

Dec. 19, 2022
6:00pm
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: Heather Seay, Jim Kiser, Michelle Sebastian, Jessica Holbrook, Joe Gates, Bill Knox, Todd Stoupe, Scott Attaway and Cristy Cummings.

Heather called the meeting to order and determination of quorum occurred at 6:00pm.

Jim made a motion to change the order of agenda item **D**, (Façade Grant), to be the first New Business agenda item. Michelle seconded the motion and motion passed.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the Nov. 28th meeting. Minutes were approved.

New Business

The first item of business was the Façade Grant Expansion. Scott shared some differences between Gastonia's Façade Grant, and the previous rendition of Lowell's Façade Grant. Specifically, the grant available to Gastonia's business are limited to a specific location, and that location is taxed specifically to fund their Façade Grant. Lowell's previous Façade Grant was limited to the downtown area and resources came from the city's General Fund. Caroline Tyson, co-owner of Groovy Beast restaurant in Gastonia, has leased the property where the ICONZ Bar on Westover Street was located. The Tyson's plan on opening a second Groovy Beast restaurant at this site. Caroline shared some of her ideas as to how she and her husband envision the exterior of the restaurant would look like. Some examples included, but weren't limited to, signage, windows, and a mural. Her request was for the LCC to consider not limiting the boundaries of the new Lowell's Façade Grant to the downtown area only. There was some discussion among the committee regarding this possibility, and much of that discussion circled around how the funding for the Façade Grant would come from the General Fund. Joe shared a current zoning map to see where business areas were located in the city. The LCC will continue this discussion as they begin working on a proposed Façade Grant for City Council to consider. And we thanked Caroline Tyson for coming to speak to our committee.

City employees and members of City Council have received several complaints from concerned citizens regarding the bulk trash that has been placed curbside, well in advance of the bulk trash pick-up days. Particularly, the unsightliness of couches, chairs, mattresses, and rugs that have lined up along North Main Street of recent were identified. City Council is in discussion regarding amending *The Lowell Code of Ordinances Chapter 50 Garbage and Refuse Collection and Disposal*. They would like to propose a graduated fee schedule, based on what the item is, to remove the items if they are placed curbside outside of the normal bulk trash pick-up days. The assessed fee would be added to the property owner's water bill. Heather asked how residents would be notified of the change if the amendment was adopted. City representatives shared that some of the ways would include updating the information on the website, posting it on social media, and including it in the next newsletter. Scott also reminded the LCC, that currently the city offers four free bulk pick-up

dates per year for residents, and that will continue. He also pointed out that there are several locations in Gaston County where the public is able to dispose of bulk items free of charge, and that Lowell has a Loner Truck program for its residents too. The LCC discussed the changes, how it might impact the aesthetics of the city, the cost to property owners, and impact it would have on the duties of the sanitation crew. The proposed revision to the Lowell Code of Ordinances reads: *In order to promote an aesthetically pleasing image and to mitigate pollution in the City of Lowell, Lowell Sanitation Department, or their contractor, will rectify the violation by disposing of bulk refuse (or other materials listed in 50.03) and charge the sanitation account holder, or the property owner, for the removal of materials, in accordance with the established sanitation fee schedule.* Michelle made a motion to move forward with the text amendment and fee schedule as proposed by City Council. Jim seconded the motion. Motion passed. The proposed fee schedule, if adopted by Council would be revisited at the June City Council meeting.

Todd shared where we are at with the Lowell Economic Development Story Maps. Using GIS software and LED Mapping software he has been busy creating interactive maps to showcase what the city is doing. These are interactive maps that will be highlighting topics of interest such as new residential developments, Parks and Recreation updates, commercial buildings, city parking maps, festivals and events showcased, schools, and current and future amenities at our parks, such as the McCord Park and future River Front Park. The LCC will preview and critique the maps and provide feedback. The maps will be rolled out to the public soon on the Lowell website. Although the maps will be useful for residents, they will also promote tourism and encourage recruitment.

Joe shared an update about the Downtown Revitalization Study and Development Committee. The committee consists of staff employees and business owners. The group has been busy identifying vacant properties and looking at ordinances/zoning for those properties. In addressing the needs of the city and its residents, the committee is also looking closely at what is special about the properties and what may be a good use of the space. Their goal is to envision and make recommendations for suggested uses of the properties. An example of the type of topics they are brainstorming would be, "What type of restaurants/retail would bring people downtown after 5:00pm?". Some of the ideas included a Dessert/Ice Cream late night Bakery, Bottle Shop, and Bicycle/Outdoor Enthusiast store. This committee has been working closely with the Mount Cross Area of Chamber of Commerce, whose mission is *to build relationships to serve as a transformational force for the growth and prosperity of eastern Gaston County.* Lowell is in a unique situation in that our city will have a significant number of new residents in the very near future, and there is much opportunity for commercial and service businesses.

Staff Updates

Cristy shared updates.

- Concrete at McCord Park is now in. The new shelter has been ordered and will be installed soon.
- A demolition contractor for the new River Front Park has been selected, and demolition will start in the new year.

- A contractor to do renovations at the Community Center has also been selected.
- Recreational basketball practice is now ending and league play will begin and continue through February. The basketball program includes approximately 90 youngsters from Lowell.
- The new banner poles for McAdenville Rd. were delivered but they included the wrong type of attachment needed. This will be corrected. The Maintenance Department will install them, once corrected.
- No events are scheduled until February when the Senior "Valentine" Luncheon is planned.

Joe shared updates.

- There were no new site plans to share.
- Building 3 at the Gateway 85 Business Park in Lowell will be occupied by Newell Brands Company. They will utilize the 1.5 million-square-foot facility as a warehouse and product distribution center.
- In January the city will look at rezoning on Hwy 7 to change it to industrial for new construction.

Member Comments

Heather indicated that she would not be at the next meeting. Jim will run the January LCC meeting.

Jim, and the LCC, welcomed Bill Knox as the newest member to this committee. We are excited to have him join us.

Jim thanked the city staff members for hosting a Christmas party for the volunteers.

Jim noted that the Jeep Groups at the Christmas Parade were a hit. He suggested a possible event of "Jeeps in the Park", similar to the past "Trucks in the Park".

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting adjourned.

The next LCC meeting will be on January 23rd at City Hall.