



Prosperity & Livability Committee Meeting
Chaired by Mayor Pro Tem Ewing
Committee Members: Ewing, Hudson, Peters, and Golden
April 3, 2019 – 9:00 a.m.
3rd Floor Lobby Conference Room
Minutes

Present:

Chairman Jason Ewing and Committee Members Jeff Golden, Wesley Hudson

Absent:

Committee Member Monica Peters

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Michelle McNair; Major Kenneth Steele, Assistant Police Chief; Andy Piper, Senior Planner; Scott Dingus, Civil Engineer; Joel Ferguson, Engineering Design Technician.; Curt Brower, Electrical Engineer; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; and Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Others Present:

Quina Weber-Shirk, NC Cooperative Extension- Community and Schools Garden Coordinator; Carl Vierling, Executive Director-Greater High Point Food Alliance; Patrick Harmon, and Ray Gibbs, Executive Director-Forward High Point, Inc

News Media Present:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

Note: The following handouts were distributed during the meeting and will be attached as a permanent part of these preceding.

- PowerPoint Presentation: Community and School Garden Update and other pertinent information
- Information and photographs for tree species
- Map of proposed project area

Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

Update- Community Garden Progress

Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing started the meeting with an introduction of Quina Weber-Shirk, the Community and School Garden Agent, to speak on the update of the Community Garden Progress.

Quina Weber-Shirk, Community and School Garden Agent presented a PowerPoint Presentation on the update of the Community and School Gardens progress; provided a hand out with a detailed report that included her essential duties and responsibilities; shared a list identifying 33 Community Gardens in High Point, and a list of upcoming events for 2019 that included training and workshops. Ms. Weber-Shirk continued discussion and spoke to research that was done on gardening to include but not limited to healthful eating patterns; to the need of the Community Gardens in being it was a place for food security planting, supplemental income in selling produce, and for outreach and education on gardening to the public; explained the definition of Community Gardens as it is anywhere a community of people joins together to garden; gave details of the different Gardens and their locations; spoke to the seven donation Gardens that grew food that would be donated to food pantries; gave an overview of the 9 neighborhood gardens, and 15 school gardens that demonstrated for students to engage academically; and spoke to the urban agriculture lots and their main goal which is to raise production in urban sites. Ms. Weber-Shirk highlighted the World Relief community garden that was started for immigrants and refugees; stated the success of this Garden is going well; and that they have interest meetings for Community Gardens that had interpreters available to outreach to those who speak different languages.

Chairman Ewing asked how much was allocated in the City budget for Community Gardens. Mr. McNair replied that \$20,000 was budgeted.

Ms. Weber-Shirk spoke to the South Side Community Garden; to doing a site visit with Union Hill Elementary, Ferndale Middle School, The Point College Academy, and with High Point University Physical Therapy Pro Bono Clinic and adding and assisting with the clinic in an additional service that offered a supplement food pantry for clients that were food insecure. Ms. Weber-Shirk continued discussion on working with nonprofits; spoke to how funding and sources were stumbling blocks for gardens, and how difficult it was for some gardens in transporting supplies needed.

Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager, inquired if the non-profit organizations had trucks to lend out to the gardens if needed. Patrick Harmon replied yes. Ms. Weber-Shirk stated that some Gardens have larger spaces that would require a truck or trailer to pick up their supplies.

Carl Vierling reported: several gardens have been extremely successful, and plans are underway to expand the gardens: to transportation of supplies being an issue; and to coming up with a plan to help resolve the problem such as coordinating with deliveries.

Chairman Ewing asked if the eight grants awarded was for eight Gardens.

Ms. Weber-Shirk replied yes; and explained her plan is to outreach to other Gardens to make them aware of the grants so they may possibly receive funding as well.

Chairman Ewing asked how much money was used from the \$20,000 in the budget. Mr. McNair stated that a journal entry was done with those numbers, and that he would provide that information at the next meeting. Chairman Ewing stated that knowing what Gardens received grants would help in deciding which Gardens to assist that had never received assistance.

Ms. Weber-Shirk continued her discussion regarding a Seeds to Share event that was held at the library; spoke to the attendance of around 50 people who donated seeds, and to the volunteers that included master gardeners, stated the event was a key point to building a network in the community among gardeners; spoke to keeping gardening sustainable. Ms. Weber-Shirk gave her priorities for 2019 that included: building a website, creating videos to share success stories; and to the upcoming training for 2019 that included: workshops with the farmer's market, and mentor training at the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University.

Mr. Vierling expressed appreciation for the city's support and the positive long-term effect the community gardens have had on the neighborhoods.

Mr. Hemann spoke to the great support from Guilford County and the City of Greensboro. Chairman Ewing expressed gratitude on the success and asked about the number of gardens Guilford County and the City of Greensboro.

