



MINUTES
Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency
Board of Commissioners – April 20, 2021
Held in the Executive Conference Room at
800 Municipal Dr., Farmington NM

Members Present: John McNeill, D.D.S. - Chair
Jill Tanis – Vice Chair
Doug Dykeman – Commissioner
Elizabeth McNally - Commissioner

Members Absent: Greg Mills – Commissioner

Staff Present: Warren Unsicker
Elizabeth Sandoval

Others Present: Mark Hathcock, City of Farmington Traffic Engineer
Cody Dudgeon, Desert River Guides

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair John McNeill, and there being a quorum, the following proceedings were duly had and taken.

2. Approval of the February 16, 2021 Minutes

Vice Chair Tanis stated that on page five of the minutes, “units” should be added after refrigeration under Chair McNeill’s question to Mr. Unsicker, page five, item five, fifth line.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Tanis and seconded by Commissioner Dykeman to approve the minutes of February 16, 2021 as amended. This motion passed 3-0.

3. Proposal for Downtown Upgrade and New Design for Free Parking Lot Signs – Mark Hathcock

Mark Hathcock, City of Farmington Traffic Engineer, presented the following presentation:

Downtown Free Parking New Signage Designs

Free Parking Lots in the Downtown Area

- A total of 10 parking lots
- City owned or leased by the City for public use
- Total approximate parking spaces of 450



Preconstruction Free Parking Signage

- 15 signs (red stars) were installed at multiple driveways to the free parking lots
- 8 wayfinding signs (yellow stars) were installed on Main Street directing people to the free parking lots
- 23 Total signs
- This design of free parking was used at all placement locations



Chair McNeill asked if the building with the American flag was privately owned.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that he was not sure and would have to look into that.

Current Sign Placement

- Before construction a total of 10 free-parking signs were removed. This included all 8 of the wayfinding free parking signs on Main Street.
- 10 temporary signs have been installed at new locations on Broadway.
- Main Street does not currently have any free parking signage.
- 23 total signs are currently installed for free parking.
 - 13 = Red Stars (Old Design)
 - 5 = Green Stars (Temp Design)
 - 5 = Yellow Stars (Temp Wayfinding)



Proposed New Free Parking Sign Placement

- Green stars represent the new sign installations at the driveways to the free parking lots (18 signs).
- 17 proposed placements will be similar to the previous placements.
- 1 additional sign will be placed at the free parking lot on Animas Street.
- Layout for the Animas Street parking lot and is currently the planning and design process.



Chair McNeill stated that a third of the parking lot on La Plata St. was owned by the City and asked if the remainder was privately owned.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that the City does lease the upper section of the parking lot.

Chair McNeill asked if the business at that location would have any input on the signage.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated no, but that it might be a good idea to get their input.

Chair McNeill stated that it would be good to get the businesses input and buy-in, also including them would help build a better business relationship.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that he would work on that.

Proposed New Free Parking Sign Placement

- Green stars represent the new sign design installations at the driveways to the free parking lots (18 signs).
- White stars represent the new sign design installations for wayfinding to the free parking lots (19 signs).
- 37 total signs to be installed.



Proposed New Free Parking Design Options



Commissioner Dykeman asked if these were Wayfinding Signs and how the design of the new signs affected the new infrastructure Downtown.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that the way finding signs would not have addressing at the bottom and most of the signs could fit in the planters, should concrete placement be needed the Parks Department would construct that with minimal damage to the current infrastructure.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that the brand is The Heart of Farmington, so her preference would be option 1 or 2. Vice Chair Tanis stated that showing the logo for Downtown would be her preference, therefore choosing option 1.

Chair McNeill asked if there were other signs being considered within the community, not specific to Main Street.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that there are other signs, some have been removed and there is no proposal to place any more signs Downtown.

Chair McNeill stated that the signs throughout the City should be consistent with one another. Chair McNeill asked which of the three options was the easiest to see.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that the leaf from the logo on option 2 was hard to see but that option 1 was the best and the matches current wayfinding signs.

