

DECEMBER 2020

DDC Activities

Board Member Spotlight

Michael Freilinger



Michael Freilinger is the President/CEO of the Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria, a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation dedicated to the redevelopment of the Downtown in Peoria, Illinois.

Michael has over ten years of executive experience in the public sector as the County Administrator/Manager in Polk County, Des Moines, Iowa; Osceola County, Kissimmee, Florida; and Tazewell County, Pekin, Illinois.

While in Des Moines, Mr. Freilinger, in his capacity as County Administrator worked with the City of Des Moines on numerous urban redevelopment issues such as: mixed use housing, low - mod income housing, parking, street scape improvements, signage and way-finding, economic development, gap financing, historic rehabilitation, riverfront development, and the Iowa Events Center, a multi-building complex that includes a convention center, arena, and exhibit halls.

In his current capacity as President/CEO of the Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria, Michael draws upon his past experience to act on behalf of the DDC and its stakeholders, businesses, property owners, developers and residents of the downtown to accelerate the redevelopment of Downtown Peoria.

When asked what DDC accomplishments he is most proud of, Michael called out a few highlights: **"The DDC has been involved in a number of property acquisitions for commercial, retail, and residential projects, especially in the Warehouse District. We continue to work on behalf of downtown businesses and property owners to ensure they have what they need to be successful. From parking issues, form code amendments, historical tax credits and other financial aids to promoting awareness of downtown businesses and collaborating with local governing bodies and advisory groups, the DDC is on the ground advocating for all. I am also proud of our dedicated board members and our many contributors who sustain us. Without them, this work would not be done."**

As far as his vision for downtown Peoria, Michael says, **"I look forward to the day when businesses can fully reopen and draw crowds back downtown. People enjoy coming down to the waterfront, the Warehouse District, and the Central Business District to take advantage of the many diverse food and entertainment venues. It is encouraging to see new development and new businesses opening even in the midst of the current pandemic. If that is happening now, I can imagine a very bright future for downtown Peoria where all are welcome."**

Warehouse District Development



In an effort to kickstart further development in the Warehouse District, the DDC had an opportunity to acquire the property at 724 SW Adams Street (formerly the Julian Hotel), which is adjacent to the parking lot previously acquired at 726 SW Adams Street. These two lots can be joined for vertical development, resolving issues with air-rights. The property is in a prime location in the growing Warehouse District, directly across from Dozer Park.

Riverfront Park Master Plan



The Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) and the Peoria Riverfront Association (PRA) have collectively drafted letters to the Downtown Advisory Commission (DAC) in a joint effort to raise concerns about the proposed Riverfront Park Master Plan and to ask that the City take a pause to substantially rework this conceptual plan. The most significant issue with the current plan is a 41 percent reduction in parking, which would negatively impact business and property owners on the riverfront. The DDC Board approved the letter drafted by the Planning Committee. The letter has been delivered to the DAC. We are hopeful that the City will work closely with stakeholders for the benefit of all concerned.

Property for Sale Office Space for Sale or Lease

Available

RE/MAX
Traders Unlimited
COMMERCIAL



234 NE Madison Avenue, Peoria

Amazing three-story single or multi-tenant office building in the Central Business District. Private parking on adjacent lot. This building offers many offices, elevator, conference room... For lease or sale. Reasonable rental rates. Move in condition. Lease Price: \$7.50/sq. ft. Purchase Price: \$695,000. 1118 Total Sq. Ft. For more information, contact Michael O'Bryan at michaelobryan@remax.net or (309) 687-5069.

Business Spotlight The Neon Bison



The former Judge's Chamber, now "The Neon Bison," is the longest running bar in Downtown Peoria, located in the heart of Peoria's Downtown at 514 Main Street, Peoria.

In August of 2019 local owners bought the bar and took a leap of faith to reinvest and reimagine Downtown Peoria's Main Street.

With lots of TVs and a great surround system, it's the perfect spot for sporting events, including Direct TV's NFL Sunday ticket and Cubs and Cardinals baseball during the season. The newly built window front seating area transforms to a cozy country/rock stage at night for small, intimate live music. New gaming machines located in a private gaming area pay out big on a weekly basis!

The Neon Bison is all new and bringing a bit of Nashville to Peoria! Follow them on Facebook and Instagram or check out their web site at www.TheNeonBison.com.

Resources for Developers

The DDC Planning Committee was tasked earlier this year to provide guidance on the DDC's position on the issue of homelessness in the downtown. The outcome is that the Planning Committee has created and the DDC Board has approved, a one-page resource summary for business and property owners on how to contact agencies for assistance with the homeless population if it impacts their property. A copy of this resource summary will be available on the DDC's website at www.downtownpeoria.us.

New Business Hello Poppy Boutique

The Warehouse District is welcoming a new business!

