

June 27, 2022
6:00pm
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: Heather Seay, Jim Kiser, Michelle Sebastian, Joe Gates, and Cristy Cummings.

Heather called the meeting to order and determination of quorum occurred at 6:00pm. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the April 25th meeting. Minutes were approved.

New Business

We welcomed Lowell's new Planning Director, Joe Gates. Joe comes to us with a wealth of public service experience and will be a valuable addition to our city team. We look forward to working together with Joe.

Cristy shared Lowell's Parks and Recreation comprehensive "Master Plan: Program Review & Needs Assessment Study". This plan was developed with the efforts of the Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management department at North Carolina State University. This plan was constructed after obtaining input from our residents on their wants, needs, and priorities for the future. It addresses the communities' recreational programs, facilities, events, and wellness opportunities, to name a few considerations. Providing a plan for the future that meets our resident's needs and interests for a healthy/happy community is the goal. Along these lines, Cristy also shared that indoor recreational programs, which was identified as a deficit in this study, may include a future partnership with both the Lowell Boys Club/Girls Club and McAdenville's Pharr YMCA facilities. There will be more to come on this as meetings and discussions take place. The "Master Plan: Program Review & Needs Assessment Study" in its entirety is available to view from the Lowell website. The LCC will continue discussions on the study after time to review it more thoroughly.

Cristy also shared that our "natural areas" are one of the city's current priorities as work will soon take place on the new riverfront park located at the old dye plant near Poston Park. Clearing out and demolishing unusable materials/buildings is scheduled to take place near the end of the summer.

Cristy indicated that the upcoming "Music in the Park" event, scheduled for July 8th, was geared toward teenagers. Besides DJ music, there will be food, inflatable games and a game truck for our youths to enjoy.

Joe shared information regarding the "Gastonia Economic Development" planning that he was familiar with, and how this may be of benefit for Lowell. As the city wants to support small business, and in general our business district, ideas on how to do this was the basis of the discussion. The folks working in the development and planning to support the Gastonia businesses included potential renderings of building elevations, help with architectural designs, building inspections, and fees. An example of a familiar business that benefited from this support is the restaurant Pita Wheel. Our discussion revisited Lowell's former

Façade Grant. Joe will look into the details of that grant, and we will discuss it at our next meeting to see whether it should be modified and/or implemented.

Another avenue that may be a way to support the economic development of Lowell's business district is the city's participation in the "NC Main Street" program. This a coordinating program with "Main Street America" which helps in revitalizing older and historic small towns. It is a preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country. Lowell's consideration in participating in such a program is in the early stages of discussion and investigation.

Scott Attaway, city manager, stopped in and shared that city representatives will be meeting with business owners to discuss the "Downtown Master Plan". Also working with consultants, this is a rendering of what downtown could look like. There is much to consider regarding such a plan, which includes but is not limited to, working with DOT for bicycle and pedestrian consideration. Also, the Lowell Land Development Code has design criteria to be considered.

Staff Updates

Cristy shared that the CaroMont Health Grant this year is being used for the Music in the Park events.

Cristy also highlighted upcoming events, in addition to the Music in the Park, which included Yoga in the Park, National Night Out (police department sponsored event), Senior Luncheon, and Trucks in the Park. She also mentioned that sign-ups for soccer are now open.

Congratulations to Sue Lowe who was honored as the city employee of the month.

Joe shared that he will be looking at ways in which Lowell's online presence can be improved.

Member Comments

Jim complimented the city on the increased presence of the American Flags that have been lining the streets during recent weeks. And thanks to our maintenance crew for their hard work in putting them up.

Jim also brought up the possibility of adding Christmas flags along McAdenville Road during the holiday season. This is part of the traffic route that is used during busy nights of Christmas Town in McAdenville. Another consideration may be including solar lights to illuminate the flags. More work in collecting information to support the addition of the holiday flags will include the cost and feasibility of posting the flags. More to discussion to come on this.

Michelle asked about the hydration station that was purchased with the CaroMont Health Grant from last year. Cristy shared that it has arrived and will be installed at Bob Bolick Park soon.

Jim made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Michelle. Meeting adjourned.

The next LCC meeting will be on July 25th at City Hall.