

Committee Members:

- Grant Russel, at-large – Committee Chair
- Randy Greeno, Ward 5
- Jim Niemeyer, Ward 6
- Jim Slough, Ward 4

Guests:

Mayor Christina Muryn
Jill Wagner, DFID President
Brad Wagner

Meeting Start Time: 5:02 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 5:56 p.m.

Agenda:

Call to Order

Roll Call

- Jim Slough absent at the start of the meeting arriving at about 5:15 p.m.
- Grant Russel was appointed Committee Chair

Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area

- Mayor Muryn provided the following summary of how we go to this point:
 - The creation of a DORA has been discussed numerous times in the past but never progressed beyond casual discussions. It gained traction this year in light of COVID.
 - Working with DFID, downtown business and property owners were surveyed about the creation of a DORA
 - Received 95 positive responses, 3 neutral (from one property owner who owns three parcels because they don't take a position on such issues); 70 did not respond
 - Received near unanimous favorable responses from restaurants and bars
 - Explained how a DORA works
 - A DORA does not suspend open container laws or public intoxication laws. Standard penalties for such violations would apply.
 - At participating establishments within the DORA districts, drinks may be purchased and served in specially marked DORA cups. The patron may take this DORA drink outside of the serving establishment and carried throughout the DORA district.
 - The DORA cup could be a bright colored plastic cup that is easily identifiable.
 - The DORA drink may not be taken into other establishments that hold a liquor permit.
 - Retail establishments may or may not permit shoppers with a DORA drink.
 - The DORA will be in effect the entire year from 11 a.m. until 11 p.m. This time limit is set by us; the state does not restrict the hours for the DORA. This time frame 'seemed right' but is not set-in-stone.
 - The DORA doesn't eliminate the need for special event permits, fencing, etc. for events like Boogie on Main and Oktoberfest

- Signage would be erected at the DORA boundaries and also placed upon establishments front doors to indicated participation in the DORA. The CVB has expressed interest in helping fund such signage.
- The Mayor reached out to Tiffin which implemented a DORA this summer.
 - They experienced no increase in police calls nor any problems related to the DORA
 - Tiffin provided a copy of their DORA application which we will use as a starting point for our DORA
- The process to create the DORA
 - A public hearing is required. This will be held via Zoom.
 - Council approves the creation of the DORA. There was discussion about whether this requires an ordinance or a resolution.
 - The City submits the DORA application to Ohio Liquor Commission
 - Restaurant / bars within district are automatically allowed to participate in the DORA program but must register their intent to do so with the Ohio Liquor Commission. This registration process takes a few weeks to complete.
- The proposed footprint of the DORA is that of the DFID plus some additions, especially south of Center Street.
 - Councilman Russel suggested that the DORA area be reduced to match the DFID area exactly because the DFID cleaning / maintenance program can double be used in the DORA application. It also provides additional benefit to being a part of the DFID. Councilman Greeno said he is leaning toward narrowing to the DORA boundaries to DFID boundaries.
 - Councilmen Niemeyer & Slough asked about inclusion of The Fern and West End Tavern; he considers them part of downtown. Much discussion about these two establishments plus Brew U at N. Main St & Center St. Two things all three establishments have in common – they are separated from the Downtown Findlay district by railroad tracks and there are little to no establishments between them and downtown.
 - Councilman Niemeyer, as a former owner of a restaurant, said he would support the DORA, especially if his establishment had a liquor license.
 - The consensus of the Committee was to narrow the DORA boundaries to match that of the DFID with the understanding that this decision may be revisited at a later date if necessary.
- Councilman Greeno asked if Council can rescind the DORA after implementation.
 - Mayor Muryn said that is possible. The DORA would be created with an initial sunset period – believed to be one year. Renewal of the DORA would require Council's approval.
- Councilman Greeno & Niemeyer expressed concerns about public intoxication.
 - Mayor Muryn said that Findlay Police Chief Ring expressed such no concerns and that the experience of Tiffin did not show increases in public intoxication incidents.
- Councilman Greeno & Russel both wondered about how much this would be used and the net effect on a restaurant / bar's bottom line.
- Councilman Niemeyer asked if the DORA should it be seasonal? Mayor Muryn mentioned that establishments are being creative - Stix is erecting domes; Baker's Café will have outdoor heaters – to extend outdoor dining – and that the DORA should support that creativity. The Committee felt that weather would make the DORA seasonal and that so that we didn't need to do so.

- Mayor Muryn received three phone calls voicing concerns that the DORA would encourage public intoxication. She explained to the callers that the DORA doesn't eliminate public intoxication laws or exempt bars & restaurants from over-serving.
- Councilman Russel said that a communications plan will need to be developed.
 - This should be done in cooperation with Visit Findlay/CVB. Mayor Muryn has discussed the DORA with Alissa Preston, Director of the CVB who supports the concept and has assisted with communications with local businesses.
 - It should include a web page similar to the Defiance DORA web page <https://www.visitdefianceohio.com/dora/>
- Action items
 - Determine if a resolution or ordinance is needed.
 - Generate a new DORA map that mirrors the DFID boundaries
 - Ensure that the application includes language about a review period and renewal process.

Adjournment

Grant C. Russel

Grant Russel - Ad Hoc Committee Chair

COMMITTEE REPORT

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FINDLAY, OHIO

An **AD HOC COMMITTEE** met on October 26, 2020 to discuss the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA).

We recommend:

proceed with DORA application

Aye Nay *Randy Greeno*
Randy Greeno

LEGISLATION: _____

Aye Nay *Jim Niemeyer* *SECOND*
Jim Niemeyer

DATE: October 26, 2020

Aye Nay *Grant Russel*
Grant Russel

COMMITTEE: AD HOC

Aye Nay *Jim Slough* *MOTION*
Jim Slough