MINUTES

COUNCIL DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 – 4:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Pamela Holder, Vice Chair, Council Member Nicole Bentley, Exec Dir. Heart of Brevard Billy Parrish, Heart of Brevard Representative Lee McMinn, Citizen Member Parker Platt, At-Large Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio Member
Staff Present:	Paul Ray, Planning Director Alex Shepherd, Assistant to the City Manager Emily Brewer, Planner
Guests:	Monica Driscoll

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Vice Chair Pamela Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by Assistant to the City Manager Alex Shepherd.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Copelof requested that there be an item added to the agenda, I. Interactive Art Project for Clemson Plaza. Motion by Ms. Bentley, seconded by Mr. McMinn to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of March 18, 2024 Meeting

Motion by Mr. McMinn, seconded by Ms. Bentley to approve the minutes of the March 18, 2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Times Arcade Alley Update

Ms. Bentley said Duke Energy is almost done, and then the contractor will need to place the conduit box. After that, Duke Energy will be completely finished. She also mentioned that Comporium should be done.

F. Sidewalk Usage Policy Update

Ms. Brewer said that back in January, we had a discussion with the committee about what we wanted to regulate and what we wanted to allow regarding objects placed on the sidewalk. We have worked with the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) on this issue, and they have informed us that all objects placed on the sidewalks should have insurance. She mentioned that we have proposed text amendments to cover that, and we will require a permit from businesses. Currently, we have permits split into four categories: sidewalk dining, A-frame signs, permanent, and semi-permanent objects. However, in our proposed amendments, we will have three categories that include sidewalk dining, A-frame signs, and objects placed on sidewalks. There are no changes to sidewalk dining or A-framed signs if they meet the clearance requirements. The change is for sidewalk obstructions and to have a permit required for a space that immediately abuts a business themselves. We also will not allow anyone to place objects in the brick area. Items that are located within an indentation of a building or its facade would not require a permit because that is not within the right of way, but we would still recommend that the business have the same type of insurance.

Ms. Holder asked who will educate the businesses about this new rule and if the Chamber of Commerce would help.

Ms. Brewer mentioned that Ms. Bentley and the Heart of Brevard would help with educating businesses.

Mr. McMinn asked why the sidewalk dining furniture is required to be metal.

Ms. Brewer stated that it is required by our agreement with NCDOT.

Mr. Platt asked can I place a permanent object in front of the two feet of my building that is immovable so that basically I own it.

Ms. Brewer said that any object that you place there should be able to be moved once you leave.

G. Downtown Beautification Grant Discussion

Mr. Ray said there is a small grant opportunity that has come our way, and I would like to have a discussion on what we should apply for. It is a collaboration between the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina and Dogwood Trust. It states a maximum amount of $10,000 for projects not exceeding a total of $50,000, but the foundation may make exceptions at its discretion. Some examples of items they will fund are pedestrian signals, decorative crosswalks, shade structures, benches, bicycle racks, and public art.

Mayor Copelof mentioned using the grant to install a bike rack that will bring people downtown from the Estatoe Trail, and we would not lose a parking space downtown.

Mr. Ray proposed another option to plant Silva Cells Downtown; however, we would need to study this further to ensure it meets the Downtown Master Plan. He said Silva Cells cost around $20,000 each. Another option would be the Times Arcade Alley archway that we removed from the budget because it was $30,000.

Mr. Parrish recommended that we implement items that we have already planned for and are searching for money for. He said that he does not see the bike community using the bike racks because unless they can see their bike, they most likely will not use the rack.

Ms. Bentley mentioned installing lighting in the alley by Cup and Saucer to allow for placemaking and allow people to use the area when it's dark.

Mr. Ray said that he will contact Mr. Shook and have him install lighting in the alley.

H. Mural Painting Discussion

Ms. Bentley informed the committee that the Hub for the Arts Committee has been discussing art in a public space for a long time. She said the original plans for Clemson Plaza called for public art that has local significance and a water feature. During the change of council leadership, who were part of the Downtown Master Plan Committee, felt at the time they could not make a decision. The Heart of Brevard started looking at the possibilities of mural projects and came across the North Carolina Music Murals Trail, which is a statewide initiative. The artist has done over seventeen murals that show murals of artists in their birthplace.

At 5:06 pm, a motion was made by Mr. McMinn, seconded by Mr. Platt, to pursue funding opportunities and to explore the possibility of installing a mural. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Platt said that Clemson Plaza is not finished, and this mural is a step towards that. However, it does not address the functionality of the plaza; it's about the decoration.

Mr. McMinn recommended that we should make incremental improvements to the plaza when the opportunity presents itself.

Mayor Copelof said she thinks the mural would bring an interest to Clemson Plaza that would draw people.

Ms. Driscoll mentioned that she does not like the location of the mural and would prefer that it be in another location.

Mr. Ray said the final proposal will have to be approved by the City Council.

I. Interactive Art Project for Clemson Plaza

Mayor Copelof informed the committee that this is not a permanent piece of art and that she is being approached by TC Strong, which is a non-profit organization that helps raise awareness for mental health. She stated that the art is a framed netting with the word "hope" outlined in green crochet and has a box of blank fabric where you can write a message that will then be woven into the netting. She said that she does not think that we need permission to place a non-permanent piece of art.

Ms. Bentley said that the policy does not address installations of items that are not permanent. She said the City Council would probably need to approve it.

J. Public Comment

No public comment.

K. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council Downtown Master Plan Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 4:00 PM.

L. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Minutes Approved - May 8, 2024

X _____
Gary Daniel
Chair, Council Member

X _____
Alex Shepherd
Assistant to the City Manager