



AARRC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 12, 2015
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, Second Floor Board Room

Board Members in Attendance: Chair Pattiy Torno, Vice Chair Carleton Collins, Stephanie Brown, Esther Cartwright, Councilman Jan Davis, Joe Ferikes, Karl Koon, George Morosani, Commissioner Brownie Newman, Ricky Silver, Peter Sprague, Pam Turner, Mayor Jerry Vebaun, Cindy Vinisch Weeks

Staff in Attendance: Stephanie Monson Dahl, Caroline Long, Sasha Vrtunski

Guests: Jeff Dalton, Angela King, Bryan King, Liz Koh, Roger McCredie, Mark Rosenstein, Mari Peterson, Harry Pilos

A quorum was established and Chair Torno called the commission to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Silver made a motion to approve the minutes from the February meeting, Mr. Koon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Planning and Design Review Subcommittee Update

Mr. Collins stated that the Committee met March 11th at the offices of RiverLink and heard about the changes to the RADLOFTS project. They also reviewed the greenway plan as it relates to the RADTIP project with RiverLink staff.

b. Networking Committee

Mr. Sprague noted that the Committee had two recent meetings, one with the Chair and one with Staff. They worked on firming up the Committee's plan, to make sure it is in sync with the Commission's workplan. One main task is to engage anchor institutions and partners in order to start discussions of how the riverfront plan fits in with those institutions' master plans. These institutions include: AB Tech, UNCA, Mission Hospital, and Norfolk Southern. The Committee assigned the organizations to specific members and are gathering materials to take to initial meetings.

The Committee is also interested in connecting with peer boards, such as the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and the Chamber's EDC board. They are working on a strategy to encourage large property owners in the River Arts district to attend public meetings, identifying future AARRC members, and are planning on having AARRC representatives meet with new business owners in the area, especially with respect to businesses in the music and arts industries.

c. Staff Update

Ms. Monson Dahl handed out the update matrix, and noted that the consultants for the RADTIP delivered 25% construction drawings two days ago. All horizontal lines, or lines on the ground, have been drawn at this point, and staff can move ahead to work on the Public Art Master Plan, stormwater management, right-of-way acquisitions, and other processes. In addition, staff has been meeting with RiverLink and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission to discuss river cleanliness and safe river access. The group has finalized a commitment from the state to fund a boat ramp at Craven street and an improvement of Jean Webb park; and

RiverLink has agreed to write a grant agreement to fund an access point at the existing ADA fishing pier. Mr. Silver asked if there will be signage to direct people to the steps, and Ms. Monson Dahl noted that any City-managed sites there should be signage.

Asheville Police Department Central District Community Resource Officers, Sean Davis & Lucas Lovelace gave a brief report on the 123 Graffiti Free program and their enforcement of eviction protocol in the riverfront area.

d. Rules Committee

Chair Torno noted that it could be beneficial to codify the Networking Committee as a standing committee rather than ad-hoc. The Rules Committee noted that the Commission will have a considerable amount of turnover in the next couple of years. Ms. Vinisch Weeks noted that involving ex-officio community members in the AARRC committee work might be helpful.

e. Riverfront Commission Retreat

Ms. Monson Dahl reviewed possible retreat dates and asked Vice Chair Collins to work on determining a final date for the retreat. The Commissioners noted that during the retreat, a broad discussion exploring the notion of transitioning the AARRC to a different organization type, with fundraising capabilities might be in order.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. French Broad River Greenway East Section

Ms. Monson Dahl discussed the French Broad River Greenway East Section, the Craven Street Improvement Project, parking issues and traffic dispersement. The Greenway Committee of the Multi-Modal Commission has requested a joint meeting with the AARRC.

b. Design Review: RADLOFTS

Vice Chair Collins shared the updated plans for the RADLOFTS project. He noted that the designer has incorporated a lot of different materials including brick and HardiPlank. There will be 237 total units, including 92 two-bedroom units. There have been three design changes: they combined the two buildings into one larger building; removed the pedestrian sidewalk that cut through the property; and converted 20,000 square feet of live/work space to straight residential.

The Chair noted variances which pertain to this project—these will be considered by Council and not by the Commission. The project has not yet gone to the Technical Review Committee or Planning and Zoning.

Councilman Jan Davis and Mr. Koon recused themselves. Vice Chair Collins made a recommendation that the Commission approve the project, as it does meet the intent of the River District Guidelines

Ms. Brown made a motion to accept the recommendation and Mr. Morosani seconded the motion. Ms. Vinisch Weeks noted that the design team has worked hard to provide a project which will be a true asset to the area, and Ms. Turner noted that the homes will be a great addition to the area. *The recommendation was accepted unanimously.*

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Angela and Bryan King are the owners of the 12 Bones restaurant in the River Arts District, and are concerned about how parking will be handled once the roadway is moved closer to their restaurant. Ms. Monson Dahl noted that Staff would have to negotiate with the property owner, rather than the business owner, about the design for parking on the property. The current drawing shows the road going through existing parking. She noted that she is not able to offer design recommendations, but she is able to ask questions such as: Would it be possible to move the parking area to a new part of the property? She expects that when the appraiser speaks to the property and business owners, that the appraiser will be asking similar questions. The property and business owners' responses will inform the appraiser's decision as to whether

the property can still be used by the existing tenant or by any other business. Ms. Monson Dahl also noted that there is an opportunity for the City to add land to Mr. Peterson's property, and that the shape of the parcel could change due to the new location of the roadway. She believes this could possibly allow for a redesign of the parking area, or even free up new space for parking. She reiterated that at this point, the City is unable to negotiate for real estate purposes, because they are locked into a federal process. The assistance which the City may provide is delineated in federal guidelines. If the appraiser determines that the business cannot operate on the property, the City is required by federal law to give them monetary business relocation assistance. The process is the same for a resident: if the City's plans were to impact a tenant who was a resident, the City would be required under federal law to give the resident monetary assistance. If the property owner refuses the City's offer (which will be reviewed by third parties including NCDOT and FHWA), the property owner will have the right to adjudicate the offer in court.

Ms. Brown inquired about the timeline for the process, and Ms. Monson Dahl noted that the City has begun to pull plats for right-of-way acquisition. By December, Staff must have all the plats in hand. There will be general public information released by the City, individual property owner and tenant mailings, and property owners will individually be hearing from Staff and appraisers between June of 2015 and January of 2016.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

a. Whitewater Consortium Presentation

b. Visioning for AARRC

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friends of Connect Buncombe are holding a meeting Monday, March 23rd from 4-6pm with NCDOT to discuss greenways.

7. ADJOURN

Chair Torno adjourned the meeting at 5:56 p.m. without objection.