



Prosperity & Livability Committee

(Virtual Meeting)

Chaired by Councilman Hudson

Committee Members: Hudson, Holmes, Jefferson, and Peters

February 3, 2021 –9 :00 a.m.

3rd Floor, Council Chambers

Minutes

CALL TO ORDER (Virtual Roll Call)

Chairman Wesley Hudson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Following a virtual roll call, the following attendance by Committee Members was duly noted.

Physically

Present (1): Chairman Wesley Hudson

Remotely

Present (3): Committee Member Michael Holmes [joined at 9:38 a.m.], Committee Member Cyril Jefferson, and Committee Member Monica Peters

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Mark McDonald, Transportation Director; Lee Tillery, Parks and Recreation Director; and Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Staff Remotely Present:

Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; Edith Brady, High Point Museum Director; Mary Sizemore, Library Director; and Michael McNair, Community Development and Housing Director

Also Present:

Dorothy Darr; and Tony Collins

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS2021-54 Presentation-Southwest Greenway System

Staff will provide a presentation on the Southwest Greenway System

Mark McDonald, Transportation Director said that the Engineering Services and Transportation Departments had worked together to develop draft plans for the Southwest Greenway project to construct a greenway extension from Vail Avenue to W. Ward Avenue using a portion of existing Cassell Street. The cost to convert the existing street section for use as a greenway and construct connecting sidewalk and ADA accessible ramps was estimated at \$82,000.

Committee Member Peters asked if the extension would include paintings, and safety features; said the greenway was utilized by pedestrians; and asked Dorothy Darr to provide more information on the project. Mr. McDonald replied yes.

Ms. Darr thanked everyone for their consideration, and recognized Tony Collins, President of the Southside Neighborhood Association in attendance. Ms. Darr provided a statement requesting to appropriate \$82,000 in the city's upcoming budget for the extension; outlined the benefits that the project would have in the southside neighborhood; and spoke to the history of the project which began in 2004.

Mr. Collins voiced appreciation to address this vital program in the community; concurred with Ms. Darr's statement requesting funds for the project; said the extension would have a positive impact on the community; spoke to feedback from the community; referenced a homeowner's excitement; voiced appreciation, thanked, and commended staff from the city of High Point-Michael McNair, Community Development & Housing Director, Lee Tillery, Parks & Recreation Director, Travis Stroud, Interim Chief of Police, Rebecca Coplin, Keep High Point Beautiful, and Operation INASMUCH, and National Nigh Out; spoke to developers coming in the area; to having an equality initiative; and to having the project completed.

Committee Member Jefferson thanked Ms. Darr, and Mr. Collins for sharing their statements; voiced support for the project; spoke to prior investments the city had made; inquired on recent investments for this area for this purpose or related functions; and on opportunities to financially support the extension in the city's upcoming budget. Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager replied that some projects for the area would have went through the Community Development and Housing Department; spoke to recent projects such as the construction of new homes, the investments at the Southside Recreation Center; and said that it was too early to determine funding opportunities in the upcoming budget.

Michael McNair, Community Development and Housing Director spoke to recent investments that included: a pedestrian bridge and walkway-\$325,000-\$350,000; \$2 million for floodplain mitigation; 17 homes built-impact \$2 million tax base; overall estimated investments was around \$4-\$5 million; and spoke to the continued effort since 2004.

Ms. Darr spoke to the new home construction projects; to adding projects to the greenway such as: rebuilding the teaching garden, adding public art, four seasons bird sanctuary; and spoke to continuing the beautification of the southside. Ms. Darr voiced a disparity in the city with people of color while walking, and bicycling; said the percentage was higher for people of color according to past Pedestrian Crash studies; spoke to the advantages the greenway would have; and to being equitable and fair.

Committee Member Jefferson referenced a discussion at the February 2020 council retreat in regards to having an holistic, and targeted approach to neighborhood development; to the leveraging with prior economic investments ; to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and inquired on the Southwest Corridor, and small scale manufacturing developments.

Mr. McCaslin noted that the retreat was pre-COVID; said that the neighborhood development projects had to be put on hold; and that the small scale initiative had purchased three parcels of land transferred from the CDC.

Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager spoke to the ongoing data efforts identifying neighborhoods that could be targeted; said no recommendations had been made at this point due to the impacts from COVID ,and funding.

Committee Member Jefferson inquired on the percentage of homeowners in the southside neighborhood; and spoke to the transient population/long term residents. Mr. McNiar replied that the percentage of homeowner was around 17%. Ms. Darr replied and provided statistics from 2012 of having 30% homeownership in the southside neighborhood.

Mr. Collins spoke to generational residents in the southside neighborhood; referenced this location as 'low hanging fruit'; and to keeping the community informed on the status of the project

Committee Member Peters spoke to the impact of COVID; to being conservative with taxpayers' dollars; and to having economic development in the opportunity zones.

Discussion took place regarding low homeownership due to redlining; Daniel Brooks, City Leader; creating a mixture of income in the area; how the greenway could attract development; gentrification; systemic and structural racial discrimination; continuing to discuss an holistic and comprehensive strategy addressing issues.

Committee Member Holmes thanked Ms. Darr and Mr. Collins for their discussion; said they captured the spirit of what was hoped to be accomplished; spoke to equality and equity; and to having a strategic long term vision with the city of High Point.

Chairman Hudson thanked Ms. Darr and Mr. Collins for their invaluable efforts; voiced his love for the greenway; to last year's budget cuts made due to COVID; said his priority was reinstating the 11 positions that were cut; spoke to the need to increase revenue before spending funds; said he did not want to increase property taxes; and that he was not in favor on voting to increase spending in next year's fiscal year budget.

Ms. Darr spoke to discretionary funds in other departments that could be used; and requested the committee to take action to take this matter to council.

Committee Member Jefferson spoke to continuing economic incentives in the midst of the revenue shortfall; and said this project was an investment to improve the core city.

Committee Member Peters made a motion to forward this matter to the City Council with a favorable recommendation to approve funding for the extension of the Southwest Greenway project from Vail Avenue to W. Ward Avenue using a portion of existing Cassell Street. Committee Member Jefferson made a second to the motion. Following a roll call vote by Chairman Hudson, the motion carried by the following 3-1 vote:

Aye (3): Committee Member Holmes, Committee Member Jefferson, and Committee Member Johnson

Nay (1): Chairman Hudson

2021-55 Update-The High Point Museum
Staff will provide an update on The High Point Museum.

Edith Brady, High Point Museum Director made a PowerPoint Presentation on the High Point Museum; spoke to focusing on the museum's mission: sharing greater High Point history, providing perspective for current issues, and strengthening the sense of community; to embracing new technology for the online content; to maintaining partnerships with community organizations; to new programs; to new projects such as a history of the pandemic collection; to reopening plans that would include 3 safety factors (mask requirement, limited visitors, and hand sanitizer use); to having outdoor socially distanced experiences; to feedback from the community; to caring for artifacts; to moving forward; voiced appreciation for her staff's hard work and efforts; and to promoting the museum's activity on social media.

Committee Member Peters commended Ms. Brady on a fabulous job with the museum.

Committee Member Jefferson thanked Ms. Brady for sharing an update; and for the support with housing neighborhood meetings that were able to accommodate in a safe and social distanced way; and for her support with the Coltrane project.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Prosperity & Livability Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Wesley Hudson, Chairman

Attest:

Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk