

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTIES OF POTTER §
AND RANDALL §

CITY OF AMARILLO §

On the 26th day of October 2006, the Center City Development Committee met in a regular meeting at 3:00, in the Hospitality Room, Amarillo Civic Center, Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

Member	Present	Meetings Attended	Meetings Since Appointment	Held
Richard Ware, Chair	Yes	5	5	5
Richard Brown, Vice Chair	Yes	3	5	5
Les Simpson, Secretary	Yes	4	5	5
Paul Harpole, City Commissioner	Yes	5	5	5
Gary Pitner, Center City	Yes	4	5	5
Richard Constancio	Yes	5	5	5
Joe Ted Davidson	Yes	4	5	5
Ed Davis	Yes	4	5	5
Oscar Gamboa	No	3	5	5
Bill Gilliland	Yes	4	5	5
Jerry Hodge	Yes	3	5	5
Glen Parkey	Yes	3	5	5
Freda Powell	Yes	2	5	5
Chris Storm	Yes	2	5	5
Jeffery Tidmore	Yes	4	5	5
Ex Officio Members:				
Debra McCartt, Mayor	No	4	5	5
Doris Alexander, City Center Chair - 2006		1	4	4
Jake Sadler, City Center Chair - 2007	No	0	1	1
Arthur Ware, Judge, Potter County	No	3	5	5

Staff Present: Beth Duke, Center City Executive Director
Vicki Covey, Director of Community Services

Others Present: Media and approximately 40 citizens

Richard Ware, Chairman, opened the meeting of the Center City Development Committee at 3:05 pm and established a quorum. The following items were discussed:

Item 1. Approval of the minutes of July 27, 2006

Motion to approve minutes was made by Glen Parkey, seconded by Gary Pitner, carried unanimously.

Item 2. Presentation by James Toal of results from the community visioning meetings held in August 2006 for the Amarillo Downtown Development Study.

James Toal, Gideon Toal presented an overview of the perceptions, opinions and suggestions from of the community meetings conducted in July and August.

Importance of downtown Amarillo: Downtown health is a “bellwether” of the health of a community. Downtowns are a source of pride for all citizens. Downtowns can enhance retention and relocation of businesses and industry citywide. Urban lifestyle is a trend across America. Downtown can retain and attract young educated people and become the knowledge center. Stabilize the central city tax base.

What is working about Amarillo’s downtown: Financial and business center; center of government; geographic center of the city – convenient to everyone; focus of cultural and civic and arts events. Downtown is ten minutes from the airport. Downtown has a good walkable scale. Of those responding to the surveys, 94% indicated downtown was very important to the future of Amarillo. There have been recent investments in restaurants, entertainment venues, and residential/loft housing. There is strong support from city, county and business leaders.

Key Challenges: There has been slow to stagnant growth over the last 20 years. There is a perception of a parking problem, safety issues at night, lack of family or affordable venues, and no significant hotel. The Interstate and the suburbs have seen the bulk of investment and growth. Amarillo must change the momentum.

Key Development Goals for next 5 to 7 years: 400 to 600 housing units, 130 to 200-room hotel, 400 to 600,000 sq ft of commercial/office space, 6 to 10 restaurants or nightclub venues, retain and grow downtown as financial, business, and government center, have a major presence by higher education; associated parking support, ballpark with other entertainment venues, family friendly venues, parks and landscaping (more trees), demolish or redevelop 3 to 5 vacant buildings/eyesores.

Implementation requires public/private partnerships to use tools available to public agencies to leverage private resources. The goals are to create projects that carry out the public goals, to allow a fair rate of return for private investors, and create a short term and long term net gain for local tax jurisdictions.

Item 3. Discussion of the status of the Amarillo Downtown Development Study

James Toal indicated he hoped to recommend financing tools, such as tax increment financing, before the end of the year. The boundary for such would be similar to the area presented at the meeting, bounded by Washington on the west, I-40 on the south and the rail yards on the north and east. The study is on track to complete as scheduled in April/May.

Item 4. Committee Reports.

Incentives - Glen Parkey reported the subcommittee would be working on the schedule to do a tax increment-financing zone by the end of the year.

Public Relations - Freda Powell reported the media encounters since the last meeting. She expressed appreciation to Beth Duke for all the good exposure she gives to Center City.

Hotel - Bill Gilliland would be available to discuss downtown with any prospects.

Residential Living - Jeffrey Tidmore – no report.

Urban Lifestyle - Joe Ted Davidson reported the Arts in Public Places committee had met and discussed goals for including art in the plan. He reported the retail owners still have safety problems with late night closing. Women who walk to their cars feel at risk.

Item 5. Consideration of agenda items for the next meeting

Richard Ware indicated the November meeting would focus on the implementation of the tax increment-financing plan. The Committee should plan to make a recommendation to the City Commission regarding the benefits and details for the zone and plan. He asked members to assemble their thoughts or concerns about the issues or their ideas and send them to Beth Duke.

Item 6. Public Comments

Wes Reeves, Amarillo Historic Preservation Foundation, introduced Daniel Carey, Regional Director for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Mr. Carey offered his services or assistance, as it may be needed for the downtown effort.

Leslie Cox said several out of town people have inquired about developing a downtown hotel.

A representative with the Silver Haired Legislature asked about the use of eminent domain. Mr. Toal explained eminent domain is now illegal to use for economic development to assist private development. He added it never really worked well anyway.

Todd Harmon asked about the creation of a TIF. Mr. Toal hopes to have one in place by year-end. TIF's have been very successful tools for Fort Worth and even Temple.

Robert Goodrich asked if anymore thought had been given to a new theme or identity for downtown? He said slogans do not always work. Downtown should be several things, working and living. Make downtown a destination for travelers. He asked about hotel property within two or three years. Mr. Toal responded it really should have within the next year.

Ted Davis asked what should the committee be doing about Public Improvement Districts (PID). Mr. Toal responded that could happen at any time.

Joe Ted Davidson asked if the City is approving buildings that the group does not know about?

Richard Constancio asked what could be done with the "eye sores?" Mr. Toal responded that code enforcement could be used more aggressively and incentives could be used to encourage redevelopment. He indicated the committee would have to set priorities for the use of incentives. Mr. Toal responded that replacing overhead power lines with underground line could be a priority for a TIF financing. A PID could do the same but the property owners have to vote on the priorities.

A question was asked about the status of the Amarillo web site. Mr. Toal answered it may be available early next year with the Center City website.

Gregg Rohloff commented that the Oklahoma City redevelopment effort is still a work in progress after 10 years.



With no other business to come before the committee, Richard Ware adjourned the meeting at 4:15 pm.