



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From: Charles Randy Oliver
City Manager**

AGENDA DATE REQUESTED: MAY 22, 2007

ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST TO PROVIDE MORE FOCUS AND MAXIMIZE RESOURCES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEART OF PEORIA PLAN CONCEPTS BY 1] ADOPTING AN ORDINANCE TO EXPAND THE PLANNING COMMISSION BY FOUR POSITIONS, 2] ADOPTING AN ORDINANCE TO CHANGE THE STATUS OF THE HEART OF PEORIA COMMISSION, AND 3] TRANSFERRING HEART OF PEORIA COMMISSIONERS BY APPOINTMENT TO EXISTING PLANNING AND/OR REGULATORY COMMISSIONS

The Heart of Peoria Commission has worked diligently and with success to raise the awareness of the Heart of Peoria Plan and New Urbanism. However, after thoughtful review of the Heart of Peoria Commission [HOP/C] history, review and adoption process for the Land Development Code [LDC], and City Council reports on business and commissions, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. The establishing ordinance for the HOP/C provided no authority, power, or process for the HOP/C to impact projects and planning in our community as part of the implementation of the Heart of Peoria Plan. The HOP/C has struggled for the past three years to rewrite that ordinance, and has not been able to do so, probably because there are already established processes and groups in place to accommodate their purpose.
2. The HOP/C has been and is comprised of citizens committed and willing to invest in the future of our community, and have been challenged with because of the lack of authority, power, or process. In addition, issues critical to the implementation of the Heart of Peoria Plan all fall within the defined authority of other existing, established entities.
3. Citizen involvement and leadership is too critical to our community to have it diverted and/or weakened by duplication or incompatible investment of effort and fragmented focus.
4. The recent review and adoption process for the LDC clearly reveals a fragmentation of focus on a significant planning effort in our community. Both state statutes and City ordinances clearly identify and assign the authorities for conducting the hearing and making recommendations regarding the comprehensive plan, future land use, and zoning to the Planning and Zoning Commissions. However, the HOP/C was instrumental in moving forward coding proposal identified in the Heart of Peoria Plan area, and they are trying to influence the approval system externally rather than internally. There needs to be a cohesive, targeted planning focus that merges the interests of New Urbanism, as represented in the Heart of Peoria Plan, with our traditional planning organizational structure; i.e., the Planning Commission.
5. The business community, both current and potential, needs to have available and understand a clearly defined, communicated, streamlined development approval process. It is confusing and adds an un-needed layer of bureaucracy when developers of projects within the Heart of Peoria area try to understand if they need to go before the HOP/C

prior to Council, staff, and/or other commission review.

6. And finally, in addition to maximizing the investment of citizen volunteers on our City commission, we must be on alert of efficiencies to maximize resource allocation – staff and dollars – to staff commissions. The City invests over one million dollars a year in our commissions and has to be alert for duplications and/or conflicts.

Therefore I am asking the City Council to concur with my recommendation that the community's planning effort be more focused and concentrated in a single entity, and in a manner to incorporate meaningful discussion and consideration of New Urbanism principles, have accountability for the implementation of the Heart of Peoria Plan through appropriate entities, maximize the investment of citizen involvement and leadership, and utilize staff resources efficiently by:

- A. Expanding the size of the current Planning Commission from seven to eleven, and assigning the responsibility of the Heart of Peoria Plan implementation through the appropriate entity to the Planning Commission and Planning Department.
- B. Changing the status of the current Heart of Peoria Commission from a City appointed commission to a private, civic commission, similar to that of Peoria City Beautiful, allowing the current and future members to meet as they wish, without Open Meeting Act regulations, to study, advocate, and take other actions as they wish related to the Heart of Peoria Plan and New Urbanism.
- C. Transferring Heart of Peoria Commissioners [with the exception of those that currently serve on other City commissions or are not in compliance with the City commission attendance policy] to other commissions having authority in the areas of land use and development, and taking advantage of an alignment of opportunities to add HOP/C members to the Planning Commission, as follows:
 - i. Christopher Summers – Planning Commission
 - ii. Dick Schwebel – Planning Commission
 - iii. Joe Richey – Planning Commission
 - iv. Beth Akeson – Planning Commission
 - v. Patrick Sullivan – Traffic Commission
 - vi. Nancy Biggins – Zoning Board of Appeals
 - vii. Bill Washkuhn – Public Building Commission

The contribution from the Heart of Peoria commissioners the past three years to raise the community's awareness and serve as a catalyst for the new LDC has been positive and made a difference. However, to continue to make that difference, those commissioners must be placed in positions to impact policy and regulation for the benefit of the community.

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Mayor

Jim Ardis