

**TOWN OF SILER CITY**

The Siler City Downtown Advisory Committee met in Regular Session on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 5:30 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:** Tim Booras, Wren Farrar, Denis de St. Aubin Jr., Loretta Kivett, Jason Hoyle, Richard Szary, Sam Testerman, Cecil Wilson

**OTHER REMOTE ATTENDEES:** Michael Smith with the Chatham Economic Development Corporation

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Bill Horner

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

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Szary added to old business (b) a report on the BOC actions that have been taken on the committee recommendations. A motion was made by Wilson to approve the revised agenda, seconded by de St. Aubin Jr. & unanimously approved.*

**CONSENT**

*Szary added that the business/property owner letter only went out in English, and he forgot to have it translated into Spanish. A motion was made by Wilson to approve the February 23, 2021 minutes with the addition, seconded by de St. Aubin Jr., & unanimously approved.*

**OLD BUSINESS**

- a) 2021 NC Main Street Conference (Rich, Denis, Cecil, Jack)  
Wilson noted that he took from the conference that Downtown should be made a destination place, to look for 'diamonds in the rough' type buildings that can be used in a different way, and to focus more on marketing the city and Downtown. de St. Aubin Jr. noted that he took from the conference that Downtown was the emphasis on the history of the Town. De mentioned the idea of having a history museum in Town. Meadows mentioned streetscape, outdoor dining, mid-walk crossings and also the backbone of the NC Main Street program is historic preservation. Szary mentioned increased communications with property owners/business owners downtown. Szary also mentioned helping entrepreneurs, and helping startups.
- b) Report on BOC Actions taken by Committee Recommendations  
The BOC has approved the minimum non-residential code for the whole planning jurisdiction with one more public hearing left. The BOC decided not to take down the left-hand turn sign at Raleigh St. and Chatham St.
- c) 2021 Priority List of Recommendations
  - 1) Includes Cost
    - a) Local Historic District
      - a. Pros vs. Cons Subcommittee (Bill, Wren, Denis, and Jack)  
Meadows and Farrar met recently. Topics discussed were establishing a historic preservation ordinance for the downtown district and historic preservation commission for downtown Siler City. Each subcommittee

member will create a list of pros and cons and submit to the planning director prior to the next subcommittee meeting.

- b) NC Downtown Development Association membership - \$175.00 (Jack)  
They meet quarterly with downtown developers and downtown main street professionals. The association is available for informational purposes and webinars. This is the association for downtown communities. The fee is \$175 a year. The committee decided to keep this item on the priority list of recommendations for future discussion.
- c) N. Chatham Ave. – stormwater in the basements of several buildings - \$5,000  
212 N. Chatham/Belk Building and the block where the NC Arts Incubator has buildings that have water in the basements and has water that rises in the basements during rain events. Hiring an engineer to do some data collection and watershed planning could be a solution. The engineer could figure out where the water is coming from and figure out ways to mitigate those problems, and provide cost estimates and prioritize those issues. The committee agreed to keep this on the priority list of recommendations.
- d) Duke Energy Bury overhead utility lines (OHL)
  - a. Request presentation from Sanford Mayor Chet Mann  
Sanford did this several years ago. The idea here being that Mayor Mann has a roadmap for how to get this done for a town and could speak to that. Michael Smith with the Chatham Economic Development Corporation mentioned that Sanford has a staff member that is dedicated to downtown Sanford Inc., helping the processes along. The committee is interested in having either the mayor or somebody from the Sanford downtown people come and speak.
  - b. Engineering Study - \$15,000  
The chair posed the question, “is this the right time to ask for an engineering study?” Booras noted that he talked to the economic developer at Duke Energy and he said three things; that every single small town in NC is asking for this to be done, that the studies are very long and that the high cost is a non-starter for most.

