

**PLACE Design Task Force Minutes**  
**May 9, 2019 - 12:00- 2:00 p.m.**  
**Neighborhood Development Services**  
**Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall**

**Members Present:** Mike Stoneking, Mark Rylander, Serena Gruia, Rachel Lloyd, Fred Wolf, Rory Stolzenberg, Andrew Mondeschein, Lena Seville, and Kathy Galvin

**Staff Present:** Carrie Rainey, Kari Spitler, and Alex Ikefuna

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Stoneking called the PLACE Design Task Force Meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

**1. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC (5 minutes)**

None.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR BARRACKS ROAD/EMMET STREET INTERSECTION PROJECT (10 minutes)**

**Carrie Rainey:** We are beginning the work on one of our Smart Scale projects, which is the intersection of Barrack's Road and Emmet Street. Kyle Kling will be managing the project and is setting up the steering committee. He has asked for a PLACE representative to volunteer and be part of the committee.

**Mike Stoneking:** How far does the project extend?

**Alex Ikefuna:** Coming towards Downtown, it extends to Hilltop Road. There might be pushback regarding the canopy but there are exposed roots and unhealthy trees growing. Going forward it isn't a good idea to have unhealthy canopies, however they do need to be replaced and consider planting trees that will have a much better canopy in the future.

**Rachel Lloyd:** Some of the neighbors are upset about getting rid of the cliff clay cutoffs because they like the trees. Some of the discussions started with the bike/ped plan, which identified that street as a major bicycle route, but there isn't much traffic now because it's a big climb. The pedestrian facilities also have narrow sidewalks and neighbors are upset that we might be widening the street to put in bike infrastructure without pedestrian improvements. Will there be good pedestrian infrastructure?

**Alex Ikefuna:** Yes. After the project is done, they might be able to walk from their houses, some of which are very stepped back, and walk all around the corridor. It doesn't connect to the Emmet Street project, so when these projects are done we need to do then something to connect the gaps.

**Mike Stoneking:** Are these nighttime meetings? Who is the consultant?

**Alex Ikefuna:** Timmons Engineering is the consultant.

**Carrie Rainey:** It will likely be similar to other Smart Scale projects, which is about 5-7p.m. meetings that will might be monthly in the beginning and then taper off. There may also be open houses that committee members may be asked to speak at.

**Andrew Mondeschein:** Notes that he lives relatively close by and is willing to be the representative on the steering committee for this project.

**Rachel Lloyd:** One neighbor living on the section of Barracks Road has been asking the City for information on the project for a long time and never received much, even at a concept level. The message that came back continued to be that there was no design yet and that it was just an idea. The neighbors are concerned that there has already been a program and basis for design before the neighbors were engaged.

**Alex Ikefuna:** Nothing has been done because we just issued the notice to proceed a few weeks ago. The only thing being done now is putting together the steering committee and then a letter will go out.

**Mike Stoneking:** It's also Smart Scale, so there are requirements.

**Serena Gruia:** In addition to the neighbors who live there and counting bikers and pedestrians, is there any kind of lemonade stand set up to talk to people as they are going back and forth to ask them questions?

**Alex Ikefuna:** That is a good point and it might be a part of the community engagement process. We should also take these discussions to the steering committee.

### **3. LONG-RANGE PLANNING DISCUSSION (60 minutes)**

**Mike Stoneking:** Shares that he wrote the new City Manager a letter and explained the process of PLACE developing recommendations for the Long-Range Planner position. He accepted a get together a few weeks after he starts for the City on May 13. If more than two people are interested in attending, we will have to notice it.

**Lena Seville:** Why is there such a negative response to noticing meetings? It's good for the public to know what we are doing.

**Mike Stoneking:** The only problem is for practical reasons and having to adhere to a certain schedule. We have three people interested so far so we will set it up.

**Serena Gruia:** In the meeting we should discuss if he has experience with this kind of position, as well as using other cities as examples to determine what has been effective to start the conversation.

**Mike Stoneking:** Notes that he looked around the DeSoto area and didn't find any, but there are other examples along the east coast that we know about.

**Kathy Galvin:** The interviewing process for this position is unclear so this might be a good opportunity to talk about that as well.

**Mike Stoneking:** Notes that he asked Mike Murphy if two PLACE members could be on the interview selection committee, although it might not be his decision to make in a few weeks.

