PLACE Design Task Force Minutes
March 12, 2015 - 12:00 p.m.
Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room

Members Present:
Mark Watson – Chairman
Rachel Lloyd
Andrew Mondschein
Gallon Byrd
Tim Mohr
Claudette Grant
Scott Paisley
Kathy Galvin

Public Present:
Charlottesville Tomorrow (Reporter)
Bill Emory
Lena Seville

Staff Present:
Amanda Poncy
Carrie Rainey
Read Brodhead

AGENDA

Call to Order

Mark Watson, Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon

1. Public Comments

   Bill Emory recommended that the Place Task Force work with the UVA Architecture School, Monticello and the Charlottesville Department of Economic Development, now that we have a surfeit of hotels here in the city, to host the CNU (Congress for the New Urbanism) annual meeting. Having the CNU meet in Charlottesville would focus attention on many of the ideas that the Place-Making Summit will try to move forward. CNU met in Buffalo last year and Salt Lake City the year before, Mr. Emory felt it would be nice for CNU to meet in a college town.

   Mark Watson said it was the best conference he had ever attended was in Austin. He said he would find out how far out the schedule is for future conferences.

2. West Main Street Pilot Concept

   West Main Street Project: DRAFT Recommendations for Phasing Prioritization

   The West Main steering committee recently recommended that City Council endorse a vision for the corridor and consider supporting the following preliminary actions to manage and redevelop West Main:

Rachel Lloyd introduced the proposal for the streetscape plan for West Main. She said it is based on several design concepts that can be tested before implementation. In particular, new parking strategies and bike lane improvements may be appropriate subjects for pilot or test programs to confirm their feasibility for the corridor in advance of construction. Street repaving and re-striping present an opportunity to experiment with street changes for a relatively low cost. In 2013, West Main Street had a deficiency rating of 82, which makes it eligible for repaving.

Rachel said this is a great opportunity for re-striping parking and bike lanes and undertake some of the easier parking management so the businesses are not left hanging. The idea is to increase the parking efficiencies on West Main and to provide a safer biking environment. She said the committee also thought it would be appropriate to identify an appropriate time frame for the study and an appropriate metric so we know if we have succeeded or not.

Potential metrics for success:
1. Improved on-street parking utilization compared to 2014 West Main parking study
2. Annual retail sales stability or improvement for West Main businesses tracked through an evaluation of taxable revenue
3. Accident reduction for all modes of movement (ped/bike/car)
4. Improved traffic mobility for cars and bikes (reduced congestion, stable or improved travel times)
5. User surveys

Rachel said this plan will need help from other departments such as the City Attorney, Police, and cross-departmental opportunities in order to implement a plan.

Chip Boyles, Executive Director, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission said the TJPDC would definitely like to be involved.

Rachel asked if the Task Force members had comments, all comments should be sent in by March 23rd and be addressed to the Steering Committee.

4. Ms. Keller reported on the University of Virginia Bike Share program. She shared that they have had quite a bit of use of the Bike Share program despite the weather. One interesting thing was the technology for being able to understand where these bicycles are so they can actually build some data related to where the bikes are picked up and where they are returned and where they go. In the presentation they showed where the bicycle had be generated and where they were going and although there is only one little station

in front of Stacy Hall on West Main, one of the fattest lines in this report went downtown and back on West Main. There is GIS on some of the bicycles.

5. Create 2015 Analysis/Research Presentation Schedule

    PLACE identified the following topics for research and evaluation:

    1. Building on local knowledge as a strong foundation for public projects. What are the best methods to enable citizens to share what they know about our community with the city's consultants? How can the city use the research capacity at UVA to support public realm design initiatives in Charlottesville?
    2. Creating an effective RFP template for public projects. We should define a design problem effectively so that projects can solve a potentially complex range of problems. How do we create the best framework for a city project to achieve design excellence?
    3. Best value analysis tools for making design choices. How can we ensure that we achieve the highest design value for every dollar spent on public infrastructure?
    4. Community engagement strategies to achieve effective public inclusion. Public space is something we all share. How can the city become more proactive in working with citizens?
    5. Education about civic design. Citizens are empowered if they understand how design can work for them.
    6. Creating and using steering committees effectively to achieve multi-faceted solutions to design problems.

