



AARRC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 14th, 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, George Morosani, Commissioner Brownie Newman, Peter Sprague, Mayor Jerry Vehaun

Board Members Absent: Karl Koon, Ricky Silver, Pam Turner, Cindy Visnich Weeks

Staff in Attendance: Lucy Crown, Stephanie Monson Dahl, Caroline Long

Guests: Pat Dennehy, Helen Hyatt, Roger McCredie, Keith Wimsett

A quorum was established and Chair Torno called the commission to order at 4:05 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Vehaun made a motion to approve the minutes from the April meeting, Mr. Ferikes seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. STAFF UPDATES

a. Craven Street Bridge Improvement

The current Craven Street bridge does not provide a sufficient turning radius for commercial/truck traffic, which is an issue for the businesses in the area including New Belgium Brewing. There are plans and funding available in the CIP to build a sufficient turning radius using the existing bridge to accommodate trucks and commercial traffic. The City plans to construct a new bridge to solve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity issues, which will also improve the access for commercial traffic; however, the full cost of that bridge is not funded at this time. City Council passed a resolution in 2013 that included a provision to prioritize funding in the RADTIP for a solution to the turning radius issue. It has also been identified that there is a critical gap in the bicycle and pedestrian network for the area; there is no safe connection (existing or planned) between the extensive greenway network that is being built on both sides of the bridge. After review of the feasibility study for a cost effective solution to one or both of these transportation issues, Riverfront Office staff recommended the City and partners look at funding a design to create a new bridge span (and design an interim turning radius solution, if necessary) that would solve both issues. The new bridge span estimated cost is \$3 million, with design cost being an (additional) \$500,000. Council will consider funding the design as part of the FY '16 budget process. City and County elected officials have had discussions about this issues together via the MPO. While the City was offered an award of \$685,000 in STP-DA funds to go towards construction of this "span" solution, there is no current funding for the design nor the remainder of the construction cost.

b. Whitewater Proposal Evaluation: Key Findings

Ms. Monson Dahl will be presenting to City Council at the May 26th meeting. Staff met with various regulatory agencies that will need to be involved in this project and if City Council decides to go forward with the project, the city will need to follow the federal 404 permitting process. The feasibility report suggested acquiring property that the City does not currently own, and acquiring the property for non-transportation reasons could potentially threaten the integrity of the RADTIP acquisition process.

c. Annual Retreat June 26th

Staff are working to complete an agenda for the retreat and will have it to the Commissioners by their June 11th 2015 meeting.

d. Greenways Update

Friends of Connect Buncombe are paying for consultant from Greenville SC to work on a branding process for the region's greenways. They have discovered 8 different thematic groups and will have stakeholder meetings within different areas of the county.

Lucy Crown discussed the public meeting process for the French Broad River greenway and the June 27th meeting with different stakeholder groups.

Chair Torno discussed an inventory of Riverfront areas to coordinate with groups who are taking ownership of those riverfront areas. The Commission also discussed the various City boards which are pertinent to the AARRC and how to dovetail meetings with them into their current workplan.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

a. Mr. Collins noted that the Planning and Design Review committee is a core advisory group for the Form-Based Code process and they and other community leaders are working with Ms. Vrtunski. The City has been working to align the Design Review procedures across different commissions, and it appears as though any project which merits Technical Review Committee review will happen before it comes before the Planning and Design Review committee. The Committee is also considering moving their meeting time.

b. Networking Subcommittee

Mr. Sprague noted that the committee met on May 4th at the Mountain Housing Offices. The group heard a report on the Azalea Road project grand opening. They heard from Mr. Morosani about his meeting with UNCA. The Committee is interested in approaching Mission health as a community partner. He discussed ownership change of a few buildings on the riverfront, including Riverside Arts Makers Place, or RAMP Studios LLC which has purchased the palette business across from the Grainger building. They also had an update from Sasha Vrtunski on the Form-Based Code efforts. There will be a June 18th meeting for stakeholders and a July 24th charette and consultant visit. Their next meeting is the first Monday in June at Morosani and Associates.

c. New Belgium Update

Mr. Ferikes was unable to attend the meeting but Chair Torno noted that New Belgium is still scheduled to be open at the end of 2015. Staff expect paving on Craven street this week or next. The distribution center in Enka is open and the greenway should be open in early fall.

3. NEW BUSINESS

Design Review: Amboy Road Food Truck Park

Amboy Road Food truck park will include a bar and café in building. The design will remove portion of roof to create a covered outdoor eating space. The Subcommittee encouraged the developer to include more riparian species native to this area in addition to the hardscape around the building. The exterior improvements are predominantly cosmetic, including a new roof, new canopy, and installation of barn door type features. The Subcommittee felt the project met the intent of the guidelines, with the only comment being to increase the use of more riparian landscaping in plan. Owned by Dean Pistor. Mr. Morosani asked what will attract people to the location, and the Chair responded that Carrier Park is the most visited park in the city of Asheville, and is right across the street. Mr. Collins noted there will also be storage inside building which the food trucks can use. Mr. Newman asked if this project is this a replacement for the food truck area downtown. Mr. Collins noted that it is an addition, and they have

space for two food trucks at this point. Ms. Brown asked whether the signage meets the code requirements for the area and Ms. Monson Dahl noted that it does, although it is disappointing that there cannot be a sidewalk in the front because the property is owned by a third party. Mr. Davis noted that a crosswalk will be very important, to connect this side of the street to all of the development on the other side.

Mr. Collins made a motion to recommend to the commission that the project meets the intent of the design review guidelines with the exception that they increase the use of riparian landscaping. Mr. Morosani seconded and the motion passed unanimously

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Wimsett is the owner of Inspire Personal Fitness on Riverside Drive just north of Southern States Farm Supply. He came to the meeting to get more involved with the River Commission.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Commission will discuss the expansion of the Duke Energy substation on Swannanoa River Road 339 Lyman Street is under contract. Ms. Monson Dahl is meeting with a potential developer in a week.

WLOS had a question about the construction of the new French Broad River Academy buildings in Woodfin, which will be another educational institution on the riverfront.

Staff will distribute a link to the Darren Dahl article on why New Belgium chose Asheville.

Ms. Monson Dahl reminded the Commissioners that the third Thursday is next week, 3-5pm and she will host open office hours on the 5th floor of City Hall. This session will focus on form-based code and what it means moving forward.

6. ADJOURN

Chair Torno adjourned the meeting at 5:09p.m. without objection.