

**DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING MEETING**  
**COMMERCIAL AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 6:30pm**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

*Amber Kobler, Neighborhood Planner, City of Des Moines Community Development*

- a) Brief overview of the Drake Neighborhood Plan and how this will fit in
- b) Introductions

**II. Current efforts of the Roosevelt Cultural District**

*Presented by RCD members / stakeholder committee*

- a) Discuss goals / projects / overall vision for the area
- b) Identify needs / challenges

**III. Discuss potential partnerships and resources**

- a) How can the Drake neighborhood support RCD's efforts?
- b) Ideas for fundraising?

**IV. Conclusion**

**Meeting Notes:**

Amber Kobler, City Planner, gave a brief overview of the planning process for the Drake Neighborhood Plan, which began in January 2009. There have been several subcommittees, each focusing on a particular topic. This subcommittee is working on commercial areas in the neighborhood. The intent is not to replace or have the Drake Neighborhood Association (DNA) take over the efforts of the Roosevelt Cultural District (RCD). Rather, the intent of the discussion at this meeting is to learn about the RCD's efforts and plans, see how the DNA can support and assist the RCD, and ensure that their goals are at least referenced in the Drake plan.

Attendees introduced themselves and noted their affiliations. About half of the group was part of the Drake planning committee, either DNA members or Drake Area Business Association (DABA) members. The rest of the group was affiliated with the RCD.

**Current efforts of the Roosevelt Cultural District / Potential partnerships and resources**

*Vision Plan*

Rod McCullough, Managing Director of the Playhouse and RCD Treasurer, Sheena Thomas, current Chair of the RCD, and Jennifer Sayers, who is leading the streetscape stakeholder group, described how the Cultural District developed their Vision Plan Report & Recommendations. The two main purposes of the Vision Plan were to address safety concerns on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and add more green space to the area. The Plan outlines a series of recommendations for traffic reconfiguration and improvements in pedestrian safety and accessibility. It also calls for installation of public art and adding street trees and

planters. The RCD developed the Plan with help from Mike Simonson, one of the property owners. In late 2007, the RCD presented the Vision Plan to the surrounding neighborhoods, Councilmember Christine Hensley, the Mayor, and Gary Fox from the City's Traffic and Transportation Division. The group encountered opposition to some recommendations of the plan from several of the businesses in the area. One concern is the age and state of the sewer under 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Amber Kobler will look into it and report back to Jennifer Sayers.

Rod, Sheena, and Jennifer all noted that Plan is a starting point with many details to work out yet. Currently, Jennifer is leading a stakeholder group that is putting together an application to the City for a streetscape project. The goal is to have the streetscape implemented in the next five years. They have already been successful in obtaining funding for raised crosswalks on Center and Chamberlain. Rod McCullough stated that the project may be a challenge because there are so few property owners in the RCD, most businesses are tenants. The RCD could use support from the Drake Neighborhood when pursuing funding. Andrea Hauer, from the City's Office of Economic Development, suggested that the schools could contribute in-kind to help with the RCD's required matching contribution. The RCD also overlaps several neighborhoods and can work with each of them to raise funds or pursue grant opportunities. The key will be to layer funding from a number of sources, or to do the project in phases.

#### *Cultural & Entertainment District*

The RCD is certified by the State Historical Society of Iowa as a Cultural & Entertainment District. Larry James Jr. and Woody Wasson indicated that the Drake Area Business Association is considering applying to have Dogtown certified as a cultural district as well. The group discussed the benefits of doing so and the differences between being a cultural district and the Main Street Iowa program. The RCD decided to apply for cultural district status in part to include Roosevelt High School, Hubbell Elementary, and the Playhouse. RCD members stated that they have not been successful in achieving live/work space for artists in the area. They also noted that there is some conflict between the cultural function of the district and some of the businesses.

There was discussion about expanding the RCD boundaries. The RCD is currently considering expanding to the south, to include the Des Moines Art Center and/or the Salisbury House (as larger anchors). The group talked about whether or not it made sense to expand north and east to include the Dogtown area and other parts of Drake. It was decided that it may be better to have multiple cultural districts that are distinct areas, although there is certainly opportunity for working together and promoting one another. Attendees agreed that it is important to create a sense of cohesion and synergy among the commercial areas in the Drake neighborhood and try to capitalize on something – like trees – that tie these areas to each other. The group also discussed creating an umbrella committee or forum for the west side commercial organizations to come together, learn from one another, and make sure they are not working at cross purposes.

The next meeting of the Drake Commercial Areas Sub-Committee will be on **Tuesday, April 20, 2010** to discuss the Uptown Shopping Center. Location and meeting time is still TBD.