

TOWN OF SILER CITY

The Siler City Downtown Advisory Committee met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 5:35 pm through remote electronic meeting conducted by simultaneous communication via Zoom with Chair Szary presiding. Szary read the mission statement.

DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Horner, Loretta Kivett at 5:35, Richard Szary, Sam Testerman, Cecil Wilson

OTHER REMOTE ATTENDEES: Shannon Ford with Duke Energy – Town’s Account Manager, Bruce Naegelen with the NC Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tim Booras, Wren Farrar, Denis de St. Aubin Jr., Jason Hoyle

TOWN STAFF PRESENT: Planning Director Jack Meadows, Permit Specialist Justin Bridges

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Wilson to approve the agenda, seconded by Testerman & unanimously approved.

CONSENT

A motion was made by Horner to approve the January 26, 2021 minutes, seconded by Testerman, & unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

- a) Business/Property Owner Update Letter in English/Spanish
The letter went out and the goal is to do another letter by the summer time.
- b) 2021 NC Main Street Conference
De St. Aubin Jr., Meadows, Szary & Wilson will be attending the virtual conference. The Planning Director will get everyone registered.
- c) 2020 Priority List of Recommendations
 - 1) Includes Cost
 - a) Duke Energy Presentation (Shannon Ford, Town’s Account Manager)
 - a) Repaint silver utility poles
Mr. Ford said that if the Town plans on burying the utility lines in the future that the poles would be replaced. The committee discussed having them painted in the meantime. Mr. Ford said that the painting is a part of Duke Energy’s general maintenance program, and that painting them black would be at no cost to the Town.
 - b) Bury overhead utility lines (OHL) – Engineering Study
This would be a multi-year, multi-million dollar project. Mr. Ford referenced Sanford as a Town that has gone through this process. He told the committee that an engineering study would be required since the scope of the project is so extensive. There would be an upfront cost for the engineering study, which might range from approximately ten to fifteen thousand dollars.

- b) Public Works
 - a) Clean dirt/debris from the gutters – Street sweeper
Currently, the street sweeper cleans downtown every Saturday and Sunday morning. The Public Works director said if the committee does not think the job is being done well enough that he can investigate it. It was voiced that it does not seem like the current street sweeping is effective and a committee survey was recommended. The survey will be completed by Meadows and Szary.
 - b) Install missing section of sidewalk adjacent to 224 N. Chatham Ave.
There are no current plans for this section according to the Public Works director. The committee agreed to leave this item on the list but to revisit it in about six months.
 - c) Sidewalk replacement schedule
Sidewalk replacement will be back up in July.
- c) NCDOT
 - a) Mill the asphalt pavement – Resurfacing schedule
NCDOT is in agreement to mill the asphalt downtown. NCDOT needs to know where, so a committee survey would be helpful for this. The survey could look at the debris build up and the thickness of the asphalt.
 - b) Road Diet – Second Avenue
The application has been made and the Town is just waiting on awards at this point for a study.
- d) Minimum Nonresidential Code Abatement
The planning director submitted a memo and ordinance amending the code to allow the Town to enforce a minimum nonresidential code and the Town Board will be considering it at the March 1st meeting. This was a recommendation by the DAC. If it is adopted, there would be some abatement funds involved with this. This could be for just the downtown district or the entire corporate limits.
- e) Downtown Lights – Town Board request
Commissioner Bray has mentioned adding lighting to Downtown year-round that would make the area more appealing.
- f) Wayfinding signs – location and destination
The Town started putting up way finding signs about a decade ago. The discussion is whether or not new wayfinding signs would be a good addition.
- g) Parking Issue – Parking lot in the RR row along Birch Ave.
It is believed that parking has picked up Downtown. A new parking study for Downtown can be done. The committee discussed that the area at the corner of Beaver and Chatham is going to be new parking.
- h) Street banners – SCMA
The committee discussed talking to the Merchants Association about replacing the street banners.
- i) NC Downtown Development Association membership - \$175.00
More information about what the membership entails will be discussed at the next meeting.
- j) Funding: Municipal Service District, Bond, General Fund

The committee discussed that finding ways and options to fund larger projects is going to be needed going forward.

