

**COMMON COUNCIL
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2019**

The City of Noblesville Council Downtown District Committee met pursuant to public notice on Tuesday, March 19, 2019. Megan Wiles, Wil Hampton, and Darren Peterson were present. Rick Taylor was absent.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Deputy Mayor Steve Cooke, Street Commissioner Patty Johnson, Parks Director Brandon Bennett, Economic Development Specialist Aaron Head, Craig Crosser of Nova 29 and Board President of Noblesville Main Street; Lorna Steele, Executive Director of Noblesville Main Street; Esther Lakes of Smith's Jewelers; and Dan Stevens of the Hamilton County Commissioners' office. Caleb Gutshall, Ailithir McGill, Bob DuBois, and Matteo DiRosa were absent.

Ms. Wiles called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Old Business:

1) Update on Alley Activation (Aaron Head)

Mr. Head stated he is still compiling a list of building owners and tenants and their contact information. He stated because it is difficult to get one type of contact for each person (email or phone number), they have decided to hand-deliver letters that will include an invitation to a meeting about plans for the alleys. He stated they propose delivering the letters the first week of April with a meeting tentatively scheduled for April 11th. He stated at the meeting, the proposed alley projects and the benefits of alley activation will be presented. He stated he is gathering case studies of alley activation in other cities to use as examples. Ms. Wiles stated because Spring Break is during the first week of April, some people may miss the letter and then the meeting. She asked if the schedule might be delayed for one week. Mr. Head replied he would make note of Ms. Wiles' suggestion. Mr. Head stated he also has been studying use of the alleys, particularly deliveries in the north/south alley between 9th and 10th Streets and north of Conner Street. He stated he is trying to get contact information, and he is building a spreadsheet and working through the process. He stated it is important that he doesn't overlook anyone. Ms. Wiles stated it will be a challenge to keep the contact list up-to-date going forward. Mr. Peterson suggested using the Engineering Department's traffic study equipment on the alleys to save time and work. Mr. Head replied he will follow up with the Engineering Department.

2) Update on Downtown business & building owner engagement (Aaron Head)

Mr. Head stated the communication plan will be City-wide, but because the first project is the Levinson, there will be more emphasis on Downtown. He stated the City has hired Keriann Rich of Imavex to build the communication protocol. Mr. Cooke stated the NoblesvilleNow.com website is available, with opportunities to sign up for text alerts and stakeholder focus groups. He stated more information and functionality will be added in the near future. Mr. Head stated Ms. Rich will conduct the focus groups, with the goal that citizens may be more honest and open

with someone who is not a City official or employee. He stated more than 200 letters were sent to businesses to inform them about the website, and only two letters were returned. Mr. Crosser asked if posters or signs will be available for businesses to display. Mr. Cooke replied they are included in the communication plan. Mr. Head stated cards with parking information will be given to restaurants and shops to display and give to customers. Ms. Wiles suggested that table tents at restaurants could be helpful as well. Mr. Cooke stated the outreach being planned is comprehensive.

Mr. Head stated he and Mr. Cooke met with the Elks Club last week. He stated they will be one of the most affected businesses during the Levinson's construction, but they are excited to find ways to help themselves. He stated they are working to offer valet parking during peak times, and they may be able to use the City employee parking lot. He stated they also may hold special events related to stages of the construction. Mr. Cooke agreed that the members were very positive and offered many ideas. Mr. Head stated All Local, a shop on the south side of the Courthouse Square, is contemplating carrying more convenience items for apartment residents.

Mr. Crosser stated the attitude of many of the business owners is that the City should contact them with any information; they should not have to look for it. Ms. Wiles stated that is a problem, because there are so many avenues of communication, particularly on social media platforms; how is the City to know which avenues to use. Mr. Head replied his contact information is on everything being sent out, so anyone can contact him with questions. There was a brief discussion concerning supporting businesses by directing the construction workers to them for lunch. Mr. Head stated he is making note of the committee's suggestions. Mr. Cooke stated handouts with information about the website will be distributed at the Downtown Business Summit. Ms. Lakes stated businesses expect to be informed about events that will affect them. Mr. Head stated he works to inform businesses whenever possible, and the response has been positive.

3) Update on Planters (Esther Lakes)

Ms. Lakes stated at the last meeting there was a suggestion to bring sample planters to Smith's Jewelers to see how they would look. She stated there were several problems that prevented the suggestion from being executed: the planters are not in stock and take three weeks to be delivered; there is a minimum order of \$3,000.00; and they are very heavy – transportation is a problem. Ms. Lakes stated she spoke with Sundown Gardens nursery, who gave her a price range of \$180.00 to \$365.00; planters that are painted or have a patina would cost 20 to 30 percent more. She stated the current planters are too small at 18" x 18". She suggested 22" x 22" or 26" x 26". Mr. Bennett noted smaller planters must be used on the inside sidewalks around the historic Courthouse to maintain ADA compliance. Ms. Johnson agreed. Ms. Lakes stated the nurseryman suggested cast fiber planters rather than concrete; he said they wear and look like stone, but are much lighter. Ms. Johnson stated the lighter planters would be much easier to remove and store during the winter. Ms. Lakes stated she was told concrete was the most durable, but cast fiber should wear just as well. Mr. Crosser expressed skepticism that the cast fiber would endure. He stated they tend to crack if they are used over multiple seasons. Ms. Lakes stated she will also speak with Allisonville Nursery to see if their information coincides with Sundown Gardens'

