



Agenda

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STUDY SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Thursday, April 26, 2007

7:00 pm

City Council Chambers, City Hall

200 Lincoln Avenue

- 1) CALL TO ORDER
- 2) ROLL CALL
- 3) APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- 4) STUDY SESSION – *DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN*
 - a) Presentation/Overview (Michael Trujillo, Chair, Steering Committee)
 - b) Discussion
- 5) ADJOURN

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SANTA FE GOVERNING BODY STUDY SESSION
April 26, 2007

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**MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION
OF THE GOVERNING BODY
City Council Chambers
Santa Fe, New Mexico
April 26, 2007**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A Study Session of the Governing Body of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico, was called to order by Mayor David Coss, on April 26, 2007, at approximately 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 200 Lincoln Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll Call indicated the presence of a quorum, as follows:

Members Present

Mayor David Coss
Councilor Miguel Chavez, Mayor Pro-Tem
Councilor Patti J. Bushee
Councilor Christopher Calvert
Councilor Carmichael A. Dominguez
Councilor Karen Heldmeyer
Councilor Rebecca Wurzburger

Members Excused

Councilor Matthew E. Ortiz
Councilor Ronald S. Trujillo

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Councilor Wurzburger moved, seconded by Councilor Calvert, to approve the Agenda as published.

VOTE: The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

4. STUDY SESSION – DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

A copy of "Santa Fe Downtown Vision Plan," is incorporated herewith to these minutes as Exhibit "1."

A copy of a letter dated April 25, 2007, to Mayor Coss and City Councilors, from Lois Snyderman, Downtown Vision Plan Steering Committee, is incorporated herewith to these minutes as Exhibit "2."

A copy of "Comments on the Santa Fe Downtown Vision Plan," dated March 18, 2007, from Lois Snyderman, Downtown Vision Plan Steering Committee, is incorporated herewith to these minutes as Exhibit "3."

A copy of a letter dated April 25, 2007, to Mayor David Coss and City Councilors, from Marilyn Bane, President, the Old Santa Fe Association, is incorporated herewith to these minutes as Exhibit "4."

a) Presentation/Overview (Michael Trujillo, Chair Steering Committee)

Reed Liming, Planning Division Director, presented information via power point. [Exhibit "1"].

Michael Trujillo, Chair, Steering Committee, thanked the members of the Committee for their efforts to make this happen. Although the Committee didn't always agree on everything, they always had a 2/3 majority vote when they voted.

Mr. Trujillo spoke about the Vision Plan and the way it was developed by the Committee, saying the most important thing was the preservation of Santa Fe for our children and our children's children. The Committee discussed many options, such as a streetcar which wasn't well accepted. Mr. Trujillo said the Committee listened to and considered all of the options.

Mr. Trujillo said the Committee held hearings all over town, holding three on the south side, in an effort to get maximum input from all of the people of Santa Fe. He said it is important not to lose our downtown. He commented that there are 16 different subdistricts downtown, and the Committee believes these should be reduced to 3-4 – a capital district, a cathedral district and a historic district. He wants a downtown for the people of Santa Fe as well as for visitors to Santa Fe.

Mr. Trujillo said the Committee believes it is important to provide parking downtown in order to attract people downtown. He complimented the City on its park/shuttle arrangement for its employees, noting that concept can be used for access/parking in the downtown area.

Mr. Trujillo said the Committee emphasized green building, solar, and ideas such as electric bollards in the street which could be lowered for emergency vehicles into downtown. He said there was great deal of discussion as to whether to close downtown to vehicle traffic, noting this is a policy decision to be made by the City Council. He said historians told them to close downtown would be going against history and tradition.

Mr. Trujillo said the Committee doesn't want this Plan to sit on the shelf, and urged the Council to include its ideas, smooth the rough edges and pick things from it for immediate implementation – development of the river, how to get local serving retail. He asked the Council to look at this with an open mind. It is a visionary plan.

Mr. Trujillo thanked staff for their input and assistance in developing the Vision Plan.

b) Discussion

Councilor Chavez spoke about the presentation, and thanked the staff and Committee for their work. He specifically commented on the following portions.

