

JOINT CITY PLAN COMMISSION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION / DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Saturday, March 26, 2011 –12:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center – 1519 Water Street, Stevens Point, WI 54481

PRESENT: Chairperson Mayor Halverson, Jack Curtis, Shari Laskowski, Chairperson Lee Beveridge, Tim Seibert, Kathy Kruthoff, George Hanson, and Ald. Tom Mallison

EXCUSED: Ald. Jerry Moore, Tony Patton, Anna Haines, Maurice Rice, Norm Myers Sr., Karl Halsey, and Hans Walther

ALSO PRESENT: Community Development Director Michael Ostrowski, John Kneer (Rettler Corporation), Todd Grunwaldt (Grunwaldt and Associates), Ald. Marge Molski, Ald. Joanne Suomi, Jim Belke, Ron Kappell, Linda Kappell, Ward Wolff, Merle Kesselhon, Lois Lawler, Mary Ann Laszewski, Heath Stoltz, Maurice Stoltz, Barb Jacob, Jenni Lam, Dan Menzel, Sarah Robinson, Nancy Schultz, Joe Roppe, Dave Carlson, Laura Vonkuas, Kristy SeBlonka, Matthew Brown, Dave Medin, Sandy Medin, Brian Kowalski, Dan Goulet, Kathy Goulet, Justine Pawelski, Sarena Melotte, Bill Schierl, Leo Jacoby, Bernie Coerper, and Larry Proulx

INDEX:

1. Opening remarks.
2. Approval of the report from the March 16, 2011 meeting.
3. Discussion and possible action on redevelopment ideas/plans for the CenterPoint MarketPlace area. Public input will occur during this item.
4. Other business.
5. Adjourn.

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1. Opening remarks.

Mayor Halverson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Approval of the report from the March 16, 2011 meeting.

Mayor Halverson said due to not having a quorum, the Plan Commission will be unable to approve the minutes from the last meeting, but the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission (HPDRC) can approve the minutes. The Plan Commission will approve the minutes at the next Plan Commission meeting.

Motion by Beveridge to approve the report; seconded by Seibert. Motion carried for the HP/DRC 6-0.

3. Discussion and possible action on redevelopment ideas/plans for the CenterPoint MarketPlace area. Public input will occur during this item.

Mayor Halverson said he is thankful for the good turnout and the participation of the community at these meetings.

John Kneer from Rettler Corporation stated that he had taken the input and comments from the last meeting and determined that Concept 3 was the most liked, and it also retained the most space. He said that Phase 1 (see Attachment A) of the project would be the separation of MSTC from the mall, and to the reestablishment of Third Street through to Centerpoint Drive.

At this time, John Kneer presented two further refined concepts, Concept 4 (see Attachment B) and Concept 5 (see Attachment C).

Concept 4 keeps about 66,000 square feet of building area in the center. It also provides for three two way streets: Third Street, Strongs Avenue, and an east-west street between the mall and Main Street buildings. In addition, this concept provides for more parking between the existing Shopko building and the mall building.

Concept 5 is similar, but it changes the parking on Third Street from parallel to perpendicular. In Concept 5, more of the building remains, approximately 75,000 square feet, and there would be less parking between the Shopko building and mall building. In addition, Strongs Avenue becomes a T-intersection.

Chairperson Beveridge brought up the issue of the need to create exterior walls, and was wondering if some of the mall area could become indoor parking. Todd Grunwaldt stated there would be ventilation issues to consider, but that could be an option.

Mike Metcalf, Architect - Said that the atrium space is the best space in town. He would like to keep the connection between Shopko and MSTC. He stated that he did not want a vehicle connection between Centerpoint Drive and the downtown, but openings for pedestrians only. His suggestion was to take the building back to the atrium, as there is no need for businesses on the south side of the building, and place a glass wall the length of the building, leaving room for parking, green space, and other stuff. He also believes that City Hall should move into the former Dunham's building.

Cathy Dugan, 615 Sommers Street - Represented the League of Women Voters and read a prepared statement (see Attachment D) on their position of the mall.

Jerald Duellman – Stated that Stevens Point has the opportunity to solve its issues with the mall. He believes the entire city and county offices could be moved to the mall, and you could also add an additional court room. The police department could move over to the mall as well, and the old city hall could be converted to a jail and eliminate the construction of a new jail facility. Mr. Duellman then suggested that the city could purchase the old Sorenson's greenhouses with the intent to raise fruits and vegetables to supply the jail and schools. This venture could be a partnership with the university, the residents of the high rise, and persons serving community service could provide the labor. Mr. Duellman also stated that the concepts have too many exit streets and there is less of an opportunity to bring in jobs.

