

September 24, 2015

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory was held in the Winkler Activity Center of the Winkler Park on Thursday, September 24, 2015 at 5:00 p.m., with the following members present:

Brad Lail	Rudy Wright	Hank Guess
Bruce Meisner	Aldermen	David P. Zagaroli
Danny Seaver		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were: City Manager Mick Berry, Assistant City Manager Rodney Miller, Assistant City Manager Andrea Surratt, Deputy City Attorney Arnita Dula, Deputy City Clerk Sarah Prencipe and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

Staff Present: Assistant to the City Manager Yaidee Fox, Parks and Recreation Director Mack McLeod, and Public Services Director Chuck Hansen

Freese Nichols Present: Charles Archer, Mike Wayts, and Morgan McIlwain

Present from the Bond Implementation Commission: Chair Burk Wyatt and Vice Chair, Allison Holtzman; Riverwalk Subcommittee Chair, Charlie Dixon and Vice Chair Michael Bell; City Walk Chair Frank Young, and Vice Chair Mike Thomas; and Streetscapes and Gateways, Chair, Rob Dickerson.

- I. Mayor Wright called the meeting to order. All Council members were present with the arrival of Alderman Zagaroli at 5:27 p.m. Mayor Wright advised that he had another meeting to attend and left the meeting at 5:12 p.m.
- II. Update from Freese Nichols Regarding Bond Project Objectives

Program Director, Mike Wayts, from Freese Nichols thanked Council for the opportunity to be a part of the exciting program for the City of Hickory. He introduced Charles Archer and Morgan McIlwain, and presented a PowerPoint presentation. He advised of the items which would be discussed which included an update from the Bond Commission Subcommittee Chairs, the project limits that they had been defining for this program, the next steps, the program planning schedule, and Riverwalk exercises. He advised that Council had passed an Ordinance that formed a 42 member Bond Commission. Their goals were to provide input, oversight, and to be an advocate for the bond program. They formed three Subcommittees: the Riverwalk, the City Walk, and Streetscapes and Gateways. They had met multiple times with the Bond Commission, and with each of the Subcommittees. He commented that the Bond Commission members were very passionate about this program, and very excited for the future of Hickory. He stated that it had been a pleasure to work with them on this project.

Mr. Wayts discussed planning and used for an example furniture manufacturers to draw a parallel to the bond program planning that they are doing. Every year the furniture manufacturer develops an operational plan, marketing plan, analyzes the market, and creates parameters of what type of furniture line that will be developed that year. That sets direction and priorities for the coming year and gets everyone on the same page throughout the organization. The benefits of that, as you start to implement that plan, you are simply decision making moving forward, you help to communicate the message across and outside of the organization. Ultimately they will operate more efficiently and they will save money. He used Riverwalk of the bond project for an example. They have been working through a process. They have discussed what the project is, so they can hire the right consultant to design that project for all the proposed elements that project would have. It is extremely crucial to get everybody on the same page with the direction and the priorities of the program before they are hired. Otherwise they are paid, they get to the 50 percent point, and nobody agrees where they are at. That money would be wasted. Mr. Wayts showed a flowchart and explained the process. They sit down with Council, and City Staff and receive initial input on the program parameters. That vision is then taken to the Chairs and Vice Chairs and to the Subcommittees of the Riverwalk, City Walk and Streetscapes and Gateways. They get feedback from that and may need to go back and discuss the information with Council and City Staff. They want to get everybody in agreement to help formulate the second vision which is taken to the Bond Commission. The Bond Commission may then give feedback and the process would continue. They have been working through this process to try and get everyone on the same page, and to set the direction and the priorities. As they go through this process multiple times they are going to develop a program, within the 40 million dollar budget, refining the concepts and everybody will be on the same page. They are looking at identifying supplemental funding opportunities to expand the budget. Mr. Wayts asked the Subcommittee Chairs to give an update for their respective projects.

Chair of the City Walk, Frank Young advised that the Vice Chair was Mr. Mike Thomas. They started their first meeting with a bus tour, with Public Services Director Chuck Hansen. They saw the site from Lenoir-Rhyne to downtown, as well as what the future sites may look like from downtown. They saw the challenges of the railroad in particular near Lenoir-Rhyne. That is going to be an issue, and it is going to take a lot of money to build the city walk at that point. Some of the other areas are not going to be as challenging, but it is going to be a challenge. They also discussed ideas about what each of them would like to see within the city walk and what each of their favorite ideas were. They brainstormed, and ranked the projects. If they did everything that was in the artist rendering right now it would be 27 million dollars. They know that is not going to work. The City has applied for the TIGER grant and should hear about that in October. They are hoping to get 22 million dollars. An additional 22 million dollars would be fantastic. He advised that the City did get a million dollars.

