

Needed Change by Collaboration

Written by By Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
Friday, 28 August 2015 04:17



There are always those people who fight against change of any kind, on any subject. The purpose of last weekend's Community Workshop at the Second Street Events Center was an attempted collaboration among many groups – the City, B.I.D., and the Gallup Mainstreet/Arts & Cultural District to name three – and dozens of individual citizens with ideas of their own.

The consultant team for this effort was led by Charlie Deans of Community By Design and his crew of Sarah Ijai, Paige Winslett, and Lisa Flynn; and was enhanced by Gabe Preston of RPI Economics, Nevin Harwick of Harwick Transportation Group, and Doug Borwick of Arts Engaged Cultural Planning, who was unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts..

Charlie led the discussion on Friday evening, explaining the purpose of a downtown redevelopment plan/arts & cultural district plan, defining the boundaries/land ownership and uses, demographics and market/economic highlights, transportation/traffic existing conditions, and opportunity sites (public property, empty buildings, and vacant land).

The accumulation of about 70-80 citizens listened while Deans showed slides of statistics and info that included: Economic Development Tools; Arts & Cultural District Plan and real time schedule; Economic Opportunities, Regional Trade Areas, primary and secondary; Market Analysis; Creative Economy; and Transportation numbers of vehicles, pedestrians, and inter-city transit.

All of this information became the basis for the Saturday clinic, naturally, and served a viable and real purpose in that regard. Talk circulated freely during and after the presentation, most of it positive, and anticipation shone through many of the words discussed by the attendees for this presentation. Some was from recent new-comers and the balance split between relative established veterans of Gallup in many different disciplines or career paths and the very few old-time residents who had experiences not to be denied or ignored.

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Ideas and concepts were swirling throughout the room, spilling onto the sidewalk outside where small groups continued talking after the main body had departed. Saturday promised a new beginning for most, and a new spirit of cooperation and advancement for our city.