

Group 6 2nd Avenue Listening Session

2/17 Session Notes

Moderator: Harriett Brooks

Note Taker: Nathaniel Adukeh

Introductions of each participant and what brings them to meeting (5 mins.)

Scott Troxel – Realtor – Knows 2nd Ave. Well

Rebecca Elder – Reagan Smith Associates – Marketing Coordinator – Nashville Native

Phil Walker – City Planning Consultant

Judy Miller – Used to work on 2nd in the Butler’s Run building – 20years working in Nashville

Joe Cain – MDHA 4th Gen Local native Nashvillian

Joe – Nashville Civic Design Center

Do you have a favorite memory/experience from the 2nd Avenue area? (10 mins.)

Scott: Restaurant Morrell’s; liked it better when it was for locals than for tourists; before Country Music Hall of Fame most tourism was on Demonbreun; Mainly used by locals until the tourist boo; Morrell’s was a cajun/new orleans restaurant, simple but locally owned. Wonderful architecture, deep redness of the brick, the architectural details and subtle character, hopefully in the future to not make it look like disneyland but to maintain the overall feel.

Judy: Enjoys the hoopla that occurs when the NFL is there SEC and Bachelorette parties. Enjoyed it because it fun and the vibrancy funny cheerful positive.

Joe Cain: Desolate before decades before similar to lower Broadway for many years; became a place for locals for restaurants the shops; proximity to courthouse; it was the local place to go; 2nd ave a bit more local than the other streets downtown.

Rebecca: Enjoys sports and the events and people there during sporting events.

Phil: There’s enough space to add to the human scale, architecture and detail and streetscape work well, but overall to bring it back to what it was.

What makes the 2nd Avenue area unique? What are key characteristics to keep in mind as we move forward (12 mins.)

Scott: As you look downtown you find streets with similar buildings but not with them all together, contains a long strip of similar unique buildings. So many different uses there is a vitality for 18 hours of the day, offices, residents, lunch destination, retail; In some areas it vacates but not on 2nd ave. it maintains activity.

Phil: It has the visual termination of the metro courthouse. Not many streets where you look down and there is a visual termination and that makes it special. Limited on-street parking does it actually help, there may be other ways to use space and make pedestrians feel safer and maybe stop parking on the street. How to separate vehicles from pedestrians.

Joe Cain: One thing that bugs north or south is the cars on 2nd ave i.e. parked cars; all historic but there is only one parking place in front of business, it can be reused for another purpose and let the flow come out of pedestrian flow and used for a new purpose.

Judy: Faces the water but we face 2nd ave. Perhaps have a larger presence on the water, sit back on the river and watch, water taxis would be cool you could go back and forth. It's unique because we do have water.

What changes could make the 2nd Avenue area a better place? (12 mins.)

Judy: To find a way to have outdoor dining, rid of cars, widen sidewalks, enjoys outdoor dining and is something that is not on Broadway.

Rebecca: To have more outdoor dining and could be a destination in Nashville where that is unique to the area.

Phil: More geared towards streetscape, buildings to be rehabilitated but completely damaged buildings feels should be somewhat maintained/ like what was there before and not approach as a blank slate. A way to activate the street level, perhaps murals and ground floor activation to contribute to the street.

Joe Cain: 2nd was one of the first historic neighborhoods, the streetscape is tired and was put in in the 80s, not all needs to be thrown away but re-looked at and what can be improved; could new trees be implemented to not have to duck from the existing trees. Keep the old buildings but the streetscape could be opened more. Needs to be a double-sided street, there needs to be a reason someone would walk past commerce street and move up.

Scott: Street feels tight and trees could be pushed back. AT&T building is ugly and not engaging, the building mutes and stunts the street, perhaps retail fronts that feels more natural than a straight brick wall.

What would you like to be able to experience in the 2nd Avenue area? Do you have any thoughts on opportunities or aspirations to consider? (12 mins.)

Phil: Great historic architecture, retail, residential, maybe some office. Streetscape activation, building wall improvements/murals. How to re-invent but tunnel vision to rebuild back what was. Literally try to re-create the design, maybe some additional floors, maybe additional setback, but not to fully re-create the destination.

Joe Cain: Reactivation; Walking outside the office building at lunch and seeing people walking up and down the street to get lunch; it was more for the locals i.e. courthouse employees/people; How to draw people back in and maintain the clientele; Need to make it a place where people will go to and not all tourist but more local.

Scott: Not to turn over for one group for locals and tourists but something to attract. If it attracts locals it will also attract tourists. Nashville has a legacy, could be a moment to respect its history but also a time to re-create what was there and improve upon it.

What do you think are the biggest obstacles to overcome? (12 mins.)

Judy: Expressed concern that it keeps its historical character, a completely demolished building rebuilt may not fit the rest of the buildings. Another concern is if someone does not build back at all. Will the work get done and can it get done? Some venues, like the Irish Pub, has sit vacant for a while could that trend continue.

Phil: Whoever goes in to build will have to fit the historical guidelines. A RFP type process to get proposals from developers and perhaps an analysis beforehand to get an idea of the uses of the property, could be a way to jumpstart.

Scott: The time, the cost, the property owners and their various financial positions, how can the properties next to each other maintain property.

Joe Cain: There has been a vacant lot on 2nd for 20-30 years. Work to be done that that doesn't happen, although it is not a given it will have to be worked on and worked for. Have to consider to possibility of inaction due to dealing with many property owners. The train shed is an excellent example, is there a desire for the owner to do something about it, there is work to be done and to keep in mind what needs to be done if buildings/properties are left.

How should this area feel in relation to the river? (10 mins.)

Joe Cain: Love to see relation to river but doesn't know if it ever has. The Wharf made relation in history, but today 1st ave. could be a lot more and enlightened. Both streets can be elevated and communicate.

Phil: How do you extend commerce to the river front? Can there be an arcade to 1st ave?

Scott: Buildings could be built taller to have a view of the river.

What did we not ask you that you would like to discuss more or learn more about? (8 mins.)