

First Friday Noontime Forum Series
“Continuing the Growth and Prosperity of Downtown Lancaster”

Highlights

July 2009 – “LET’S TALK ABOUT DESIGN”

— Panel Discussion moderated by Tom Cook

**Panelists: Mary Colleen Heil, John DeVitry,
John Hershey, Ann, Lampe & Phil Wenger**

- ❖ Gathering places are any where people gather. Every public street should be a gathering place of some sort—a variety and a variety of scale.
- ❖ For the past 40 years we have been focused on vehicles—it should be more about people for the success of the City. It doesn’t have to be a large project—keep the human scale.
- ❖ Binns Park is the “apple” that we already have—let’s polish it and expand it’s uses. Special events in the park and Lancaster Square would help create more of a flow people in the downtown—the best advertisement is to bring more people in to the City. Getting people downtown makes other things happen. Human activity is more important than design, streetscape or landscaping. First Friday is an example of creating human activity. Many people gather on the 100 block of Prince St.– Gallery Row; however, there are other examples of locations within the City that people gather on that night —Marion Court, Steinman Park, Building Character, Prince Street Café, The Creamery, etc. People do not gather at Binns Park.
- ❖ Fred Kent felt that Penn Square was too small – it is an intersection. If you look at the history over the past 100 years, Penn Square consisted of many shops and was a hub of activity. Today there are three banks and the hotel. The decisions we have allowed to be made by individual property owners has caused a shift in scale – rather than 15 to 20 businesses there are now only 3 or 4.
- ❖ Lancaster Square is a big space that begs for activity. Incorporate Binns Park in to events in Lancaster Square. Plan events that compliment events that are being held at the Convention Center.

- ❖ Keep the streets open when there are special events – don't create a hardship for businesses and those who live downtown. People driving through the area might be interested to see what is going on and decide to stop and enjoy the event.
- ❖ Binns Park was created as a place to go for quiet thought not to be a wild and crazy place.
- ❖ Despite all the problems that Penn Square has it has the potential to be an exciting area in conjunction with the other areas around downtown – the hotel/convention center, Central Market, etc.
- ❖ Rather than closing streets during special events in the Binns Park/Lancaster Square area the mounted police patrol could be utilized to assist with people crossing from one side of Queen Street to the other The use of the Patrol makes such a special impact on visitors to the City.
- ❖ Central Market is the number one Best Destination in the Power of Ten Survey. We are about to spend \$7 million on it. The Market has charm already; however, there is no place to sit - No place to sit and eat or to visit with a friend.
 - The Plan for the Market does include tables and chairs.
 - Someone needs to be in charge of maintaining the tables and chairs. If not, the area will be unsightly.
- ❖ There have been a number of significant changes to downtown that has allowed for places to be created – moving the idling buses from in front of Isaac's, the addition of parking in the first block of North Queen Street, the bulb outs to slow traffic, etc. Streetscape improvements such as the new sidewalks are contributing to the creation of place in the downtown. We are beginning to take the town back from some of the vehicles.
- ❖ People want the City to have charm and to be attractive. The City could be cleaner and have more charm – more could be done. Chattanooga, Tennessee is a success story and is a good example of what can be done.