Mayor Halverson stated there is a fine line between parking and building. We need to keep as much of the building, but to also have enough parking to support the businesses that go into the building. He believes that Concept 4 retains a great deal of square footage for building and parking.

John Dolan, 318 Washington Avenue - Pointed out that in Phase 1, by taking and changing the southwest side by MSTC, you would have to reconstruct 90 feet of new wall. If the City can wait for a developer to invest, this would keep the upfront costs down. He expressed that we don't have the money left to do anymore after Phase 1. When the building was originally built, the soil was poor and the foundation was placed three feet below grade, in turn, saving us cost now. Mr. Dolan also pointed out that the parking requirements would need to be met. Mr. Dolan said that Concept 4 would better meet our current parking codes.

Nancy Schultz, 925 Smith Street - Stated that it is imperative for Third Street to go all the way through to Centerpoint Drive. We the citizens have to have a vision beyond the building. If all we have is a walkway downtown, there will be no one interested in the northern parcels for development. This is our opportunity to create that with Concept 4.

Rand Erbach, 823 Main Street - Stated that we need Centerpoint Drive to access the downtown and open up the area. He is currently working to reface the backside of his building. He indicated that a positive attitude is what is helpful for our downtown. He would like to see as many streets as possible and for the north wall of the mall building to have as many windows and store fronts as possible.

Bill Schierl, Arts Alliance - Likes Concept 4, as it allows for parking for when the theater is redeveloped and has shows.

Mark Lieber, 3213 Wanta Drive - Would like to suggest low cost movies, or theme months for movies shown at the Fox Theater.

Kathy Goulet, 709 Lindbergh Avenue - Thinks that there is a need for beauty in our downtown area, and appreciates the green space. Our downtown needs to have beauty to be a drawing force for people to come downtown.

Tom Brown, 317 Sixth Avenue - Stated that it is fine to have Third Street go all the way through, but would like to save the walls until there is a developer to finish the project. However, if we are unable to do that, then he would like to see the area have finished streets. He also agrees that the atrium space is the best public space. Mr. Brown likes Concept 4 because it makes more sense for the two-way city street.

MaryAnn Laszewski, 1209 Wisconsin Street - Likes Concept 4 and the two two-way streets going through. This also enables more light and a good intersection on Strongs Avenue. She also thinks that the additional parking is positive, as well as the space for Guu's to put in a patio area.

Sara Robinson, Association of Downtown Businesses – Likes Concept 4, but has a concern for an unloading zone for Guu's. She also pointed out there may be an issue for the buses unloading at the Strongs Avenue bus stop, and is supportive of the perpendicular parking on Third Street.

Mike Metcalf, Architect – Said that after hearing input from others, he has changed his mind and would like to see Third Street reestablished for vehicular traffic, but does not like the traffic pattern for Strongs Avenue.

Mary Ann, Laszewski 1209 Wisconsin Street – Does like the traffic pattern of Strongs Avenue because you have two options to get to the mall area and to Main Street.

Tom Brown, 317 Sixth Avenue – Stated that the south side parking lot in Concept 4 is already dedicated to the employees and tenants in the area. The concepts just show a more organized space. He expressed he did not like the perpendicular parking on Third Street.

Bernie Coerper, 1400 West River Drive – Does not believe there is a need to put a street through the mall area. Mr. Coerper asked if we have a year to decide what to do with the rest of the mall. Mayor Halverson said that Phase 1 will not start until July or August, and Phase 2 will not start until 2012 or 2013. Mr. Coerper then pointed out that this is not the last time for us to give ideas to the area. He would also like to see what Shopko would do to their building, and pointed out that the more we tear down of the mall the less there is to offer a developer.

Jerald Duellman - Asked if there could be more access along Centerpoint Drive in order to take traffic off of Third Street and give the north side of the mall better access. Mayor Halverson said that there would have to be a traffic study done. We can ask, but Wis DOT will not want more access points from Centerpoint Drive and a roundabout may be necessary at the Highway 66 and First Street intersection.

Mayor Halverson indicated that Concept 4 appears to be the most popular with a little tweaking. The parking style on Third Street would be determined by the Board of Public Works due to any traffic safety concerns. The final concept will be presented to the Plan Commission at the May 2, 2011 meeting.

Kathy Kruthoff stated that this is what democracy looks like and how pleased she was to hear all the viewpoints leading to the final concept. She is in favor of Concept 4 and is pleased to see the intergenerational interactions going on. She also likes the green space displayed, but wants to keep in mind that someone would be responsible to take care of these areas. Concept 4 does address the parking needs.

4. Other business.

The Plan Commission will meet May 2, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. for the review of the final plan, and the Historic Preservation / Design Review Commission will get the project in pieces starting with Phase 1 and the MSTC plan.

5. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.