

Minutes of the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership Board of Directors
Wednesday, October 14, 2009 3:00 pm
Morehead Planetarium, Downtown Chapel Hill, NC

Members Present: George Draper, Linda Convissor, Dick Mann, Tommy O'Connell, Mark Vevle, Glenn Boothe, Dwight Bassett, Patty Griffin, Hilary Workman

Members Absent: Kevin Foy, Chris Jones, Cheryl Lin, Andy Pennock

Staff Present: Jim Norton; Executive Director, Meg McGurk; Assistant Director, Bobby Funk: Office Manager

Others Present: Pat Evans, Curtis Brooks, Emily Cameron, Jane Park, Alex Varabyou

George Draper called the meeting to order

Citizen Comments:

Pat Evans announced the next Friends of Downtown meeting featuring Fred Black as speaker on October 29.

Consent Agenda:

Mark Vevle motioned to approve minutes. Linda Convissor seconded, motion carried.

Items for Review/Discussion:

Streetscape Presentation – Curtis Brooks, Urban Forester with the Town of Chapel Hill gave a brief history of the 1993 Downtown Streetscape Plan and explained that the Town recently adopted a new Streetscape Plan in June 2009 guided by Mikyoung Kim Design. Mr. Brooks presented a Power Point Presentation with highlights including:

--Lighting poles downtown are owned by Duke Energy who must approve any changes. Currently Duke Power is going through a re-lamping of all fixtures on Franklin Street and Columbia Street and plan for completion at the end of October. Duke is looking into a 250 watt option, but is currently at the 100 watt option.

--Mr. Brooks spoke of the need for a mast arm signal system for pedestrian crosswalks to include lower level pedestrian lighting funded by Duke Power. The designs are outlined in the streetscape plan. Mr. Brooks mentioned the one year LED light pilot project on East Franklin St. has low light levels but high quality.

--Mr. Brooks stated that with soil improvements and technology, the current planters may not be serving the same purpose they did years ago. He presented options for urban trees without planters and introduced the concept of nano-parks with benches, paving variety, brick roads and stamped asphalt.

--The West Rosemary Pilot Project, the first project of the new Streetscape Plan, will run from Breadman's Restaurant on West Rosemary to Mitchell Lane. The site currently has no sidewalks and much of it is privately owned property. He spoke positively of the potential for street trees on the north side of West Rosemary St. The project should begin in the summer of 2010.

--Mr. Brooks explained about the system of ducts that allow for lines to be run underground and the need to meter any water systems that might be installed for planters. Each duct bank has 4 tubes in it; one goes to power lights, one to signal power, two are left open for other utilities. These are unmetered outlets because of the standard draw of power for each street light. There are circuits on the light poles to be used for Christmas lights which are calculated before hand. Duke Energy has to plug them in and unplug them. Mr. Brooks spoke of the town's intention to bury all wires on Franklin St. The overhead wires on Rosemary St are high voltage which is very difficult and expensive to house underground.

--Mr. Brooks explained the need for more polls and fixtures, and the challenge of tree canopies and limbs obstructing lighting with ambient light alleviating some of the problem. Mr. Brooks announced that the trees will begin to be trimmed up. Mark Vevle suggested dark sky advocates may have issues with an increase of uplighting. Mr. Brooks spoke of the good work with cooperation of business owners getting ambient lighting.

Halloween Update – Jim Norton stated that Town operations for Halloween will run similar to last year with street closures from Roberson Street to Raleigh Road. The Town will not be allowing the extra hour for bars to be open due to the time change.

Façade Grant Applicant Update – Jim Norton announced the Partnership has granted Classic Clothing \$775 for a new awning as part of the Partnership's Façade Grant Initiative.

Discussion of Alleys – Jim Norton announced the Town will begin to clean the public alleys downtown on a regular basis. Mr. Norton complimented George Drapers work on Amber Alley. Mr. Draper discussed the direction he will take with lighting in Amber Alley and solicited input from board members.

Project Homeless Connect Update - Jim Norton said the city council gave rave reviews of the event. Meg McGurk said there were 235 guests. She stated they grew into St. Joseph's church in addition to The Hargraves Center. All data will be put into federal database which will be reported on later. Mr. Norton noted that her efforts were excellent.

Downtown Master Plan Update – Jim Norton stated that the Town Council approved the Downtown Master Plan draft on Monday night. Mr. Norton and Dwight Bassett are putting together a more detailed proposal which will be finished at end of October and then made public to solicit proposals; due in December.

Downtown Listening Session Update - Jim Norton announced the November 4th session will focus on holiday promotions with a push for businesses to be open on Sundays. Norton stated that the

Partnership has requested free parking for Saturdays in all lots during holiday season and that last year there were 2000 coupons for one hour free parking to give to businesses.

Mr. Norton announced the University Square meeting tomorrow. He encouraged people to come with ideas to voice to the committee.

Items from the Board

Hillary Workman asked about downtown branding. Mr. Norton said we have talked to Splinter group. Ms. Workman mentioned it to student government which may be interested in getting involved in a potential internship type project. Glenn Boothe spoke of that being a good point. How that is a good place for grad students looking for real world opportunities for projects to get experience.

Linda Convisor announced the UNC Homecoming parade that will take place three hours prior to kick-off of the football game. Ms. Workman spoke of concerns about street closings. This will be a rolling closing.

Glenn Booth talked about the need for better parking signage downtown. Mr. Norton said it will be rolled in with the way-finding plan to hopefully be.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobby Funk, Office Manager