

Forest Hills Neighborhood Association

March 17, 2016

Meeting Notes

Attendees: 6 Residents

Staff Present: Ross Zelenske, Neighborhood Liaison/City Planner; Battalion Chief Heffelfinger (HFD); three members of Ladder 3 (HFD); Master Police Officer Sherrill (HPD A-PACT), and Police Officer Bechtol (HPD A-PACT)

Meeting Notes:

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Gwen Belk.

Gwen Belk introduced herself as the neighborhood group leader. Gwen thanked the usual attendees for their continued attendance and city staff for all their efforts to keep citizens informed. She stated that she thought these meetings were incredibly informative and is working on spreading the word to the rest of the neighbors.

MPO Sherrill from the Hickory Police Department introduced himself and provided the following report:

- If any residents saw police and their K-9 officers going through Geitner Park it was for a training event. Calls for the month included: a breaking and entering to the Boy Scout Cabin in Glenn Hilton Park, a larceny to a construction site, two motor vehicle accidents in the parking lot of Geitner Park, a child abuse case, an animal in the house call, and a dispute between two neighbors that resulted in an assault charge. MPO Sherrill also noted that earlier there was a call for a suspicious male subject around the VFW leaving a backpack in the forest. Officers located the subject who informed officers that he was weight training and the backpack contained his weights. He stated that he was leaving it behind at the park and covering it up, so it would not be stolen. He was instructed by police to no longer leave his belongings behind.
 - A citizen stated that she felt that the neighborhood has had a high crime rate recently, which was very unlike the neighborhood's usual police reports.

Battalion Chief Heffelfinger introduced himself and the crew of Ladder 3. He provided the following report for the Hickory Fire Department:

- A report for the area included all calls since January 1st to present. There have been 43 calls to date, 31 of which were either EMS or a motor vehicle collision. Three were powerline arcing or gas leaks, and another five were service calls. No major fires were reported.
- Chief Heffelfinger also noted that you should have changed out your batteries during Spring Forward. This includes smoke detectors and CO alarms.
 - A citizen inquired if the department was still giving out free detectors and batteries.

- Chief Heffelfinger stated that the department was and would install them for you. Citizens should reach out to the Fire & Life Safety Division for more information.

Planner Ross Zelenske introduced himself and provided the following information:

- Ross began by passing around the March edition of the City Snippets newsletter, which included information on upcoming activities and notices. Be sure to contact the City's Collections Division in regard to any significant upcoming water usage, such as filling a pool.
- A rough timeline for the bond projects has been released. Ross stated that all of these projects would be phased, so as not to overwhelm the Bond Commission and city staff who would be administering them over the next few years. As usual, timelines are subject to change, but the projects will be ordered as followed:

Citywalk	April 2016 RFQ July 2016 City Council Approval
Highway 321 and Clement Blvd Gateway	May 2016 RFQ August 2016 City Council Approval
Highway 321 and Highway 70 Gateway	May 2016 RFQ August 2016 City Council Approval
Riverwalk Phase I/II	July 2016 RFQ October 2016 City Council Approval
I-40 and Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard Gateway	Coordination with NCDOT; 2017 start
Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard Streetscape	2017 start
Riverwalk-Citywalk Streetscape	2018 start
Riverwalk Phase III	Coordination with NCDOT; 2017 conceptual work, design work in 2019
Park 1764 Phase I (Business Park)	City Council and County Commissioners meeting next week to discuss details

- A question was asked in regard to what an RFQ meant. Ross responded that RFQ stood for Request for Qualifications. Basically, an RFQ is a document that the city will develop and release for potential design firms to review and respond to. The RFQ will include things like project background and scope, work to be conducted, budget and timeline. Firms will respond back with a document that outlines their qualifications, project team if selected, the budget and how it will be spent. Staff will review these responses and interview firms, before making a final recommendation to City Council.

Ross then provided information on other projects going on around the City.

- The Friends of Hickory Park will have bids going out by April 2016 with construction starting soon after a firm is chosen.
- As mentioned last month, the Kiwanis Club splash pad has broken ground and should be completed by summer 2016. Ross noted that per Parks &

Recreation administration if a splash pad were to be located in the NW quadrant of the City of Hickory, it would be located at Jaycee Park.

- No movement has occurred on the Lackey project. Still awaiting the Lackey Family agreement and architectural plans.
- Bruce Meisner Park, formerly Cloninger Mill Park, was recently approved for a total of \$3.9 million. A portion of the funding came from private donations. Phase I will carry out \$2.3 million worth of work. No timeline was available, but should occur over the next few years. This park will fill in a gap for far NE Hickory.

Ross finished by mentioning some other odds and ends going on around town.

- Plans for Publix were passed around. Ross stated these plans were a bit dated, but the overall site and building design would not be changing significantly. Publix is locating in the Viewmont area. Plans had not been approved yet, but the next round of revisions had been received.
- Ross reported that the Lake Hickory Marina, which is near the Highway 321 Bridge in Caldwell County, has requested a Special Use Permit to open a drinking establishment. This requires a public hearing, which will be held next week.
 - A citizen stated that they recalled the noise problems from the previous tiki bar that was once open.
 - Ross responded that staff was aware of the noise issue, but was surprised to hear that it was heard from the other side of the river as well. He stated that the citizens from Caldwell County were notified and he had heard back from some who were not in support of this. Ross stated that his department would not be recommending approval to the Planning Commission.
 - A citizen asked if this would go forward to City Council.
 - Ross stated it would not. This type of hearing would be heard by the Planning Commission and would be the final decision, unless appealed to the court system.
- Ross noted that the City of Hickory had released its new website. The address is still the same, but the design was improved to be more citizen friendly. He stated that some links to pages on the old website were still on the site and staff were working to correct those dead links.
- The old Nissan dealership near Arby's is expected to be re-occupied by a car dealership. A permit has been issued for this.

Ross asked if there was anything else he could find out for the group. There were none.

With no other items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Next Meeting:

April 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM at Geitner-Rotary Park. Notes recorded by Ross Zelenske.