**Rachel Lloyd:** Mike Murphy sent an email stating that he would reach out to the PLACE committee when they are ready to do interviews for the position, so he is intending to do that.

**Mark Rylander:** There is a concern that the definition of the position might migrate and as a senior position starts getting a longer title it could become ineffective. What is the central focus? We should advocate that the translation of a long range vision into the types of physical zoning policies that will translate into the Zoning Ordinance needs to be a component in it somehow. There needs to be forward progress on getting the map done and having a Comprehensive Plan reflected in the Zoning Ordinance.

**Kathy Galvin:** The position was viewed as essential to go hand in glove with the RFP going out to an outside consultant team, to do the Comprehensive Plan update to completion, integrate an affordable housing strategy, and roll into a zoning reform to match the vision of the community. It was understood that there needed to be someone who knew what those things were, how to integrate them, and how to implement them.

**Mike Stoneking:** PLACE wrote a 3 page piece and most of it has gone into Mike Murphy's final notice for the job. One of the reasons for meeting with them is that we should keep reiterating that so it doesn't migrate into another position. We aren't the only voice, but maybe we can be a strong one.

**Kathy Galvin:** The new contract for a consultant team that Council agreed to fund for \$800,000 is a concrete task that is associated with this position, which is aligned with a lot of the goals established in the memo from PLACE.

**Rachel Lloyd:** An RFP hasn't been issued for that, so when the new person comes in will they be writing the scope for that?

**Kathy Galvin:** In conversations with Mike Murphy he said he was going to reach out to PLACE, as well as other groups, to have multiple pairs of eyes on that.

**Rachel Lloyd:** There are some essential questions that the City has been grappling with for a long time that this candidate will probably have to, including form based code vs. other kinds of codes. The strengths or weaknesses of the candidate will probably sway the conversation in one direction or another. Should we advocate for one way of looking at it?

**Kathy Galvin:** The reality is that there is one already in process and another small area plan that called for a form based code. The candidate should definitely have skillsets in that area without coming right out and saying you are endorsing anything. It would be horrible if the person came in with strictly a Euclidian zoning approach.

**Lena Seville:** We already have a hybrid approach so that wouldn't fit. Part of this person's job is going to be doing community outreach to determine what that larger community wants and we should be careful about being too specific.

**Mike Stoneking:** They have to be well-versed in the tools that we use today. Having a form based code is not the same as not listening to what people want. We would want this person to know how to implement character-based codes and then they go to the City and citizens to do so. It isn't an either/or situation.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS (40 minutes)**

##### **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**

**Serena Gruia:** Is the \$100,000 for the participatory budgeting project under the City Manager or City Council?

**Kathy Galvin:** Because it was something adopted in the budget and the City Manager is responsible for implementing the budget, it would fall under the City Manager. It's not to say that there can't be some agreement between City Council staff and City Manager staff to work together, but Matthew Murphy is technically a member of the Council's office.

**Alex Ikefuna:** it is unclear if anyone was hired for the participatory budget, but Matthew Murphy is the City Council Outreach Coordinator and this experiment will require engagement with the community so he is involved with the process and the discussion.

**Mike Stoneking:** We are inviting a status update rather than a final product and it might even be better if they don't have it finished.

