MINUTES
City Council Downtown Master Plan Committee

Wednesday, August 12, 2026 – 3:30pm
City Hall Council Chambers

Members Present:	Gary Daniel, Chair Council Member Lauren Wise, Vice Chair, Council Member Nicole Bentley, Heart of Brevard Executive Director Dee Dee Perkins, Heart of Brevard Representative Dakota Chapman, Citizen Member Mayor Maureen Copelof, Ex-Officio Member
Members Absent:	Parker Platt, Citizen Member
Staff Present:	Wilson Hooper, City Manager David Todd, Assistant City Manager Becky McCann, Communications Coordinator Shawnee Cummings, Assistant to the City Manager
Guests:	Abby and Eli Steel, Doug Miller
Media:	Jonathan Rich

A. Welcome & Call to Order

Chairman Gary Daniel called the meeting to order at 3:29pm.

B. Certification of Quorum

Assistant to the City Manager Shawnee Cummings certified that a quorum was present.

C. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Ms. Perkins to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Ms. Bentley to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2026 meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Update on Co-Ed Theater

Mr. Hooper said Abby and Eli Steel are present and will participate in the update. He said this was probably not the best time for an update, as they will know more information tomorrow after meeting with the insurance agent to find out what, beyond what we know, will be covered under their insurance. The City is asking Abby and Eli to not only repair what was damaged during the water leak, but to do some additional repairs to the theater before it reopens. There is a possibility that insurance may cover some of it, but if not, then we will have to figure something out. The additional repairs are safety related and include a fire alarm, replacement of loose ceiling tiles, and the City's repair of loose stucco on the building façade.

Ms. Steel said they are in a holding pattern with the insurance company, as it is mainly back-and-forth communications between the restoration company and the insurance company. Ms. Steel added that it is negotiating at this point and there are not a lot of changes to the building itself. Some of the plumbing and electrical work is being subcontracted out and they are waiting for the bids to come in from the subcontractors. Mr. Steel said all of the damaged material has been removed and the building is essentially down to the studs. From here, they are waiting to rebuild.

Mr. Hooper said the repairs mentioned are the short-term plan so that the theater can temporarily reopen until more substantive repairs can be performed. The City commissioned an architect to look at the building and their report identified additional repairs that needed to be made as soon as possible, which are much more expensive and not covered by either party's insurance. Mr. Hooper said Ms. Bentley is going to help us apply for a grant through the NC Department of Commerce that should cover a significant portion of the repairs, but we will need to fundraise for the remainder. The grant requires a 5% match, but the cost of the needed repairs will likely exceed what we are eligible for with the grant, which is why fundraising will be needed. There is no cost estimate yet, but the repairs are structural and the City will likely need to raise $500,000 from the community. In addition to structural repairs, repairs will also include a sprinkler system, replacement of old wiring, and accessibility changes to the theater itself. Mr. Hooper said the aforementioned repairs will keep the theater in operation for 10-15 years, but longer-term repairs have not yet been determined. He said they are trying to get the theater back in service so that Abby and Eli can finish out their contract with the City, but we do not yet have a plan for repairs beyond the next decade.

Mr. Daniel asked if the grant mentioned was the grant previously discussed. Mr. Hooper confirmed. Ms. Perkins asked if the $500,000 estimate is in addition to the potential grant. Mr. Hooper said yes. Mr. Daniel said he thinks this discussion is overdue because it keeps the Committee up to date rather than in the dark and added that we should talk about it every month until there is resolution.

F. Update on Bringing the Ecusta Trail into Downtown

Mr. Hooper said this item was discussed by this Committee and the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee (PTRC) to determine the best way to bring the Ecusta

Trail from its intersection with W. Main St. into downtown. With a terminus of either England St. parking lot or Clemson Plaza, numerous options were presented, including bike lanes on both sides of the street and bidirectional bike lanes on one side of the street. Each option had trade-offs, such as safety and loss of parking.

