GURA Board Retreat Notes

The retreat began at 9:00 a.m. on January 23, 2015 at the Golden Community Center. Staff welcomed the board members in attendance, which were Reed, Gould, Eakes, Miller and Story. Board members and staff introduced themselves and provided their educational and professional background.

Staff asked the board members about what they want to accomplish from the retreat. Many members wanted to have a clear understanding of goals in each project area.

The board discussed the implications of City Council Resolution 2161 and how this could frame future negotiations. The resolution focused on realigning economic development entities in Golden. In particular, Resolution 2161 provided guidelines as to how much property and sales tax could be given to projects and staffing suggestions for GURA. Board members discussed their interpretations of the resolution, and its implications for future decisions as a resolution rather than an ordinance.

The group watched a short video of GURA’s role in downtown which included the history of GURA, past projects, and an overview of the grant program the organization administered.

Following the video, a brief discussion of GURA’s mission statement took place. The group came to a consensus that it was not the appropriate time to evaluate the mission statement as it might change as the various project areas are discussed. It was suggested that they write any ideas for improving the mission statement as the retreat progresses.

Parfet/Briarwood Urban Renewal Area

As this is the smallest URA, the board asked if money could be spent outside of the URA boundaries. Money can technically be spent outside the boundaries, but GURA’s legal counsel would need to be consulted on any limits or guidelines. Specifically, better pedestrian connections could be constructed, such as a wider sidewalk on 8th Street that would connect the West 8th apartments and the neighborhood to Washington Avenue. Further infrastructure ideas will be investigated, and guidelines for investment within and outside the URA boundaries sought.

The present board members directed staff to invite a representative of Confluence to a GURA board meeting to discuss the project and ensure that the improvements listed in the agreement with the developer have been completed.

Other projects that could be implemented in the URA were presented. Options for sidewalks in the URA, connections to the nearby trails, and a water fountain in or around the dog park are projects that could provide a community benefit.

A meeting between GURA staff and the Briarwood Inn owners should be convened to better understand the Briarwood Inn’s intentions regarding their initial interest in constructing lodging on the property. If Briarwood wants to build an addition, a feasibility study might be a good investment on GURA’s part to get an idea of what could be developed in the area.

Central Neighborhoods Urban Renewal Area

Many meetings with the residents in this area have been conducted to get their input and suggestions for improving the area. The residents do not want the URA to be similar to downtown Golden, and want smaller scale retail and neighborhood amenities. The Central Neighborhoods Plan identified significant areas of change, which includes the URA.
A common theme between the neighborhood plan, URA plan, and residents’ input is the need for a public space for people to gather. There are two areas for a public plaza in the area; the triangular price of land located at the southern end of the URA, or an area near the Golden Music string instrument repair shop, the credit union and the proposed orthodontist office. The group thought staff should meet with Alex Qualtire of Golden Music, the credit union, and the proposed orthodontist office owner to see if it would be possible to have a public space near the businesses.

Ideally the public space would have seating areas, adequate lighting, accessibility to and from the surrounding neighborhoods, and landscaping. Ideas for uses included a skate spot, a reading area, or a community gathering space where elements of the space could change easily.

Long-term goals for improving the area include constructing better sidewalks on the West end of the URA, and revamping the streetscape along East Street.

**West Colfax Urban Renewal Area**

This URA is the biggest and most challenging since there are six different subareas all of which have different needs. Areas 1, 2 and 3 could be enhanced through a series of projects focused on public space and walkability. Area 3 has similar goals to the Central Neighborhoods URA. The MIE proposed flex industrial space is in Area 4, while the Gateway Village development will occur in Area 6. Heritage Square occupies a majority of Area 5.

Change in this area is dependent upon when owners of properties want to make changes. Short term goals for this area include designing a complete street for Colfax, and taking a GURA field trip to Colfax to get a sense of potential projects.

As more information about the potential complete street design is developed, the GURA board wants to meet with Planning Commission to discuss in detail the design goals for Area 3 as they relate to the South Neighborhoods Plan and possible zoning changes. It will be beneficial to be like minded when dealing with redevelopment proposals.

Similarly, the board would welcome a visit from Planning staff to better understand how the “sustainability menu” works with development projects.

**Mission Statement**

At the conclusion of the meeting, the board determined that there is no immediate need to change the mission statement. At the same time, the board would welcome staff efforts to update the web site with information specific to community goals within each URA project area.