



## **AARRC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

*Thursday, May 12, 2016*

*Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Second Floor Board Room*

**Board Members in Attendance:** Chair Carleton Collins, Vice Chair Stephanie Brown, Esther Cartwright, Joe Ferikes, Karl Koon, Jane Mathews, George Morosani, Brownie Newman, Peter Sprague, Pam Turner, Kristie Quinn

**Board Members Absent:** Councilman Cecil Bothwell, Jason Young, Cindy Visnich Weeks

**Staff in Attendance:** Sara Henry, Todd Okolichany, Sam Powers, Sasha Vrtunski

**Guests:** Brian Gulden, Josh O'Conner, Annette Pace, Jerry Sternberg

Chair Collins called the commission to order at 4:07 p.m.

### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jane Mathews made an edit to the April minutes. With these changes, Chair Collins made a motion to approve the April minutes, and Mr. Koon seconded the motion to approve the April minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously with Ms. Mathew's changes.

### **2. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

#### **a. History Lessons**

Chair Collins mentioned Mr. Sprague's history lesson suggestion and asked about the commission taking a further look at this project. Ms. Mathews reiterated that she has information to share. Chair Collins asked Mr. Sprague and the Networking Subcommittee to take the lead on this idea and bring a plan back to the Commissioners.

### **3. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **a. Networking Committee Update**

Mr. Sprague recounted the meeting held at the offices of Explore Asheville. During the meeting the subcommittee reviewed the Economic Development Coalition Staff Report and the 2020 Strategic Plan. Mr. Sprague reported on new business developments including a new gym opening, and Carrier Park restrooms being overhauled. New Belgium Brewery's tasting room is open and as a result employment in the River District has increased. The Wedge Brewing is opening a

second location. Breweries are collaborating on a seasonal beer as part of the river clean up project. The Networking Committee participated in Riverfront Redevelopment's Third Thursday Open House, and Mr. Sprague attended the last CIBO meeting where he and saw a presentation on the RADTIP and Form Based Code by the City.

#### **b. Planning and Design Review Committee Update**

Ms. Mathews provided an update on the Planning Committee Subcommittee meeting. The group met and discussed public art. Jason Gilliland designed hand rails which are being considered for development projects in the RAD. The group also looked at Form Based Code and what tools can be used to help visualize these projects that come before the committee. In June, staff will bring the greenways to the subcommittee to review. Vice Chair Brown noted that the CVB will be looking at reworking the way-finding signage in the future and would like the support of the Planning Committee with this task.

### **5. STAFF UPDATES**

#### **a. Staff Projects Calendar Update**

New Belgium Brewery is open and May 20<sup>th</sup> is the Wilma Dykeman Birthday Party. Ms. Mathews mentioned the 100 year flood symposium is in July.

#### **b. Private Development Update**

No major updates were reported during the meeting.

Mr. Morosoni asked about Form Based Code updates. Ms. Vrtunski reported an update on the public comment process. The City has FBC on the open report site for comments. She is tracking the changes that need to be made on each segment and will share comprehensive comments with the consultants in June and then go into a second draft format in August. She reiterated that this is a process with continuing conversations with stakeholders and property owners. Ms. Vrtunski explained that once the code is in a place where most are happy, she will begin the review process with AARRC, City Council, and Planning and Zoning. The group asked about tracking changes. Ms. Vrtunski agreed that an executive summary or a list of changes would be a great way to track these updates.

Chair Collins stated that the commission may not get a detailed update every month depending on the flow in the process. Mr. Morosani addressed his concerns with what property owners can do between each district. Ms. Vrtunski reiterated that his concerns have been heard and they have gotten similar feedback from others and are working to make the changes to better fit the district's needs.

#### **c. Buncombe County Parks and Recreation Update – Josh O'Conner**

Mr. O'Conner reported there are no major updates. Public Comment is completed and they are moving into the phase to start the study. They are looking into additional funding opportunities and grant options to see which greenway projects can be moved into the next phase.

## **6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **a. Consideration to Alter Form Based Code Study Area**

Ms. Vrtunski presented the staff report to the commission to give an overview along with a timeline of events. Mr. Sternberg sent a letter in September 2015 to property owners to sign a petition. A map of the area was provided to the commissioners. The commission wanted to see a draft of the code before making decision. The draft code was reviewed last month. The consideration is for the commission to determine if now is the appropriate time to make a recommendation or a resolution to council.

