



BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2014

BRISBANE CITY HALL, 50 PARK PLACE, BRISBANE

7:30 PM - CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Conway called the workshop to order at 7:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present: Lentz, Liu, Miller, O'Connell and Mayor Conway
Staff Present: City Manager Holstine, Administrative Services Director
Schillinger, Community Development Director Swiecki, Sr.
Management Analyst Cheung

WORKSHOP

A. Economic Development/Discussion of Downtown Brisbane and Crocker Park

City Manager Holstine provided an overview of the meeting format, stating the goal of the workshop was to identify the goals and objectives for the City's Economic Development Program. He said that the focus areas for the workshop would be Downtown Brisbane as defined by the City's General Plan (Visitacion Ave. and The Brisbane Village Shopping Center) as well as Crocker Industrial Park. He then briefly described each of the attachments included in the packet.

Councilmembers Lentz and Liu then explained the reasons for holding the workshop. Mainly, how the Economic Development Subcommittee could work to implement these goals, and how City services and community enjoyment could be enhanced through economic development.

Administrative Services Director Schillinger then went over the Top 25 Revenue Generators for the City. He indicated that total revenues from these 25 companies produced \$7M of the City's \$12M budget. He then answered questions posed by Councilmembers.

Community Development Director Swiecki highlighted the goals from the Local Economic Development Chapter of the City's adopted 1994 General Plan. He also briefly described the

Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) report that was prepared by the Urban Land Institute for Crocker Park.

Senior Management Analyst Cheung spoke about the online comments that were received through Userve, where an Economic Development Forum had been open since late September. She went through the 27 ideas submitted by community members and highlighted some of their corresponding comments. She said the top ideas concerned a new library in Central Brisbane, revitalization of Visitacion Ave., having a Trader Joe's or Whole Foods in town, and creating a makerspace in Brisbane.

The Council then invited community members to share their ideas.

Jerry Kuhel asked how many participants there were on Userve.

Beth Grossman spoke about artist studios, the ones that exist in Minneapolis, and how Crocker Park could be a possible location. She noted the mural next to Midtown Market is starting to degrade and indicated she contacted the artist (Mona Caron), who said she would help restore it and suggested installing rain gutters and pigeon points. Beth also spoke in support of a makerspace.

Anja Miller stated she thought economic development is about revenue being paid to a city and what kind of businesses should come to Brisbane. She also said there is not enough attention paid to the Chamber of Commerce and what they're doing, as Crocker Park has 91% occupancy. She spoke about how parking downtown at lunchtime is very difficult and asked about a Parking Assessment District, as economic development needs to have more parking.

Mitch Bull, President of the Brisbane Chamber, said that economic development should be renamed "community sustainability" as it's not about bringing in, but enhancing current businesses. He said there needs to be discussion about "Crocker Park 2.0" and that Brisbane could be a regional center. He said economic development is about marketing – What do we want this little village to be? He said from a retail perspective, we should look at the surrounding population to consider demand.

Carolyn Parker expressed the need to ask the citizens of this town how much they want to expand the population of this city, noting Brisbane is unique in that it has a small population nestled in one area like a tiny village, and that we should build upon this point of uniqueness. She mentioned Point Reyes as an example.

Michele Salmon stated that Brisbane needs to focus on things that make it unique and special like the Mountain and the Bay, and not try to be like a "strip mall." She asked about the City supporting the 23 Club which is about to be lost. She remarked that Brisbane has a beautiful setting and that it needs to be on the map because of who we are, not who we want to be. She said she opposes having housing up and down Visitacion Ave. She said Brisbane should focus on how to make existing businesses more viable (ex. Madhouse, Christy's Donuts), how to revitalize Visitacion, and remove dead trees in Crocker Park.

Jerry Kuhel said that a makerspace can pay for itself, where machinery can be rented for a fee.

David Fraser proposed the makerspace idea, which fosters incubators and having a free form place to figure out how to build things. He stated how knowledge industry jobs are easily outsourced and that a makerspace would be an incubator for a skill set that will be valuable for the future. It is like shop class without a grade where people can come together and exchange ideas and he would be supportive of a cottage industry like Etsy. He remarked that the Teen Center building was a former shop so the location for the makerspace there makes sense.

