MINUTES

COUNCIL DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 15, 2020 – 4:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Maureen Copelof, Chair, Council Member Gary Daniel, Vice Chair, Council Member Jim Fatland, City Manager (Left at 4:30 PM) Paul Ray, Planning Director Nicole Bentley, Heart of Brevard Melanie Spreen, Heart of Brevard Representative Dee Dee Perkins, Citizen Member Susan Threlkel, Council Appointed At-Large Member
Members Absent:	None
Staff Present:	Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant Leigh Huffman, Planner
Guests:	Billy Parrish, President, Heart of Brevard Mark Burrows, Blue Zones Project

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Chair Maureen Copelof welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Fatland had to leave early so items regarding Downtown Master Plan Budget Update and Jordan Street Dumpsters were moved to the beginning of the agenda. Ms. Bentley asked to add an item regarding Christmas Lights and Decorations. Motion by Ms. Bentley, seconded by Mr. Ray to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of September 17, 2020 and September 24, 2020 Meetings

Motion by Ms. Perkins, seconded by Mr. Ray to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2020 and September 24, 2020 meetings as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Downtown Master Plan Budget Update

Mr. Fatland reported that City Council voted to approve a budget amendment that included the transfer of $180,000 to the Downtown Master Plan Committee fund. He said we appropriated the full fund balance and we have a transfer of $11,000 from the Heart of Brevard fund. The two projects we're showing is Clemson Plaza and the remaining monies to be used as the committee prioritizes like planters, etc. Just under $500,000 is available to spend. This committee did pass, before the budget was adopted to move the parking monies out of here so we keep the full two cents of the tax rate to be pledged for future debt, like the BUILD grant. That is still totally free and clear if you want to pledge $180,000 toward future debt like a BUILD grant match. Ms. Copelof reminded everyone that before we actually had money we authorized hiring Julie Metz again so that is the one budgetary commitment that we had voted on so far this year. Mr. Fatland reported that he and Julie Metz will be scheduling a debrief with USDOT in the next 8 to 12 weeks to receive feedback on our 2020 BUILD Grant application and what we can do to make our next application stronger.

F. Jordan Street Dumpsters – Review of Financial Information

Mr. Fatland reported that Paul Ray had obtained two quotes to purchase two sub-surface dumpsters and have them recessed in the ground. The lowest quote was $27,000. He also got a quote from Republic Services to service the two dumpsters twice per week for $450 per month. Mr. Fatland said he would hate to see the Downtown Master Plan Committee spend up to $30,000 on this program. He thinks that if this in-ground program works well and we add more in the future, it makes more sense to make this part of the sanitation budget. His recommendation is to finance the purchase of the dumpsters over five years, and to look at the income generated from commercial garbage and recycling fees compared to the cost of paying Republic and the loan payment to determine how it would affect the rate for commercial customers. He will bring that information back to the next meeting.

G. Update on Focus 2020 Review

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

H. Sidewalk Usage Code Amendment

Leigh Huffman distributed a draft text amendment for the committee's review and noted that this is a staff initiated text amendment based on two things. She explained that allowing sidewalk dining on a NCDOT right-of-way required that we sign a new agreement with NCDOT. This amendment is looking at coming into compliance with the NCDOT requirements for sidewalk dining, and regulating the usage of the sidewalks for display of merchandise and placement of permanent and semi-permanent obstructions. In general, this amendment expands the ability of merchants and restaurants to use the city sidewalks. Specifically language was added to clean up the regulation of the display of merchandise and adds an entirely new section for sidewalk dining. Ms. Huffman noted that the fee schedule would also be amended to add the new sidewalk dining permit process required by NCDOT.

Ms. Huffman said Staff would welcome recommendations on all aspects of the amendment, but specifically would like feedback in two areas. The first is regarding the placement of permanent and semi-permanent obstructions. She explained that as it's currently written, this makes all permanent and semi-permanent structures on the sidewalk not placed by the City illegal. This means planters, seating that stays out when businesses are closed, any number of items that have been placed there for decoration, are all prohibited by this section. The second is regarding regulating what the furniture, umbrellas and alcohol enclosures look like. She said it's a question of whether we want to codify those design standards into our code or if we want to the let the businesses decide what kinds of materials they want to use.

