

Sept. 26, 2022  
6:00pm  
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: Heather Seay, Jim Kiser, Michelle Sebastian, Jessica Holbrook, Joe Gates, Phil Bonham, Candy Funderburk, Anne Massey, 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 August 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Minutes were approved.

### **Unfinished Business**

Tori Dellinger, who is an Economic Development Specialist for the Economic Development Department for the City of Gastonia, share information about the Façade Grant available for businesses in the downtown area. The purpose of these types of grants are to revitalize the facades of properties, market the properties, and encourage occupancy. The Gastonia Façade Grant is a reimbursement program with a sliding scale, depending on the business's investment. There is a 50/50 matching grant for investments up to 20K, and up to a 30K reimbursement for a business investment of \$100,000. There is rolling enrollment for the application process with a maximum of 60K total matching grants per year. A Design Review Committee approval is needed first, and this occurs once the business applies, shares photos, façade renderings, etc. The information that Tori shared will be helpful as the LCC and city members continue their discussions on the possibility of reinstating a Façade Grant for Lowell business.

Discussions for the installation of Christmas banners along McAdenville Rd. included Cristy sharing some prices for various sized of banners. The new poles will be priced out and Phil and Cristy are working on the quotes. More discussion to follow once prices and logistics are worked out.

### **New Business**

Joe shared an economic development update.

- Lowell's residential growth will increase by one square mile, primarily on the north side of town. This is due to several new residential developments in the works, which include Pulte Homes (proposed 422 homes), Grove Street Townhomes (proposed 200 homes), River Heights (proposed 70 homes), and Lowell Woods (proposed 200 homes).
- The Northpointe Gateway 85 construction is nearly complete and it includes one and a half million square feet of space.
- The I-85 Widening Project will begin construction January of 2024. The project will include 10 miles of I-85 and will be from Hwy 321 (exit 17) to Mt. Holly (exit 27). Lowell City Council members met with DOT to discuss the plans for the three bridges in Lowell that will be impacted by the expansion.

- City leaders, business owners, and representatives from NCDOT met to discuss the infrastructure and challenges foreseen for the downtown area as all look forward to the future.
- The updated Lowell Website includes online maps, thanks to the work of Todd Stroupe. He used the Geographical Information System to help in the creation of the maps. An example of his efforts includes the “Downtown Roadway and Streetscape Improvements”, which can be found on the “Planning and Zoning Plans and Maps” page. Thanks for your hard work, Todd.
- Progress on the McCord Park will include fall vegetation plantings, followed by hard scape installation.
- Wayfinding signs for the city is still in the plans as logistics and costs are considered.

Cristy shared some of the details of the updated Lowell Website and solicited comments/feedback from LCC members. Some suggestions included, but were not limited to, tweaking the calendar so that links made navigation easier.

Cristy shared some of the details of the Master Plans for two parks.

- Bob Bolick Park’s plan includes expanding the basketball courts, adding a splash pad, shelter, restrooms, and paved walkway, and increasing the parking area.
- Harold Rankin Park’s plan includes a new multipurpose field, walking trail, a smaller baseball field with new bleachers and dugout, pickleball courts, basketball courts and improvements to the parking area.

Cristy highlighted some of the 2022 Community Events.

- The LCC would like to, once again, honor the Lowell veterans this coming Veterans Day. Would the lunch be a drive up / takeout event, or would vets prefer a sit-down lunch as an option, was discussed. Joe is going to check possible venue options, and Cristy will check on possible meal/menu options. More to come on this event.

## **Staff Updates**

Cristy shared that Lowell is applying to be recognized as a “Tree City USA” member. This would mean that the city continues working with the North Carolina Forestry Department, and hosting events, such as future tree plantings, will occur. The current Lowell *Tree Landscaping Ordinance* was also mentioned in the discussion. Details of the ordinance may be found on the Lowell website.

Joe shared that the final touches to the Lowell website, using the use of the Polymorphic software, is happening. This will improve the experience that residents have when using online features.

New LCC members, Jessica Holbrook and Anne Massey, were welcomed. Great to have these two folks supporting our community and sharing their time and insights.

## **Member Comments**

Jim wanted to thank the Maintenance Department for the improved/repared stairs at Rankin Park.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

The next LCC meeting will be on October 24th at City Hall.