information. There was a discussion concerning how many planters would be needed. It was decided that Mr. Peterson would work with the Parks Department to make a recommendation of the number of planters needed. A sub-committee consisting of Ms. Lakes and Ms. Wiles will visit the nurseries to choose a planter design. Ms. Lakes will invite Chairman Taylor to join them. Mr. Bennett stated the planters must be ordered within two weeks in order to be ready for the first spring planting.

Mr. Head left the meeting.

4) Update on Seminary Park (Brandon Bennett)

Mr. Bennett stated the bid opening was held on March 15th; only one bid was received, from Myers Construction Management, Inc. He stated the budget was estimated at \$300,000.00, but the bid came in at approximately \$498,000.00. He stated he plans to meet with Myers next week to see what can be done to bring the cost down, such as value engineering and work that Parks employees could complete. He stated he will also go through the specifications again to see if any more of the work would be eligible to be paid from Park Impact fees. He noted one reason for the high bid was due to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding; because it is a federal grant, the Davis-Bacon wage rates must be used. Mr. Bennett also stated that the bid for electrical work was very high. Mr. Peterson confirmed that electrical work is very costly right now due to the cost of copper wiring. Mr. Bennett noted that the Engineering Department had reviewed and approved his estimates for the project. He stated the budget for the project was based on a CDBG grant of \$190,000.00; \$100,000.00 approved by the Council; and \$75,000.00 from Park Impact fees. He stated he will work creatively to bring the cost down and find more funding to meet in the middle. Mr. Hampton asked what the best-case scenario would be to break ground. Mr. Bennett stated it could be as early as one month, but he has to secure funding first.

5) Update on Street Lights

The committee agreed that the new black street lights and trash receptacles look very attractive, and they have heard the same comments from citizens. Ms. Johnson stated the east side of 9th Street between Conner and Logan Streets will be finished tomorrow. She stated Valmont, the company that manufactures the street light poles, owes the City 36 new poles that they agreed to replace, but their plant is in Nebraska, which is experiencing widespread disastrous flooding. She stated she may order an additional 30 street lights. Mr. Bennett stated there are still green sign holders in Downtown. Ms. Johnson stated once she hires the two employees that will be dedicated to Downtown, she will have them hand paint the sign holders and any other smaller items. Mr. Crosser noted Ms. Johnson did an excellent job of communicating to businesses concerning the project. Ms. Johnson replied she worked from Mr. Head's contact list. Ms. Wiles asked how much more money will be needed for lights. Ms. Johnson replied the lights are \$1,500.00 each, not counting installation costs. She noted some foundations also need to be repaired. Mr. Bennett asked for pricing on the lights and benches, so that he can see if any money can be saved at Seminary Park. Ms. Johnson agreed to forward the information to him.

Ms. Wiles noted the street lights on the south side of Conner Street at the Judicial Center are not decorative street lights. She asked Mr. Stevens if she might approach the Commissioners to purchase street lights that match the interior lights at Federal Hill Commons. Mr. Stevens agreed that she should. There was a brief discussion concerning the green light poles at the Church Church Hittle & Antrim parking lot at the northeast corner of 10th and Conner Streets, but it is a private lot.

Ms. Johnson asked if she should order the black metal benches to replace the wooden benches. Ms. Wiles replied yes, she should.

6) Update on expenditures from the Downtown Development Fund (Steve Cooke)

Mr. Cooke distributed a list of expenditures from Downtown funding for 2017, 2018, and 2019. He stated the trolley service proposed at the last meeting has been removed from the list. There was a discussion concerning use of street-legal six-person golf carts from McGavie's in place of the trolley.

Mr. Cooke asked Ms. Johnson to get a quote for the star brick ribbon at the Public Safety Building. Ms. Johnson stated she will have quotes by the next meeting. Mr. Cooke stated he will add the price to his spreadsheet once it is received. Mr. Cooke reviewed the unspent amounts left in the Downtown Development Fund. Ms. Wiles stated some of the balance might be used to fund the Seminary Park improvements. Mr. Cooke stated he will add the cost of the planters as soon as it is known.

Ms. Steele left the meeting.


Other Business:

Mr. Hampton asked Mr. Bennett for an update on the sign at Federal Hill Commons that was damaged by an erratic driver. Mr. Bennett replied he is in the process of collecting estimates. He stated he may install an electronic sign. He noted the limestone for the sign has to be ordered from another state and will take three to four months to arrive.

The next meeting will be April 15th at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.


RICK TAYLOR, COMMITTEE CHAIR


EVELYN L. LEISS, CITY CLERK