Ms. Weber-Shirk stated it was less duplication of programming with the collaboration of governments; that she was able to have a satellite location in High Point to outreach to more people; gave total number of gardens for Guilford County (140 school and community gardens of which only there was only 23 active school gardens with a similar amount for the community gardens)

Chairman Ewing thanked Ms. Weber-Shirk, and asked staff to provide dollar amounts for the program for the budget.

Mr. Hemann stated he would provide that information for Chairman Ewing.

Update- Streetscape on Portion of North Main Street

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager, gave an update on the Streetscape project; spoke to the portion of North Main street being in the final phase; stated a committee that included several departments, would go over the project plan; and spoke to moving forward with the implementation.

Scott Dingus, Civil Engineer, shared an engineering layout that would include a streetscape with trees, lamps, and locations for benches; reviewed the species of trees that would do well in this area; stated he had experts to assist in making these decisions to have a better-looking streetscape area; and to the locations where permission was needed from property owners on public rights-of-ways.

Andy Piper, Senior Planner, stated he was a part of the Urban Forestry Committee with city, spoke to the standards and guidelines needed to assure the trees would last a long time, and putting the right species of trees in the right place; provided pictures with the different species of trees; and spoke to doing the development the right way.

Ray Gibbs spoke to issues with placing trees in the small available spaces; to choosing the right size trees that would not block pedestrian traffic suggesting a tree branch structure of 7 feet and above; to the need of tree pits being prepared correctly; to proper drainage lines with the new development; and to having benches that were pedestrian friendly. Mr. Gibbs continued discussion on the Hospital's master plan with a designer's point of view; to issues with business owners that did not want trees blocking the view of their businesses; to placing trees correctly and properly; to safety; to needing a long-term plan; to the budget impact; and to adding trees to the plaza this summer.

Committee Member Golden inquired on speaking with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on lowering the speed limit in consideration of foot traffic on Main street.

Mr. McCaslin stated the city would have to take over the maintenance on Main street in order to propose that change.

Mr. Gibbs spoke to having street parking on the east side of Main street; to the economic factors of helping businesses increase their cash flow; stated businesses would increase their cash flow by 30% in having parking.

Chairman Ewing inquired on the different parking types of diagonal versus parallel.

Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager, explained the safety concerns with diagonal parking; and stated parallel parking would protect pedestrians.

Mr. Dingus stated the state would only allow the city to go down to 30 miles per hour on Main street; and spoke to having pedestrian lights on Commerce between Green and Main street.

Curt Brower stated it would cost around \$2,000 per fixture to install that did not include the price of labor; that in the past LED fixtures were placed between each street fixture depending on restrictions.

Mr. Gibbs discussed working with the Library at the clock tower; opening up a small plaza that would be done in phases; looking into grants and assistance from community; and voiced the need for the clock tower to have contents around it.

Chairman Ewing asked for a time line on master plan competition; inquired on purchasing property to guarantee implementation of the plan; and voiced the need in consistency for developing the master plan.

Mr. McCaslin spoke to completion of this area to be done in a few years; to the need of placing

trees correctly; spoke to issues of purchasing additional right-of-way's because it could affect parking for businesses; and stated the plan is being discussed.

Mr. Gibbs stated he was communicating with the hospital on their long-term plans for parking.

Citizen's Concern Regarding Dog Waste

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager, provided a copy of an email from Bill Hudson. He stated Mr. Hudson spoke to Councilmember Hudson on a concern with citizens not picking up and disposing of their dog's waste, and that Mr. Hudson wanted Council to consider an ordinance that required owners to clean up after their dog. Mr. McCaslin spoke to the Water Shed plan with a best practice list; and stated Kenneth Steele, Police Chief Assistant, was here to give feedback on the request.

Committee Member Golden inquired on issuing two public service announcements a year on the issue to the public to include other best practices on picking up after your dog; on signage in problem areas; and on having more dog stations.

Chairman Ewing spoke to Home Owner Associations that did not enforce this concern and to older sub-division neighborhoods that did not have a Home Owner's Association with no authority.

Kenneth Steele, Police Chief Assistant, said it would be a process to take legal action and enforce it; stated it would be hard to prove because one would have to be present to witness the act as well as the alleged guilty party being present to dispute the accusation against them.

Chairman Ewing requested staff to advise Mr. Hudson that the ordinance would not be enforceable and to recommend to him to participate in a neighborhood group in his area; and stated that Committee Member Hudson had texted him in agreement on the inability to enforce the ordinance.

Mr. McCaslin stated he would provide Mr. Hudson with that information.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Prosperity and Livability Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Jason P. Ewing, Chairman