Mr. Jerry Sternberg presented to the commission. He noted that he represents many of the property owners on the River. He is concerned about form based zoning in the area west of the railroad tracks in the current study area. His concern is that formed based zoning will expand in the future affecting other parts of the river and businesses in those areas. He said he is also concerned that outside consultants who are not from the area will be making decision about the the riverfront. He is concerned with the decision making process for how specific zones are determined. Mr. Sternberg would like to know if these decisions were made when it was raining or flooding. He also said that New Belgium Brewery would not have been built under this code. His understanding is also that lofts are required above industrial buildings. His concerns are also with building to the street and where parking is allocated. He said that whoever is building has no clue about recycling or industry. He has heard no complaints about current zoning. He asked the commission what there is to gain by imposing Form Based Code on this side of the river. He is asking the Commission to please sign the resolution to ensure City Council does not make the riverfront something that they cannot manage. Mr. Sternberg added all the property on the river will be out of compliance when this ordinance is passed.

Vice Chair Brown asked Ms. Vrtunski about Mr. Sternberg's letter. She asked if Form Based Code is imposed will properties be conforming to the code. Ms. Vrtunski explained that it has already been determined that there are several business that are not conforming due to being in the flood zone. Ms. Mathews seconded that she believes most of this area is nonconforming due to flood plains. Chair Collins explained the purpose of Form Based Code is to be a tool to say what kind of development we would like to see in the river in the future. Ms. Vrtunski explained that if there is a disaster and rebuilding is needed then a business can rebuild. The form may have to change to adapt to being in code, but it could rebuild. In no case should a code limit access to your property. Property owners can rebuild, they just have to rebuild within the parameters of the code. Ms.

Mathews explained that the river is the most widely diverse place in regard to form. This is to encourage diversity, create place, and to acknowledge that it is a flood area. Ms. Vrtunski explained that none of the current uses will be completely removed. Industrial uses will be maintained, but no feedback has been given that folks want exclusive industrial use. The feedback has been to ask for more flexible use.

Open discussion ensued about what kinds of recycling is allowed and the difference between light and heavy / regular manufacturing. It was explained that the difference is about the external impacts to neighbors. Chair Collins attempted to summarize the conversation. City Council is interested in Form Based Codes because they have worked in other areas. We are interested in applying this idea to the RADTIP. The ultimate question brought forth by Mr. Sternberg's resolution is whether we remove a portion of land from the study area or allow the area to remain as is, but tailor the zoning in a way that works best for all interests. Mr. Koon is in favor of removing the area west of the rail road tracks if the code remains as it is today. He said he is not in favor of RAD VII, and feels that the market place will determine the best way the area will develop. Ms. Quinn agreed. Chair Collins iterated that this input can be part of the continuing discussion.

The question was presented: should the Commission move to remove property out of the study area? Or should we move to keep in in and change to code to make it work? Resolution to be formed to leave the study area as it is or remove this area. Staff will take the input heard today and bring it back to the commission – RAD VII and VIII maintain active use of present river district.

Vice Chair Stephanie Brown made a motion to discuss this further at the July meeting. This will give the commissioners time to see how the changes to the draft have impacted districts VII and VIII. The Commissioners want the City to take their input and make changes to the code and then they will make a decision. The group unanimously agreed to bring this back in July.

Mrs. Vrtunski explained the Form Based Code timeline. There will not be a second draft by July, but more comments and direction as to districts VII and VIII should be developed by that time.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Proclamation to Recognize Karen Cragolin**

The Commissioners would like the executive committee to move forward with the Proclamation for Karen Cragolin. Ms. Turner also suggested doing something tangible for her such as a tree planting.

## **8. CITY/COUNTY LIAISON UPDATE**

### **a. City Council Update**

No update was provided at the meeting.

**b. County Commission Update**

No update was provided at the meeting.

**9. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**a.** Timothy Sadler came to reinforce his concerns about gentrification in the RAD. He asked the Commissioners what is being done to preserve the district for artists. His suggestion is to have an artist subcommittee to plan for preservation of the district for artists, specifically in regard to housing. Mr. Sadler also asked who from the Commission will be on the joint energy task force for the RAD to be a net zero district. Brownie Newman will be on the task force.

**10. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

May 20<sup>th</sup> – Wilma Dykeman Birthday Celebration from 4-6PM at Jean Webb Park / Riverside Dr.

May 20-21<sup>st</sup> – Studio Stroll from 10AM-6PM in the RAD

May 20-22<sup>nd</sup> – Burners & BBQ all day at Days Warehouse for Public Art Installation

May 21-22<sup>nd</sup> – Foundation Hellraiser all day behind 289 Lyman St. (Skate Park)

July 15-16<sup>th</sup> - Flood Symposium

Chair Collins adjourned the meeting at 5:38pm.