so, what kind of statistics will we see?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Yes. The study will provide an overview of current market availability. Response gathered by staff from consultant: Supply Impact – HVS will model the impact of the proposed new hotel on the local competitive set of existing hotels. The effect will be seen in aggregate in our report tables that show how the overall market’s occupancy will be expected to perform before and after the new supply opens. If you want to see our estimates of how the subject hotel would affect individual hotels in the market, then we actually do analyze this in our models and could discuss it verbally. But we usually do not show this in our reports, for numerous reasons.
2. Looking at other cities that studied possible downtown hotels near large venues, how many studies funded by cities can we find that did NOT recommend a hotel?
  - a. **Staff Response:** Response gathered by staff from consultant: “No” Recommendation – Our clients typically retain us to analyze the market-anticipated performance of a hotel rather than to recommend “for” or “against” a hotel. So, we are rarely in an advocacy role one way or the other. Typically, we will show the scenario that we believe best represents market thinking of active hotel investors and then we can help answer questions about what levels of investment returns such a scenario would imply. The investment community can then make their own decisions about (a) whether they agree with our projections and (b) whether the implied returns on investment are high enough to attract their funding sources.
3. Will there be an analysis of Bloomington-Normal’s convention business in the past few years, also a look at how many conventions or meetings have been held in Normal since the Marriott was built?
  - a. **Staff Response:** If a contract is approved, these factors will be taken into consideration. Response gathered by staff from consultant: Convention Business – Yes, we would typically include a discussion of historical trends and future anticipated booking trends, based on information provided by local experts. Our proposed scope of work does not specifically include developing our own projections of convention demand, which can be a complex exercise. However, we have these capabilities and would be happy to discuss them, as you deem appropriate.

Prepared by: Barbara J. Adkins, Deputy City Manager