

## **Downtown Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**

### **January 12, 2022 - 4:00pm**

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**Members Present:** John Anderson, Laura Culpepper, Anne Keenhen, Evelyn Saucedo, Mario Torres, Miles McCall, Greg Williams, Brandi Cartwright, Chay Runnels, Jay Anderson, Perky Beisel

**Members Not Present:** Ben Sullivan, Ramsey Parr, Betty Shinn, G.W. Neal, Suzanne Patterson

**Staff Present:** Mario Canizares, Jessica Sowell, Larissa Philpot-Brown, Bethanie Griffin, Steve Bartlett, Brian Bray, Alaina Helton,

Meeting was called to order by Miles McCall at 3:36pm

Chairman Miles McCall made opening statements and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Vice Chairman, Greg Willams reminded everyone that they were being recorded.

The chair and vice chair asked the committee to look at the different plans they were provided with over the holidays and asked them to visit a downtown that wasn't nacogdoches while they were traveling for the holidays.

Miles McCall began the meeting by asking members to review which downtowns they were able to visit and the things that they liked about those downtowns.

- Brandi Cartwright - visited Kilgore, Tx and Marshall, Tx
  - Noted that Marshall offered ice skating in their downtown during the Christmas season
  - Noted that both towns had large sidewalks and streets and wheelchair ramps that were easily accessible and each had outside seating for visitors.
- Chay Runnels - Visited Jacksonville, Tx
  - Noted they had a pocket park, that seemed to be the product of a building demolition that was transformed into a food truck lot with a permanent pergola, outdoor seating, a shaded area, and lights in the evening that made for an inviting space in the middle of their downtown.
- Miles McCall - Visited Crystal Beach, TX
  - Noted that there is no central point to Crystal Beach and it is very spread out. Mentioned we have an advantage in Nacogdoches with our Main Street being a focal point and everything is within walking distance
- Laura Culpepper - Visited Natchitoches, Louisiana

- Noted they have one main road leading into their historical district with large overhead signs welcoming you into their historical district. Mentioned maybe this was something we could look at for Nacogdoches.
- Perky Beisel- Visited Hot Springs, Arkansas
  - Noted it was interesting to see how they dealt with their limited parking issue. They had a multilevel parking lot a block away that helped resolve the issue. She also mentioned that there was a multitude of benches for visitors to rest at.
- Anne Keehan - Visited a few Downtowns in Central Texas as well as downtown Lufkin, TX
  - Noted that a lot of downtowns in Central Texas were similar to Nacogdoches
  - Noted that Lufkin, TX has a more vibrant nightlife and also includes several blocks that a part of their downtown

The committee moved on to begin discussing their thoughts after reading through the 1974 plan.

Miles presented a handwritten letter he received from community member, Milton Moore. Mr. Moore noted that only about 20% of the 1974 plan had been completed in his note.

Miles asked the committee members to present any feedback they had after reading through the 1974 master plan.

John Andreson- Noted that he was delighted with the so far reaching ideas of the 1974 plan. He also mentioned that he liked the idea of a coherent downtown which we now have. Stated that the idea of coherency is utilizing the 1846 boundary line that includes the Zion Hill community and historic Shawnee Street which would make downtown much more inclusive of the community. Mr. Anderson also noted that there are parking suggestions in the plan now that are still current and still need to be addressed throughout Downtown Nacogdoches.

Mario Torres - Noted that there seemed to be more industries during 1974 which made family income at the time more stable. Mr. Torres suggested that we look at current data regarding this issue as we develop the new plan.

Brandi Cartwright - interested in the Texas main street historic plan and stated that it accurately highlighted some of the difficulties that we are still working with today in Downtown Nacogdoches. Also stated that, to her, there are two different parking situations in Downtown: (1) being a situation like the blueberry festival where we will never have enough parking for 19,000 people and (2) being daily parking issues. Mrs. Cartwright pointed out that there is a need for better placement of parking lot signs and she would also like to see Downtown Nacogdoches include historical Shawnee Street as a part of Downtown.

Perky Beisel - Noted that if the ideas in the current plan are good ideas then we should look at keeping them as a part of the new plan but should also make sure we have the current data as Mario Torres stated previously.

Anne - Looking for a basic goal for downtown. She suggested that one of them be: To build our entire community so everyone feels like it is their downtown and the whole city is more connected. She also noted that she wanted to get families downtown. Agreed with Brandi's comment on parking.

Laura Culpepper - Made a comment regarding thru traffic and pedestrian streets. She noted it would create a nice feel when you are walking around but, there is a lot of value in maintaining some type of thru traffic. Sometimes when you are driving through people would make a mental note that this is a nice place to come visit. Isolates a lot of historic treasures when making pedestrian streets that could easily be driven to look at if someone is unable to walk.

Jessica Sowell began presenting the Downtown Master Plans Review presentation with the committee and what the specific recommendations were in the plans and what was accomplished and what wasn't and why.

*The full presentation can be found at [www.nacogdochesplans.com](http://www.nacogdochesplans.com)*

1974 Downtown Master Plan Recommendations Presentation:

- Mario Torres asked what it looks like when a building is deemed obsolete or not functional for a 21st century location when Jessica presented the recommendation of “selected demolition of the deteriorating buildings.”
  - Jessica answered by stating there are certain protections in place that state our buildings should be preserved and not demolished if at all possible. She noted the City has a “Demolition by Neglect” ordinance where the City will start an action against the building owners letting them know something needs to be done about their property. This has been successful in the past.
    - Larissa noted that we did not have this ordinance in 1974 or historic restoration grants.

1998 Heritage Development Plan: Not specific for Downtown. This was for all of the Nacogdoches Heritage Sites so the committee looked at the portion that was specific to downtown.

2017 Main Street Streetscape Plan: This plan was completed by the Texas Main Street Association and was Main Street specific. This plan should be completed as a part of a master plan.

- Brandi Cartwright - Noted that the plan talked about doing temporary park spaces to see if it worked and if the community would like it. Sometimes we think it's a great idea to put something somewhere then we go through all of the work to do it and it doesn't work in that location.

Miles McCall noted that Jessica sent out a FAQ document. The committee began to review these questions. These questions will act as a good guideline for the committee to communicate efficiently with the community and answer any questions they may receive.

- Jessica Sowell noted that these questions were developed based on the questions staff gets asked daily so we compiled a list of questions and let other staff and partners answer them in an easily understandable manner.

Jessica Sowell noted that on January 18th at 5:30pm will be hearing a contract from DTJ for approval.

The next meeting will be on February 9th at 3:30pm - a walking tour of downtown will be included at this meeting time weather permitting.

Adjourned: 4:54pm