Mr. Daniel said that as far as placement of permanent or semi-permanent obstructions, that would have to be permitted, just as you would permit the dining, but it would also require enforcement. Ms. Huffman said one of the options she considered was a permanent/semi-permanent fixture permit process where it would come before this committee for recommendation before Staff approved it. She added that we could have very strict guidelines in place, but someone could say they want to put out something crazy. There was discussion about establishing specific design guidelines and if a request fell within those guidelines, a permit would not be required. Ms. Spreen said she liked the idea of establishing guidelines but it is not an instantaneous process and recommended that we might want to have some language about getting approval until guidelines are created. There was also discussion about charging a fee for this process. Mr. Daniel noted that charging a fee, even if it is only $25, would make it more official and something that people are invested in. There was consensus that there should be a fee for this permit process.

Discussion then moved to the question of regulating design standards for furniture, umbrellas and alcohol stanchions. Ms. Copelof said she thinks the variety looks nice and that it shows creativity from the businesses as to how they are advertising their outdoor space. Mr. Ray thought there might be some uniformity that would make sense, like the barriers for alcohol service. Ms. Threlkel suggested that it may make it easier for merchants to say here is what is required and provide a list of vendors that we partner with.

There was further discussion about whether to require that furniture be taken in or moved next to the building at night. There was consensus that only umbrellas will need to be taken in.

Ms. Huffman will make revisions to the draft based on today's discussion and bring it back for the committee's review at the next meeting.

I. Update on Downtown Planters

Ms. Bentley received a quote from Charlie Landreth at 35˚N Landscaping for the planters. The quote to fill 30 planters in the spring and fall is $8,706.60, using the planters that we already have. Ms. Bentley said the 30 planters would include the City's 19 planters and the 8 large planters that Heart of Brevard has currently, as it would all be moved into one contract with the City. She said the quote includes all of the planters we have plus him providing something. Service would start in the spring and there would be a monthly maintenance fee of $197.56. If we decide to proceed Mr. Landreth would be happy to give us some thoughts about where they should be located throughout downtown. Motion by Ms. Perkins, seconded by Ms. Spreen to approve the proposal from 35˚N Landscaping. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Perkins said she would like to set a timeline of when we may be able to replant trees in the empty wells. Ms. Copelof noted that we need to have a succession plan for how to maintain a tree canopy so we don't have all our trees die at the same time. There was discussion about updating the streetscape plan before we plant any trees. Mr. Ray said he has talked with Mr. Fatland about hiring a design-build firm to get a head start on that. Following discussion, motion by Mr. Daniel, seconded by Ms. Copelof to support looking into hiring a consultant to help with updating our Downtown Master Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Update on Heart of Brevard Plan for Painting Crosswalk by Jordan St.

This item was postposed until the next meeting.

K. Alleyway Plan Update

a. **Guidelines**
b. **Budget**

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

L. Christmas Lights and Decorations

Ms. Bentley noted that the Heart of Brevard typically has Christmas lights installed on Main Street and some of Broad Street. She had a meeting with Clark Lovelace and Transylvania County Tourism earlier this week to discuss ways to make downtown look inviting for the holiday season. She explained that that there is a substantial amount of lights that need to be replaced or repaired before those can go up for the season. The TCT asked if there might be a match between the Heart of Brevard, the City and the TCT for funding so that we could expand those lights and possibly include wreaths or something of that nature for this year. She added that the company that has typically installed the lights has done that for free as a favor to the Heart of Brevard, but that company has been sold since last year. We are probably looking at some fees for that in addition to replacing/repairing the lights that we have. Ms. Bentley said she felt confident that if the City would promise $5,000, we could get a match from Heart of Brevard and the TCT. Following discussion, Ms. Threlkel moved and Ms. Perkins seconded to approve the request. The motion carried unanimously.

M. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council Downtown Master Plan Committee will be on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 9:00 AM at the Depot.

N. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM.

X Maureen Copelof
Maureen Copelof
Chair, Council Member

Minutes Approved – November 5, 2020

X Denise Hodsdon
Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant