

TOWN OF HIGHLANDS
PROPOSED DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS
HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY BUILDING
JANUARY 19, 2011
4 PM

Present: Mayor David Wilkes, Mayor Pro Tempore John Dotson, Commissioners Gary Drake, Dennis DeWolf, Amy Patterson and Larry Rogers

Staff Present: Town Manager Jim Fatland, Public Works Director Lamar Nix, Interim Planning & Development Director Mark Maxwell and Police Chief Bill Harrell

Call to Order

Mayor David Wilkes called the meeting to order at 4:05PM

Town Manager Fatland reported that the Proposed Parking & Streetscape Improvements had been discussed with the Town of Highlands Small Town Main Street Committee. Fatland called upon Mark Maxwell who attended the recent Main Street Design Committee along with Public Works Director Lamar Nix to discuss the proposed improvements.

1. NEED BETTER SIGNAGE TO DIRECT TOURISTS TO OFF-STREET PARKING AND DESTINATIIONS.

The Town Board had previously concurred with the Planning Board that a unified sign system was needed to direct tourists to off-street parking and public destinations. This item was referred to the Town's Main Street Committee who agreed this should be a high priority. The Main Street Committee would like to retain a graphic artist to assist in way finding design. The Town Board felt a graphics artist should be obtained once a logo was approved.

2. NEED DEFINITIVE GATEWAYS INTO HIGHLANDS TO LET VISITORS KNOW THEY HAVE ARRIVED

The Town Board was in agreement with the Planning Board that the existing signs on the roads leading into Highlands are sufficient, although need to be replaced, and that landscape median strips adjacent to entrance signs was not necessary. Town Board referred to Small Town Main Street Program who agreed to assist in design. The Town will coordinate with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce the replacement of all entrance signs to Highlands.

3. LANDSCAPE MEDIAN DOWN MAIN STREET FROM FIRST STREET TO FIFTH STREET

The Town Board discussed and concurred with the Planning Board recommendation not to install the landscape median down Main Street from First Street to Fifth Street. The Town Board, however, did recommend that bump outs or nodes be installed at intersections on Main Street to improve pedestrian safety. This would include intersections at Third and Fourth Streets. The Small Town Design Committee agreed with the nodes at the intersections and suggested that a landscape architect be retained. Nix suggested that only right turns be allowed at Third Street.

4. CONVERT SPRING STREET TO ONE-WAY EAST BOUND AND CONSTRUCT A SIDEWALK ALONG NORTH SIDE OF SPRING STREET

The Town Board supports the Planning Board on the conversion of Spring Street (From Fourth to Fifth Streets) to a one way street east bound and to construct a sidewalk along the north side of Spring Street. The Small Town Main Street Design Committee agreed on this proposed change.

5. INSTALLATION OF A TRAFFIC CIRCLE AT THE INTERSECTION OF FOURTH STREET AND SOUTH STREET IN ORDER TO ACT AS A GATEWAY AND ELIMINATE THE CONFUSING INTERSECTION

The Town Board agrees with the Planning Board to endorse the idea of improving the design of the intersection at Fourth Street and South Street to make that intersection more efficient and safer. Staff recommends that the preliminary plans for intersection realignment be approved. The Town Board agreed and plans have been submitted to NCDOT. The Small Town Main Street Committee was in agreement with this proposed realignment.

6. MID BLOCK CROSSWALK ON MAIN STREET BETWEEN THIRD & FOURTH

The Town Board was in support of a mid block crosswalk on Main Street between Third and Fourth Streets. The Small Town Main Street Committee agreed that a midblock crosswalk would be beneficial for Downtown. Staff was directed to retain a landscape architect to prepare plans which would include benches, landscaping and way finding directing visitors to the Town Square Public Restrooms.

OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. FOURTH STREET SIDEWALK ADJACENT TO HILLSIDE DELI AND STONE LANTERN

Public Works Director Lamar Nix reported that we have under design sidewalk improvements on Fourth Street adjacent to the Hillside Deli and Stone Lantern. The neighboring downtown businesses have a brick sidewalk, and this location is unsafe and unsightly. Nix reported that he would like to proceed immediately on this project pending final design specifications. The current sidewalk is unsafe and unsightly.

8. Mountain Fresh Parking Lot

Nix stated that he has coordinated with the landlord and tenant of Mountain Fresh to paint a pedestrian sidewalk and repaint parking spaces to create a better pedestrian flow to Mountain Fresh Market and Falls on Main. Staff is seeking input from the Small Town Main Street Program for this improvement. Maxwell reported that Main Street was supportive of this painting as an interim improvement until permanent improvements could be made.

Seeing no further discussion, the Mayor adjourned the work session at 5:07 PM.

Approved:

Prepared By:

David Wilkes, Mayor

Jim Fatland, Town Manager