Chair McNeill stated that he prefers option 2 and moving "Farmington" to the bottom line. Chair McNeill also stated that when talks of wayfinding started for Downtown, there was also talk about finger post signs being installed at Orchard and Main, as well as other interesting areas.

Traffic Engineer Hathcock stated that he had heard a little about the finger post signs awhile back, but has not heard anything since.

Warren Unsicker, Economic Development Director, stated that the finger post signs were taken out of the overall project due to financial constraints.

Chair McNeill stated that the finger post signs were approved and should be kept on the table until funding does become available.

Chair McNeill stated that when Mr. Tom Taylor was the Mayor of Farmington free parking was approved for Downtown. Chair McNeill stated that he does remember the consultant talking about how if paid parking was implemented there seem to be less complaints from business owners.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that some Downtown merchants are complaining about parking in regards to the tenants that live in the above living quarters. Vice Chair Tanis stating that business owners would like to see lines painted to show the number of spaces due to people parking incorrectly and taking up more space than needed.

Mr. Unsicker stated that it is up to the landlords to enforce parking restriction for tenants.

Chair McNeill stated that perhaps this could be something the Downtown Coordinator could discuss with business owners.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she would like to change her vote from option 1 to option 2 on the sign design.

Mr. Unsicker stated that perhaps the logo could be more accentuated in option 2.

Commissioner McNally joined the meeting.

Chair McNeill asked Commissioner McNally which option she liked.

Commissioner McNally stated that they all look fine and she would defer to the Commission to make the decision.

4. **Main Street and Downtown Residential Living – Jill Tanis**

Vice Chair Tanis updated the Commission on her efforts of outreach in the Downtown MRA district regarding residential living in the Downtown area. Vice Chair Tanis stated that a property owner stated that they are finding that demoing and rebuilding is more cost effective as opposed to repurposing the current property. Cost of renovation versus market revenue, as well as fire suppression upgrades and ADA compliance upgrades, are concerns for property owners.

Vice Chair Tanis passed out the following sheet:

FIRE SPRINKLER TAX INCENTIVES FACT SHEET

Sprinklers in Commercial Buildings
In December of 2017, Congress passed the most sweeping tax reform legislation since 1986. Included in this legislation (P.L. 115-97) was a provision to incentivize the installation of fire sprinklers for small business owners (Section 179).

Tax Incentive: Small Business Section 179
Section 179 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code allows small businesses to write off the full cost of commercial fire sprinkler systems as an expense up to \$1.04 million. This benefit enables many small businesses to immediately recover the costs of the capital investment. Those who borrow money to pay for a project can fully deduct the interest expense of the loan.

The new Section 179 deduction applies to upgrading existing systems or retrofitting systems in existing structures. The goal is to stimulate long-term economic growth by encouraging businesses to make capital investments.

This provision applies only to commercial structures and cannot be used for retrofitting sprinklers into residential structures.

Critical occupancies such as entertainment venues could easily be protected under this provision. This change is a permanent law and is not gradually phased out over time.

What Businesses Need To Know About Cost Recovery Section 13201
The Consolidated Appropriations Act (CASA) of 2020 includes a technical correction to the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) that gives incentives to businesses of any size that retrofit their properties with fire sprinkler systems. Under the umbrella of qualified improvement property (QIP), the tax incentive only applies to improvements made by a taxpayer to an interior portion of an existing building that is nonresidential commercial real property.

Under Cost Recovery Section 13201, there is a temporary 100 percent expensing, a process known as bonus depreciation. Previously, the costs for sprinkler system installations in commercial structures were depreciated over a 39-year time horizon. Under the new law, any sprinkler system in an existing commercial structure that is installed or upgraded from September 27, 2017 - December 31, 2022 can be fully expensed, allowing the property owner to immediately deduct the full cost of the sprinkler system.

After 2022 the ability to deduct the cost is as follows:

Year	Depreciation
2023	80%
2024	60%
2025	40%
2026	20%
2027	The depreciation schedule is permanently set at 15 years

A professional tax advisor can help a business determine precisely how the new incentives will impact its bottom line. A tax advisor can help a property owner retroactively claim any missed deductions from installing a fire sprinkler system between September 27, 2017 and present.