**Serena Gruia:** Shares that she led a participatory budgeting project in public schools recently. The idea of participatory budgeting started 20 years ago as a way for communities to directly engage the budget of their place. Typically underrepresented communities were advocating for a voice to have direct democracy and for public money towards projects that they felt were important to their communities. When we started to think about this in Charlottesville, we thought about what the implications would be for schools where our district proclaims the idea of being student-lead. Students aren't necessarily seeing their voices show up in decisions, which is why this project was such a great idea. There is a ton of outreach associated with this where individuals shares their experiences, stressors, and the positive parts of their community. People share their ideas and design projects that relate specifically to those needs and then having the community vote on the projects. There is actual money at the end of this process and it is a practical use of money where people are seeing their voices in concrete solutions. Walker Elementary School a primary meeting spot for Charlottesville because it where every parent and guardian has their children. Parents are genuinely interested in the school in the community and they are guided by love for their children, so this was a good location for the project. It's important to note that we did have a captive audience and we don't necessarily have that in the City. It was important to make this process available to the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade. They have experience and ideas and it was very important to make sure every student had access to the curriculum. As a designer, we wanted to come into the project using the platform of design thinking instead of having very specific ideas. This design is inherently ambiguous and it was important to share this with the teachers so it was truly student lead so we could figure out where their needs are and how to address them. We used interdisciplinary approach and went in through social studies. All of the students are considered designers and experts in their experience. There is a difference between contextual expertise and content expertise and it was important for students to see themselves as experts. Likewise, our community members are the experts in their context and they should be seen as such. There were 340+ students and 15 individual classes and each class had 4 sessions of design. The first conversation was about who makes decisions and how much money is spent, which can be paralleled to the City. Most of the sessions were facilitated and guided with the students. The prompt to kick it off was "How might we improve the student experience at Walker?" For one exercise, a word was chosen from the word wall and they wrote a story about an experience they had at school using the word. There was also an exercise about how to interview and ask questions about the stories that was done in small groups. All of the notes were posted in the cafeteria for everyone to see, all while maintaining confidentiality. They developed insights using a Wordle that was created showing the most common phrases that the students wanted. They presented their ideas to the class and each class voted on an idea. Teams were set up and each student was able to go to the table where they wanted to address their creativity. There were brainstorming activities that focused on brain writing, which is a group activity that has an individual component. Each student had one minute to write down big ideas about an idea and then they would pass it on. It gave them the chance to expand on the ideas that were already written or create new ones, and by the end the sheets were all full of ideas to choose. There was also this idea of ownership so that no one individual owned the ideas, but rather it was a collective effort that was generative. The picked out an idea to present to the class for review to give positive and constructive feedback, which is

exactly what we do as designers. In design is important to have evaluation criteria and they discussed impact, the life of the project, cost, longevity, time to construct, and if it was a cool idea. They had to integrate feasibility and the CFA granted \$6,000 so the students had a budget to work with. They created an elevator pitch to present and then had a secret vote to decide the class project. Even though some students' ideas weren't picked, they were encouraged to finish the project that won and build it out so it reflects everyone in the room. The top voted project was an in-school sports tournament and the second project was a school garden. One of the classes had a bad learning environment and had to mitigate behavioral and social needs, and after the project sat together in different configurations and the classroom became a learning environment. The need for student agency is important and they are now asking questions and engaging in civic engagement just like we want our community to do. Going forward we want to strengthen the connection between the "have-to" learning and the "want-to" learning, as well as project-based learning. Thinking about ways to have these projects with true tangible outcomes is really important. Some of the children were skeptical of whether or not the \$6,000 actually existed and the same can be said in the City process. The outcome isn't important, but rather the experience that the students had, the way that they feel that their voices are being heard, and how they are connected to the community is where the value lies.

**Kathy Galvin:** Perhaps there would be other sponsors that would do this and help out for other schools. In terms of participation with the community, it's great that there was a business participate in the process.

**Serena Gruia:** In theory, for the City you would have a civic budget because it would truly be a conversation between the community and leadership.

**Rachel Lloyd:** What would you do differently next year?

**Serena Gruia:** Hopefully the mindset of sitting back and watching a pilot happen will be reduced next year. It would be great to have more buy-in from the teachers and strengthening the interdisciplinary style is important. Community connections could also be grown, as well as parent involvement. In terms of building community and strengthening relationships, this process could be used in the beginning of the year to talk about how we envision our success and our interactions in the school.

**Mark Rylander:** The process was designed so carefully and there were so many different exercises in 4 sessions. You were able to keep everyone as an expert in their own context at the center all the way through every exercise and didn't let some external notion of decision-making based on metrics be used.

**Serena Gruia:** Stakeholder engagement design is the least valued thing for a client to pay for, but to shift the value into those conversations and give up the sense of control was important. The adults wanted to have feasible projects but when you get information in front of the designers and students, you create parameters that you feel comfortable with.

**Kathy Galvin:** Before No Child Left Behind, project-based learning was how students were taught. The standards of learning came in the late 1990s and then it became a stranglehold on teaching when No Child Left Behind came in and there was nothing but metrics. Schools were threatened with closure if they didn't meet the metrics and very quickly teachers felt that they were becoming nothing but functionaries to meet that criteria. Later they moved from the test metrics to a growth model. This project shows that there is an opening and it could reintroduce project-based learning again.

