

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Implementation Committee that was formed from the Downtown Development Plan Steering Committee to ask for your support and attendance at the November 13 Mayor and Board work session at 4:30 pm.

Steve Gibson, a consultant with the International Downtown Association and Urban Place Consulting Group, will be making a presentation to the Mayor and Board to try and gain a commitment from the Town to move ahead with the formation of the Collierville Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC).

For those of you who are not familiar with the effort underway to preserve and enhance the Town Square and Downtown area, here is a history of events:

Previous to 2004 there had been several studies done that shed light on the need for a plan in the Downtown area. All of these plans were filled with good information and came to similar conclusions but they all met with same result. They were shelved and began collecting dust. It is easy to conclude what needs to be done but implementing these ideas is much more difficult.

In late 2004, as a response to the need to further investigate the vision and goals that may be needed to guide future growth, a diverse group of local leaders through a committee formed by Main Street Collierville came together to review, evaluate and research ideas for the Historic Town Square District in Downtown Collierville.

A Steering Committee consisting of key public and private representatives including developers, landowners, historic district business people, Town government representatives and others, was convened to review concepts and develop a strategy. In a progressive partnership with the Town of Collierville, the Collierville Chamber of Commerce, and Main Street Collierville, consultants Market Street Services and The Sizemore Group were hired to facilitate the research and subsequent planning recommendations for Collierville's Downtown, the heart of the community. The cost to undertake this process was underwritten by the Town of Collierville, Collierville Chamber of Commerce, downtown property owners and Main Street Collierville.

In April 2005 the Collierville Downtown Square Development Plan was made public. The plan has several excellent ideas that can be used as a base on which to build, but the structure for implementing the plan, a Housing Authority, met with stiff opposition. From the Steering Committee another committee was formed to research alternatives to implement the plan. The recommendation of this Implementation Committee was to utilize the current structure of the Central Business Improvement District (CBID). The original Steering Committee ended its work and charged the Implementation Committee with moving this idea forward.

It became apparent that the committee was on the right track but needed help working out the details to present to the Town. At this point we asked for help from Jeff Sanford the President of the Center City Commission in Downtown Memphis. This organization has been extremely successful in breathing life into Downtown Memphis and it has been recognized nationally for their positive results. Through Jeff's contacts we were introduced

to David Feehan and Steve Gibson with the International Downtown Association, the world's leading authority on the development of downtowns.

These two gentlemen have over 40 years experience in working with downtown organizations and were asked by Main Street Collierville to help pull all of our research together and come up with a plan to present to the Town. The attached document is the result of their efforts and will be presented to the Mayor and Board on November 13 at the 4:30 work session.

After reading the plan, I am sure you will have many questions as it is impossible to digest everything that has taken us two years to develop. Here are a few questions that will (and should be) asked:

Why is it necessary?

In order to preserve the historic Town Square neighborhood, the Square itself must be economically vibrant and viable. In order to be economically viable, development must be high quality and historically appropriate, bringing new businesses, new residents and new users to the historic Town Square neighborhood. Having the proper plan will protect the surrounding areas from being developed in a way that will threaten the future success of the Town Square area.

Why can't the Town, on their own, do the things necessary to accomplish the same thing?

This is an excellent question and one that will be surely brought up. The Downtown area has an unlimited potential if it is handled in a way that brings everyone to the table. The success of this project will primarily be determined by the willingness of the Town and the private sector to work together. If the Town were to proceed without the private sector buy in it would never achieve its full potential. When you have a partnership between the Town and the private sector you are saying to everyone that this is important to us all and we are going to work together to make sure this is done right.

What will be the responsibility of the Collierville Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC)?

The first thing that this organization will be charged with is developing a detailed land-use plan that will be ultimately approved by the Mayor and Board. In addition to the land-use plan the CDDC will be charged with facilitating the development of a new set of zoning ordinances specifically designed for the designated area that will match the needs of the land-use plan. In addition the CDDC will act as a point of first contact for any new development and/or changes being made in the Historic District. The CDDC will be able to handle issues that come up in the Historic District that would normally just require staff approval and act in an advisory capacity to the Historic District Commission. This organization will also be involved in marketing to potential businesses and developers.

How does Main Street Collierville fit into this?

Main Street Collierville will fall under the umbrella of the CDDC and will continue producing the events with which it has been associated with.

Why should the town invest in this project?

It makes good business sense! The Square is our trademark! We should do what it takes to ensure the long term success of this asset because it makes good business sense! I don't know how you can measure in dollars the positive impact the Square has on Collierville as a whole but it is what makes Collierville different from other communities. Everyone in Collierville will benefit from a thriving Downtown Square area. If we ever allow the Square not to be "the Heart of Collierville" all of Collierville will definitely be affected in a negative way. We must give the Town Square and surrounding area the tools to compete with the thousands of square feet of new commercial and retail space being developed. A strong, vibrant and economically viable Town Square will help drive the economic engine of Collierville for years to come.

What are some of the benefits?

One of the biggest benefits of the CDDC will be taking the politics out of the equation. Once a land-use plan is agreed upon by the CDDC and the Mayor and Board we will have a clear vision of the direction of this area.

I think we can all agree that the Town Square is a special place and deserves special attention, but we **must** work together and not be fragmented in our approach. Winston Churchill once said "**If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided all will fail.**"

Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Allen Green