

# 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Listening Session

## 2/17 Session Notes

**Moderator: Shawn Shepard (Metro Plan) & Veronica Foster (NCDC)**

**Note Taker: Amelia Lewis (Metro Plan)**

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

Kem Hinton (KH) – architect, frequent visitor, downtown rotary club member, born and raised here

Richard Warren (RW) - lifelong resident of nashville, property lawyer, interested to hear

Deb Lotz (DL)– owns a loft on 2<sup>nd</sup> at the quarters (property owner), described it as magical and her dream apartment, typically splits time between Nashville and LA

Kenneth Cicora (KC) – owner in same place as deb (property owner), resident for 8 years and hoping to make Nashville home, also owns property in Franklin, looking forward to a new chapter

Ylonda Banister – lives in music row, works in TN Tower, member of Nashville City Club, lived in Nashville for 3 years and decided to make Nashville home

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

**DL:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July always magical as well as new years eve, events and shows are accessible and “everything is at your fingertips downtown” 2<sup>nd</sup> street magical

**KC:** 4<sup>th</sup> of July was first time visiting, came and bought property a year later because of their first experience, “wonderful place to be”, when you talk about avenue it’s “2<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Broadway” which are the two streets that make up Nashville. Enjoy making it a vacation rental and sharing with friends and family to show them Nashville

**RW:** Lived here all my life and there was a time when Nashville wasn’t cool. Used to work downtown and in the 80s when it started to enjoy the redevelopment, would go downtown, 2<sup>nd</sup> and lower broadway to nashville, nashville is a city of connected neighborhoods, it’s hard to make these neighborhoods happen organically but hoping to be able to make it a great place again

**KH:** “The Touring Memories” is a book about Nashville history he frequents, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave used to be a utilitarian street and was later completely enhanced with trees, sidewalks, lighting, and remember when 2<sup>nd</sup> avenue what was like before its transformation. Was previously paved with granite cobblestones with those pavers create a great street to walk down in the summer

**KC:** likes unique street pavers for the feel and character it adds as well as for pedestrians and drivers slowing down

**KH:** wants to see wide sidewalks and a feel that the street is the whole sidewalk

**YB:** the last building she worked in was the key tag building and would go walking downtown

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

**KH:** what makes it pleasant is the height of the building relative to the street, proportion is comfortable, activity on the main floor, moving up to the AT&T building where these features aren't, the character changes significantly, "urban texture"

**RW:** In the 80s when the area got popular again, the 4-5 story building heights are critical, places to preserve is where there was a lot of economic activity and it continues to develop, honors buildings and reuses them, "there are places where you drop down and you don't know where you are, but when you're on second avenue you know you're in nashville"

**KH:** the style of architecture, and even with different building styles there is uniformity which adds consistency and interesting "how lucky for us (to experience)"

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

**DL:** thought it was slightly neglected with some buildings unoccupied, would like it to be more secure and safe, the optimist is looking forward to bringing it back to magic, doesn't want to make it "too honky tonk street," but make it an enjoyable street to walk down, and have pride living and visiting 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave

**KC:** balancing competing ideas: between tourist place and a full time resident preserving history, wants it to be close to the activity on broadway but also have it be a nice place, establishing the identity of 2<sup>nd</sup>

**RW:** Referenced a book by Dan Doyle about the history of nashville, and the balance between forces of tradition and progress creates intention, we wouldn't be the "it city" if we didn't invite new things in

**KH:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue is a more pleasant street to walk on because of the streetscaping, would like vacant lots to be developed to create a wholesome streetscape, and for safety, looking at opportunity to create

**KC:** asked about existing height restriction and guidelines for this area (see last section)

**RW:** wants wider sidewalks, enhance pedestrian feel

**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.)**

**YB:** says she is still connecting to nashville, enjoys hearing stories. Enjoys reading the downtown nashville magazine and heard a lot about how off broadway (still downtown) provides a different feel than broadway

**DL:** Thinks there can be a happy medium, for her, there's always hidden gems in big cities, and even though it's a touristy place, you can still be progressive and inviting, but you don't have to copy Broadway, different sections of the downtown have different character

**KC:** you can make the character what you want

**KH:** want to see cross sections, N and S orientation provides comfort throughout all seasons with trees and pavements, no neon signs, gives it its own feel

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

**KC:** Money, need to be careful about who is developing and being able to retain the character and developers not caring about the character or considering what the character should be, thinks it's less of an obstacle and more of a "threat"

**KH:** groups and gov't leadership and bodies will have a big part – need a big master plan to guide these decisions (height and materials standards)

**YB:** Emotional component involved

**DL:** changing everything into super powers of business, historic character gets lost. Need leadership that cares for history, danger of commerce

**KH:** with various ownerships it gives an opportunity for lots of people to be involved in development, would allow for character in development

**KC:** Doesn't want big businesses that doesn't permit unique identity, hopes for financial resources to last until redevelopment happens

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

**KC:** Can you do anything on the river? Likes historic court and step down. Can you bring anything to the river to bring people to it?

**RW:** bigger conversation, whole east bank is an issue, 1<sup>st</sup> ave very small part but could play a role in the redevelopment of the whole river front area, important area that should be included in east bank

**KH:** wants to use this as an opportunity to connect to the river and improve 1<sup>st</sup>, change comfort of walking along 1<sup>st</sup>, opportunity for closing the street for festivals, echoing a master plan to this side of the river would be beneficial in making this part of our downtown much nicer

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

**SS (Moderator):** suggested future sessions including information regarding what is allowed under development

**KC:** said that a nice small breakout brings conversation that you want, commends staff on a well handled meeting

**RW:** says it's going to be a "very messy process" and wants more conversations like we've had tonight on agreement points and how to grow back better, but it won't be easy or quick, encouraged by conversation and good positive conversation tonight