2) No Cost

- a) Street Survey Subcommittee (Rich, Jack)
  - a. Clean dirt/debris from the gutters – Street sweeper  
Szary and Meadows found debris in the gutters. Some drain inlets were also completely clogged up or paved over. The committee would like to have the report from the subcommittee sent to NCDOT and Town staff.
  - b. Mill the asphalt pavement – Resurfacing schedule  
Szary and Meadows did measurements downtown on how much curb is left. NCDOT invited the committee to share this information with them and the same can be shared with the Town. The committee would like to have the report from the subcommittee sent to NCDOT and Town staff.
- b) Shopper dispensers on the sidewalk (Bill)  
The problem has been people opening their vehicle doors and banging into these empty dispensers. The dispensers can be removed or relocated.

- c) DAC scope expansion/update (Rich)  
The committee makes recommendations once a year. For no cost items the idea that was discussed was making recommendations twice a year. It was recommended to have a subcommittee draft some language to add to the committee's resolution or revise the committee's resolution, get the committee to ok it, and then have it put on the Town Board agenda to revise the resolution creating the Downtown Advisory Committee. (Wilson, Szary)
  - d) No trucks on certain blocks of Chatham Ave. (Rich)  
The question is whether or not the committee desires to see truck traffic regulated on certain blocks of Chatham Ave. It was noted that Eighteen Wheelers and log trucks are normal traffic in this area. The potential future streetscape plan was mentioned as a factor in this conversation. The committee could hear from NCDOT and several trucking companies to factor into their advisory decision.
  - e) UDO Amendment – Open space requirement for downtown residential developments (Jack)  
The question is whether the committee wants to advise that the Town waive the requirements for open space to incentivize development downtown. The committee agreed to keep this item on the list and to revisit it in future meetings.
  - f) Duke Energy repaint silver utility poles black  
Duke Energy will take care of this. The committee agreed that the poles should be repainted black.
  - g) Downtown Community Revitalization Project for UNC graduate student – market research, feasibility analysis, and financial modeling for a farmer's market/outdoor venue at the southeast corner of S. Chatham Ave. and E. Beaver St.  
The lot that used to be the Oasis is Town owned, and could be studied by a UNC graduate student as a downtown community revitalization project. (Booras, de St. Aubin Jr.)
  - h) Rezoning – 118 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. – Siler City Mills  
Does the committee support rezoning this property to be developed as a multi-family apartment complex? The committee talked and does support the rezoning of this property for this purpose.
- d) Business/Property Owner Update Letter in English/Spanish (Rich) (Jack send with public comment meeting invite in August 2021)  
Another update letter will be sent out in English and Spanish to invite the community to the September 28<sup>th</sup> public comment meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS

- a) Main Street Rural Planning Center (MSRPC) to conduct a Downtown Physical Assessment - \$200  
This item is in the strategic plan. The planning director will get some more details from Naegelen about what physical assessment would include.
- b) Public alley maintenance  
Several alleys have been neglected. Does the committee want to do a survey of what needs to be done? The committee liked the idea of looking into this issue. (de St. Aubin Jr.)

#### REPORTS

a) Siler City Merchants Association

They are concerned about trash around town. They are working on some possibilities for clean up around town outside of the annual clean up.

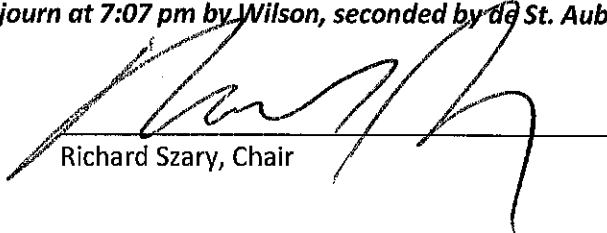
**FUTURE BUSINESS**

- a) Next Meetings @ 5:30 on 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

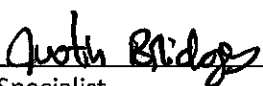
**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

**ADJOURNMENT**

*With no further business a motion was made to adjourn at 7:07 pm by Wilson, seconded by de St. Aubin Jr. and unanimously approved.*

  
Richard Szary, Chair

**ATTEST:**

  
Justin Bridges, Permit Specialist