

PLACE Design Task Force Minutes
December 10, 2015 - 12:00 p.m.
Neighborhood Development Services Conference Room

Members Present:

Mark Watson, Chairman
Fred Wolf
Rachel Lloyd
Ginny Keller
Jim Self
Claudette Grant
Melanie Miller (filling in for Tim Mohr as BAR representative)
Claudette Grant
Scott Paisley
Galen Boyd

Staff Present:

Mary Joy Scala
Carrie Rainey
Carolyn McCray

Call to Order

Mark Watson, Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:10 noon

Agenda

Public Comments – Bill Emory stated he had attached on the wall a ten page document of a sidewalk implementation plan. It is an implementation of sidewalk insulation often served drags and we do have good city code supporting regulations for sidewalks and who controls the cities right-of-way. He said if you remember the criteria for examining the code audit, you would have evaluated the excellent code direction with supporting relations. It definitely didn't seem to be a coherent policy in the sidewalk arena. He said not only whether the sidewalk gets built but what the insulation of the sidewalk does when it is installed somewhere that say for instance not in an architectural controlled district. Mr. Emory said he really doesn't know what the Task Force is looking at when they discuss the priority plan but he hope it is an effective thing and somehow brings along our plans of 1997 and 2011. He showed a picture of Franklin Street that is in need of a sidewalk particularly when big vehicles come through. It is one of these north-south railroad crossings in the city where pedestrian facilities are particularly critical and have been supplied everywhere except there.

Crosswalks – Mark said he put this on the agenda because he is not particularly clear on how crosswalks are located, who is locating them and what criteria's are used for the design of specific crosswalks. Located in place that are not well thought out, that are dark. He said he drives down Waters Street and there are 3 in a quarter mile that he finds to be unbelievably dangerous. He said that is not the only location in the city where that is the case. He said he wonder if anyone else had noticed crosswalks that appear to be located in places that are either not well thought out or are in location where it is dark at night. He said he had almost hit 7 people at the crosswalk that extends Waters Street to the new Waters Street. He said it is so dark at night and if you are moving east on Waters Street, people are just walking toward city walk and there are no lights there at all. The one at the transit station is a real problem because buses are almost 8 feet wide and there is a crosswalk coming out between two buses and you have a millisecond to try to stop.

Rachel said the crosswalk at the skate rink is also bad.

Marks said it a real problem at the King Building and the pedestrian almost are daring people to hit them; they are not making eye contact, some are on cell phones and someone is going to get killed.

Amanda Poncy stated that we generally go by the VDOT guidelines for marking crosswalks and they set some pretty straight forward criteria. There is a flow chart depicting specific pedestrian demands. She said sight visibility is another criterion and it is pretty well laid out in the VDOT guidelines and she will be happy to send out that link. She said there is a real tension between this desire for crosswalks as a safety measure which if you read the guidelines they are not technically and there are a lot of things that go into it.

Amanda said lighting is another factor.

Alex Ikefuna, Director of Neighborhood Development Services said there is a discussion now about a implementing a complex management system. It is designed to be centralized system. It is going to be 311. The operator will record the information and direct it to proper city department for attention. This is currently being discussed, and the incoming new City Council come in, this might be one of the priority projects that they will be working one.

Many of the Task Force members expressed concerns regarding the crosswalks. Some suggestions were slowing down the speed limit adding a pedestrian motion sensor overhead light, and the APT associated with the 311. When a pedestrian is entering the crosswalk, it is dangerous because everyone is not going to stop.

Rachel said there is a driving culture in Charlottesville that is generally pretty disrespectful to pedestrians and cyclists and that can only be addressed through a comprehensive street design that forces people whether they like it or not to.

Councilor Kathy Galvin said everything you all are talking about is what a form based code will do for you. She said we got into this snag because of a conflict by having BAR and PLACE and yet from the BAR she heard that there is a lot of interest in the form based code. The BAR is an optional group to the Planning Commission, and she said you don't really always need a BAR if you have a really good Form Based Code.

Alex said we could have the PLACE Task Force to look at it and provide some type of recommendations for the Small Area Plans.

Councilor Galvin said at the Planning Commission meeting, no one knew there was an implementation of the SIA.

Councilor Galvin said there needs to be a newsletter for NDS.