

**PLACE Design Task Force Minutes
February 11, 2021 - 12:00- 2:00 p.m.
Neighborhood Development Services
Zoom Meeting Webinar**

Members Present: Rory Stolzenberg, Cliff Fox, Andrew Mondeschein (Chairman), Lena Seville, Mark Rylander (joined the meeting at 1:07 PM)

Staff Present: Patrick Cory, Carrie Rainey, Alex Ikefuna

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:06 PM

1. CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE PUBLIC (5 minutes)

Peter Krebs – City was awarded money through the smart scale grant for the Preston and Grady intersection. At the Planning Commission meeting on Tuesday night, there will not be more money for small area plans. There is money available for small area plans. We need to have intersection community conversations about Preston and Grady intersection before we get to work on that streetscape project. It needs to be in the long term. You need to have it on your radar and in the long term.

The Chairman agreed with the comments and remarks made by Mr. Krebs.

2. WEST MAIN STREETSCAPE DISCUSSION (90 minutes)

- The Chairman started the discussion on the West Main Streetscape and the choices in front of City Council.
- There is a need to understand where the process is at the moment and the choices.
- Mr. Ikefuna (NDS Director) provided an update on the Streetscape Project from the staff perspective. Nothing has been decided on West Main according to staff.
- The final decision will rest with the City Council on the next steps with the West Main Streetscape.
- The City Council will seek the feedback of staff before making a decision on West Main
- Council does have a lot of budget demands and considerations, including the schools, affordable housing, and transportation access. The Council needs to balance all of these competing demands.
- There is no knowledge on what the Council is going to do with all of these demands and the next steps going forward.
- Mr. Stolzenberg provided an update from the perspective of the Planning Commission on the West Main Streetscape Project.
- The Planning Commission recommended to keep the funding in place for Phase I for West Main.
- Mr. Krebs was added to the meeting as a panelist to contribute to the discussion on West Main Street.
- The largest expense and project for the City is the undergrounding of the utilities.
- There was a discussion of the different phases of undergrounding the utilities in the City. Phase I starts at the statue and the other phases goes west towards UVA.

- There was a very in depth discussion regarding the positives and negatives of undergrounding the utilities on West Main Street.
- Mr. Stolzenberg did note that Dominion Electric was not going to pay for the undergrounding of the utilities. Dominion will only pay to relocate the poles.
- Mr. Fox did express a lot of concerns regarding the design of the project.
- One of the big negatives is the \$10 million price tag to underground the utilities on West Main.
- There are many challenges with the undergrounding of the utilities on West Main.
- Mr. Krebs provided a summary of the different things that West Main Street provides and the different options with West Main.
- There are two questions in front of the City Council: the amount of funding and should they pull some of the funding out of the project.
- The Chairman did ask the members if it was possible to minimize harm to the long term goals of West Main.
- There was a discussion following the comments and summary made by Mr. Krebs.
- The Chairman brought up whether PLACE could make a recommendation to the current City Council regarding the project.
- Mr. Stolzenberg did bring up the ‘elephant’ in the room being schools and the size and expense of the project.
- Phase III is going to be funded through a smart scale grant because the city had applied for a smart scale grant.
- Mr. Stolzenberg did bring up that the city had done an abysmal job with adding housing in the past year. Additional housing would add more tax revenue.
- The Chairman asked the question to the members of PLACE if they should ask for more time for more community input.
- The Chairman recommended that Public Works needs to work on getting the information to the City Council so that the Council can make the decision.
- The Chairman recommended that members provide their own comments to the Council on the West Main Streetscape.
- The consensus among the members of PLACE is to help the city get the information so that the city can make a good decision about West Main.
- Mr. Rylander did bring up the Drury Brown Bridge and to do more to celebrate the bridge and the builders of the bridge. Mr. Rylander asked PLACE to do more to support the bridge.

3. NEW BUSINESS (15 minutes)

There was no new business.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE PUBLIC (5 minutes)

There were no further contributions from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 PM.