Hello Poppy Boutique opened their first retail location at 114 State St., Suite 114 B. Co-owner Justice Parker says it's the first storefront location to complement the online shop.

"The Warehouse District is just industrial. We like the aesthetic of it. We feel like our feel and brand fits in down here and it's a central location where I feel like everyone can come," said Parker.

Parker says it's been a challenge to open during a pandemic, but that they are preparing for a safe shopping experience. She hopes people shop local this holiday season and support all types of small businesses.

"Shopping small is so important. I think that being able to support local friends and family and even people you may not know is more important than giving all your money to the big box stores," said Parker.

Hello Poppy Boutique is open for business and ready to serve you. We applaud them for stepping out in this challenging year and wish them much success. To learn more, visit their web site at www.hellopoppyboutique.com and join their Facebook page.



Downtown Resident Spotlight



Liz Siron

Our Downtown Resident for December 2020 is Liz Siron, a Neuro/Surgical Intermediate RN at OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. Originally from Morton, Illinois, Liz says she has always wanted to venture off and find an apartment to call her own. When asked why she chose Downtown Peoria for her current home, Liz replied **"The downtown area offered a location close to my employer, ballet studio, and various engaging restaurants and night life events."**

Liz has been working downtown since the summer of 2014, first waitressing at Kelleher's Irish Pub & Eatery in addition to Patient Care Technician at OSF until working full time as a nurse. She has lived downtown since the summer of 2018. We enjoyed hearing about her downtown living experience in the following interview and hope you find it inspiring as well:

DDC: How did you find out about downtown living options?
LS: I discovered my apartment at Sandmeyer Flats through Zillow.

DDC: Do you prefer renovated old buildings or modern new buildings in downtown?
LS: The character and history behind renovated older buildings add such a warm, inviting atmosphere to a home. Add a touch of modern updates, and I believe it's the perfect combination!

DDC: Is the price of living in the city affordable & worth it?
LS: Living expenses are affordable and a great place to grow financially independent and transition into mature adulthood lifestyle.

DDC: Is there a sense of community?
LS: I have experienced community from my landlord and have ventured out to my fellow tenants as well.

DDC: Are there enough food/beverage options?
LS: Food and beverage atmosphere is great and can always increase in diversity.

DDC: Is there enough entertainment in the city?
LS: When open, I love the Civic Center and all the variety of arts ranging from musicals, concerts, and venue shows that are offered. There is always room for more diverse and fun events.

DDC: Do you plan on staying in your current residence downtown? Moving out of the downtown area?
LS: Currently, I plan on staying where I am until I reach a higher level of financial security or new work opportunities come available.

DDC: What do you think about the new development and new businesses opening in the Warehouse District? How will that affect/benefit you?
LS: I love the idea and think new development will enhance the authenticity and culture downtown has to offer.

DDC: What do you most like about living and working downtown?
LS: How close I am to all diverse venues and the livelihood once open and safe to venture.

DDC: What improvements would you like to see?
LS: Continual enhancement of renovated buildings and adding opportunities for diverse events while providing reasonable pricing.

DDC: What new businesses and/or services would you like to see?
LS: More art festivals and riverfront concerts.

DDC: What is your vision for downtown Peoria?
LS: I would love to see downtown Peoria completely finished and restored to its original glory. I would love to see new businesses, restaurants, and community events occurring to promote a sense of belonging within Peoria.

The DDC first and foremost thanks Liz for her frontline contributions in the healthcare field during this challenging time and also for taking time from her busy schedule to help promote downtown Peoria.

Historical Spotlight

Downtown Peoria's Christmas Past

Photos and article - courtesy of Peoria Public Library



Peoria's Santa Claus Parade is the longest running Santa parade in North America, but it's not as old as you might believe. Although several sources claim that the parade dates to the 1880's, our research has shown this to be incorrect and mistakenly connected to a parade that was celebrating the opening of the Upper Free Bridge in December of 1888.

The Peoria Santa Claus Parade actually resulted as an out-growth of a rivalry between downtown department stores. The competition was a game of one-upmanship promotions in an effort to attract customers and their children to see the "real" Santa Claus. The main competitors were Peoria's versions of Macy's and Gimble's; Schipper & Block and Harned, Bergner & Von Maur. The competition to host the "real" Santa began in earnest in 1893.

In 1893, Schipper & Block was deemed, "Santa Claus Headquarters," but without an actual Santa Claus. In 1894, Harned, Bergner & Von Maur had Santa Claus at their store, and Schipper & Block had a silver statue on display they were touting as a special attraction.



In 1895, both stores were claiming that the “original” Santa Claus would be at their respective stores for the season. That same year, Harned, Bergner & Von Maur had Santa escorted around the city in a “special coach” accompanied by a brass band that attracted some attention.

