

Downtown Crozet Initiative Minutes
Thursday, November 9, 2017
Crozet Library
1:00 am – 2:30 pm

Meg Holden called the meeting to order at 1:02.

Attendees: Doug Bates, Mary Beth Bowen, Leslie Burns, Jim Crosby, Brad Diggans, John Fornaro, Paul Grady, Pat Groot, Meg Holden, Janie Perrone, Paul Perrone, Brenda Plantz, Suzanne Reid, Dave Stoner, Frank Stoner

Introduction of Attendees

Minutes from last meeting were unanimously approved.

Discussion: Strategic Task Force: Doug Bates is writing a position paper to help secure funding by asking the county to contribute to the Plaza by quickly applying for funds from the VDOT for the development of the Crozet Square. He spoke about the importance of the details and wants to form a strategic task force for planning the details.

Discussion: Frank Stoner Update: County would issue bonds to obtain tax revenues that would eventually be funneled to fund the Crozet Square and Plaza through the CCO. A 20-year bond for CDA could be issued. The development of a 2700 sq. ft. hotel and 4000 sq. ft. of retail would generate more than enough tax revenue for the County to repay for the bond in addition to a parking solution (e.g. a garage).

Another possibility would be to give Crozet a tax rebate for 20 years so that Milestone, Inc. could finance project through a newly formed Community Development Authority; funds which would be directed strictly to the Downtown Crozet. Surplus might pay for parking. This later step has been recommended by Municap.

Frank senses a growing sense of urgency about this project and would like us to take advantage of this momentum to encourage the County Supervisors to do the necessary work in a timely fashion.

The Rezoning Application needs to be filed for Dec. 1st. Application extension has been filed for to the Transportation Board. The County is waiting for the right –of-way issue to be solved, and Frank has gotten agreement from both owners to sell the necessary right-of-way to the County.

County has done nothing about getting rid of the chain link fence from CSX because of a dispute about an adjoining property.

Discussion: Pat Groot update:

The CCAC Survey results would be very useful in writing grants. Dave Stoner assured us that the results will be tallied by the middle of November.

Pat Groot and Brenda Plantz attended a Main Street conference that offered useful suggestions for keeping our community engaged with the Crozet Square and Plaza project. Because we are not incorporated as a town, Crozet is not eligible for a Main Street community designation but we can become a Main Street Commercial District Affiliate. If the CCAC as a County appointed advisory board, will adopt a resolution endorsing the MSCDA and then forward this Resolution as a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors it will allow DCI to comply with the deadlines. In order for DCI to be eligible for the upcoming grant, the Affiliate application must be submitted and it requires a resolution from the County.

The deadline for grant submission is Dec. 1st and the potential grant would be a maximum of \$7,000.

It was the consensus of the group that joining Main Street as a Commercial District Affiliate was a good idea and we should proceed with the Affiliate and grant applications.

Pat also reported on an Orton Foundation webinar about developing comprehensive plans based on community engagement. Of note were two ideas on gathering community input.

One idea is to engage high school and middle school students with a short program introducing the Plaza plan and eliciting responses to the following questions:

- a. What do you think Crozet should look like?
- b. What do you like about living in Crozet?
- c. What do you think is missing in Crozet?

Students are given a homework assignment that would ask their parents the same or similar questions. Then the students write up a report and give it to their teachers.

Another idea is to have DCI members spend time in places like the *Dollar Store* or *Great Valu* eliciting responses to a similar short survey (three questions max). These interviews are coined "intercept surveys" in the world of community engagement.

A third idea is to co-sponsor with *Perrone Robotics* another event on the Plaza site such as a Block Party.

These efforts would not only elicit community response and ideas about developing a place that would attract people to shop and hang out, but plant the seed that the Plaza site is a good place to congregate.

Dave Stoner mentioned the need to survey with a strategic plan in mind.

Frank Stoner reminded us that lots more design work needs to be done, and Pat Groot mentioned the Hotel Floyd, a “green” hotel, which has combined a conference center with its hotel and asked local artists to help decorate the sleeping and common areas which, in turn, generates sales of their work in the downtown shops.

Mention was made that environmental needs should be met for possible certification by the EarthCraft Virginia (now Viridian), which is more affordable than LEED certification.

The need for a marketing study was mentioned. While the County claims that it has the necessary information, it claims that it does not have the staff to collate it.

The meeting was adjourned by Meg Holden at 2:33 PM.

Suzanne Reid, Acting Secretary.