Expand sidewalks and narrow streets. He said this appears to be a contradiction, and said this could be difficult, especially in the downtown area where we have to work with SHPO.

Connections between areas, such as from the Railyard to the capital. The City has done some work in this area with the Wayfinder Program, and invested \$1.2 million in the River Trail to provide safe pedestrian access from the Railyard to downtown.

Arts & Culture. He said the City is doing a lot in this area, noting he is very interested in an indoor arts and culture facility of some kind. He said that concept has been incorporated into the new Civic Center, so there will be 2,500 sq. ft. for that purpose to be used in addition to the outdoor, public space we are using now. It is a question of how we promote and manage this space for local arts and culture.

Housing. He said he remembers visiting families living in the downtown area with his parents. He said downtown housing will be a tight fit, and probably won't be on the ground floor.

Historic Character. With regard to the suggestion to conduct a density study to guide and limit future development, he said this may be a contradiction because we are encouraging more expanded uses in the downtown area which may not be there now. He believes this is where there will be the most change, in infill, in increased height and density. He said we shouldn't smother the one story buildings with taller ones, and we need to be very careful in this development. He said if we don't get the height and the density correct, nothing else will matter, and the integrity of the plan will be jeopardized.

Councilor Chavez said it is better to have a plan, than not to have a plan. He said it is difficult to influence the market with just ordinances, pointing out that after ten years in promoting affordable housing, 50% of City employees still live out of Santa Fe. He believes the Plan will help to balance the market needs with the community needs and interests.

Mr. Trujillo said the Committee spent one meeting on just height, and the Committee didn't want to give an opportunity for people to knock down a one story structure and build a three-story building. They wanted to ensure there were a variety of heights which give Santa Fe its character. Mr. Trujillo said he also visited friends who lived downtown as a child. He said there are many other studies which are happening which were brought to the attention of the Committee.

Lois Snyderman, Member, Downtown Vision Plan Steering Committee, entered her comments on the proposed plan, and her prepared statement into the record. [Exhibits "2" and "3."

Ms. Snyderman read her prepared statement into the record. Please see Exhibit "3" for specifics of her statement for the record. Ms. Snyderman said she didn't sign onto the

proposed Plan which she believes is insensitive to the character and appearance of historic downtown Santa Fe. She spoke about the shortcomings, urging the Council to reject the plan and develop a new plan which is more responsive to local needs and concerns and issues.

Marilyn Bane, President, The Old Santa Fe Association, entered a letter into the record. [Exhibit "4"]. She thanked the Steering Committee for its work on behalf of the Association. Ms. Bane gave a synopsis of the letter saying that the Association doesn't agree with everything in the plan. The one overriding concern is that it isn't a preservation plan. Reading from the letter, she said, "We hope you concur that further efforts are needed, and we offer the Old Santa Fe Association's resources toward furthering those efforts."

Comments and Questions from the Governing Body

Councilor Wurzburger thanked the Committee and staff for their hard work on the Vision Plan, and respects the work which went into the Plan.

Councilor Wurzburger reflected on her days of teaching Long Range Planning at USC. She taught a course which took the steps in the planning process one by one. The most important step in that process was the implementation. She believes implementation does not mean taking the plan, plugging it in and going forward. Implementation is taking the "ideas and images" to shape the future. The Plan has good ideas, some not so good ideas, and from some people's perspective, some bad ideas.

Councilor Wurzburger said she believes it is important for the Governing Body to create a process to move forward, so we can evaluate these ideas, vote on the implementation strategy in the context of looking at the ideas and deciding which are the most important in terms of where we want to start. From her personal perspective, she likes the goal of getting people back downtown to make downtown a place where it is peopled again with people who live in Santa Fe, and not necessarily to make it a place like it used to be when we were young. And these people are brought back because of what we are creating in terms of opportunities for people to come back downtown, and what we are creating is the challenge of how we bring people downtown.

Councilor Wurzburger said she probably would start with the issue of parking and how to address that so we can get people downtown, and how to deal with the connectivity issue between downtown and the Railyard and other places.