Not to be outdone, the “Big White Store” Schipper & Block brought Santa in on a “special train” where he was greeted by thousands at Union Depot on Water Street. A procession then made its way to the store along the principal thoroughfares of Peoria to be greeted by a large crowd at the Schipper & Block.

From that year on, Schipper & Block and then its successors – Block & Kuhl and, finally, Carson Pirie Scott – went on to host the Santa Claus Parade for decades. Eventually, it was taken over by Peoria Area Community Events (PACE), which to this day hosts the parade.



This year’s parade had a twist, however. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 parade was a reverse/drive-thru parade. Floats were lined up stationary along Main and Monroe Streets. Vehicles drove by to view the “parade,” which was virtually telecast live on WMBD-TV Channel 31.

We have great confidence that next year’s parade will return to its traditional form. Speaking of traditions, wouldn’t it be a nice gift to the people of Peoria if Santa once again wound his way through the streets of downtown Peoria to wind up at the former “Big White Store” when its new occupants from OSF have finished their renovations? Maybe they will also decorate their windows for the holidays in a manner similar to what some of us remember from our childhood. If you don’t recall what downtown Peoria used to look like during the holidays, please take a look at some of our attached photographs. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Peoria Public Library’s Local History and Genealogy Room!

Downtown Activities Santa Cause 2020



The annual Santa Cause run/walk will take place from December 12 - 20 and feature a route that highlights the ArtsPartners Sculpture Walk in downtown Peoria. The “run when you want” race gives participants 9 days to run the route and take a photo with their favorite artwork along the suggested race route. They will be encouraged to #discoverpeoria and #santacause to then enter them into a contest for additional prizes. Participants also will be encouraged to share their run times with us for posting on the Santa Cause page at www.discoverpeoria.com. Packet pick-up will take place at the Peoria Riverfront Museum on December 10 - 11.

The race will be promoted through the Discover Peoria partnership with WMBD and WYZZ on Wednesday mornings, along with additional TV commercials on these channels. The Cumulus Radio network in Peoria will also run radio spots for the event. Discover Peoria will highlight on all of their social media platforms and send at least two standalone email campaigns.

Proceeds from this year’s event will benefit ArtsPartners of Central Illinois. For sponsorship opportunities or general information, visit www.discoverpeoria.com.



**shop
LOCAL
365™**

SHOP LOCAL SATURDAYS

SHOP LOCAL 365 CAMPAIGN

Starting on November 28th, Small Business Saturday, local businesses and shoppers in Greater Peoria have been invited to support and celebrate the local businesses in our community through focused spending at local establishments and through sharing positive social media messages to help shoppers discover and connect with all our region has to offer. You can make a huge impact on your community when it needs you more than ever.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO

- Post on social media any kind of promotion/sale/online shop you want to be shared.
- Use hashtag #ShopLocal365 and #ShopLocalSaturday and tag @ShopLocal365.
- We will repost and share content as much as we can.
- Support your fellow local businesses!
- Promote gift cards

WHAT SHOPPERS CAN DO

Most importantly, we must all do the things that keep our community healthy: wear a mask, wash your hands, and keep social distancing.

Safely and according to state guidelines, we ask that you:

- Spend locally to keep your dollars local
- Post on social media about retailers you supported
- Use #ShopLocal365 and #ShopLocalSaturday
- Buy gift cards to use later
- Get takeout/delivery
- Tip big
- Maintain your memberships
- Call a retailer and arrange a curbside pickup
- And so much more!

The Shop Local 365 campaign is a regional partnership among several teams throughout the five-county region of Greater Peoria. The campaign is dedicated to educating the public on the importance and impact of shopping local 365 days a year. Below are some of the partners who are working together to help build a stronger local economy. Visit www.shoplocal365.com for more information.



HOME FOR ALL

Continuum of Care™

Resource Summary

Housing
Response
System

Starting Point



Outreach

Coordinated
Entry



Prevention
& Diversion



Emergency
Shelter



Rapid
Rehousing



Permanent
Supportive
Housing

Home for All: Continuum of Care

Continuum of Care is the regional planning consortium working to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness. From homeless prevention and emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing, funded agencies work to make housing a reality so that everyone in our community has a place to call home. Partners also come to the table in a wrap around effort to support the full range of needs including employment, education, health care and more.

Street Outreach Team: Phoenix CDS

The Continuum includes a **Street Outreach Team** with a specific focus on engaging those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This team resides within **Phoenix Community Development Services (Phoenix CDS)** and leverages the organization's dual focus of housing and mental health. This team is a terrific resource to turn to in engaging individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Call Phoenix CDS at 309-674-7310 and ask for the Street Outreach Team to help coordinate a response.

