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Chair Harvey Ward - Reconsidering Downtown (NB)

Gainesville's downtown area, through decades of public and private investment and community effort, has reinvented itself from a low point in the mid-1980's to a current state that is undeniably good. There remains work to be done, but there is no doubt that our downtown can be world-class - as an entertainment and shopping destination, a workplace and a home. The future of downtown will likely resemble its past. The question is, which past? The 1970's and 1980's ghost town held together by government buildings and the occasional bar or restaurant? Or the prior downtown that was the heart of the community?

Our community cares about our downtown. City government, working through the CRA, can act as a convening authority and reach out to the various stakeholders to begin an honest public conversation about what downtown is, what it should be and to subsequently work with them to create a plan for how we get there together.

Direct CRA staff to: 1) Design a charrette process that will include downtown owners, residents, workers, managers, users and potential users to answer the above questions and begin a tangible plan for creating the downtown they want to have. 2) Return the design to the CRA board by the August CRA meeting and implement a final process before the end of calendar 2019 so that the results can influence the CRA work plan going forward.