

**Planning and Development Committee  
Meeting Agenda for April 15, 2015  
at the Decatur Renaissance, 230 East Ponce, 7 pm**

The agenda will be to take all the ideas, random thoughts, and discussions that have taken place over the last couple of months and turn them into a prioritized short-term and long-term action plan for our committee. The following is a list from our breakout session last month, a previous meeting Kathie Gannon and I had in February, and ideas from DDN's original organizational session. Please be giving some thought to this as well as adding on if you think of additional topics to address.

Regards,

Buddy

**Discussion Items:**

- Code compliance in general, but with reference especially to the 315 W Ponce project. It was expressed that there seemed to be a lot (ie, more than normal) of "variances" to code granted to the developers. Parking was mentioned as an issue, buffer space with other developments, things that appeared or came up after the plans were presented.
- Interest expressed in pursuing development of a city plan than includes a pedestrian mall, perhaps from Church to Commerce along Ponce. Example cited of Charlottesville, VA. This has been proposed before, with the idea always being shot-down, supposedly by the downtown businesses as being harmful to business.
- Concern over traffic flow and congestion. The item in the City Plan covering synchronization of lights was deferred from 2015 to 2017. Parking in downtown area was cited as a problem.
- A need for "better" railroad crossing gates discussed. It is believed that more modern technology, with perhaps less noise exists. It is not known whether the city has control over this issue or the railroad.
- Develop list of the top five pedestrian hazards in the city.
- Issues with pedestrian crossings - maintenance, enforcement, and locations. Existing crossings appear to have very lax enforcement by the police. The suggestion was made that there be "buttons and signals" at least at some of the crossings as there is on College. The condition of the crossings with their cracking and spalling was discussed, as well as a need for a crossing coming out the back of Town Square toward the Rec center.
- An overall lack of satisfaction with Decatur WiFi - no one seems to have a positive impression with the availability or performance with the existing WiFi. Can it be improved?

- Google Fiber - what can we do to get behind and support the initiative to rollout Google Fiber throughout then city?
- Interest in conducting a "Lesson's Learned" session related to the "construction defects" encountered over the past few years in the DDN "jurisdiction."
- Commercial vs. Residential zoning for multi-family dwellings. Where are the protections in the code for people who invest and buy in-town?
  - Buffer requirements for single family not applicable for MF;
  - Must be an immediate "neighbor" to provide comment or input on plans?
- Explore Traffic patterns, especially on Commerce, and E/W Ponce:
  - 1) An entire lane has been taken for construction on Ponce;
  - 2) no "right on red" causing long backups
  - 3) What is plan for the future when congestion is already a problem?
- Plans for remaining "big lots" in area including post office (think Kathie's thoughts concerning 315 juice bar, and Grindhouse might fit in this category also).
- General:
  - 1) Accessibility of plans on-line?
  - 2) Time frame: Is 10 years appropriate time frame for plans? Maybe 10 years with rolling three years as an option?
- Traffic Study - do one before next round of permitting and require on for large developments
- Zoning - to protect residential in condos
- Work with city to make sure projects meet development codes before developer is released and residents left holding the bag for shoddy workmanship
- Insufficient oversight by elected officials of land use/zoning/development
- Need downtown plan to fill in missing pieces from 2010 Strategic Plan