Resources: 211

The 2-1-1 Information and Referral Line is also a great way to learn more about available resources. The number can be provided to individuals experiencing homelessness to get them connected to the assessment process for housing assistance.

Visit www.hoiunitedway.org/heart-of-illinois-united-way-2-1-1/ for more information or **dial 2-1-1** or **309-999-4029** to speak with a call specialist.



Season's Greetings

from the DDC Board of Directors

Jeff Kolbus: Board Chair

PAAR (Peoria Area Association of Realtors)
Real Estate & Development

Robert Anderson: Vice-Chair

OSF Saint Francis Medical Center
Founding Organization

Karen Jensen: Secretary

Farnsworth Group
Architecture, Construction & Engineering

Jonathan Williams: Treasurer

Commerce Bank
Banking & Financial Services

Michael J. Freilinger: President/CEO

Downtown Development Corporation of Peoria

State Rep. Ryan Spain: Vice-President

OSF St. Francis Medical Center
Founding Organization

Mark Yemm

At-Large Director

Morton Community Bank: Banking and Financial Services

Roberta Parks

At-Large Director

UnityPointHealth - Retired; Downtown Resident

Jeanine Spain

UnityPointHealth

Founding Organization

Denise Moore

Peoria City Council

Founding Organization: City of Peoria

Sid Ruckriegel

Peoria City Council

Founding Organization: City of Peoria

Mike Hatfield

Caterpillar

Founding Organization

Jeff McLinden

Peoria Marriott

Hospitality

Travis Mohlenbrink

At-Large

Hospitality; Restaurateur: Thyme, Sugar, Cracked Pepper, Cayenne & Warehouse on State



DDC Monthly Report for December 2020
Cumulative Total From July 1, 2014 through November 30, 2020

Residential Units		# of Units	Project Type	# of Projects	DDC Finances
Completed		164	Development	46	Budget
Under Construction		290	Completed	26	Fundraising 2020: \$ 305,000
Announced		8	Under Construction	10	Current Receipts \$ 243,250
Exploring		100	Permitted	0	% of Budgeted Receipts 79.8%
Residential Units Total		562	Hired Professionals	0	
			Property Acquired	7	
			Negotiations Under Way	2	
			Gathering Information	0	
Business Start-up/Relocation					DDC Activities
Completed		37	Total Dev.	45	Media
Announced		1	Infrastructure	 	Articles/Media/Interviews 231
Exploring		1	Property Acquisition	 	Press Conferences 22
Business Start-up/Relocation Total		39	Public Art	 	Other
			Public Parks	 	Confidential Project Assistance 12
			Projects Active Total	54	Building Code Amendments
			Projects Abandoned Total	84	Lobbying for Extension of State Historic Tax Credits
			Projects Assisted Grand Total	138	Public Engagement/Planning Effort by the City
Permits					2016 Housing Study
Last 12 months					2016 Parking Study
Issued Comm. Const. This Year		2			IL-HTC/RERZ Extension
Est. Value Comm. Const. This Year	\$ 175,000				2018 Housing Study
* All Const. Permits Issued This Year	153				Opportunity Zone Funds
# Estimated Value This Year	\$ 48,851,800				Downtown Development Tours
Since 2014					Property Acquisition and Sale
Issued Comm. Const. since 2014	159				2020 Housing Study
Est. Value Comm. Const. Since 2014	\$ 64,938,526				
* All Const. Permits Issued Since 2014	1067		Mixed-Use Projects Under Construction		Commercial Development Under Construction
# Estimated Value Since 2014	\$ 145,783,636		Project Name		Project Name
			Project Name		
			Winkler Market & Apartments	27	OSF Healthcare Ministry Headquarters 1
			Neon	6	Nailon Bldg 1
			The Center	45	Mitchell Fabrics Building 1
			Adams & Oak	86	
			The Lofts at 812	126	
Developers Active Total	34				
Developers Inactive	55				
Developers Assisted Grand Total	89	Total Units UC		Total Projects	3

* All Const. Permits Include: Comm. Const., Demolition, Elect., Erosion, Gen. Building, HVAC, Plumbing, Parking, Irrigation, H2O Heater, etc.

All Const. Permits Estimated Values: Not all activity has an estimated value assigned to it therefore this is only a partial amount

www.downtownpeoria.us

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Per the DDC bylaws, in making appointments to the Board, consideration is given to the needs of the Corporation, the potential appointee's experience, background and interest in the Corporation and economic development matters, and the benefits to the Corporation to be derived from the service of the appointee. No person who has a sustained conflict of interest between his own responsibilities and interest and those of the Corporation (e.g. being a developer in the downtown or rental property owner) shall be appointed to or remain on the Board of Directors. In addition to other appropriate qualifications, all persons appointed to the Board of Directors shall possess high civic ideals and shall vigorously represent the entity or district from which they have been selected.