    Rachel said Mark Watson, the chairperson should assign everybody a topic to do some research and come back with a presentation to the community.

    Rachel found the memo from December 11, 2014 stating PLACE confirmed the need for the city to track and assess its improvement in community engagement over time. However, PLACE also identified a need for a complementary document outlining a process by which the community can engage the city more proactively to address a variety of planning issues. The discussion focused on the need for citizen education in planning and design processes (to empower community members to discuss design and planning issues that affect them); city website improvement (so community members can find the information they need and react to it in a timely way and have tools to influence planning processes); and early collaboration between citizens, the city and developers/designers for projects (for example, Albemarle county has a requirement that developers engage neighbors through a pre-application meeting for SUPs or zoning changes). PLACE recommends that any community/city engagement plan needs to be a living document, which is updated as new techniques and tools become available.

PLACE would like to sponsor a "place-making summit" or other design education seminar in the city to support community involvement in urban design.

Rachel asked is this a question for some of us to produce a research agenda.
Mark said there were three Place members on the Citizen Engagement Committee, Rachel, Andrea and himself. Genny and Tim volunteered to help on this committee.

Rachel and Tim said they would help with the Value Analysis starting in June. Rachel said they would look at the way other agencies and communities do this.

The second topic that should be efficiently completed by August is creating an effective RFP for projects.

The last topic is building on local knowledge as a strong foundation for public projects to complete by June. Ms. Keller said we could do planning and design talks and have a survey asking UVa. Faculty members who would have things already prepared Architectural Occupational projects, watershed studies, Cataloging and Research.

6. Planning and Coordination for Place-Making "Summit".

   Mark said he met with Peter Thompson and Marta Keen where they stated that they would like to be included in this process. Mark suggested that they recommend for a staff position because they do not have anyone specific on staff checking authority for aiding of PLACE which is so critical for place-making.

   Kathy Galvin said the Housing Advisory Committee had a summit and thought it would be worthwhile to talk to them on how they did it and who did it.

   Rachel said she thought as far as the Place-Making Summit the critical question is when are we going to have it and a time frame. She thought tying it in with Architectural week is good but that is next month so now we are looking at a year from now.

   Mark said he would draft something up from everything we just discussed and send it out for comments.

7. West Main Street Form Based Code Update

   Carrie reminded the committee that their session with Lee Einsweiler of Code Studio was March 17th at 5pm at Water Street Center. However, the members can attend any or all of the day's sessions if they would like. The session will include a presentation and discussion time for members to ask questions or provide comment. She reminded them there is also at public meeting starting at 6:30 the same day.

8. Code Audit Update

Carrie informed the committee that the City's code audit initiative was temporarily on hold while work was completed on the Streets that Work plan and the Smart Growth America grant program. These efforts will produce results that will inform decisions about code changes. Carrie told the committee that changes to the code not related to streets and related factors would continue moving forward, such as utility changes. Carrie indicated a work session on the Smart Growth America project was anticipated in late April 2015, and information would be forth coming.

9. Additional Public Comments

Bill Emory said the website for the Place Task Force needs some attention. The last minutes on the website is from July 2014and the last agenda is from June 2014 and he is still listed as a member and Beth Meyer as a member.

Kathy Galvin spoke that they have asked for this before and question Miriam Beckler and the web thing.

Carrie Rainey commented that it's just the nature of the amount of work people have on their plates and she will bring it up again.

Kathy said there should be some point person to at the website level. Is that Miriam?

Carrie said we have a couple of people in our office that can upload minutes and agendas on the website. She will check with them and Miriam.

Kathy said keeping the Place website up to date is a priority.

Adjourned at 1:45