Mr. Hooper said there was a lack of consensus among this Committee and the PTRC about the best option and which location should be the terminus. The issue was tabled until we found out 2 things. The first was the results of the parking study, which are anticipated in September, as there was concern that a loss of additional parking spaces would be detrimental for downtown and the Committee wanted to hear the results of the study. The second was the construction estimate for the trail itself because the bike lanes are likely to be a several hundred-thousand-dollar project. The funding sources that could help with this project are Friends of the Ecusta Trail (FOET) donations and the Tourism Development Authority's (TDA) remaining contribution, but those funding sources are intended to go toward trail construction first and can only be used if they are not needed for the trail. Mr. Hooper said since the issue was tabled, there is not much of an update.

Mr. Daniel said he asked for this item to be on the agenda because he thinks we need to continue the discussion. He realizes we are waiting on the parking study, but he does not know when we will get those results and it has pushed off a critical decision that needs to be made soon. Mr. Daniel said while things take a long time, the Ecusta Trail is coming and it appears that we are not giving much consideration to a high priority. He said we need to determine how to continue the discussion and how the decision process is going to take place given the lack of consensus.

Mr. Wise asked if we determined that both this Committee and the PTRC had agency in terms of recommending a decision to Council. Mr. Wise and Mr. Hooper both said they do not know where we left that. Ms. Perkins asked if it would be valuable to have a joint meeting with both Committees. Mr. Wise said a joint meeting will likely be valuable, as he thinks there should be a discussion between the groups.

Mayor Copelof asked if we expect to receive both the parking study results and a construction estimate in September, to which Mr. Hooper confirmed. She added that the perfect time for the joint meeting might be after we get both of those things.

Mr. Chapman noted that when the Committee did the downtown walkabout, there was discussion about additional options, such as angled parking. He asked if we have those options or if we are waiting to get them. Mr. Hooper said the City's consultant did not recommend moving forward with angled parking, as it would not yield any additional parking spaces due to frequent interruptions by driveways. Mr. Chapman said part of that option was that it would allow for a bidirectional bike lane on one side with parking on the other side, increasing safety for bicyclists. Mr. Todd said he recalls that it was a high-level discussion with the consultant, but Staff did not pursue it because more options would cost more money. Mr. Daniel added that the angled parking may also triggers a sight-line issue, as there would be

limited visibility for people pulling out of their driveways. Mr. Hooper said that is a good point, as the measurements for the angled parking calculations used the old sight triangle dimensions, so he is unsure if it will work with the new dimensions.

Mr. Todd said if there is a way to determine the terminus, that will help better direct resources because we keep producing 2 options for every configuration due to the unknown terminus. If we could decide on a terminus, it would narrow our focus significantly, especially given that the two options are on different sides of the road.

Ms. Perkins said while she knows everyone has varying perspectives, the option that takes bicyclists down Jordan St. and ends at the back side of Clemson Plaza would be safer. Mayor Copelof said it also would not eliminate parking spaces, would avoid conflicts with the Fire Department, and is a place where we have bicycle parking.

Mr. Daniel said he suggests we eliminate the England St. parking lot, as he cannot think of any cyclist who wants to park and leave their bike in a parking lot with cars moving through it. Mr. Wise added that as a terminus of a major trail system and with the starting point being a newly rehabbed visitor center in Hendersonville, a parking lot is anti-climactic end to a trail being used by thousands of people.

Mr. Hooper suggested scheduling the joint meeting with the PTRC in early October so we have the results of the parking study and the Ecusta Trail Advisory Board will have gone over the construction estimates. Mr. Daniel agreed and recommended the joint meeting take the place of both committees' monthly meetings.

G. Pisgah Health Parking Lot

Mr. Hooper said the terms of the deal with Pisgah Health Foundation were that they would give us a strip of land adjacent to the parking lot at the Jordan St. and England St. intersection in exchange for the City paving Pisgah Health's parking lot and building a fence along the new property line. By obtaining the additional piece of land, it increases the size of the lot and allows the City to add approximately 10 more parking spaces. Mr. Hooper said that we accepted the deal and Council allocated funding in the budget to repave the Pisgah Health parking lot. In the last few weeks, the contract was signed and the deed was recorded. Staff is currently working to obtain quotes to remove the shrubs, build a fence, and pave the lot.

Mr. Daniel asked if the area where the shrubs are being removed will be paved. Mr. Hooper said not yet, as we did not budget enough for that, but we will likely put down some gravel, encourage drivers to park further in, and add some temporary lines for the extra row of spaces. He added that it will not look very nice, but we will have to punt that until the next budget cycle or until additional funding is identified.

