



**PED  
MINUTES**

**REGULAR MEETING  
Tuesday, June 16, 2015**

**Board Members in Attendance: Vice Mayor Marc Hunt, Council Member Jan Davis, Council Member Gwen Wisler**

**Staff in Attendance: Sam Powers, Joey Robison, Stephanie Monson Dahl, Jeff Staudinger**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Sam Powers requested a change to the draft minutes. The final sentence of item 2a should read: *Committee members felt recommendation to Council should include three options: 1) all jobs must be at least living wage, 2) only living wage jobs are incentivized, and 3) median wage will be utilized as the benchmark for job creation.* Minutes were approved unanimously.

**2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. **Final review and recommendation of the Historic Preservation Master Plan for Asheville and Buncombe County; Stacy Merten.** Merten stated that most changes since the last draft have been in strategies. Rating categories were also added. This has been a multi-year process with a lot of input from the public and various boards and commissions. Merten said that there has not been much push back on the plan because so many players were included in the process. Motion made by Davis and seconded by Wisler that this item go to full council in August. Motion approved.
- b. **Update to Small Business Incentives; Sam Powers.** Powers introduced economic development consultant Crystal Morphus, who also presented to HCD this morning. Powers stated that HCD's suggestions included having a business ombudsman in DSD; and providing grants for façade, landscaping, employment, etc. to incentivize job creation. Some communities use CBDG funds for that. Morphus provided an update on the project via PowerPoint. She surveyed businesses (86 responses), talked to service providers, and researched best practices. The (mainly small) businesses identified numerous challenges to growth, and mentioned financing as one useful tool along with affordable space, parking, and an easier permitting process. Morphus also reviewed existing City incentive programs and said that programs should be developed to meet goals (such as job creation). Ideas from other communities include an online concierge, starter kit, startup space, and CBDG money for business startup. She is asking for feedback on City's economic development goals. Ideas discussed included allocating resources to partnering with business support organizations, increasing customer service at DSD, providing starter kits, using City website to provide information on what organizations can help, providing more guidance through the regulatory process, using incentives to encourage more jobs for City residents.

Councilors shared concern that the City play an appropriate role. Hunt stated that due to diverse council opinions, there is a need to elevate this conversation to full council level. Powers suggested that staff go back and synthesis input and then provide a menu of options that Council can review for their planning retreat. Hunt said policy direction should be finalized between now and January so we can adapt in the budget.

- c. **Revised Land Use Incentive Program Policy; Jeff Staudinger.** This item was also presented at HCD today. Major changes have been proposed to ensure the grant is incentivizing things that wouldn't happen anyway without it. Staff recommended changes include no equity requirement, no energy star requirement, but requires at least 10% affordable, affordable at least 15 years, leased only to income-qualified tenants, and convenient location but allows developer to present definition. Also changed scoring to focus on affordability, retention of workforce, location, and length of term and removing points for green building and brownfields. Council's

decision is discretionary, but eligibility criteria must be met to be eligible. Will be returning to HCD in August with revisions based on feedback. Questions remain: Should workforce income be redefined as 100% AMI? Should policy encourage more or fewer bedrooms? Should additional points be available for serving lower income households and/or larger scale developments or accessory units? Wisler and Hunt felt the give may be too much, and asked Staudinger to consider scaling back to find balance. Hunt felt it would be helpful for Council to see if we are simply buying dollar to dollar that rate reduction for what the developers would have gotten at the regular rent rate. Staudinger sees need for larger size units in our affordable housing portfolio. Hunt recommended changing minimum units from 3 to 8. Wisler very supportive to get to 90-100% on workforce housing, stating that 120% is too much. HCD had similar comments. 100%. Would like to redefine by percentage rather than affordable and workforce.

- d. **Riverfront Update; Stephanie Monson Dahl.** Form Based Code kickoff is being held tomorrow night. Monson estimates it will take one year to go to Council. Riverfront Commission Retreat going to Knoxville next Friday, June 26. Staff will follow up with you with details.

Craven Street Bridge improvement funding strategy is dependent on a city/county partnership. Currently, the strategy is not funded. Will be funded if County adopts \$300,000 budget for the bridge, which is being considered. We are able to contribute \$200,000 to design. Staff is aware councilors have received a letter from East-West Neighborhood Association. Monson clarified that the City is not planning to build something that gets torn up. Staff expects Craven St bridge to be built in 2018, with some small improvements between now and then.

Monson also clarified that the feasibility study for the bridge is finished and very site specific, Neither it nor the flood modeling work could be used for a whitewater park. The Army Corps of Engineers said a whitewater park process would take significant time and could not coordinate with additional projects. Staff was asked to try to incorporate a whitewater park into existing plans and to see if we could use the nonprofit arm to fundraise. Staff did case studies, held meeting of the officials, discussed with riverfront commission, parks and rec advisory board, and RADBA, and did a fiscal analysis. There is a lot of support in the existing plans for the results of this type of project, so it generally aligns. However, it cannot be integrated into existing projects as per Army Corps. They had concerns with the proposed location, and sees the need for very clear public process with alternative locations. Costs for whitewater park amenities vary widely in case studies, but would substantially add to the cost of the project. Members requested the report be delivered to Council via a memo to the City manager.

- 3. **NEW BUSINESS.** None.
- 4. **PUBLIC COMMENT.** None.
- 5. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.** None.
- 6. **ADJOURN.** The meeting was adjourned without objection.