**Serena Gruia:** Alongside SOLs is a pacing guideline. Budgetary literacy is not a 6<sup>th</sup> grade standard and some of the math they did in the fall was something they should be doing in the spring so some people were hesitant to do it. We need to be thoughtful about implementation and how every individual citizen who comes through and

shares their voice can actually see themselves reflected in the outcome because this is the building block of community engagement.

**Rachel Lloyd:** What are the lessons that you got from this that you could bring to the City? Do you think this process effectively even out everyone's voice?

**Serena Gruia:** This is a captive audience, but having real money at the end is really important. This process has so much documentation to see the why, who, and how and it's important to have that as proof. One of the most important moments are the conversations. In some places the designs are created in a vacuum that doesn't understand the needs of the community and the outcomes don't address the true needs so they aren't as effective. However, if the design has to reflect the needs that have been heard, the outcomes directly relate to what has been heard.

**Rachel Lloyd:** The people working on this project were also committed to seeing it through to an end point, whereas Charlottesville often falls down on. Sometimes we go through a process and decision makers at the end point don't honor the process.

**Mark Rylander:** The application of this could be more effective on a much smaller scale. It's not about what size each part of the pie chart goes to.

**Serena Gruia:** It's not about percentages, it's about real projects. It is an investment into trust and direct democracy.

**Mark Rylander:** Having the experience of getting to an endpoint with results and having a level of satisfaction from this would be really meaningful compared to a lot of other exercises.

**Kathy Galvin:** Years ago neighborhood associations would get a chunk of money but there weren't any rules. This is a good process to make sure it's inclusive and it is documented to show how we got there. Have you given this presentation to the budget office?

**Mike Stoneking:** No. We invited ourselves to their table and were told that they aren't ready for that. It's not that they weren't ready to present, but they weren't ready for input. It would be great that a project was done could be examined by those that are about to do a similar thing.

**Kathy Galvin:** They are also dealing with a possible total restructuring of how we distribute money to nonprofit organizations, which is taking up a lot of their time.

**Mike Stoneking:** How did you keep the decision makers like principals to honor the requests and not trump the end result? Did they sign a pledge or were they just good people?

**Serena Gruia:** That was one of the parameters of the project. The principal is a great leader who is thoughtful and interested in innovation in education. He was the perfect person to start this project with. He was also part of the process to offer feedback during the process. In the City process if that isn't possible, they should have to sign a pledge.

**Rory Stolzenberg:** It makes sense to include them, not just because they have useful things to add, but also so they don't feel like they are losing all agency just because other people get agency too.

**Serena Gruia:** In other City processes, there is a steering committee comprised of many people that are creating those rules of engagement, which is something the students weren't involved with. They did work within a construct. It would be the same way in a City process, but it has to be done with transparency and with many voices.

**Lena Seville:** In this case, they had a captive audience and everyone was equally involved to the same degree. If you go through the process in the City and it doesn't represent the demographics of the City that is a completely different thing. Sometimes things get changed afterwards because we don't have a representative group of people participating, so we would need a certain percentage of low income people, neighborhoods represented, etc. for it to move forward. You have to make sure the starting point is very inclusive because if it's the same small group we will just get the same complaints.

**Rachel Lloyd:** Projects aren't getting denied just because of the concern about representation.

**Kathy Galvin:** There's probably a little bit of both of everything going on and it's important to remember that Council's composition changes every two years.

**Serena Gruia:** Greensboro has done this PB process for 3 years and Charlottesville can look towards them for guidance.

### VIETNAM VETERAN'S MEMORIAL

**Rachel Lloyd:** On Monday Mike Murphy announced that there was a new committee that will be looking at the accessibility of that memorial. After a few meetings, they might come back and ask for some assistance. Are there other ideas about what is going on there?

**Mike Stoneking:** What was the starting point of the issue?

**Rachel Lloyd:** The memorial was redesigned several years ago and traditionally at the annual ceremony people accessed the park and the memorial from the old driveway/grass area where the skate park is now. With the development of the skate park, you can't do that anymore and the question is about how veterans and other elderly people can access the memorial now. It's technically accessible, but it's across a long intersection.

