Minutes
Mayor’s Ad-Hoc Committee on Downtown Planning
City of Monterey
Thursday, July 15, 2010

1. Introductions

2. Mayor Della Sala – We want to make an impact as fast as we can. Mentioned Monterey Hotel and concerns about cleanliness. We plan to maintain our existing pace on pressure washing but will be cutting back on litter pickup because the merchants want to reduce their maintenance assessments. The downtown interests have been asked to help with litter pickup. Mentioned Trader Joe’s development and State Theater.

3. City Council will look at downtown and waterfront planning on July 20. Mayor described options that would be considered and potential grant funds that will help with the transportation and parking analysis.

4. Mayor is hoping to hear some sort of consensus from the group on which downtown planning option to pursue and what the top priorities are for downtown. He described work program to investigate options for the Conference Center.

5. Downtown can’t work without participation of private sector business and property owners.

6. Mike Marotta – Priorities – Conference Center (privatization); traffic study for 2-way on Alvarado; State Theater.

7. Mike Zimmerman – When faced with the choice, they wanted to keep Cannery Row 2-way for the same reasons we are discussing on Alvarado. Wants to make sure that our studies and analysis lead to action. Agrees that we need to take care of the Conference Center.

8. Fred M. – Earlier analysis believes that Conference Center needs to be expanded by about 25,000 square feet and be refurbished. The hoteliers aren’t satisfied with the business analysis and financial conclusions in the earlier study. We are waiting for guidance from the hotels about selecting a new consultant or staying with the current firm. Fred is faced with substantial budget challenges and has opted to shrink Executive staff in favor of keeping staff at the service level.

9. Henry Ruhnke – Field trips to good downtowns are probably a good idea. We need to develop a vision for what Alvarado Street should look like. It’s more than changing the street patterns – need a full concept/marketing package. If we are going to do the transportation/parking piece right, we have to do the full program. Need to contemplate
the context of the Conference Center in overall downtown, look at streetscape, tenant strategy, parking, and cash flow analysis. Priorities – vision/overall plan.

10. Peter Coniglio – Conference Center is critical. Transient business is holding up but we are missing group business. Need to speed up the Conference Center analysis.

11. Doug Wiele – Ingredients for success elsewhere – the catalyst in Santa Cruz was the earthquake; movie theater was a major catalyst; sense is that the economic collapse is Monterey’s version of Loma Prieta. In San Luis Obispo, Tom Copeland made a major investment. There are three kinds of shopping – essential:discretionary; destination:impulse; commodity:specialty. Opportunities are on the right side of the continuum. To make this happen, we need a physical environment conducive to shopping and a couple of lead tenants. The fire downtown that took out 21 businesses is one of the reasons activity is lacking.

12. Henry Ruhnke – This needs to be a close collaboration of City and private interests.

13. MCPOA has offered $45,000 to develop a tenant mix strategy for the downtown. Mayor – Is $45,000 enough?

14. Henry Ruhnke – Four major property owners want to get moving now. Can discuss more at next meeting.

15. Doug Wiele – Property owners need to continue investing in their holdings rather than just collecting the rent. The City should provide the “critical infrastructure” and leave the rest up to the private sector.

16. Frank Sollecito – Transportation oriented development can help revitalize a commercial area. Light rail, 156 are important considerations.

Next meeting Wednesday, August 4, 9:00 a.m. Updates will be furnished on traffic study, Conference Center study, and tenant mix study.