• For more details about the tax incentives, [The CARES Act Delivers New Fire Sprinkler Tax Incentives](#).

NFSA
National Fire Sprinkler Association
The National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that represents the fire sprinkler industry. NFSA members can avoid claims on Superstorm Sandy properties. NFSA members can avoid claims on Superstorm Sandy properties. NFSA members can avoid claims on Superstorm Sandy properties.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that the Fire Sprinkler Tax Incentive is 100% deductible. Vice Chair Tanis also stated that some other things to discuss would be how

diversifying businesses would attract visibility, parking concerns, and trash issues, which will be included on next month's agenda. Vice Chair Tanis also stated that she would like to talk with Sherry Roach regarding resources available to promote Main St. and Broadway to business owners.

Mr. Unsicker stated that Sherry Roach no longer serves as the Downtown Project Manager and is now employed with the Farmington Electric Utility Department. Her availability at this point is not known, as she is working in a new position.

Chair McNeill stated that he would like for Vice Chair Tanis to report back perhaps on a quarterly basis on her efforts of outreach in the Downtown MRA district regarding residential living in the Downtown area. Chair McNeill also stating that Sherry Roach does make herself available when possible and reaching out to her to see if a discussion could take place based on her availability, also the new Downtown Coordinator should be included in these discussions.

Chair McNeill stated that demolishing buildings Downtown in concerning and does not preserve Downtown. Chair McNeill stated that the local certified government needs to be included in the comprehensive plan in regards to preserving Downtown.

Vice Chair Tanis stated that she did not think that the contractor wanted to do any demolition of Downtown locations, but perhaps other locations.

Commissioner Dykeman stated that the certified local government needs to be involved as it gives residents a say in preservation and if not in place then historic preservation goes to the State of New Mexico.

Chair McNeill agreed with Commissioner Dykeman.

5. Update From Cody Dudgeon, Owner Of Desert River Guides, On Business Start Up For The Season – Beth McNally

Cody Dudgeon, owner of Desert River Guides, presented information on his new business, Desert River Guides, located at 109 E. Pinon St. Mr. Dudgeon stated that his business does have several bookings in May and looks to employ 8-12 people. There will be a small grand opening during Memorial Day weekend. The business front area is open and doors will open to the public next week. Mr. Dudgeon stated that his biggest obstacle has been getting his bus registered with the State of New Mexico.

Commissioner Dykeman asked how many put-in locations will there be, what are the length of the trips and level of rapids.

Mr. Dudgeon stated there will be put-ins at Penny Lane, Westland Park, Cedar Hill, McGee Park and San Juan River in Bloomfield; with the major put-in being at Penny Lane and Miller St. being a 1.5- 3 hour trip depending on water level.

Commissioner McNally asked if there was an age limit for being able to participate.

Mr. Dudgeon state 8 years and older on the Animas River and 4 and over on the San Juan River, stating that it is more of a weight limit due to life jacket weight requirements.

Vice Chair Tanis wished Mr. Dudgeon luck on his new business venture and asked if he had talked with any of the Downtown businesses.

Mr. Dudgeon stated that he had talked with Three Rivers Restaurant, as well as other local Farmington businesses, about displaying posters at their place of business.

Chair McNeill asked if there were other activities offered besides rafting.

Mr. Dudgeon stated that at this time they are only offering rafting and when more revenue is brought in they may possibly include more activities.

Chair McNeill asked if space at the current location could be rented out to other businesses.

Mr. Dudgeon stated that at this time they are not renting out space, but may possibly include bike rentals and use space for storing equipment.

Chair McNeill asked if Mr. Dudgeon had any feedback from working with the City.

Mr. Dudgeon stated that the City has been helpful, especially with minor remodeling that was needed and maintenance work that was needed. Mr. Dudgeon stated that working with the City has been a very good partnership.

Commissioner McNally asked if Mr. Dudgeon would take on volunteer high school students.

Mr. Dudgeon stated that they would consider taking on high school volunteers to work on the business side of the business, stating that river guides cannot be volunteers.

