



Prosperity & Livability Committee
Members: Ewing, Hill, Wagner and Williams
Chaired by Council Member Ewing
3rd Floor Lobby Conference Room
April 5, 2017 – 9:00 A.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

Committee Chair Jason Ewing, and Committee Members Alyce Hill, and Jay Wagner

Absent:

Committee Member Chris Williams

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement; Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; Heidi Galanti, Planning and Development; Terry Kuneff, Engineering Services, Jolie Helton, Communications & Public Engagement; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Greg Venable, Transportation Administrator, and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Sarah Belle Tate, Chair- Connect HP
Megan Oglesby, Vice Chair- Connect HP
Jennifer Baldwin and Celina Chan- Alta Planning + Design

News Media:

Pat Kimbrough, High Point Enterprise

Handouts:

- *Connect HP Update*
- *City of High Point Pedestrian Plan*
- *North Carolina Railroad/Norfolk Southern/High Point Slope Improvements*
- *Penny Road Greenway Update*

Note: These handouts will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.

Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

1) Update: Connect HP

Sarah Belle Tate, Chair, and Megan Olgesby, Vice Chair of Connect HP provided an update on Connect HP's first year. To date, there are twelve task force members, which is the maximum allowed with a variety of ethnicities and work industries. They plan to change task force members every other year to get new voices/ideas. Connect HP serves in a liaison role between the City Council and young professionals.

Mission Statement: *To connect and engage young professionals in the growth and development of the city of High Point to attract and retain active, entrepreneurial and working young professionals through four focus areas: **live, work, play and serve.***

Vision Statement: *To help make High Point a supportive and desirable community for young professionals to **live, work, play and serve.***

Connect HP Accomplishments/Highlights for 2016:

- ✓ YP Summit was very successful
- ✓ Held a "mini" Retreat that was also very successful
- ✓ Created a Connect HP logo, as well as a more detailed logo
- ✓ Held a "Plant the Greenway" Day

Accomplishments/Highlights for 2017:

- ✓ Held a focus group with Ray Gibbs, Forward High Point. They focused on the top 3 things that professionals said they wanted to see in High Point: Urban living; entertainment, bars and restaurants
- ✓ High Point Young Professionals Facebook page

Future Happenings:

- ✓ E-Newsletter to start in April
- ✓ Social Media. Connect HP now had admin rights to the High Point Young Professionals Facebook page and will be posting young professional profiles/accomplishments, as well as events/news
- ✓ Open Meetings/Focus Groups. Although their task force is limited to twelve members, they did not want to be an exclusive group. They plan to have open meetings at least once a quarter where they invite anyone who would like to come. The next one is planned for May. They will focus on the stadium and the urban living aspect of their vision.

Contact information was shared as follows:

connecthptaskforce@gmail.com

Chairman Ewing thanked Sarah Belle and Megan for their efforts and shared that they have surpassed all of his expectations.

2) Update: Railroad Bank Stabilization Project

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin reported that the last two-thirds bond package was done in 2012 and which included drainage/erosion work that needed to be done on some of the railroad banks downtown. Approximately \$1.5 million was set aside to address these problems.

Terry Kuneff with Engineering Services advised that construction on the retaining walls (from Wrenn Street to Centennial) would begin in June. He shared some pictures of styles and methods of construction and noted that Norfolk Southern and NC Railroad are seeking the city's preference in the style of the retaining walls. The styles under consideration are:

- ✓ Redi-Rock
- ✓ Recon Retaining Walls
- ✓ UltraBlock

Mr. Kuneff pointed out this is the railroad's project, so the city would not have to pay for the retaining walls. The city's part of the project is to stop the stormwater from flowing over the slopes. He reported that the design is complete on the city's part and plans are to connect to the storm sewer in the street on Wrenn and run a 24-inch pipe down E. Broad, go under Centennial and continue parallel to the tracks past the green building on Centennial.

Chairman Ewing asked about landscaping plan for the wall area and Mr. Kuneff explained the railroad plans on putting rip-rap stone there. Mr. McCaslin added that it would be problematic for city crews to get in there to maintain landscaping and the railroad's union rules make it very difficult to work inside the cut area. Committee Member Wagner asked if there were any ideas for something that would be maintenance free other than rip-rap. Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, stated they may allow something different, but they would put the burden of maintenance on the city. He suggested Astro Turf. Chairman Ewing asked about the possibility of putting a heavy mill cover on it to keep the weeds from coming up.

Mr. Kuneff offered to share with the railroad the Committee's concerns about the rip-rap and desire to put in something more aesthetically pleasing.

The Committee chose the bigger block (UltraBlock) that would be more like concrete in color.

3) Update: Completion of Greenway

Mr. Kuneff pointed out the Greenway would go from Deep River Road to Penny Road and a steel bridge would be used for a crossover to Penny with another steel bridge spanning across the two streams, then it would tie in near the Piedmont Environmental Center.

He reported that the plans are complete and have been submitted to NCDOT for review/approval and although the plans have been approved, the contract documents still need approval. All permits have been obtained. Staff plans on sending the revised contract documents back to NCDOT and expect their approval by May 7th with an anticipated bid opening on June 7th. Award

of the contract will be on the June 19th City Council agenda and construction is scheduled to begin around July 10th with an anticipated completion date of March 15, 2018.

