



DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT FORUM MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

Cecil Bothwell, Brian Haynes, Julie Mayfield

Guests in Attendance:

John Punter, Chris Rodriguez, Timothy Sadler, Ben Scales, Danny Arneil, Franklin Kane, Lonelei Kane, Catherine Alter, John Harldane. John Gernandt, Yssabel Gernanot, Tyler J. Ladd, Will Franke, Phil Krell, Corey J., Kenney Cowden, Steve Combs, Amy Rodrigues, John Gillman, Russel Thomas, Walter Horton, Henry Walton, William Ball, Martin Grove, Lisa Freeman, Beck Moran, Joe Hydra, Michael Hunter, Summer Zachary, Wes Peace, John Kloeckner, Sonny Sylvester, Yoshi, Bob Sheppard, Russell Lajoy, Russell Thomas, Wes Peirce, John Gillman, Joe, John Fleer, Andrew Fletcher, Abby Roach, John Monroe, Debbie Applewhite, Sue Robbins, Meghan Rogers, Adrian Vassallo, Bob Pierce, Guillermo Rodriguez

Staff in Attendance:

Alex Carmichael, Sgt. Evan Cowart, Paul Fetherston, Jon Fillman, Dana Frankel, Alan Glines, Dawa Hitch, Chief Tammy Hooper, Polly McDaniel, John Maddux, Brenda Mills, Jason Nortz, Todd Okolichany, Sam Powers, Roderick Simmons

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bothwell called the stakeholder forum to order at 3:01 PM.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF FORUM PARTICIPANTS

Dawa Hitch, Director of Communication & Public Engagement

Dawa Hitch welcomed participants and observers to the forum. Participants that participated came from the City's boards and commissions, downtown residents, and the performer community.

3. STAFF PRESENTATION

Paul Fetherston, City of Asheville Assistant City Manager

Assistant City Manager Paul Fetherston gave a history of downtown public space management issues, which included a timeline of meetings, events, and stakeholder communications beginning in 2014. Following staff recommendations in August of 2015, the Public Safety Committee directed staff to work with stakeholders to refine the proposals to enhance downtown public space management. Staff worked with stakeholders and presented a refined set of proposals. Those proposals included: vending/push cart management at two locations, bench relocation or removal, the temporary closure of Wall Street to vehicular traffic, high impact area designations for street performances, and incentivized area designations for street performances with vending.

4. FACILITATED CONVERSATION FACILITATED CONVERSATION BETWEEN FORUM PARTICIPANTS

Dawa Hitch facilitated a conversation between the members of the stakeholder group and Public Safety Committee. John Fler discussed the public safety element of the crowd issues around the high impact areas. Andrew Fletcher urged a design, rather than an enforcement, approach to managing those problems. Tim Sadler expressed concern over the relocation of the permit for a pushcart he manages at the corner of Biltmore and Patton. Adrian Vassallo expressed support for transforming Wall St. into a pedestrian mall and suggested North Pack Blvd. be transformed as well.

Dawa Hitch asked for feedback on the proposed reservation system for the high impact and incentivized areas. Abby Roach said that the Asheville Buskers Collective would not support scheduling in any form. Andrew Fletcher said that they understood and support the need to permit in the incentive areas, but said that the need just is not there in the high impact areas.

Guillermo Rodriguez supported park-lets for busking. Bob Pierce supported getting a pilot in place to begin testing solutions to the problems.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, June 22, 2016

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bothwell called the Public Safety Committee meeting to order at 4:39 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL MINUTES

The minutes from the April meeting were approved on Councilwoman Julie Mayfield's motion, Councilman Brian Haynes's second on a 3-0 vote.

3. DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACE MANAGEMENT

a. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Bothwell opened the meeting for public comment.

Bob Sheppard asked if the corner of Wall St. and Battery would be affected the proposal. Mr. Fetherston replied that it would not.

Russell Lajoy spoke against the performance regulations, stating that it violated the right to free speech.

Russell Thomas discussed the need to protect the flat iron statue and said that limiting time slots for buskers would give the police the ability to move the poor performers along.

Wes Pierce said that registration requirement would harm the authenticity of the busking culture.

John Gillman proposed widening sidewalks, opposed designating symbols for performance space, and opposed the scheduling requirement.

Andrew Fletcher spoke against the “false process,” stating that the buskers were heard but not listened to.

Chris Rodriguez said that the scheduling proposal would be he could not perform enough to make a living in Asheville.

John Punter spoke in favor of the artistic symbols.

Tim Sadler asked the Committee to support a clear plan for an alternative location for his pushcart if the permit were not renewed for its current location.

Joe said that the magic of Asheville was in its art and music.

b. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Councilwoman Mayfield read a letter from a young busker who could not attend the forum, but said that she and her siblings busked to raise money for music camp. The author said that these rules would make “busking no longer busking.”

Councilman Haynes supported park-lets and environmental changes such as landscaping, but did not support scheduling at the high impact areas.

Councilwoman Mayfield said that after three years, it was time to get a pilot in place. She supported moving forward without the scheduling requirement. She said staff should look at expanding sidewalks and temporary environmental designs for the pilot and report back to the Committee. Councilwoman Mayfield supported the delineated performance space as long as they were large enough to encompass Asheville’s performers. She also said that if the pilot did not include a sunset, then it should include benchmarks that would trigger automatic review by the Committee or Council.

Councilman Bothwell supported delineated performance spaces. He discussed the bench removal and alternative options for environmental design.

The Committee was unanimous in their support for the temporary closure of Wall St. to vehicular traffic.

Councilman Bothwell and Councilwoman Mayfield expressed a desire to see a pilot in place before the end of the current season.

4. ADJOURN

Chairman Bothwell adjourned the meeting at 5:49 PM without objection.