Ron Davis remarked how he moved to Brisbane at age 21 and for years it was about the stars and the 23 Club. He said that we need to start with who we are, what our values are, why are we here, and once you know who you are, then everything falls into place. He suggested that loft spaces in Crocker Park could be used by artists. He said the makerspace fits into who we are. Regarding Crocker Park, he said that the industrial park keeps the coffee shop alive. Lastly, he suggested a community visioning event in the Community Center for participants to do a “brainstorming” exercise. He said that he attended a previous retreat that was well done and said that was when the real magic happens.

Michael Schuman remarked that the library can help facilitate employment of residents, which is one of the goals of the General Plan chapter on Local Economic Development. He said that it could support resume writing, literacy, and developing workforces and could be done with trainings and activating a space and creating a strong physical presence. The Tech Shop in San Francisco is a good example of a commercial makerspace. He brought up the Placemaking Workshop where one of the ideas was to slow down traffic on Bayshore instead of it being a thoroughfare.

Nicole Pasini, Library Services Manager, said that a huge part of why people use the library space is to apply for jobs, do homework, and improve their computer skills. She supported the makerspace idea and cited that the Berkeley library has a tool-lending program and that with an expanded space they could provide programs that Brisbane residents want.

Danette Davis reiterated that the coffeehouse depends on employees from Crocker Park businesses. She suggested looking at other towns to see their models. She cited Pescadero and Point Reyes as being destinations where people come to bike, which probably raises the area a lot of money. She stated that parking is a difficult situation as it’s not enforced on Visitacion, yet should be reserved for commercial use on Visitacion. She said that residents park on Visitacion all of the time, but that businesses can’t park on residential streets. She said there needs to be a bigger facility for the Library and Community Center as there is a shortage of space available for programs. She suggested the City buy the 23 Club and attach it to the Teen Center. There could be two stories on Visitacion to keep to the current building heights and three stories on San Bruno Avenue, and that the space could be used for meeting rooms, and programming for seniors and teens.

Kevin Fryer remarked that without regional draw, he wouldn’t have a concert series. In his experience with Live at Mission Blue, it’s 50/50 for ticket sales and fundraising. 50% of concert attendees are non-residents, and 50% of his support comes from out of town.

Melissa Vivas remarked she's nervous if there is too much focus on social media. She found the Top 25 Revenue Generators interesting and suggested looking at the tax structure to make it easier for businesses to be here. She stated Brisbane's history is the 23 Club and the arts, which could be beefed up with a makerspace. She stated that Brisbane's identity is about its history, which includes environmentalists, families, artists, and the fact that it's small.

Carolyn Parker asked how the boxing school is funded and said there is a big draw for out-of-towners at the Community Pool and ball fields. She also said a makerspace could encompass people from different ages.

Ken Walker said that the swimming pool, park, and weather in Brisbane are big draws. He said that Brisbane is a safe place for families and is family-oriented, and suggested thinking of how to get families to stay a little longer.

Dave Fraser remarked how he recently moved from the Pacific Northwest and was surprised there was no visitor center for San Bruno Mountain.

Michele Salmon said she is on the San Bruno Mountain Watch Board of Directors and that the mountain is a big attraction. She would love to have an interpretive center on the Levinson Property as it is connected to public transit. She suggested a "paint night" at the 23 Club, which could be a combination dance/artist/non-profit/bar space. She also remarked that Brisbane doesn't have a breakfast option anymore. She also suggested local restaurants serve food at Concerts in the Park.

Ron Davis said that affordable housing on Visitacion is a big mistake and parking will be an issue. He also suggested having a cooking school at the 23 Club that serves affordable food.

Anja Miller remarked that the name of the Council Subcommittee should be "Community Development" – how do we define this precious place and how do we build upon it.

Meena Jagdish Rajan commented that she would like to see the see the Teen Center revived. It could be a Community & Teen Center. She also suggested giving subsidies to kid-friendly companies, as there is no proper art class. She stated she is representing a group of families that have moved in with young families. She also suggested having academic enrichment classes.

