CITY OF SPRING HILL TOWN CENTER TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH, 2020 6:00 P.M
LOCATION: JOIN VIRTUAL MEETING

I. Call meeting to order and TCTF announcements
   Bill Benedict called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Hazel Nieves, Bill Benedict, Matthew Koss, Jenny Blackstock, Dennis Georgatos, Liz Droke, Alicia Fitts, Rachel Bshero present.

II. Approve August Minutes *if applicable*
   • Rachel was not able to attend the August meeting, we are trying to get the recording, when we do Rachel will type up minutes for approval in October.

III. CT Consultants Presentation
   • Introductions
      i. James Golias with CT Consultants and Paul Roszak, senior landscape architect.
   • TCTF vision, mission, and current project summary
      i. CT Consultants will be talking about their past experience with downtown areas. This will be high-level and informal.
   • Presentation by CT Consultants
      • 4 areas: Historic Downtown Center, Downtown Civic Center, Downtown Commercial City Center, Kedron Square
      • Overview of 5 potential goals:
Town Center Potential Goals

3. Preserve the character of the existing historic elements within the Historic Downtown Center – build upon this character to reinforce the sense of a historic downtown district and utilize this character to guide future development.

4. Provide walkability and connectivity within each of, and in-between, the four districts and to the adjacent neighborhoods within the context of placemaking.

   Sidewalks are good to be able to walk from point A to point B, however, within the context of placemaking, sidewalks are planned comprehensively, in relationship to all other elements and when thoughtfully designed in context, invite people to walk, shop, dine, and provide a sense of security and safety.

5. Economic development.
Town Center Potential Goals

1. Create an identifiable Spring Hill Town Center that is a unique destination with a sense of place (placemaking).

The Town Center is comprised of four districts, each with their own character:

- Historic Downtown Center
- Downtown Civic Center
- Downtown Commercial City Center
- Kedron Square

2. Employ placemaking concepts within and in-between the four districts that comprise the Town Center. Placemaking includes design elements that recall the history of Spring Hill and draw upon the unique qualities of each district, while providing a sense of unity between the four districts. The process also builds upon previous efforts, such as branding.

- Bill: Framework based off of UDC, we are aligned in the character areas in keeping that and tying that together, we see the Downtown Civic Center and Downtown Commercial City Center as one district. We will send our BOMA presentation to CT Consultants.
- Other cities worked with: Franklin – late 1980’s, looked at corridors into town (Columbia Pke, Mack Hatcher, etc.) – community wanted to be safer walking along Columbia, putting in low landscaping, brick walls, stylized lighting, trees, brought business signs into accordance with city ordinances, spurred new development and revitalization of existing businesses. Not only looking at aesthetics, placemaking, but also underground utilities to see if they need to be upgraded for needs going into the future. Side streets have their own character.
- Bill: Can you give a general timeline of starting? Started in late 1980’s, started in early 1990’s. Columbia Ave around 2005, 3rd Ave/5th around 2008. Were there historic design guidelines in place or did you help develop those? Those were developed by CT Consultants, and those were adopted by the city. Some of our challenges, we don’t have a lot of guidelines defined to have that vision going forward.
- Keeping areas of character but carrying elements throughout, like “Franklin Green”
- Mount Pleasant, TN with mining concept
Bill: Have you used Civil War signage? Mount Pleasant has Trail of Tears markers, CT Consulting is working with the city on that. Reclaiming area as a public square as well.

Fairview, Pennsylvania – making more pedestrian friendly, more inviting, bringing in historical elements

4 Broad Steps in Planning Process:
1. Step 1: Master Plan – Community input, evaluation of existing
2. Step 2: Financial Plan (detailed cost estimate, work with community to determine doable phases)
3. Step 3: Secure Grants and Funding Sources
4. Step 4: Preliminary and Final Design / Engineering, Construction documents bidding, construction of project

Aligns with National Main Street Center Approach

Questions and answers

Alicia: loved the visuals and ideas, It’s affirming to see a lot of things we presented to BOMA are parts of what you would put together as an image. Using Mt. Pleasant as an example, if you take Main Street to Duplex, what’s a realistic timeframe to get started and completion.

