

Feb. 27, 2023
6:00pm
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: Heather Seay, Jim Kiser, Michelle Sebastian, Jessica Holbrook, Joe Gates, Bill Knox, Anne Massey, Phil Bonham and Cristy Cummings.

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

A motion was made by Anne to approve the minutes from the Jan. 23rd meeting and it was seconded by Jim. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Joe shared the suggested changes for the Façade Grant application. Modifying the original application and expanding the breadth of who may be eligible was discussed. Attention was given to the wording of the document to more closely align it with the intention of the purpose of the grant, which is maintaining and/or improving the appearance of building facades. The districts in Lowell that would be eligible to apply for the proposed Façade Grant would include most areas where businesses may be located. The areas zoned for residential use would not be eligible to apply. Joe will continue working on the document by making the changes that the group discussed, and he will share it with the LCC for another examination.

New Business

Cristy shared that the city was approached by Draft Dog Sculpture regarding a possible art installation for a location in Lowell, perhaps at one of our parks. She shared some examples of what the design, style, and cost of the dog sculptures were. The LCC thought it could be a nice addition to our city, but at this time it seemed cost prohibited. This did lead to further discussion of what we thought would be a nice addition regarding public art to our parks, and most specifically the new McCord Park. Some ideas revolved around the art installation being “kid friendly”, or one that would encourage photo opportunities, or perhaps one that would propel into additional installations which could result in a type of branding for the city. As work continues on our local parks, hopefully there will be more discussion and opportunity to include public works of art.

Joe shared with the LCC the “One Gaston 2040” initiative that the county is rolling out. This initiative is born out of a culmination of viewpoints and information collected, to provide a vision of our community for the future. The data gathered included 70 surveys and entailed the views of 1700 people. It hopes to provide a framework of guiding principles for businesses, non-profit organizations, local governments and all, to work together to create the County that the people of our community imagined. There is much more information available from the [One Gaston 2040](#) website.

Cristy shared information about the North Carolina PARTF (Parks and Recreational Trust Fund) and the LWCF (Land and Water Conservation Fund) grants. The PARTF is a matching grant up to \$500,000 and the LWCF is also available up to \$500,000. Cristy also

shared that the cost analysis to renovate Harold Rankin Park, based on the master plan established, would be 3 million dollars for the entire project. The city plans on taking on the project in separate phases. Phase 1 would include the area behind, and closest to, the Boys/Girls Club building. This project would repave the basketball court, expand the playground, build four pickleball courts, a multi-purpose field, bocce ball courts, a new restroom, and expand the walking trail. The cost of Phase 1 is 1.5 million dollars. Phase 2 of the project will include an updated baseball field, repaving the parking lot and a new concession stand and batting cages. Bill made a motion to apply for the PARTF grant for 500,000. Anne seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Jessica made a motion to apply for the LWCF grant for 500,000. Bill seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The PARTF is awarded in the fall and is up to 3 years. It is unknown when the LWCF will be awarded.

Staff Updates

Cristy shared updates.

- Sports registration is coming to a close and it looks like there will be 3 Tee Ball teams and a 9-10 team this year.
- Basketball is wrapping up.
- The Lowell Police Department will be hosting a "Bike Rodeo" on March 25th. The event will highlight bicycle safety and include a bicycle obstacle course, and a free helmet give away.
- Easter Senior lunch will be on Apr 6th.
- The annual litter sweep pick up is on Apr 15th.
- The city has hired Andrea Nixon as an assistant for the Parks and Recreation Department. Welcome, Andrea!

Joe shared updates.

- The Planning Commission meeting will include discussions about signs and updating the mapping of Storm Water Control information.

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

The next LCC meeting will be on March 27th at City Hall.