Beth Grossman commented that she had a recent art show at Oakland's Impact Hub which like the SF Hub is a collective space where artists pay a monthly fee for conference rooms, events, and meditation.

Jerry Kuhel said he is aware of an offer on the 23 Club and that it was a private sale.

Renee Marmion said she would like to see a gymnasium with basketball courts. She also mentioned the upstairs of the Brisbane Inn as having a kitchen and dining room which she could see as offering jazz.

Ken Walker asked if there was anything the City could do to help businesses with a retail aspect come to Brisbane by giving them financing options or other incentives to move here.

Ron Davis inquired about Universal Paragon's 700-room hotel site and why it didn't go forward.

CM Conway said that a feasibility study was done which said the area would support a 200-300 room hotel if the area was built out and there were headquarter companies.

Mitch Bull remarked that Rick Swigg performed the feasibility study and commented that if anyone wants to build a hotel, should first contact Mr. Swigg.

This concluded the community input portion of the workshop.

CM Lentz said that the community's feedback was excellent.

CM Miller began his comments in response to "Community Development, Preservation, Viability" saying they all needed to be thought about. He remarked that to have a viable business community, Brisbane needs to have all of those things.

He first suggested enhancing what we have, with a focus on green-conscious businesses. He next spoke about the Library remodeling/upgrading having been on the radar of the Facilities Subcommittee and how there has been a report from the County Library System on their needs. He said the City needs to look at sites and what it can afford. In looking at different users, they'll need to look at a facility in light of those changes and reiterated that the library is an important part of enhancement of the community.

He next suggested the formation of a Visitation Avenue Task Force so that the City can understand what is keeping businesses from being there. He expressed his skepticism about minor incentives noting that what really matters is improved sales. He also noted that Brisbane would need to be realistic of what would fit and what the market would handle.

Next, he remarked that Crocker Park is doing relatively well, with new businesses from San Francisco's overflow. He expressed his concern about landscape maintenance and suggested using GVMID to see that those issues are addressed. He said he had questions about mixed-use in Crocker Park and is not sure about that yet.

Mentioning next the TAP Report, he said one of the recommendations was moving the CalTrain Station to Old County & Bayshore, noting that the former location then would be used by Brisbane residents, but that Kinder Morgan would need to move first. He said that if Brisbane wants activity around transit, then Kinder Morgan can't be there.

Next, he spoke about the Baylands and inquired why we can't plan in phases. He said that there is no longer infrastructure financing like there used to be. He said that the Geneva Extension is an expensive project. He suggested things like retail off of Bayshore that don't require the Geneva Extension.

Lastly, he commented on the enhancements that the community suggested. A makerspace and artist studios are part of a bigger picture. He said that those are supplemental things. He said we should focus on what we believe our identity to be. What do we want to sell to people, businesses? He said the City hasn't consciously devoted itself to answering those types of questions and that it would also help with marketing. He said that there may be a need for another task force. He also said that what Brisbane used to be and what it is now are very different.

CM O'Connell said it's the "cool factor" of being a small town that we want to see on entering town. But those aren't going to make the Top 25 Revenue Generators. She said that Brisbane should be looking at possible changes in the business park to make the cool factor happen. She said we're here to talk about income and that the little cute stuff isn't going to make us money to pay for staff. She asked whether we could live like we do now and be happy and indicated that she would answer "yes". She suggested looking to commercial areas to see what those businesses need to stay here. She supported a task force for getting pride of ownership on Visitacion Avenue.

She remarked about the notion of giving more responsibility to the Chamber for business retention, but at 91% occupancy, it's a moot point if we don't have a spot for a company like Facebook. She said that ideas for services and talent can help bring a vital downtown, but that is not what our economy is based on. For that we need to talk to the Chamber and see what we're willing to put up with to get someone new in our Top 25 list.

CM Conway remarked that it's not a monetary engine on Visitacion, but a community identity. He remarked that the Chamber did a Visitacion Ave. Business Consortium, which has now dissipated. Due to people renting, there is no incentive for owners to upgrade. Renters are just trying to survive and they don't want to put in capital if they're trying to put food on their table.