Mr. McCaslin pointed out the funding for completion of the Greenway came from the 2012 two-thirds bond package.

4) Presentation: High Point Pedestrian Plan

Greg Venable, Transportation Administrator, advised that Alta Planning + Design was hired through a \$70,000 grant received from NCDOT (Bike & Pedestrian Division). He then introduced Jennifer Baldwin with Alta Planning + Design who provided a brief overview of the planning process as follows:

- ✓ One-Year process
- ✓ Steering Committee consisted of city staff, citizens, advocates, DOT staff, business leaders, etc....
- ✓ Public outreach was a big piece of the process and they wanted to hear from citizens directly about struggles to access businesses, destinations through walking; where they are currently walking; where they would like to walk and their key destinations.
- ✓ An interactive map was developed to help aid them.
- ✓ Conducted a user survey.
- ✓ She spent a day actually talking with transit riders.

Ms. Baldwin proceeded to review the six chapters in the High Point Pedestrian Plan:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions. There are approximately 235 miles of sidewalks. They conducted a live, work, play analysis which was mapped and shows where the highest needs are for pedestrians which aids them in developing the recommendations.

Chapter 3: Policy. They reviewed the city's Code of Ordinances, Development Ordinances and draft of the Complete Streets Policy.

Chapter 4: Programs (to ensure that people are using the roadways safely). Some of the programs are: Let's Go NC!; Active Routes to School; I brake for people.

Chapter 5: Recommendations. This chapter includes the infrastructure recommendations, which resulted in a network of sidewalk recommendations in various categories:

- New Sidewalk
 - Resulted in 104 projects which is about 70 miles of proposed/needed sidewalks throughout the city
- Enhanced Corridor
 - Resulted in 21 projects which is about 28 miles proposed
- Micro Gaps (missing sidewalk sections less than 500 feet)
 - 16 projects consisting of 1.2 miles proposed

- Intersection Improvements
 - They did a robust analysis of several intersections along key corridors such as Centennial Street, Eastchester, Elm Street, Green Drive, Lexington Avenue, MLK, Jr. Drive, Main Street, Westchester to determine the types of design techniques to make these more walkable, etc....
- Limited Access Crossings
 - They conducted an inventory of nine separate bridges (limited access bridges, overpasses) to determine the feasibility of adding pedestrian accommodations along the bridges and ranked them in order of implementation difficulty. This will aid NCDOT as they are doing the bridge replacement reviews and will make the design process a little easier. One of the examples used was the Green Street bridge across US 311.
- Transit Amenities
 - Recommended improvements such as lighting, bus route information, shelter, bike parking, trash receptacle, bench, public art

Chapter 6: **Prioritization and Implementation**

- Current Prioritization Methodology
 - Five criteria used: Pedestrian generators within a ¼ mile, worn path, constructability, posted speed limit, pedestrian crash history
- New Prioritization Methodology
 - Six criteria: Demand, safety, equity, speed limit, micro gap, and transit access
 - She shared a HEAT map grouped into four tiers for prioritizing projects
 - Triangle Lake Road was the top scoring sidewalk project (1.5 miles in length, 5' sidewalk)
- Enhanced Corridors
 - Recommended improvements: lighting, bus shelter, wayfinding
 - Looked at Main Street/Library area and the potential to improve the pedestrian environment adding a median that introduces landscaping to narrow down the travel lanes to slow down the traffic
- Implementation
 - Details of who does what, coordination, cost of project, etc....

At this time, Ms. Baldwin entertained questions/comments regarding the Pedestrian Plan.

Mr. McDonald explained that staff has no specific recommendations, except to ask Council for approval of the High Point Pedestrian Plan so they can move forward with implementation of the plan. Mr. Venable clarified that NCDOT likes to see projects that are on an approved plan.

Committee Member Wagner asked if this would alter the current sidewalk priority list and staff replied that it would change it some and that staff would need to do a further review. Mr. Venable explained that it would not change what has already been approved, but it might be necessary to retweak the overall list.

Mr. McCaslin asked about the possibility of getting NCDOT to incorporate the proposed design for Skeet Club/Eastchester into the existing project. Mr. McDonald explained it would have to go through more study, but they could make an ask although he was uncertain as to the pedestrian accommodations in the plan for this area. Mr. McCaslin pointed out this is the most heavily traveled intersection and that the sidewalks on Skeet Club would dead-end on Eastchester, which would be problematic. Mr. McDonald explained there are some changes to the intersection that were not shown on the illustration (i.e. left turn lane coming off Skeet Club will be a dual left turn lane). Chairman Ewing noted more people walk along Eastchester and crossover at the Penny Road intersection because it is closer to the Palladium area.

Chairman Ewing stated he would like to have some sidewalk discussions in the near future on the priorities that were set by the previous Council. Mr. Kuneff shared that 95% of the previous sidewalk (gap) projects are under review and close to construction.

There being no further discussion, **Committee Member Hill MOVED to forward the High Point Pedestrian Plan to the full Council to be placed on the May 1st Agenda with a favorable recommendation for adoption. Chairman Ewing made a second to the motion, which carried unanimously. [3-0 vote]**

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk

Jason P. Ewing, Chairman