

Downtown Advisory Task Force Meeting
April 30, 2019 - 10 AM - Bellmoor Inn

Main topic of discussion: Pedestrianizing the end of Rehoboth Avenue - bandstand area
Total attendees: 30 – majority in opposition to pedestrianizing – 1 in support

Reasons Businesses Expressed for Opposition:

1. Loss of customers/revenue for businesses
 - a. Customers no longer able to drive up to storefront – people do not want to walk
 - b. Many businesses in area have a “carry-out” product that rely on parking in front for pick-ups
 - c. Bandstand area already closed too early /periodically– loss of business is experienced during those times
2. Deliveries would become a “logistical nightmare”
 - a. Increase the amount of congestion with trucks trying to deliver to businesses
 - b. Safety concerns for pedestrians – dollies, carts, etc. on the sidewalks
 - c. Perishable/ food items must remain within a regulated continuous temperature – farther they must travel off the truck, more risk of contaminated food
 - d. Stores cannot regulate when deliveries arrive
3. Safety/cleanliness
 - a. More trash in area and more difficult for trash to be removed
 - b. Employees would have to walk with bank bags, cash, supplies, etc. – could be late at night/ early in the morning – unsafe
 - c. Firetrucks, EMS, Police – concerns over getting access/through crowds in an emergency situation
4. Puts businesses around the bandstand at an unfair disadvantage
 - a. Competition for business is already hard – too many other choices that would be more convenient if customers cannot drive up and park in front of business
 - b. Businesses in that area pay a lot of money for the central/visible location, customers enter business because they drive by and see it & because they can drive up to and park out front
 - c. Harder for business to make/schedule repairs bring in people for cleaning, etc.
5. Parking is already a problem, even more spaces would be taken away
 - a. Already a perception of not enough parking in downtown, additional space would then be taken away
 - b. Loss of revenue from parking meters for the City
6. Other:
 - a. The boardwalk is already a pedestrian friendly area
 - b. Visitors want to drive their cars into town and park as close to their destination as possible
 - c. Statistics were provided of the number of cities that created pedestrian areas and failed – 85% failed and reversed decision

Reasons Businesses Expressed for Support:

1. Aesthetic appeal

Additional topics discussed:

1. Events at the bandstand do not necessarily equal more business for shops around the bandstand – sometimes has opposite effect
2. Consensus that the bandstand is often shut down too early (hours or even days in advance) before event even starts
3. Lack of communication to the businesses as to when and for how long the bandstand will be closed to traffic
4. Businesses are requesting advanced notice to help with scheduling, orders, shipments, food prep, etc.