He next said that Brisbane has the same number of people as it did 50 years ago. There has been a big change in how things functioned; it was a local economy, but it no longer is. We don't have the economic push to help enhance Visitacion. In the past, it was "We'll recall you" and everyone had a drama story about the 23 Club.

Looking at the shopping center, he said he likes the idea of doing mixed use with affordable housing; which would be an important feature of how to plan our future.

He expressed his opinion that Crocker Park is a "weird animal"; noting technology incubators are palpable; that's how Facebook and HP started. He said artist incubators are a good idea, as are biotech incubators and that Brisbane should be talking to Fisher Scientific. He said we should be going after specific businesses for certain spaces, such as the former VWR site, and the need for a staff person who has that focus.

He said that when it comes to hiring someone, doing so may not be able to be quantified until years later. The Chamber of Commerce position is half-time, but they're doing a great job with retention.

He commented he'd like to bring back a dairy farm at the Levinson property – it could provide local food, and the kids could find out where milk, cheese and butter come from. He said that perhaps there could be funds available through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Lastly, he remarked that they would not be focusing on the Baylands tonight.

CM O'Connell remarked that Brisbane is small and getting a building permit is the same as other cities, but we are so much nicer.

CM Conway remarked that broadband in Crocker Park is something else they're working on.

CM Liu said that in order to figure out where we want to go, we need to know our identity. She said that some people don't know the history of Brisbane, but like it for the same reason old-timers do.

She said that in regards to economic development in Brisbane – 91% in Crocker Park is great, but we need to plan for the next recession. She said that South San Francisco really planned a process to be about biotech and she wants Brisbane to be economically-marketable.

She said she likes the idea of a makerspace. In regards to community development, she wants to look at recreational opportunities.

She also said she would like see a more vibrant downtown with more shops.

She likes seeing the Mountain driving in; undergrounding wires would preserve views. Looking down and up from the Village, she likes the idea from the TAP Report of turning the shopping center out towards Bayshore. She said an entryway project would slow down traffic on Bayshore to get people to stop, maybe with an iconic art structure, and come into town. She then spoke about murals around the Bay Area and how mural tours can be organized to show people the history of Brisbane. She said Brisbane could set up space in the Community Center for people to sell their artwork.

In speaking about the Village, she remarked how anchor tenant spaces are so important and that Brisbane should work with the owners to market those spaces. She said that she would like to see two stories with a parking structure on top. She felt it important to take advantage of the views of the Mountain.

She then commented that a high-end seafood/steakhouse at the Marina should be encouraged. She also made suggestions for a soda fountain on Visitacion, a pharmacy at the Village, and that she didn't want to see vacancies on Visitacion. She remarked that she sees the need for affordable housing. She said she doesn't want to see vacant lots at the Village. She suggested a beautification project with the community to clean up weeds.

In regards to solar panels, she mentioned that there should be incentives for businesses to install them and that Brisbane should have more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to show that we're progressive.

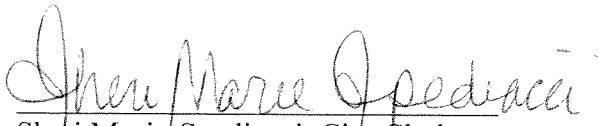
In regards to Crocker Park, CM Liu said she likes the Southeast Crocker Park mixed-used plan and brought out the recommendation from the ULI TAP Report about creating showrooms to open up the City's sales tax potential, and for incentives to be offered for companies to come to Brisbane.

CM Lentz expressed the need to bring back music, and have artist galleries/studios where artists can make and display their products. He said the City owns a number of spaces downtown that are not being used. He said that the TAP Report would be presented to everyone. He also said that most of the ideas suggested tonight can happen and suggested looking into partnerships with private businesses or the County.

Anja Miller made a final remark regarding Bank of America explaining how the City got the bank, but the permit was given on condition of a three-phase process, where they would phase into a permanent building. She said they haven't fulfilled their promise to build a permanent building.

Mayor Conway thanked the community and adjourned the meeting at 11:03pm.

ADJOURNMENT


Sheri Marie Spediacci, City Clerk