

MINUTES

COUNCIL DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 18, 2021 – 3:00 PM

City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present: Maureen Copelof, Chair, Council Member
Gary Daniel, Vice Chair, Council Member
Jim Fatland, City Manager (left at 3:59 pm)
Paul Ray, Planning Director
Billy Parrish, Heart of Brevard Representative
Lee McMinn, Citizen Member
Parker Platt, Council Appointed At-Large Member

Absent: Nicole Bentley, Heart of Brevard Executive Director

Staff Present: Katherine Buzby, Planner
Denise Hodsdon, Executive Assistant

Guests: Wes Dickson & Nathan Brock – Sycamore Cycles
Mark Burrows, Blue Zones Project

Media: Jeremiah Reed, *The Transylvania Times*

A. Welcome & Call to Order

B. Introduction of New Members

Committee Chair Maureen Copelof welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. She then introduced new committee members Lee McMinn and Parker Platt.

C. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Executive Assistant Denise Hodsdon.

D. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Daniel asked to add an item re update on inground dumpsters on Jordan Street. Motion by Mr. Daniel, seconded by Mr. Ray to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Approval of Minutes of October 21, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Mr. Fatland, seconded by Mr. Daniel to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2021 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Meeting with Wes Dickson of Sycamore Cycles re 37 North Broad Street Property

Wes Dickson explained that he has met with Assistant Planning Director Aaron Bland about the old Transylvania Times building at 37 North Broad Street. He noted that the property is included in the Downtown Master Plan and he has some questions and concerns that he would like to address prior to finalizing plans for his new store at that location. Mr. Bland suggested that he meet with this committee to discuss these items.

Alleyway - There is an adjacent alley off Broad Street and there seems to be a question as to who owns that alley. That is something they would like to have clarified as they would be interested in potentially taking that over if there would be an opportunity for them to maintain it. He noted that there is a repaving project at some point in the Downtown Master Plan and they are interested in resurfacing their lot in the next couple of years and would be looking at doing that alley at the same time. Mr. Dickson said that access to the parking lot is through that alley and it gets used pretty heavily. He would not want to see it shut down to vehicular traffic, but to make it nicer and cleaner and to promote walking between there would be something that he thinks would be necessary.

Mr. Ray said that the North Broad Alley appears to be represented as a City right-of-way on GIS and he has always assumed that it is a City alley, but he has never investigated it himself. He said he would do some research to see what he could find.

Probart Street - Mr. Dickson said the biggest issue for City discussion would be to look at turning Probart Street one-way heading toward Broad Street. They will be receiving deliveries there and that would allow them to unload. There is an old loading dock there that they could reinstate back into the building if they were able to use Probart Street. Without that, an 18-wheeler would have to pull up on Broad Street, stop and unload in the middle of Broad Street. He said if they had a centralized loading dock, they would also consider giving other people access to it if it would help other deliveries being able to unload and service restaurants in that block area. He said that it also seems that there would potentially be more parking if all the parallel spots were moved to the other side of the road if it was one-way.

Dumpsters – Mr. Dickson said he has looked at the trash situation behind some of the restaurants adjacent to the property and he would like to have some sort of centralized waste management. He would be willing to work with the City and/or Heart of Brevard and give some space for that if it made for a cleaner field back there. He said the preferred location for the dumpsters would be the back of the parking lot near the Nichols property.

Mr. Fatland noted that the City can't do improvements on land it doesn't own and asked if Mr. Dickson would be willing to lease the dumpster location to the City. Mr. Dickson said they would be willing to do that. Mr. Fatland said his thought is to do a lease and put a regular dumpster on it initially and then if we decide to go to the inground dumpsters we already have a lease in place to make those improvements.

Traffic calming on Broad Street – Mr. Dickson said they would love to see the Downtown Master Plan look at calming of traffic on Broad Street with a center median and making sure that people can feel comfortable walking down and crossing Broad Street. With the hotel going in at some point, they are concerned about going back and forth across Broad Street in a safe manner.

Mr. Parrish said we have had some conversations with the hotel developer around that and asked if there had been any movement with NCDOT. Mr. Ray said NCDOT is waiting to hear from the hotel developer and Mr. Ray has asked them to contact NCDOT and open up that conversation, but they have said they are not ready to do that yet. Mr. Parrish will ask Nicole Bentley to follow up on that and give an update at the next meeting.