Councilor Wurzburger said, rather than saying we need a new plan, or to start over, or we need a study, she would like to pull together the appropriate group of citizens to help us decide how to move forward.

Councilor Heldmeyer gave an overview of the history of the plan. The consultants who were hired to do the Plan think that Santa Fe should be a life style center to compete with other life style centers which they felt would be coming into town, and that everything in Portland is "just ducky." Their knowledge of our historic preservation seemed to consist of the fact that one of the principals had done his dissertation on the law of the Indies. Although admirable, it didn't

seem this was the appropriate set of backgrounds which was wanted for people to do a plan for downtown Santa Fe which is almost 400 years old.

Councilor Heldmeyer said the consultants "talked a good line," duped a lot of people including some of the local preservationists who told us not to worry, that the consultants would be hiring local consultants and those people will keep the consultants in line. The first thing the consultants did was to fire their architectural historian because she told them "you just don't understand." She said luckily there were public meetings, and thanked the Committee for holding the southside meetings. The word was the same from people in all parts of town, which is that "we want to preserve what is left of historic downtown Santa Fe." This is what we heard from the people. Unfortunately, the consultants never heard it, and the Committee was left with the task of taking a plan which really wasn't focused on preservation, and had an emphasis on development – how development would occur, not what is important about Santa Fe and what we want to preserve.

Councilor Heldmeyer said at the meetings, people talked about local serving retail and local serving housing, but said they don't think this is possible any more because land is too expensive and it won't happen, and it will just be a front for expensive vacation rentals or second and third homes or expensive shops. People liked the idea, but were worried about execution. She pointed to the experience at the Railyard to get local serving uses. She said this is especially hard with privately owned land, unless the City gets serious about requiring people to provide these things. She said although it can be done on City-owned land, there isn't much City-owned land which can be used for these purposes.

Councilor Heldmeyer said the proposed plan talks about homogenization, making the downtown "simpler," or only three districts – making the downtown look alike. She said the reasons for the many subdistricts relates to the unique characteristics of each and every block of downtown, citing the hard work in this regard by the League of Women Voters. She said the idea of having the many subdistricts was to maintain not just a unique characteristic, but the specific characteristic, the specific diversity of every block downtown. This plan says it's too complicated, it's too hard, let's not do it.

Councilor Heldmeyer said, beyond that, what you have seen from this Council is allowing those districts. The Council has allowed a redevelopment district in downtown in order to have a building which was higher, denser, closer to the street – all the things everybody says they don't like, but it's coming. She noted there may be others coming.

Councilor Heldmeyer said we have in downtown Santa Fe what other cities would "kill for," and people don't really understand that. We have something real, authentic and unique, and there are those who would push it away because it's getting in the way of progress. She heard a quote, "change is uncomfortable," but so is preservation, and you have to fight for preservation. It isn't just going to happen, and you have to fight every step of the way. Preservation for our downtown means both preservation of the existing historic fabric, but it also means maintaining the size, mass and scale which are what draws people to Santa Fe. She said, "They don't come to look at the First Interstate Building." If we don't take care, we will have a bunch of "First Interstate buildings."

Councilor Heldmeyer said Councilor Chavez asked if it is better to have a plan. She said it depends on the plan. She expressed appreciation of what the Committee has done in

taking some of the “curse” off some of the things which were in the Plan. However, she believes there needs to be more work and more thought about what the people from Santa Fe like and not what the people from Portland like, but what is unique and important about Santa Fe. Until this is in the plan, in more detail than it is now, she doesn’t believe the Plan will work.

Councilor Dominguez thanked the Committee and staff for its hard work, and for the Old Santa Fe Association’s involvement in this, and for being willing to take on this task. He said this is an important step forward. He noted during his 35 years of life in Santa Fe, the First Interstate Building has always been there. He thanked the Committee for taking the discussion to the south side and trying to get input from Santa Feans now living on the south side.

Councilor Dominguez said this is close to his idea of a Vision Plan which is to ask the “what if” questions – what if we do this or that, why can’t we think about this or that – and to him, this is what a vision plan is about. He said we talk about preserving the character of downtown, but he would like more discussion about preserving what Santa Fe really is. He said to him, downtown isn’t the size or color of the buildings, it’s what’s in the heart. He said few in this room can talk about this. He said when he speaks about preservation, it is what is in the heart. He said the way things look, massing and sizing is important.

