

March 27, 2023  
6:00pm  
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: Heather Seay, Jim Kiser, Michelle Sebastian, Jessica Holbrook, Joe Gates, Bill Knox, Anne Massey, Candy Funderburk, Cristy Cummings and Scott Attaway.

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

A motion was made by Jim to approve the minutes from the Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> meeting and it was seconded by Jessica. Minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Unfinished Business**

After one more go over of the proposed Façade Grant, and one minor change, the LCC was pleased with the final document. Jim made a motion to approve the proposed *City of Lowell Façade Improvement Standards and Grant Program* and to send it to City Council for their review and approval. The motion was seconded by Bill. Motion was unanimously approved. A special thanks to Joe for all of his work on organizing, modifying, and gathering information for this endeavor.

Joe and Todd Stroupe attended the North Carolina Main Street conference recently, and Joe shared his thoughts and some highlights from this conference. He also shared synopses of the “Toolkit” and “Breakout” sessions. More detailed information from the sessions is also available, and Joe would be happy to share the information with anyone who is interested. There are many requirements necessary for a city to gain the classification of “North Carolina Main Street”, and currently the city does not have the resources that would be required. But the LCC may consider ideas for the conference as a jumping-off point for ideas for the future. Our group did discuss and learn about Social Districts, which are areas where people can walk with open, to-go containers of alcoholic beverages in a contiguous area. This may include both indoor and outdoor areas of businesses within a defined area and with specific hours established for the social district.

### **New Business**

Cristy shared several volunteer opportunities for activities and events coming up. The “Eggs in the Park” is scheduled for March 31<sup>st</sup> and volunteers are needed to help hide the eggs. The Easter Senior Lunch is April 6<sup>th</sup> and folks are needed to help with passing out to-go trays for our seniors. The Litter Sweep this year will occur on April 15<sup>th</sup> and the meeting spot will be City Hall.

Cristy brought up the idea of having an honorary “Citizen of the Year” for a member of our community. The discussion included what we thought the criteria may be for the program, and Cristy shared some of the details for similar programs from other cities. Some of our considerations included, but not limited to, individuals who continually support the betterment of the community through participation in civic events, or neighbors who go above and for others. Cristy will continue to work on some ideas, and the LCC will discuss it at a future meeting.

## Staff Updates

Joe shared updates:

- Planning and zoning have been busy. In fact, there were more permit requests during the first three months of this year, compared to the total number of permit requests in 2022. This is primarily due to the new neighborhoods and development in Lowell, but also more people are making renovations to existing properties.
- Lowell Townhouses have preliminary plots with 170 units on the construction drawing phase.
- A section of Highway 7, near Phillips Place, has been rezoned to “Industrial Flex”. The type of development described will provide industrial facilities with business fronts.

Cristy shared updates:

- A BBQ Cook Off is planned for May, 20<sup>th</sup> at McCord Family Park. The public will have an opportunity to share in what is sure to be some tasty pork butt, ribs, and chicken. City Council will also be selecting a beer vendor for the event.
- The last tax appeal meeting is April 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Engineers are currently working on the soil erosion plan for the former Dye Plant which will become Riverfront Park. Demolition of the plant will begin this spring.
- Renovations will soon begin at the Community Center now that the renovation contract has been awarded to a contractor. Timelines include staging by April 15, windows and doors replaced by May 20, and all exterior painting completed by June 30.
- The Carolina Thread Trail has been awarded a grant for the development of a trail along the South Fork River in the area of the new Riverfront Park and the new development River Heights. There will be two trail public easements from River Heights and a third one from the Riverfront Park. The amount of funds allocated for this section of trail is \$127,000.
- There will be six baseball teams and four tee-ball teams this spring.
- The baseball fields have been graded and there are plans to put down new mulch at the playground.

Scott shared updates:

- A draft budget is in the works and a new line item will include funding for the LCC. The proposed budget will be presented to City Council at their May meeting with final approval occurring at their June meeting.
- The city is looking into using Urban Gorilla Paint in creative ways to be used as a traffic-calming tool. Scott shared examples from cities who have found aesthetically pleasing ways in which downtown areas can be transformed. More to come on this.

## Member Comments

- Heather wanted to thank those involved in making the new posts and banners along McAdenville Road a reality. The public seems to be happy with the new addition to the streetscape.
- Bill inquired about the Litter Sweep scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Michelle mentioned a concern about the high amount of truck traffic through town.
- Jim mentioned that new Welcome/City Limit signs need updating.
- Jim asked about the possibility of providing “welcome materials” for new residents. The city currently shares a “Welcome Packet”, and a brief discussion of what may be included in it occurred.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jim and seconded by Bill. Motion passed unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned.

The next LCC meeting will be on April 24<sup>th</sup> at City Hall.