Railing – Mr. Dickson said they noticed that that area is a pop-up event area in the Downtown Master Plan and there are two walls that give them concern, mainly for people falling off the walls. They would be interested in talking about if there would be a railing option available to them from the City if they agree to some pop-up events. He said the wall and maintenance is shared by them and Doug Harris, but the liability or the safety is not spoken of. He said he is going to put a railing up, but would love to have help from the City as a private/public partnership where we could work together to make it safer and make it conform to the rest of the look of the city.

It was noted that the walls are on private property and the City would not be able to fund it unless there was an easement or lease from the owner. Mr. Fatland said he thinks with the streetscape plan utilizing the alleyways in a more positive sense and picking up this additional alleyway, it brings a good flow of pedestrian traffic into downtown so a railing on that wall becomes more of an important issue if we are going to bring more people through that area. Mr. Parrish asked Mr. Dickson to discuss this issue with Nicole Bentley to see if there would be any funding available through Heart of Brevard.

Front Yard - Mr. Dickson said he would also love to partner with the City on the front yard to make sure they are executing what would be in line with the streetscape. He would like to make that area an additional greenspace that would be available to anyone who wanted to use it.

Mr. Daniel asked for a timeline and what would be the priority on this list. Mr. Dickson said it is their goal to have the store open by the first quarter of next year. He said all of these items are independent, but Probart Street would be hard to execute after they open and it would be great to have a solution by the first part of December. The back

parking lot and alleyway are things that they would like to have figured out by the time they open.

There was discussion that making a street one-way would take some research and evaluation and as a short-term solution to the delivery issue, maybe the City Council could consider no parking on Probart Street. Mr. Parrish suggested we put together some recommendations for discussion/evaluation at the next meeting. Staff will start working on it and give an update at the next meeting.

G. Recommended Priority Items Related to Entryways to Downtown

Mr. Parrish reviewed the Heart of Brevard and Blue Zones Project Recommendations Regarding Priority Entryway Issues (copy attached as Exhibit A). He explained that these are specific recommendations to address and enhance the safety of downtown and include the following:

1. Address Motor Vehicle Operator's Failure to Follow Posted Speed Limits;
2. Enhance Bicycle Safety;
3. Maintain and Create Safe Crosswalks;
4. Improve Pedestrian Safety Where Times Arcade Alley Enters Jordan Street;
5. Make Sidewalk Repairs and Maintenance a Budget Priority; and
6. Track Priority Repairs

Ms. Copelof noted that this all feeds into the Public Works comprehensive maintenance plan, which is still on the to do list. Mr. Parrish informed the committee that they also plan to do another Walkable Center Assessment during this upcoming winter.

H. Update re Clemson Plaza and Underground Dumpsters

Ms. Copelof noted that the sign has been removed and Mr. Ray reported that First Victory will be back on the job site on November 22nd doing the fine grading work for the paver, and the paver plans to start on the 29th. Mr. Ray said that they are having trouble finding the cedar for the seats for the walls and the shortage of materials has been difficult for them.

Additionally, Mr. Ray reported that First Victory will also be on the Jordan Street dumpster worksite on November 22nd finishing up and we should be able to use the dumpsters in two weeks. The wall to conceal the grease bin will not be finished as they are having difficulty finding a brick mason for that job.

I. Recommendation of Process for Clemson Plaza Interpretive Plan

Mr. Parrish asked to postpone this item at this time, but he does have a draft process outline that we will send out to the committee for feedback.

J. Christmas Decorations

Ms. Copelof noted that the new snowflakes have been installed and the Heart of Brevard has purchased some additional lights. She expressed appreciation to John Wayne and Bartlett Tree Service for once again putting the lights up at no charge.

K. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council Downtown Master Plan Committee will be on Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 9:00 AM in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

L. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 PM.

Minutes Approved - December 2, 2021

X Maureen Copelof
Maureen Copelof
Chair, Council Member

X Denise Hodsdon
Denise Hodsdon
Executive Assistant



Recommendations from Heart of Brevard and Blue Zones Project – Brevard Regarding Priority Entryway Issues

Introduction

The Heart of Brevard Built Environment Committee (BEC) has as part of its FYE 2022 work plan to develop recommendations for improving the connections to downtown Brevard from its main entryways. BEC members Mark Burrows (representing Blue Zones Project - Brevard), HOB Board member Curtis Greenwood and HOB President Billy Parrish developed draft recommendations based on the HOB Winter 2021 Walkable Center Assessment for review by the BEC. The BEC met on November 2, 2021 and reviewed the draft recommendations.