- Mount Pleasant: started 2013 or 2014, we went through 3 city managers so the project laid low for a while. With new administration, project is on track and applied for funding and moving ahead. More reliant on grants, you need to get grants in place and secure funds before moving ahead.

- Franklin: Multi-phases, will be ongoing for years. Main Street in Franklin 1990’s, there was a pause and then started back up in 2005. Franklin does have sources to do things without outside grants.

- James: Broad picture, to go through existing conditions, connect development, master development could take 9-12 months. At that point you can start to find funding. Some grants have certain times of the year you can submit. We try to leverage federal and state dollars. Funding can take a year or two. Construction drawings can take another year, year and a half. Some work can be going on concurrently, but it will be 2, 3, 4 years before you see a shovel in the ground depending on the scope of work.

- If the community can have matching funds to grants, it helps speed up the process.

Bill: If you had 200,000 dedicated to sidewalks, what would you do? What opportunities, challenges do you see?

- Paul: I am familiar with Spring Hill, I’ve almost moved there before. I’ve always thought “wow this could be something special” I know a fire and storms knocked out a lot of buildings. That’s the first target to me. Getting back to the fee.. for planning it depends on the area, what are you looking at? The whole length of Main Street from Saturn Interchange to Duplex? Most of the planning ranges
from 75,000 to 150,000 depending on scope. Without all the information it’s hard to say.

- Hazel: Do you have projects or work with projects that are not as detailed or comprehensive as the ones that you’ve explained? For example, underground utilities are expensive. Considering our situation, we have some disadvantages to work with and money is the bottom line, I wouldn’t want to see us in a situation where we would wait 3-4 years to see something happen. Do you work with or are there approaches to not such detailed transformations as what we’ve seen? I would love us to be at that level, but I don’t know if we even have the structures for that.
  - Paul: The long part is submitting for the grants, we don’t give detailed construction until the funding is in place. This is a state route, not only because of the funding it is a review process. You could just replace sidewalks easily, but going through the process with grants and DOT reviews it’s time consuming. The reviews and funding are the longest part.

- Hazel: I’m not just asking about time. Are there ways to put lipstick on this without a complete facelift of downtown? More elementary approaches to creating uniqueness in downtown without going all-out like Franklin?
  - Paul: There are, you could do hanging baskets on utility poles and we’ve done that and worked with communities that have done that but they’ve come back to us because it didn’t make sense of place. When take care of things like drainage issues, it really helps. You can do it, we would be glad to assist you. But in my experience it’s not money well spent, it doesn’t create the same placemaking.

- Bill: You guys have already worked with the City of Spring Hill on Harvey Park and you were able to leverage grant funds in that project which is a huge success. I’m a planner and I like the idea of a master plan I think we’ll get there over time. I appreciate all of the feedback and answers. This was very informative.

- Alicia: I know this group, there are usually more opinions and thoughts from others I want to make sure Bill, Hazel and I haven’t hijacked questions the rest of the group may have.

- Dennis: Appreciate all the time and effort it’s very through.

- Matt: I don’t have anything specific, we need to resolve gauging our interest on the master plan process, what that would mean. We’ve thrown out ideas with smaller working groups and addressing programs as we are able to. We need to discuss the master plan piece.

- Rachel: I love what you’ve presented and incorporating the historical elements. I wasn’t present at the last meeting, do you assist with applying for the grants?
  - Paul & James - We work with the community on finding grants and help apply for them. Also teaming with other city departments can help with taking projects further.
Paul: You mentioned overhead utilities are costly to bury, that’s one of the hardest things to fund in a grant, but if you have matching funds it can be easier. Cost can vary a lot.

James: We’re finding out when we get federal funding, specifically TAP funding and sidewalks need to be ADA compliant and there is a pole in the way, utility companies need to move the poles, but we don’t have to pay for the whole project. Sometimes we’ll just put some underground, or work with utilities to combine wires, and clean them up.

Bill: I would be curious if that could be an effort as we look at the sidewalks and partnering with the utilities.

Alicia: If we were to pursue something like this with you guys.. James, since you are on the planning commission is this a conflict of interest?

