

Minutes of the Downtown Okauchee Advisory Committee (DOAC)

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Committee Members Present

All committee members were present.

Contributing Staff Present

Jacob Heermans, Land Use Specialist

Rebekah Leto, Senior Land Use Specialist

Welcome/Introductions

The Committee members introduced themselves. Mr. Fruth welcomed the committee and thanked them for their time and service in assisting Staff with guiding the development of unique zoning provisions and identifying opportunities to strengthen the business and residential environment in Downtown Okauchee. Mr. Fruth explained that this project will guide the third major code update with significance to the Town of Oconomowoc within the last few years. Previous updates included Farmland Preservation and Shoreland Zoning. The Town and County are working in partnership on this project and stakeholder input is vital to the project's success.

Mr. Fruth identified that the existing one size fits all zoning scheme does not work for a downtown environment and in an area where the development pattern pre-dates zoning. With the economy rebounding, there is a renewed interest in the redevelopment of downtowns locally and nationally.

Mr. Fruth concluded with a quick summary of the meeting schedule, which included a project overview, committee input sessions, and an introduction to topics that will be discussed at Meeting #2.

Project overview presentation

Ms. Barrows presented a project overview including the following:

- Project charter and timeline
 - The objectives are in line with the results of a 2013 business community survey that was conducted for the downtown Okauchee area.
 - The 2013 business community survey and input from the DOAC will help guide decision making.
 - Priority topics have been identified to guide the development of unique zoning provisions for the downtown environment.
- Project area/variance history
- Analysis document
 - The analysis document will be referred to throughout the project. Additional thoughts may be provided by committee members at any time.
- Demo of the google site where all meeting materials are electronically stored (an updated link will be provided as part of each meeting reminder email.

Committee Input Sessions:

The committee split into two groups, facilitated by Ms. Leto and Ms. Barrows, to discuss what makes Okauchee and surrounding communities a great place to work/live/visit and identify opportunities for potential improvement. Below is a summary of the committee input sessions.

Session 1: Positives of Okauchee

Questions:

- a) What do you like most about Okauchee?
- b) Why do businesses locate in Okauchee?
- c) Why do people choose to live in Okauchee?
- d) What draws visitors to Okauchee?

Answers:

- Okauchee Lake
- Easy Access from Highway 16
- Recreational Activities
- Walkable
- Affordable Living/Diverse Options
- Diverse Dining Options (cost and food type)
- Urban Getaway
- Central Lake Country Location
- Quaint Downtown Area
- Social
- Friendliness of Business Owners
- Diverse Offerings
- Lake Access (incl. boater access to restaurants/bars)
- Year-Round Events
- Downtown Lighting/Landscaping
- Community Feel
- Businesses perceive easy success
- Diversity in Uses
- Scale of Buildings
- Opportunities for Business Growth
- Foolery's
- Round-a-bout is a Focal Point

Session 2: Opportunities

- a) What do you see in other area downtowns or communities that helps make them vibrant?

- Lodging
- Activities for All Seasons
- Residential Options
- Professional Offices
- Parking Alternatives
- Sewer
- Downtown Theme
- Coffee/Ice Cream Shops
- Affordability
- Improved Facades
- Family Friendly Establishments
- Kid Friendly Areas
- Studio/Service Uses
- Destination Retail

- b) What could be improved in downtown Okauchee?

- Building Aesthetics
- Increased Advertising
- More Diverse Business Uses
- Zoning Regulations
- Limited Outdoor Use
- Boat Access
- Accommodate Seasonal Uses
- Removal of Overhead Utility Lines
- Increased Walkability
- Lodging
- Increased Entertainment/Events
- Uses on or Near Water
- More Family Activities
- Shared Parking Opportunities
- Increase Density

c) How would you like to see vacant spaces/properties redeveloped or repurposed?

- Increased Density
- Redevelopment of Existing Buildings/New Development is Expensive
- Increased Commercial Uses in Downtown
- Increased Residential Options – Higher Density Housing
- Outdoor Dining/Music
- Mixed-Use Buildings
- Community Sponsored Events
- Hotels/Lodging Options
- Increased Energy
- Increased Events/Activities
- Need for a Community Identity
- Maintain Existing Commercial Properties (30 bars on lake in 60's)

Session 3: Business/Visitor Focus

a) What makes businesses successful in Okauchee?

- Involved in the Community
- Events/Sports Leagues
- Central Location
- Draw of the Lake
- Outdoor Use Allowed
- Walkability
- Consistency of Operation
- Good Food (diverse cost & food type options)
- Variety
- Visually Appealing
- Specialized Businesses
- Economic Diversity
- Hosting Activities
- Good Looking Architecture
- Significant Population to Serve
- Service Mentality of Businesses

b) What challenges do businesses face?

- Financial Backing
- Consistency of Operation
- Local AirBNB ordinance
- Town Choosing Residents over Businesses
- Zoning Regulations
- Lack of Advertising
- Unchanged Environment
- No Hotels
- Lack of Sewer Requisitions
- Surviving Winter Slowdown (Primarily Summer Resident)
- Lack of Parking Near Foolery's

c) What could improve the business climate?

- Active Chamber and Business Association
- Higher Density (more year-round residents)
- Mixed-Use Buildings
- Sewer Requisitions
- Allow Uses Close to the Water
- Expanded Business Offerings
- Expand Uses into Parking/Street

d) What could help Okauchee attract more visitors?

- Lodging
- Outdoor Spaces (To Host Events/Event Space)
- Parking
- Preserve Resort Town Feel
- Additional Service Operations
- Diversity in Uses

Session 4: Residential Focus

a) What could improve the quality of life for residents?

- Bike Access
- Improved Lake Views/Access
- Sewer Requisitions
- Adequate Housing Choices
- Sidewalks
- Incorporate Mixed-Use Buildings
- Shoreland Zoning/Nonconforming Building Requirements
- Diversity in Uses

b) Are adequate housing choices available?

- NO
- Rental Options Limited and Appear to be Low Quality
- Mixed-Use (Residential above Retail)
- Affordable Options
- Aging Population – need smaller footprints to accommodate
- Small/Clustered Housing Near Downtown

Next meeting topics:

Ms. Barrows explained the agenda for the next meeting, which will be held on May 11, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. at the Oconomowoc Town Hall. The agenda will include a discussion of the following:

- Continuation of DOAC input session summary
- Zoning/use
- Height
- Road Setback
- Offset
- Introduction of Meeting # 3 topics