



Ridge Street Priority Neighborhood Taskforce

Minutes

Wednesday, October 28th, 2020

4-5PM

Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

AGENDA

1. Introductions/Housekeeping/Minutes

Meeting begins 4:02PM EST.

Taskforce Roll Call:

NAME	POSITION	ATTENDANCE
CHRIS MEYER	Business Owner	Yes
KATHY JOHNSON HARRIS	Property Owner	Yes
KETTIE HOLLAND RUPNIK	Resident	Absent
KEM LEA SPAULDING	Ridge CDBG Representative	Yes
PAT LLOYD	Resident	Yes
AUDREY OLIVER	Resident	Yes
TANEIA DOWELL	Planning Commission	Yes

Grants Coordinator Erin Atak (EA) opened meeting and called roll call asking members to state their connection to Ridge Street (business owner, property owner, resident, planning commission, or CDBG Taskforce).

2. Review Taskforce Priorities and Project Ideas

EA reviewed September 23, 2020 Ridge Street taskforce meeting summary and delivered a brief outline of what the CDBG grant is, and the role of the Ridge Street Priority Neighborhood Taskforce.

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Erin Atak, Grants Coordinator (atake@charlottesville.gov), (434) 970-3093

EA shares City of Charlottesville Ridge Street Notebook to the Taskforce to review “Taskforce Homework 1/Survey 1” Results: Available through the following link and on the City’s website. The link contains the Ridge Street Priority Neighborhood Map, Taskforce agenda’s minutes, and survey results.

https://charlottesville-my.sharepoint.com/:o:/g/person/atake_charlottesville_gov/EkovRp3XFnhMnteWl35-CXUB5BWOPzBR98z78YDAVIJG-Q?e=a8UuYz

Kathy Johnson Harris (KJH) moves to accept the minutes for the September 28, 2020 Ridge Street Priority Neighborhood Taskforce. Chris Meyer (CM) seconds the motion.

Taskforce begins to examine the Survey 1/Homework 1 results

KJH asks for clarification for how HOA is recognized as a strength. Pat Lloyd (PL) adds that all of Brookwood falls under a Homeowners association and that the neighborhood pays dues in exchange for community amenities. PL explains that this survey result would have likely been from someone within the Brookwood HOA community.

Kem Lea Spaulding (KLS) asks if the results of the survey are solely from Taskforce member. EA replies saying that it is both Taskforce and members of the Ridge community.

CM identifies “sense of community” as one of the higher-ranking strengths in the survey, as well as “easy access to downtown”.

PL highlights “Traffic/Speeding” as one of the higher-ranking weaknesses identified within the survey results.

CM repeats “Traffic and parking” as an issue identified within the survey, as well as “infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks)” as a concern for neighbors. CM states that as one of the strength’s is Ridge being so close to the downtown area, the neighborhood attracts many cars that park along the streets.

CM points out to the Taskforce that it is interesting to see the weaknesses and concerns around the dilapidated housing and contradicted by concerns on the gentrification side.

KJH adds a child was injured due crossing from Old Ridge to Tonsler Park due to Traffic.

KLS points out the need for a sidewalk on Brookwood.

Taneaia Dowell (TD) poses a question to the Taskforce about how the committee could help against prevention of gentrification in the neighborhood. TD is not entirely sure what the solution to this issue would be. TD reminds the committee that everyone should be mindful of new development and its effects on residents that are already established in the neighborhood.

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Taskforce discusses traffic challenges on Brookwood, Ridge street, 5th street, Old Ridge, and Raymond Rd.

KJH also points out the data for Ridge Street. KJH states that Ridge street is one of the areas with the lowest amount of rent for the City. Many people are making less than \$10,000 a year (less than 30% AMI) and the concern that becomes apparent with this is education and affordability. Most of these individuals fall under the category of Front-Line workers, some of whom own homes, and others who rent. There are many hotels in the Ridge Street corridor, and there is potential for job possibilities for local community members.

TD responds to KJH and states that community resources and education are vital and that a potential for a relationship with hotels is possible. It is possible to use a conference room to hold programs at different venues.

KJH outlines CATEC Scholarship and childcare program and the possibility to use CDBG funds for this program.

EA explains the different sections of the CDBG grant that KJH CATEC scholarship program could fall under. CDBG underwent a request for proposal from October 1 to October 16 seeking applications for public services, housing, and economic development. The CATEC program would be something that would qualify for funding for the separate portion of the CDBG grant outside of the Ridge Street grant funding.

CM adds that LEAP applied for the separate CDBG funding. CM adds it would be interesting to explore the possibility to explore ways to revitalize areas of the Ridge Street Neighborhood through partnership with organizations like Habitat for Humanity or Piedmont Housing Alliance. This could address the affordable housing crisis in the City and revitalize some of the abandoned properties. In tandem with addressing traffic and parking.

Taskforce discusses the abandoned homes. PL states that the owners could not be found. There is discussion about how taxes are being kept to date. KJH states that the families of the abandoned homes have been members of the community for many years.

Taskforce begins to create a project list.

- Increased speed signage (KLS)
- Speed bumps by intersections (KLS)
- Three-way stop signs to slow down traffic by intersection (KLS)

Brennen Duncan (BD), City of Charlottesville Traffic Engineer Introduces himself. He recommends conducting a speed study.

KLS states that a speed study has already been completed for Ridge Street.

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BD states that he can look for the results.

KLS also suggests making improvements for 5th street speeding.

BD states that he will be appearing before City Council on November 16th to discuss the fatalities and some of Staff's recommendations moving forward to address concerns. The 5th Street improvements will likely end up being too costly for the CDBG Ridge Street Priority Neighborhood Taskforce, and BD recommends that this project stay separate.

KJH repeats the need for enforcement surrounding parking. Brookwood Drive has become a challenge to drive through due to parking violations. KJH also recommends rumble strips for traffic calming remedies.

KLS identifies that Transit does not come to the bench at Brookwood lane.

BD states that rumble strips have not been used within the City for the residents' benefit because it adds noise to homeowners who live directly next to the strips. Speeding is not considered a problem unless most drivers are going over 10 mph over the speed limit, in other words the 85th percentile. Additionally, a three way stop sign could not be placed as traffic calming because it goes against engineering principles. A vehicular demand is warranted for this to occur. BD states that he will ask about enforcement with the Police Department.

KJH asks BD about Brookwood Lane parking enforcement as well.

PL asks EA about updates on the Elliot Streetscape plan, the 1998 Ridge Street Study Recommendations, SIA Recommendations, and the Pollocks Branch Improvement; and how many of the recommendations from these plans is the City going to undertake that would address some of the concerns listed within the Survey.

BD discusses that Elliot Streetscape is waiting on final amount of funding from council and the Smartscale for Cherry and 5th, and a watershed study. Some items on these plans could still need funding, that is possible with CDBG funding. EA states that an update can be given to the Taskforce on the progress of these projects.

TD suggests the option of having a Taskforce walk through the neighborhood.

3. Other Business

Next meeting will be held one week in advance to account for the Thanksgiving Holiday (November 18).

4. Public Comment

One member of the public outlines the importance for continued community engagement.

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Meeting is Adjourned 5:10 PM

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