Ms. Perkins asked what the estimated cost is. Mr. Hooper said to pave the Pisgah Health parking lot and build the fence, we budgeted $20,000. To fix up the City's parking lot, aesthetically and to comply with our parking lot standards, it will be

closer to $85,000. Mayor Copelof asked if there is a way we can create the new spaces with gravel and temporary paint so the public can use the additional parking spaces in the meantime, to which Mr. Hooper said yes. Mr. Daniel said he is excited about it and the potential for it to be an attractive parking area.

Mr. Hooper added that Ms. Bentley will be getting 10 spaces in the City Hall parking lot for her employee parking program. He said it has not been finalized yet, as he thinks we might be able to offer her the row of parking where the trailer for the hardware store used to be. Mr. Daniel asked if the parking program includes residents. Ms. Bentley said yes, it includes residents and employees.

Mayor Copelof said the Pisgah Health parking lot agreement showed great initiative by the Planning Department. She added that Pisgah Health was so cooperative and immediately saw the benefit that additional parking could bring to the community.

Committee Comments

Mr. Daniel said he has started to see the value in changing the Committee's name to the "Downtown Master Plan Implementation Committee." The Committee was originally formed to solidify the Downtown Master Plan and he believes the intention was to see it completed. He wants to ensure the focus stays on seeing the Master Plan implemented and believes changing the name would have an effect. Mr. Daniel said no action is needed today, but he would like to hear any thoughts.

Mayor Copelof asked if we have thought about changing it even more, as the Committee does a lot more than just the Master Plan and having that in the title is somewhat limiting. Mr. Daniel said we are doing those things under the title we currently have and if the intent is to focus on getting the Master Plan implemented, then he would prefer that we just call it that and continue to operate as we do. He added that it would be with the understanding that we are here to see the Master Plan implemented, even though we will continue to address other issues downtown.

Ms. Perkins said when the committee was formed, the implementation of the Master Plan was its intent. Mr. Daniel said given that some people were not here for the history, changing the name makes the intent of the Committee clear. Mr. Wise said he is new to the Committee but does not have any issue with changing the name.

Ms. Perkins said changing the name has been discussed before, but without any referral to Council. She added that if changed, it may carry some action. Ms. Bentley said she agrees with Ms. Perkins in terms of giving it some action, but it is hard because the Committee does a lot that is not in direct relation to the Master Plan.

Ms. Perkins suggested "Downtown Advisory and Master Plan Implementation Committee", so that it continues to serve as an advisory committee and the title covers both aspects without being too narrow. Mr. Daniel asked if that addressed Mayor Copelof's thoughts, to which she confirmed. Mr. Daniel said he agrees

because it keeps the words "Downtown Master Plan Implementation" and he thinks that should be first since it is was Committee's original purpose. Mr. Wise suggested "Downtown Master Plan Implementation and Advisory Committee." Mr. Daniel said "Downtown Advisory Committee" because having two Downtowns in the name gives emphasis to both separately, rather than having them bleed into each other.

Mr. Wise moved, seconded by Ms. Perkins to recommend renaming the "Downtown Master Plan Committee" as the "Downtown Master Plan Implementation and Downtown Advisory Committee" to Council. The motion carried unanimously.

H. Public Comment

Doug Miller asked if the strip of land bordering the pediatrician's office was still an option for the parking lot. Mr. Daniel said it is being left as City-owned property with a City-owned right-of-way through their parking lot and it is not part of the parking lot discussion. Mr. Miller also commended Aundrea Harris' parking enforcement, as he has noticed a difference with vehicle turnover. Mr. Hooper said he is glad to hear that because the City has considered booting and towing, but the laws on it are so arcane that it is hard to figure out how to do locally. He added that it is nice to know that enforcement appears to be working better without having to impound vehicles.

I. Set Date for Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 3:30pm

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 3:30pm.

J. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:14pm.

Minutes Approved: September 9, 2026

X _____
Gary Daniel, Committee Chair
Lauren Wise, Committee Vice Chair

X Shawnee A. Cummings
Shawnee Cummings
Assistant to the City Manager