MINUTES

COUNCIL DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 29, 2024 – 4:00 PM
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Pamela Holder, Vice Chair, Council Member (left at 4:45 pm) Nicole Bentley, Exec Dir. Heart of Brevard Lee McMinn, Citizen Member Parker Platt, At-Large Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio
Members Absent:	Gary Daniel, Chair, Council Member Billy Parrish, Heart of Brevard Representative
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager David Todd, Assistant City Manager Paul Ray, Planning Director Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Denise Hodsdon, City Clerk
Guests:	Monica Driscoll, Kevin MacDonald, Doug Miller
Media:	Jon Rich, *Transylvania Times*

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Committee Vice Chair Pamela Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 4:07 PM.

B. Certification of Quorum

Quorum was certified by City Clerk Denise Hodsdon.

C. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Holder noted that Item F Sidewalk Usage Policy needs to be postponed until the next meeting. Mr. Platt moved, seconded by Mr. McMinn to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes of June 12, 2024 Meeting

Mr. McMinn moved, seconded by Mr. Platt to approve the minutes of the June 12,

2024 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Times Arcade Alley Update

Mr. Hooper reported that the Times Arcade Alley project is substantially complete. However, there are a few outstanding items, including the addition of a few new drains that weren't in the original plans but are needed to catch rainwater from unexpected sources. Other items to be completed are the addition of the decorative light pole across from the Chocolate Shop, which is on order but not expected until October. He mentioned that now that the signs are installed in the Jordan St. bumpout, we feel that they look strange and don't function as expected. Staff has been looking at some reconfiguration to maybe make them function better and not obstruct pedestrian traffic as much as they do now. At the same, we are still working with Duke on whether the pole can be moved so that it's not in the middle of the walking path. We are also looking for an alternative to the stop sign because you can't see it until the last five feet, which defeats the purpose when it is too late to stop. Mr. Ray added that the landscaping will be installed all at once in the fall.

F. Parking Options

Mr. Hooper noted that since we did the bulbouts on Main Street last year, we have heard a lot of feedback on the loss of 19 parking spaces. We have been exploring some of the ideas we have heard from this committee and from constituents and Staff has categorized those ideas into buckets. He shared the attached list for the committee's review and noted that a few of these bucket items, particularly in columns 3 and 4, are things we could do fairly easily if the committee thinks appropriate.

Mr. Hooper explained that the proposal in column 4 would be to reconfigure the loading zone and the parking spaces on Jordan Street to make the phantom parking space there an official parking space and expand the length of the loading zone so that it can be used by trucks and delivery vehicles again, because at the moment they are blocking the street or parking on the sidewalk. On Broad Street, the long loading zone in front of Quixote has a handicap space right in the middle of it, which affects the utility of the loading zone. If we move that space up to the back of the existing spaces, we might have enough dimension to add two spaces there and still have a long enough loading zone to be helpful. That buys us one space back and relocates the handicap space to a more convenient location.

Mr. Platt asked about the two loading zones on the first blocks of Main Street and pointed out that the trucks can't really use them so are using the middle of the street. Mr. Hooper said they would be up for discussion, and he would be willing to explore how those are used by the businesses on Main Street.

Ms. Holder asked what items in columns 3 and 4 could we do that wouldn't cost a lot of money and time. Mayor Copelof thought that signage would be one of the most impactful and could be done quickly with minimal expense. She also thought if we

created a parking map that shows all the paid and free parking areas that we could give to businesses to hand out, that would be a tremendous impact at minimal cost. Mr. Hooper noted that staff is planning to add small wayfinding signage.

Mr. Hooper mentioned that something else to explore is #7 in column 3, which would be to do a survey of downtown streets to find out if there is extra space where we might be able to add more spaces.

Mr. Platt asked if there is an actual parking problem, or is there a perceived parking problem? Is it a signage problem or is it a quantity problem? Mayor Copelof said there is certainly a perceived problem and that the number one issue in the over-50 population survey was downtown parking. That demographic, which is large here, definitely sees parking as a problem and they are telling her that they have stopped coming downtown because of the parking problem. She added that the businesses perceive it as a problem and are upset about it. I don't think our visitors perceive it as a problem so much. She asked what if we tried to entice the people who have stopped coming downtown with some of the other suggestions that are on this list, like make the first hour in our pay lots free or just make Clemson Plaza lot free. It would be a goodwill gesture to our residents to make it easier for them to come downtown.

Ms. Bentley said we need to figure out the daily usage of downtown, thinking about the number of businesses we have, their employees, the residents who don't have designated parking. She agreed that the first hour free in the paid lots would go a long way to get folks downtown. She said we have also talked about whether it is possible to increase the on-street parking limits from 2 hours to 3 hours.

Mr. Platt asked if the over-50 folks were complaining about not being able to find parking or having to pay for parking. Mayor Copelof said the complaint was about not being able to find parking and having to walk too far. Mr. Platt said I think if it is a quantity problem, we need to know. He asked how many businesses we have and how many parking spaces do we have? Ms. Bentley said we have about 200 businesses who have employees and about 100 of those are public facing. Mr. Hooper thought there were approximately 340 free public spaces. Mr. Platt said if we don't have a clear idea of what our real need is and what our real supply is, we can find ourselves in a serious problem. He suggested that we need to do a parking study in order to work from facts. If the number one return from the over-50 population is parking, then we need to focus on it in a way that is more than just speculation. Mr. Platt moved, seconded by Mr. McMinn to recommend to Council that they consider undertaking a parking study. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hooper noted that staff will start working on columns 4 and 5.

G. Public Comment

Doug Miller said I appreciate everything you are doing to update us. He said enforcing the loading rules would be helpful as some of the larger trucks can impede traffic flow and create

issues for people who are trying to find a parking spot or just trying to walk around. Also, consistency with enforcement of the rest of the parking would be helpful as there are people taking advantage of the fact that there is one parking enforcement officer and they know her consistent schedule.

H. Set Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council Downtown Master Plan Committee is to be determined.

I. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Minutes Approved - September 19, 2024

X Pamela Holder

Pamela Holder
Vice Chair, Council Member

X Denise Hodsdon

Denise Hodsdon
Assistant to the City Manager

Disposition Buckets for Downtown Parking Possibilities				
Highly unlikely (1)	Wait and see (2)	Study more (3)	Ask committee (4)	Staff will execute (5)
1. Build parking deck 2. Establish permanent shuttle 3. Buy Pisgah Health lot 4. Make Clemson and Jordan St. lots free w/o establishing paid lots somewhere else	1. Effects of new ticketing/enforcement 2. Partnerships with pvt lots, particularly for surface lot on E. Main 3. Big wayfinding refresh* 4. Make Clemson and Jordan free; charge for on-street parking at Main and Broad**	1. Buy Nichols grassy lot 2. Event/temporary shuttle 3. Make first hour free in paid lots 4. Fit more spaces by converting some to "compact only" 5. Fit more spaces by converting some streets to angled parking 6. Find unused collection/turn lane space to convert 7. Make some side streets one way to make room for more spaces.	1. Reconfigure Jordan St. loading zone 2. Reconfigure Broad St. (Quixote) loading zone	1. Convert Blue Ridge bakery loading zone 2. Small wayfinding/ signage additions 3. Remove obstructions near existing spaces