The following recommendations, presented to and approved by the HOB Board on November 10, 2021, are respectfully presented to the City of Brevard's Downtown Master Plan Committee for discussion and implementation.

Recommended Entryway Priorities

Listed below are specific recommended action items regarding the entryways to downtown. Inherent in all the recommendations is the need for our City and NC DOT to address unsafe and hazardous conditions in an ongoing way.

1. Address Motor Vehicle Operator's Failure to Follow Posted Speed Limits. At present posted speed limits at entryways into the downtown business district are frequently ignored, making downtown less safe for pedestrians. This is particularly true along Broad Street and Caldwell Street. Consider the use of physical reminders/deterrents such as brightly painted crosswalks and pavement markings that indicate a transition to a pedestrian- and cycling-oriented downtown as well as flashing yellow and/or in-street Pedestrian Crossing signs. Consider installing more posted speed limit signs, including signs on the main entryways to downtown that alert motorized vehicle users that they are about to enter a pedestrian- and cycling-oriented downtown area. As a part of this recommendation, better "truck route" signage is required for US 64/US 276 (southbound) and reroute northbound truck traffic to Caldwell Street – at significantly slower speeds per current posted speed limits. If the aforementioned deterrents and visual reminders do not significantly alter motor vehicle operator behavior, consider stepped-up traffic enforcement - as a last resort.

2. Enhance Bicycle Safety. Enhance overall bicycle safety with a specific focus in the short term of repairing, or replacing if necessary, the deteriorated or unsafe storm drain grates in and especially leading into the downtown business district. Replacement will be required for those grates whose grate design parallels the street. In addition, bicycle/pedestrian signage should be posted at key entry points to downtown.



3. Maintain and Create Safe Crosswalks. Enhance existing crosswalks while creating two new crosswalks.

a. Place two new crosswalks on critical entryways into downtown:

i. At North Caldwell and Probart Streets, linking the downtown to the primary route to the Brevard Music Center and the Bracken Mountain Preserve – a long standing community goal.

ii. At South Broad Street at Transylvania Regional Library and where significant new private sector investment has been made. Consider this crosswalk a pilot project that includes highly visible painted crosswalk with an automated yellow flashing “stop for pedestrians” sign.

b. Address and improve crosswalk timing issues for pedestrians.

c. Repaint all deteriorated crosswalks.

d. At a minimum for all major intersections downtown, place highly visible “Yield to Pedestrians” signs to remind motor vehicle operators that they are to yield to pedestrians at all crosswalks.

4. Improve Pedestrian Safety Where Times Arcade Alley Enters Jordan Street. When exiting Times Arcade Alley onto Jordan Street motor vehicle operators cannot see pedestrians utilizing the Jordan Street sidewalk where the alley exits onto Jordan Street. The inability of motor vehicle operators to see pedestrians creates an unsafe interaction between motor vehicles and pedestrians on a daily basis. Possible solutions could include the use of mirrors that expand the motor vehicle operator’s visual field, pedestrian detection devices that indicate to the motor vehicle operator that pedestrian activity out of their line-of-sight has been detected, a pedestrian warning system to ensure that pedestrians are aware of a motor vehicle exiting the alley, and other visual aids to enhance motor vehicle operator and pedestrian awareness. Longer term solutions could include closing the alley to through traffic or the installation of a removable bollard system to allow for alley closure for special events, at peak pedestrian times or on a semi-permanent basis while allowing daily access to delivery vehicles on an as-needed basis.

5. Make Sidewalks Repairs and Maintenance a Budget Priority. Develop in the City of Brevard’s FYE 2023 Budget process a budgeted line item for sidewalk repair and replacement to begin to address the sidewalk hazard issues that are extant in the downtown area. This line item should set a specific linear foot goal for repair or replacement with sufficient funds allocated to accomplish the goal as defined.

6. Track Priority Repairs. Purchase and implement public works repair tracking software that allows for specific GPS-pinned priority repairs and the tracking of those repairs to ensure successful completion.