

First Avenue Uptown College District

October 18, 2007

Wells Fargo

8 a.m.

Present: Sgt. Tim Camp, Scott Crosby, Sandi Fowler, Marshall Godwin, Erin Lenninger, Richard Luther, Emily Meyer, Kevin Platz, Rod Pritchard, Lisa Reid, Deb Schnyder, Keith Slaymaker, Sam Shea, Matt Teply, Capt. Bernie Walther, John Wasta, Phil Wasta, Betsy Westphalen

First Avenue Improvement Project: Engineers Jeffrey Morrow and Tim Mroch from Anderson-Bogert Engineers & Surveyors, Inc. presented information on their current traffic study of First Avenue between 7th and 19th streets. They have been hired by the Linn County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) to study traffic projections and feasible solutions. The LCRPC aims to ensure cohesiveness in the planning efforts of Linn County. They represent cities within Linn County and the county itself. In a recent long-term study, traffic on First Ave. was identified as one of seven areas needing further study. They will take the results of this study and present them to the officials of all constituencies they represent. Any decisions or actions that take place are up to the local officials.

1. This study is still in the “gathering information stage” and is the beginning of a long-term process. They presented traffic projections for the year 2040 (30-40% more traffic) and the consequential impact on First Avenue and its side streets. The downtown revitalization efforts will increase the traffic coming into and leaving downtown. They have so far developed six different options and held an informational open house. Widening of First Avenue is just one of many options on the table. They continue to look for feedback and will take that information back and adjust those six options to present to the LCRPC. St. Luke’s has expressed interest in widening First Avenue and maintaining easy access in and out of their property. Coe College is against widening, instead advocating improved aesthetics and easier and safer pedestrian access. The engineers asked for input from the group, positive and negative aspects of First Avenue and ideas for improvement. The group came up with the following:

Good:

- a. healthy traffic flow/exposure for businesses
- b. Easy access to Interstate 380
- c. Considered “mainstreet” of Cedar Rapids
- d. The trees/look of the avenue
- e. Business opportunities for residents nearby

Bad

- a. Congestion
- b. Dangerous for pedestrians
- c. Few alternate routes in/out of downtown
- d. Not enough parking
- e. High rate of speed of traffic

Ideas

- a. Take out/block some side streets, allowing room for aesthetics
- b. Extra minute or two is okay, worth the potential beautification
- c. Aesthetics on side of street, take out some street parking
- d. Bike paths and wide sidewalks does increase traffic in other ways
- e. Eliminate every other left turn to allow for aesthetics

It was agreed that there is no one size fits all answer. It may have to be broken down block by block. Traffic congestion is worse for short period in the morning and evening. First Avenue is a state and federal route. Because of this, the Department of Transportation will also need to be involved with any changes.

- 2. Safety & Security:** Capt. Walther introduced Sgt. Tim Camp, who will be the police contact for this district. They are not able to dedicate an officer to the 10 blocks in this district but can assign an officer to the downtown and uptown areas. Along with the shift change in January, they will have officers dedicated to the long-term problems and planning of the various districts. There should be no shortage of officers and patrols for Uptown.
- 3. Update on Legal Process:** Rod informed the group that he has been voted by the steering committee to be the legal liason between this district and Gilda Boyer at Shuttleworth & Ingersoll. Very recently, Gilda completed filings to declare the First Avenue Uptown College District a non-profit organization in the state of Iowa.
- 4. Dues:** Since the legal process now allows the group to collect money, the steering committee will set up a bank account and collect dues from member organizations. The dues are voluntary and the suggested structure is as follows – minimum of \$50, maximum of \$500, \$10 per employee. Dues paid during the remainder of the 2007 calendar year, will cover through the end of 2008. A form/application with more information will be mailed to each business in the district. The steering committee will compile a list of potential uses for the money collected. Some will be used to offset costs already incurred. Members of the steering committee and any other volunteers will visit with entities along the avenue and explain the objectives of the group and what has already been accomplished. They will invite them to future meetings and events.
- 5. Future Meetings:** The time of the meetings will change to 8 a.m. to allow for more participation by member organizations. The day will stay the same – third Thursday of the month. The meeting location of Lynch Room, Gage Memorial Union, Coe College is set through April 2008. The steering committee hopes to bring in a speaker from the Downtown District for the November meeting and host a social event/meeting for December. More details will come. If you have any suggestions for guest speakers or special events, please contact a member of the steering committee. Also, elections for officers will be held at the end of the year/December meeting for the 2008 year.
- 6. Preferred Method of Contact:** The preferred method of contact for minutes, invitations and general communication is e-mail due to the speed and low cost. Those that do not have e-mail will continue to receive a hard copy.

Next Meeting

Steering Committee: November 8, 2 p.m., Nassif House.

Large Group: Thursday, November 15, 8 a.m., Lynch Room, Gage Memorial Union, Coe College.

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