6. Update On Status Of River Reach Activities; Paddle Trails Designation Project; & Stocking Of Fish In Animas River Within MRA Area For Increased Opportunities For Winter Time Fishing – Beth McNally

Commissioner McNally discussed updates regarding River Reach, Paddle Trails Designation Project and stocking of fish in the Animas River for winter fishing.

7. Update On Progress Of The Three Rivers Estate Senior Living Facility – Beth McNally

Commissioner McNally stated that the Three Rivers Estate Senior Living Facility is in Phase I and on track with construction. The contractor is using all local subcontractors. The contractors also hold periodic barbeques onsite. Commissioner McNally stated that she would update the board on upcoming barbeque dates. There have also been numerous inquiries about the facility and even some deposits made on the units being built.

8. Main Street Now Conference Discussion – John McNeill & Jill Tanis

Vice Chair Tanis and Chair McNeill discussed the three day Main Street Now conference they had attended. Both Chair McNeill and Vice Chair Tanis noted that there were many webinars being offered, including topics such as online marketing strategies, essential tips for rebuilding business, webinars on inclusion and keeping conversations alive, to name a few.

Chair McNeill mentioned possibly having a Four Corners cultural fair that celebrated and included all cultures. Chair McNeill also mentioned the Shop Small by American Express rescue funds and asked Mr. Unsicker if the businesses within the City were aware of these funds.

Mr. Unsicker stated that all of the federal funding that are being offered are advertised to those who qualify.

Chair McNeill stated that another topic that was of interest from the conference was branding experience and what is important to maintain and what needs to be changed. Chair McNeill stated that this is a topic that the Downtown Coordinator might benefit from.

9. MRA Staff Updates – Warren Unsicker

Mr. Unsicker provided his staff updates noting that there is more and more activity Downtown. The speaker system Downtown is fully operational and easy to use. The Totah Theater project is coming along and is ahead of schedule. The Anasazi Inn is starting remediation, which needs to be done before the demolition can take place.

Commissioner McNally asked if there was asbestos or lead paint found at the Anasazi Inn.

Mr. Unsicker stated that there was some, but it was not as dire as they thought it would be.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the Downtown growth continues, a new beauty business is moving in, the Iron Wood Gym and other businesses are starting to pop up Downtown. There has been a lot of interest in the Downtown area and that is encouraging to see. Mr. Unsicker also stated that the Wells Fargo Downtown location would be closing June 2, 2021. There will be a plan to do a walk through for potential business opportunities for that building.

Commissioner McNally asked if it would be possible for the MRA to take a tour of the facility as well.

Mr. Unsicker stated that might be a possibility and that he would update the board at a later time.

Mr. Unsicker also stated that the Food Hub for Downtown is in process and a Kitchen Coordinator has been hired.

Commissioner McNally asked if there was an update regarding the Downtown Coordinator position.

Mr. Unsicker stated that the position is being reevaluated at this time.

Chair McNeill stated that the need for the Downtown Coordinator is great and the position really should be full-time.

10. Business from

Floor – There was no business from the floor.

Chair – There was no business from the Chair.

Members – Vice Chair Tanis stated that she sent a letter to the property owner located at the lot behind the old tea company, but has not received a response. Vice Chair Tanis said that she also called the gym located near the property and there was no response. Vice Chair Tanis also stated that there were workers at the gym location that were installing turf that seem to be part of the gym.

Mr. Unsicker state that there is grant that was obtained to pay for the panels that are being installed. Mr. Unsicker stated that some of the panels were damaged and were replaced.

Chair McNeill asked if it would be possible to submit a cost estimate to the property owner for replacement of the damaged panels.

Mr. Unsicker stated that was a possibility.

Commissioner McNally asked if anyone knew what the operating hours were for Three River Restaurant.

Mr. Unsicker said that he was unsure and with the change in occupancy levels going from turquoise to back to yellow he was doubtful that operating hours had expanded.

Staff – There was no business from Staff.

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chair Tanis and seconded by Commissioner McNally to adjourn. The motion passed 4-0. The Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.



John McNeill, Chair



Elizabeth Sandoval, Administrative Assistant