

Armory Arts District Study Group

January 19, 2011 Minutes

In attendance: Yvonne Seggerman, Joan Hausrath, Thomas Mann, Linda Dewing, Mike Cassidy, Linda Cohen., Mark House, Amanda Grossi, David Wax, Tony Estrella, Barney Heath, Tom Willett, Maia Small, Mayor Don Grebien, Rick Goldstein.

Goal of meetings- To discuss what the Armory Arts District will look like in 2020.

Minutes were approved from the last meeting.

1.Armory News

Yvonne went over how the loss of JMW as a tenant has put financial stress on the Armory. Currently it looks as if the Armory is headed into receivership. The Gamm has been considering purchasing the Armory but has been unable to get traditional financing. Private financing may be a possibility. There are also new groups expressing interest in becoming Armory tenants.

David Wax, board member of Gamm emphasized the survival of the Gamm as a theatre company and not as a real estate investor. The drive of the board is to keep the theatre successful and preventing debt. The long term goal is for an arts center but the board is

cautious and will move forward when it is financially viable.

Mayor Grebien spoke about continuing the city's relationship with the Armory because of the investment the city has made in the building's preservation. Currently the city is working to reach out to the current mortgage holder. He is interested in sustaining the Gamm Theatre in the building and in Pawtucket, long haul.

Thomas discussed the possibility of a land trust. Currently there are no assets for a land trust to make a purchase of that magnitude, but it could be an option. There may be other opportunities because the Armory is a historic building but it's not an overnight decision.

2. Planning Department – Exchange Street Pedestrian Design Improvement

Barney discussed DOT enhancement money for Roosevelt and Broadway expansion. They have received \$500,000 of state money for Exchange St. project. They will be taking the design to DOT, who will then take it on as their own project. This will help the cost go down because money will be spent on construction rather than design. Currently they are in the conceptual phase.

Maia Small gave a presentation on her vision of the future of Exchange St. (The Exchange Project) as part of an overall Downtown Design Plan. The project involves the area between Nathanson

Bridge to the Broadway intersection. She has been looking at how all forms of transit come together and a major goal is to improve the use of alternative transportation. Due to monetary constraints the project may have to be put together in pieces and stages.

The goals are to increase school safety, enhance bike ridership, create beauty, and connect to the Blackstone Valley bike path.

Exchange St. is the gateway into Pawtucket.

Safety and speed are a big concern at the Broadway and Exchange St. intersections.

Organizing the loading/unloading zones on the North side of Exchange St. next to the school and Armory.

Bike Lanes on South side of Exchange St.

Slow down Traffic on Exchange St. by narrowing, normalize intersections and making the area an urban street rather than a highway.

New Public Space on the corner of Broadway and Exchange.

Trying not to move curbing to save money.

More information is available at DowntownPawtucket.us

Q+A

Mike suggested separating the buses and cars at Tolman, that maybe the buses should park along the armory side of the school, (Fountain Street) or utilize the municipal parking lot. Maia mentioned that a lot of this depends on understanding the bus routes.

A car count at Tolman was suggested.

Bus stop on Exchange St. could be a possibility.

Prevent students crossing through traffic and traffic pileup from loading and unloading.

Depending on the materials used, the estimated cost is unfortunately three times the \$500,000 currently available.

Yvonne suggested a blinking yellow light between the Armory and Design Center over the raised crosswalk might be required in the future, if a tenant comes in occupying both Armory and a floor of the center. Maia confirmed this as possible.

Rick expressed concern over cars on Broadway moving from the right lane to the left to get on 95.

Questions were raised over converting Broadway into a two way road, but it would be a long battle with RIDOT.

Moving utilities underground and eliminate poles and wires to make Exchange St. esthetically pleasing

Yvonne mentioned storm drains near the Armory (Fountain and Exchange) that are due to be blown out by the city - these may need to be coordinated with in the project for expense containment.

So much will impact the Tolman High School let-out time, it will be important to share these designs as soon as possible with Fred Silva, Principal and Deb Cylke, Superintendent of Schools

Trees and trenches help to reduce storm water run off.

Yvonne expressed that because Exchange St. is the gateway to the city it would be important to get full funding if at all possible for the project so it can be finished in one piece.

Other Business

Gamm News

Tony- A Doll's House will be playing January 20-February 20

The Next meeting is February 9, 2011 at 11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: Amanda Grossi

Minutes approved November 2, 2011