

Rob Allison - Re: Questions

From: Rob Allison
To: Connie Wharton
Date: 2/25/2011 2:12 PM
Subject: Re: Questions
CC: Rob Allison

>>> "Connie Wharton" <connie.wharton@gmail.com> 2/24/2011 4:31 PM >>>

Hi Rob,

I am looking forward to our discussion in the morning. I have read everything I could find about the downtown project on the internet. There wasn't much about the utility issue....as you would expect at this point.

Below are a list of questions that will allow Mike and I to give the city the very best proposal that we can. Of course, I am most interested in what I didn't ask, but what you think is important to this issue.

My questions are:

What is the overall status of the project?

The City Council has adopted the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan, hired McDougal Companies as the Master Developer & Consultant, and contracted with SGS Engineering to provide professional services to design & coordinate the "duct system" for the relocation of utilities. SGS is in the process of designing the first project with boundaries of Ave. Q on the West; Main Street to the North; Ave. O on the East; and Broadway to the South. The intent is to bid the first project in April or May and issue Notice To Proceed in May or June.

In addition to the above mentioned activity, the City Council has approved a Master Zone Case for Downtown. Amendments to the Master Zone case will be filed during this year. City staff is very close to completing the Downtown Public Improvement Design Guidelines and plan to present to Council before the end of June.

Is the "utility" issue the biggest bottleneck?

It is my opinion that redevelopment will not progress dramatically until investors are confident that relocation of utilities are will occur. The biggest bottleneck at this time is getting all the utilities on board with the concept of the City providing the duct bank and the utility companies funding the infrastructure and installing the infrastructure.

Besides AT&T, Suddenlink, NTS, and LP&L, are any other parties involved?

Specifically what have you asked them to do?

Other communication utilities have been identified that use the NTS facility as a "hub", but do not provide downtown service.

Does each utility have a separate and distinct role of any sort?

The players for downtown include LP&L, City Water & Sewer, Traffic Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Atmos, SuddenLink, NTS, and AT&T. Certainly, level of participation could and probably will differ on a project by project basis.

What does the budget look like for the project and can I get a copy of it?

As per the Master Plan, the project investment for downtown is approximately \$700 million and with the inclusion of public & public/private partnership, that investment is estimated at \$1 billion plus. The Council has appropriated \$7.5 million toward phase one (North/West quadrant. In addition, the City has received a \$1.5 million grant from the EDA for a total of \$9 million for the phase one project.

What are AT&T's objections and concerns as you understand them?

The position of AT&T is they will require reimbursement for the part in the project.

What have they asked for and why?

AT&T has communicated to the City that the entire downtown revitalization project will cost \$40 million and the initial project will cost \$1 million. This is information from a February 22nd meeting with David Nichols and Joseph Cosgrove.

Who are the principals involved in the negotiation?

To date, communication with AT&T has included Cameron Monroe (Amarillo), Robb Thetford (Amarillo), Bob Garza (Richardson), and recently, David Nichols (President, Texas), and Joseph Cosgrove, Jr. (Associate General Council).

Is the Technology Committee identified on the Downtown website significantly involved? (other than Gary Zheng)?

The Downtown Redevelopment Commission completed their charge and are no longer active. There is a Tech Team working with SGS assisting in the design of the duct system and coordinating the designs of the other utility companies. The Tech Team includes SGS staff, City staff, and representatives from each utility.

What has been the "tone" of the negotiations?

Mostly positive with all utilities including AT&, but AT&T is holding firm of the position of requiring reimbursement.

Again, we are most interested in what you perceive to be the key issues. I very much appreciate you taking the time to give us a little more background. See you at 10am in the morning.

Regards,
Connie