- k) Farmers Market
The committee discussed that a UNC graduate student might could do market research, feasibility analysis, and financial modeling, to attract the private investment of a farmer's market.
- l) Local Historic District – Pros vs. Cons
 - (a) Historic Preservation Plan
 - (b) Historic District Design Guidelines
 - (c) Historic Preservation Ordinance
 - (d) Historic Preservation CommitteeWas agreed by the committee to have a sub committee do pros and cons because there is much to consider concerning this. One pro that was mentioned was that there is a 50% property tax deferment as long as a property maintains its historic significance. Subcommittee members are de St. Aubin, Farrar, Horner and Meadows.
- m) Siler City Mills – DFI project
Update: One of the recommendations is to rezone this property from a mixed-use zoning district to an industrial zoning district. If a Brownfield grant is done, a deeper dive will be done with this property.
- n) N. Chatham Ave. – stormwater in the basements of several buildings
Flooding has happened in several basements of buildings Downtown. An engineer has agreed to do a study, cost for the study is about \$5,000. He would come up with projects to fix the problems with cost estimates provided, and they will be prioritized.
- o) Newspaper dispensers on the sidewalk
There is some cross jurisdiction between the Town and it being a NCDOT right-of-way. This would be an obstruction in the right-of-way, as most of these dispensers are empty and people who park there open their car doors to find that they are close to hitting these dispensers. It was further discussed that these dispensers are simply an inconvenience to the people parking there.
- p) Planner I Position – 20 hours spent on downtown = \$30,000/annually
Not yet funded.
- q) Downtown Façade Grant Program = \$15,000/annually
Not yet funded.
- r) Downtown Building Rehabilitation Program = \$15,000/annually
Not yet funded.
- s) NC Main Street Conference = \$1,000/annually
Not yet funded.
- t) NC Main Street Downtown Associate Community Program = \$1,550/annually
Not yet funded.
- u) Police presence in Downtown = \$27,500/annually
Not yet funded.
- v) USDA Rural Business Development Grant for Streetscape Plan for Chatham Ave. = \$4,000

Not yet funded.

- w) Replace existing Downtown sidewalk trash receptacles = \$15,906
Not yet funded.

- x) Replace existing Downtown parking signs and change maximum time to 3 hours = \$300
Not yet funded.

2) No Cost

- a) Presentations (Duke Energy, NC Rehabilitation Code, State Historic Preservation Office, NC Main Street Center, etc.)
Some education of building code was discussed for the committee. Bruce Naegelen has come up with a plan of having a 'round table' presentation discussion regarding the process of a building redevelopment. This presentation could be for the committee, SCDO and Siler City property owners. Mid to late March is the tentative time frame for this presentation. The committee said that a 6 pm, Tuesday or Thursday presentation could work.

REPORTS

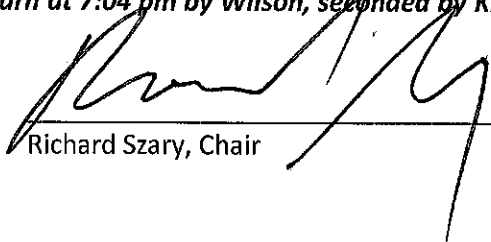
- a) Siler City Merchants Association
They are going to be working on planters Downtown.
- b) Planning and Community Development Department
Planning issued the permits to Wrenn Family for the 121 N. Chatham Avenue project of four apartments and also to redevelop the parking lot off of Birch Avenue.
The Department has a new Certified Zoning Official as Justin Bridges completed 6 weeks of classes through the UNC School of Government and passed the CZO test.
The strategic planning process; they have a vision statement, they have four strategies, they are working on their implementation plan and will have tentatively made a date of April the 19th to present to the Town Board.

FUTURE BUSINESS

- a) Next Meetings @ 5:30 on Mar. 23, Apr. 27, May 18, Jun. 22, Jul. 27, Aug. 24, Sep. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 16
- b) 2021 Priority List of Recommendations
 - 1) Public Comment on Draft Project List – Sep. 28, 2021
 - 2) Approve Priority List – Oct. 26, 2021
 - 3) Approve PowerPoint Presentation – Nov. 16, 2021
 - 4) Present to Town Board – Jan. 3, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business a motion was made to adjourn at 7:04 pm by Wilson, seconded by Kivett and unanimously approved.



Richard Szary, Chair

ATTEST:



Justin Bridges, Permit Specialist