

Downtown Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2014

Present:

Dan Kron, Ann Heron, Lynn Schurman, Lance Weber, Russ Kolthoff, Amy Brickweg, Rick Bohannon, Erin Trisko, Nate Sauer, Dan Steil, Brian Lintgen, George Schnepf, and presenting was contractor Geoff Martin

Next meeting:

September 15th 4pm, and October 6th 4pm

I. Announcements

1. County feasibility plans are to be done late fall/early winter and include plans for storm and sewer as well as other areas, the city will still have some feasibility to do, but this is positive news.
2. Power Lines were discussed. Excel is not interested in burying them, new construction this is usually done even though it is not the company's preferred method. Excel says it is harder to provide maintenance to them if they are buried. Suggested that the city pass an ordinance requiring all new lines to be buried. This would then require the company to cover the cost of burying all lines involved in construction. This is an important part of downtown scenescape for many people, but it would most likely receive a lot of pushback from Excel and possibly require attorneys to resolve. If this is pursued it would look like this: Planning Commission would present this idea to City Council after having research on cost, other towns that have done this, and areas it would make the biggest impact. If City Council approved it then it would fall to Excel to cover cost once ordinance is passed. Questions to be answered: what other towns have done this at little/no cost to the town?, who pays the cost of changing lines to homes that are impacted?, how does this impact future building?, could the ordinance be written to include discretion by council to allow for future unknown scenarios?.

II. Discussion

The main focus of today's meeting was a presentation by contractor Geoff Martin, who is the landscape architect and urban designer hired by the city to help plan upcoming changes to Cold Spring. He presented a slide show which is attached to this email. This presentation included results from property owner surveys, highlighting both "Opportunities" and "Challenges". He then showed drawings and schematics of what is currently in Cold Spring and how it could be in the future. Some parts of this presentation will be documented here, but all members are encouraged to look at the presentation attached, as there is input needed by Geoff at the two scheduled future meetings.

Opportunities: Traffic flow and pedestrian ease improved, incorporate themes of granite, beer, and baseball, bike trails and lanes, clean up entrances to city and sight lines to create gateways to town, work with Golden Plump as a "gateway business", greenery increased downtown.

Challenges: old institutions being part of new look, old and new areas blending, burying power lines, improving business district, wider sidewalks, more bike/walk paths, increasing tourism and "tourist-friendly" feel, more bike racks, parking and areas with handicap accessibility.

Concerns: traffic during construction, costs, taking away character, loss of business during construction.

Geoff Martin, along with others, met with Stearns County Department of Transportation and had a good discussion. The county projects a traffic count of 15,000 vehicles by 2030 on County Road 2 (Red River Avenue). This could warrant them creating a 4-lane through Cold Spring, but they are being conservative and working with Cold Spring to keep the road a 2-lane.

Geoff then shared his Preliminary Framework Plan: Highlighting which streets and intersections are top priority for investments so that we can focus on those areas first and work outwards from there to incorporate features. This schematic in the powerpoint shows where there is potential for pocket parks, trails, future Granite Landing development.

When referring to the Powerpoint presentation, please note that Geoff provided two options: A is without a bike lane, and option B is with a bike lane. He highlighted aspects such as wider sidewalks and boulevards, clearer access to bike trail, more trees, planting and colored concrete along with new lightpoles to help create a friendly look. The addition of bike lanes often will mean slimmer sidewalks (still wider than they currently are). Maintenance of streetscaping will fall to private property owners. Irrigation should also be considered.

Development on Main Street should maintain the current look of businesses being directly on the street with parking behind and beside, instead of a more suburban look with parking in front of the building.

III. Follow Up:

These are the questions that Geoff would like the committee to discuss and be able to vote on for our next meetings with him (please mark your calendar now and consider these questions while reviewing the attached documents).

. Should bike lanes be incorporated on Red River Avenue though the entire project area?

. For the segment with a 66ft. ROW fronting of the Brewery, should parking be removed on the east side to provide space for a bike lane?

. Should parking lot buffers be included in the streetscape plan for Red River Avenue? If so, should the buffers be completely on private property or split with the ROW?

. Should parking lot buffers be included in the streetscape plan for Main Street? If so, should the buffers be completely on private property or split with the ROW?

. Should sidewalk bump outs be incorporated on 1st Street South and 1st Street North to define future parking bays, shorten the cross walks, provide space for streetscape elements and visual cues to motorists to slow down in this special downtown district?

Should sidewalk bump outs be incorporated on Main Street to define parking bays, shorten the cross walks, provide space for streetscape elements and visual cues to motorists to slow down in this special downtown district?

. Should sidewalk bump outs be incorporated on other downtown streets?

. If space allows, should angled parking be incorporated on 1st Street South?