**Mike Stoneking:** Does the solution include roadways?

**Kathy Galvin:** There will be VDOT engineers involved with the task force because how you can enter off and on state arterial roads is a challenge and they need clearances between the intersections.

**Serena Gruia:** Notes that her husband was at all of the meetings involving the skate park and the people with the memorial didn't want any changes. The parking lot that was created where the old skate park was has an access parking lot that was designed to accommodate wheelchairs and it is equidistant from the other parking lot.

**Rory Stolzenberg:** We need signage that states that there is parking over at the fire station.

**Kathy Galvin:** It would be a long and arduous walk for someone in their 80s. The big challenge will be if VDOT would let any kind of entry point off of the John Warner Parkway. It would be interesting if there was a parking lot near there and you had a fleet of golf carts that were always there. They would fit into the multi-use trail every easily.

**Serena Gruia:** Can the memorial be more integrated into the botanical garden?

**Rachel Lloyd:** The botanical garden design will integrate it, but its location now was its historical location and the veterans were adamant that it not move.

**Lena Seville:** The lower section of botanical garden is much more natural and native with plantings. It would be a nicer walk, but it would still be a long one.

**Rory Stolzenberg:** Starting this Saturday there are going to be botanical garden visioning walks every half hour.

**Lena Seville:** For the amount of times that the space is used, it would be reasonable to say to just let us know and we can provide something.

**Mike Stoneking:** That is intersecting with a delicate time in the population's age group.

**Rachel Lloyd:** Right now there is a steering committee and those people have already been assigned by Mike Murphy. No one from PLACE is an assignee to that committee so we would be a visitor. The cause for it was that veterans are older and have mobility problems and the access was cut off with the addition of the skate park. The best route to travel might be from the new parking lot on the other side of the railroad tracks so you wouldn't have to cross any roads.

**Kathy Galvin:** Hopefully there will be facilitation of some kind with the committee. The mindset is that people want a parking lot right beside the war memorial and we have to go through the steps of how difficult that will be and finding a solution. The access problem just wasn't communicated very well and it needed to have this process again. Because it takes so long to go from concept to implementation, people forget the early decisions. Going back to the PB project, this just shows how important documentation is and it's important to have a project that can be implemented within 6 months.

**Rachel Lloyd:** There has to be a design voice that balanced out the demands for accessibility for the memorial and the benefits of having cars move through a public park, which creates other problems.

**Mike Stoneking:** Is there anything else to discuss?

**Kathy Galvin:** The writing of the RFP for the consultant team will be the other big thing. Shares that she reiterated to Mike Murphy that PLACE was designed to do this kind of work and shouldn't be forgotten and he took it very seriously.

**Rachel Lloyd:** Why is West Main taking so long?

**Alex Ikefuna:** West Main is a big project with different segments and code changes. In terms of the streetscape design, there are different stages and that's why it's taking so long. If everything goes right, by next summer the utility replacement project will take place, which will take 2.5 months to complete. When that is complete, private utilities that will be undergrounded will begin, which will be in 2021. Once that phase is complete, the streetscape project with the roadway and sidewalks will happen.

**Rachel Lloyd:** To go from concept to CD has been years and it should take 9 months. It ends up costing so much money when these things drag on and notes that she doesn't understand why it's has been 5 years.



**Mike Stoneking:** There was a 2 year schedule set aside for CDs and we are 8 months into it. We are also still talking about where the statue will end up in the whole scheme of things.

**Carrie Rainey:** There has been a lot of engagement with folks in the area with Charlene Green for the historical interpretation package. Not that everything else went on hold, but it slowed up the process for those discussions to happen. That process alone took about 5 months.

**Alex Ikefuna:** Right now we have to go back and make adjustments to the federal and state funding make adjustments in terms of cost estimates and what needs to be included and those things take a certain amount of time. We haven't even done the right of way acquisition and that also takes time.

**Kathy Galvin:** With regards to the statue, we should adopt the recommendations from staff that we initiate a parallel process to begin a discussion about the statue. It wasn't the right thing to do but we could not delay the process. There needs to be a community discussion and Council should not be making unilateral decisions like that. There will be a process that needs to include the Native American peoples as well because of the challenging design. Then staff will come back with a resolution.

#### **5. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC (5 minutes)**

None.