

Minot Downtown Gathering Place Public Meeting

December 18th, 2017

Shannon Straight started the meeting by introducing the purpose of the 6 million dollars allowed to spend on the Downtown Gathering Place. He stated we are welcoming feedback, and that the technical review committee is meeting Wednesday 12-20-17 at 1pm at the council chambers. He invited the public to join the meeting. He then let the audience know that we post the questions and answers from all public meetings on the city website. He stated the 3 boards of conceptual drawings are only concepts and that they are not set in stone. The purpose of the meeting is to obtain your input on where you want the site to be out of the 3 blocks presented.

John Zakian stated the posting of the questions and answers is a requirement of HUD, and that it will be on the city's website. He then went into the National Disaster Resilience (NDR) competition background. The gathering place was unique to this competition. The application had a specific site in mind but the site envisioned would not work because of HUD rules. He said there is no ideal site but these 3 sites are the best available. To get this money, we had to sign an action plan with HUD (the action plan is what we intend to do). In the action plan, we have requirements that have to be in the site for example, it must be approximately 2 acres. He then went into brief detail on how we got to these 3 sites. He then went over the slides; the definition of downtown, site by site block by block analysis, Score Card Criteria, weighting on the scoring criteria, and an image of the score card.

Shannon Straight stated that we must spend this money by 9-20-2022.

Question and Answer

Q: So, we have 6 million to spend, 2 of the properties are vacant what about the one with buildings? Will that cost a lot more?

A: John Zakian said that will factor into the selection, but it appears based on estimates that none of the 3 sites acquisition, relocation and demolition costs will take too much money out of the 6-million-dollar budget. Any of these properties could end up being more expensive than anticipated because we don't know exactly how much these properties will cost. Additionally, we are required by HUD to do historical and environmental reviews, and this is a voluntary buyout program. That means it is different from the properties purchased for flood control in that we cannot force people to sell their property.

Q: When will these concepts be determined? Such as one site looks better for all year-round activities and one is closer to the river.

A: John Zakian said the action plan said that this is meant to be a large park with a large amphitheater, farmers markets, or maybe even a food truck vendor. The terms of structures are not agreed in the action plan. The action plan is on the cities website. He said what the property is going to have on it will be determined in more public meetings. We must have a site selected and then will know the limitations of that site.

Q: Could you go over where funds are coming for the building, for the site, and continued maintenance, and will that effect tax payers?

A: John Zakian said HUD funds under the NDR Grant cannot be used for maintenance. It is going to require another source for maintenance. This will be another discussion, it can be a partnership with nonprofit, or the Park District. He said there will be operating costs which cannot come out of HUD funds. He said some gathering places from other towns are self-sustaining. The 6 million must be used for capitol expenses. Shannon said this is the same for each project; HUD funds can't be spent on operations.

Q: Will there be fees involved for gatherings?

A: John Zakian said there is no requirement in the action plan, it will have to be determined later. Nothing is mandatory. The city council will be in charge.

Q: Can we hear what the people's ideas are for this site?

A: Shannon Straight said we want to pick the site and then have another meeting for details on what people want. This is a meeting to pick which site you want to see. John Zakian said this will happen again and we really do want people's ideas. HUD likes to see a process, and right now in the process we just need to pick a site. Shannon Straight said we will make sure these sites will be as safe as they possibly can be.

Q: Trinity Hospital is talking about building a new hospital outside of downtown, has site number 1 been considered for when trinity knocks down their hospital.

A: John Zakian said all property owners have been informed that we are considering their property. HUD has many rules and we can't talk offers with owners yet.

Q: Is there a requirement for the amount of green space? Does it have to have a green space?

A: John Zakian said the entire foot print must be a green space. The action plan envisions a fountain in memory of the flood, and the amphitheater will have to have structure. For the most part, it is envisioned that it will be mainly grass and green space.

Q: 2 out of the 3 sites take away more of the parking for downtown. Is this a plot to move people into the new ramps?

A: John Zakian said no there is no plot. He said there is plenty of space downtown, we took that into account when deciding on these 3 sites, and we are not trying to push anyone into those garages.