Councilor Dominguez said local serving retail is great, how to get people and locally owned businesses downtown. We need to have these discussions. He said he remembers visiting his grandparents on Otero, and his parents lived in Bellamah. He said it would be nice to have people living downtown. We need to have this discussion. Parking has been an issue since he was a child, and will always be an issue.

Councilor Dominguez said he is troubled that many times the City Council will ask the public to participate in something, but then there are a few Councilors that don’t agree with what has come out of this public process. However, we thank the public for all of its hard work, but then say we are going to do something different, and we have the votes to go in a different direction. He said this is unfair to the public. He said this is supposed to be a public process with public participation, and getting the ideas and “what ifs,” and not disregarding what people have said, and to help further the discussions. He said, as Councilor Wurzbarger said, the tricky part is implementation – implementing everybody’s ideas and getting to the next step so that we can have the community we all love and envision. He is excited about the next step.

Councilor Chavez said the issue of the municipal building is important. He asked if the Committee or the public addressed this issue at all. He said we are building a new civic center to replace the old gymnasium, but we are still in the old school building. If we decide to keep the core of our City business downtown, we need to decide how we will do that in the future.

Mr. Trujillo said there was discussion about moving City Hall to the post office building, as well as why the Courts don’t move near the penitentiary. However, the Judges don’t want to move.

Mayor Coss thanked the Committee for its work. He said much of the implementation will be up to the Governing Body in continuing to work with the community on these things. He agrees with much of what Councilor Heldmeyer said, and believes it is hard to overemphasize the historic preservation, but doesn’t believe we have enough tools right now. He said we need to do the study of historic heights as recommended, as quickly as possible. He agrees with

Councilor Heldmeyer that we need more than 3-4 subdistricts downtown. He agrees with Councilor Chavez with regard to the issue of density.

Mayor Coss would like to see implementation of the peripheral shuttles and other transportation issues. He agrees that the number one reason locals don't come downtown is that they can't find parking, and we need to work on that. He said pedestrian access and accessibility is a place to look at implementation. He is intrigued about what might be done with public spaces, including the Sandoval Garage, but commented that public space is limited. He said there are many buildings which have damaged the historic downtown, including the First Interstate Building, and when those wear out we might think about something else there.

Mayor Coss said there are places to start to implement things which we are doing. This includes the importance of working on the cathedral project which will make a giant difference in how downtown looks and is preserved.

Mr. Trujillo observed that we are talking about the same things, we're just saying it differently. He said no one on the Committee wants a concrete jungle on the Santa Fe River, "because that ain't gonna ever happen." He noted the first plan included an amphitheater outside on DeVargas about which the Committee was shocked. He said we are talking about cleaning up the trails so people can ride and walk, but never a concrete jungle.

Mr. Trujillo commended Councilor Heldmeyer, agreeing that change is hard and preservation is just as hard. This Committee said over and over that preservation is important. He said this is a Vision Plan and not an implementation plan. They didn't have enough time to do that.

Mr. Trujillo said never once did the Committee think its task was too hard or too much work. He reiterated that change and preservation are difficult. He said Councilor Dominguez was correct in that this is a Vision Plan and just ideas and thoughts. He said the people spoke loud and clear.

5. ADJOURN

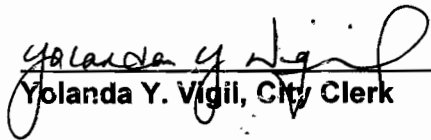
The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Approved by:

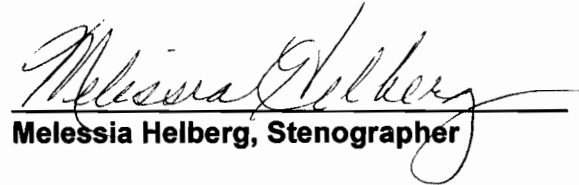


Mayor David Coss

ATTESTED TO:


Yolanda Y. Vigil, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted:


Melessia Helberg, Stenographer