James: Projects will still go through an RFQ process, I would recuse myself from those projects so I’m not influenced either way or trying to influence anyone else. I’ve been told it’s not an issue.

Bill: One of the qualifiers for the grant was ADA accessibility, I would be curious if funds secured could be used. I think there are some follow ups on our side of what we’ve used so far can be used towards a long-term plan, or if not, how can we best apply that. This has been very informative and helpful either way.

Hazel: I appreciate what you said in answering Alicia, I know there are so many things going on within the city now that the average citizen is not aware of. There’s a lot going on with development, like Kedron Place and starting to see development there. What you said about partnering with departments of the city is really wise, I think it needs to come from BOMA also to be able to come back and see where we’re going with this. They have their own agendas which also come through the planning commission... would you be able to still help us even though you are on the planning commission?

James: Yes that’s my understanding. Most things coming through planning commission are private developments. I want to be fully transparent but I would be making sure we have those conversations up front. If there was a conflict of interest I would recuse myself.

Hazel: Yes you were referred to us by our city administrator, so they should know that.

IV. Public Comment(s)
   - No one from the public is present.

V. Round Table Discussion
   - Alicia: at some stage in next few meetings, it would be prudent and informative to have small business people from Old Town on Main Street to talk with us about what they would like to see. So they can hear what we’re talking about that may impact them, and what they would like to see.
• Bill: Groove Life is building a new headquarters within the downtown area, that’s someone we can partner with. Let’s reach out to people and invite them to participate going forward. We’ve all discussed capturing public comment, let’s look at small business owners and downtown and Kedron Square. Phase I of that is approved. They’ve reached out with the Historic Commission they’re open and taking guidance, because that’s essential where Spring Hill was founded. How do we reach beyond that into the general community and get feedback?

• Hazel: I agree with what Matt said, one of our most pressing next steps would be for us as a group to really come together and decide what course of action do we want to take? Do we want to go a Master Plan route? I would like to encourage us to flush that discussion out in our next meeting.

• Dennis: What we’ve been envisioning up until this point is very different. Both approaches could happen depending on where we want to go. What they’re proposing is great, but $200k won’t touch what they are talking about.

• Alicia: My understanding is the $200k is geared towards sidewalks, I don’t know that we have a lot of leeway in how we spend that $200k, I agree we need to focus on our direction but there are conversations we need to have with departments in the city to see what projects may be out there to see what we could be focusing on. I don’t know that it makes a lot of sense to help if other projects are already being budgeted for.

• Hazel: That money is definitely for specific things. It’s not ADA anymore, but the state changed it. There are no qualifiers for that money. I would like to propose that we take a step back from just looking at the $200k, have a conversation and flush out are we wanting a bigger long term picture/result for our city, or are we interested in just doing smaller cosmetic efforts. There’s nothing wrong with either one. We have an opportunity here to actually be a catalyst for us to have a wonderful downtown. It doesn’t have to be at the same level as Franklin, we can have our own style and what we want. What we can afford. It will take time and a master plan to do that. This is something that bothered me about the city when I moved here. I felt like there wasn’t a master plan for our city. We have guidelines, UDC, but we don’t really have a plan of how we want our city to look. We have an opportunity to be a catalyst for that or we can decide that’s too big for us and go toward doing more.

• Bill: I don’t think it’s fair to question our dedication.

• Hazel: I didn’t mean that, we should make the decision on how we want to go with this.

• Alicia: I need to leave the call.
• Bill: Maybe I misheard, we have short term goals we have all reviewed, looking at this long term is something we have discussed as well. I think we need to have deeper discussions on how we can use this money and work toward short term goals and build long term vision.

• Jenny: I like that they help with grants, I like the idea of their plan and that’s huge. But if that’s a direction we want to go we need to figure out who pays them.

• Matt: I appreciate concern about grants, my experience with grants is that the biggest step for any organization is knowing what grants exist. The hard part is having the knowledge of what’s available.

• Bill: a lot of times the 80/20 is huge. Our money would be $1M if we had a grant. Sometimes the investments in the long term plan uncovers those opportunities. I’ll work to build that in to our next meeting. I’ll follow up with the city on how we can leverage these funds.

VI. Adjourn

• Bill Benedict adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.