Assistant City Manager Andrea Surratt advised \$800,000 from North Carolina Department of Transportation for design of the city walk.

Mr. Young commented that if the City gets the TIGER grant it would be huge, and good for the Riverwalk as well. He advised that he had a fantastic subcommittee, very energetic, positive, and some good ideas. They had talked about the layout of it, and the vision. The artist renderings had helped tremendously. Ultimately they do not know what will pass and what is feasible. Mr. Young advised that Mr. Chuck Hansen and Mr. Charles Archer had went to Atlanta to speak with Norfolk Southern and get their blessing. They did get their blessing as it would improve security for the railroad if there was an established walkway there. Not only that, but they also received their endorsement for the TIGER grant, which they also were applying for. They discussed with Martin McGill and Associates additional ways to raise money through sponsorship and adoption. Everybody on the Committee had written letters to the elected officials requesting consideration for the TIGER grant. A lot of them had received feedback. He advised that his favorite part would be an iconic bridge over 127. Unfortunately that cost a lot of money. There had been some conversation with some businesses around that area, that maybe they would like to go in and help with that iconic bridge. It needs to be something that people from around the State and maybe even from South Carolina, would look at that image and say that is in Hickory, North Carolina. It is essentially the entrance to downtown and North Hickory. When you go over that bridge you need to get the sense that this is a fantastic place to live, and you want to go walk on that.

Vice Chair of the City Walk, Mike Thomas commented that the point that got the most support from the Subcommittee was that the general concept was that there needs to be good access to the city walk from various parts of the city, but in particular a strong connection of the city walk to one point on either side, north and south. North being the SALT Block and south being the Ridgeview Community Center and Library. Making sure those two places are tied back into the city walk and knit the city together. That was the top vote getter in the Subcommittee.

Chair of the Streetscapes and Gateways, Rob Dickerson advised that the streetscape piece had been the component on this, that while it is important it really comes after a lot of this. Depending on the TIGER grant and the Riverwalk and what order things are done in, a lot of the improvements on streetscapes will be a third tier project. We are hoping to get the TIGER grant, therefore it would free up some funds and we could do more. We all take personal pride in our own neighborhoods and own areas. They realize that they want to do that for the City. They want the areas of the city, which are not privately owned or controlled, to have the air of new, fresh, and inviting. A lot of that ties back into just general appearance. They had toured around town, which covered every street in Hickory, with Brian Frazier. They had discussed the components which included sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting and general appearances. They started looking at each road and its active use, traffic volume, does it make sense to put a bike lane, a walking path, or crosswalk on it. They discussed the cost. There are so many things that have to be considered such as water runoff. As soon as you go from roadside ditch to curb and gutter that changes not only cost, but the complete design. They questioned locations of bike lanes. They had also discussed things like the size of the foliage. He commented that it all comes down to what is best for a given area. He was excited about the linking of downtown to the river which is a dream to everyone. How do we do that? The big dream would be to use the private spur of the railroad that would somehow connect us, but the practicality of that is still an unknown. Based on some of the design ideas would be to take Old Lenoir Road, and use some traffic calming there. It does not have sidewalks. Take that down to two lanes with a divided center, with a walking path and bi-directional bike path. Which could be incredible. Not only would it change that neighborhood, there are neighborhoods that run all down one side. It would also change the whole feel of the City. We have a lot of people that don't know what is over there and there is a lot of potential growth. It is also on the way to the ballpark. There are all of these symmetry's there that could be really good.

Chair of the Riverwalk, Charlie Dixon advised that the Riverwalk committee contained 14 members, and they are all very enthusiastic about that aspect of revitalization of Hickory. He commented that they look at Lake Hickory as being the most outstanding physical asset in this area and this town. Anything that can be done to enhance the appearance of where the lake and Hickory come together. The use of the lake and that area will be beneficial to all of us and the City. They had a bus tour of the area, and walked over the areas to be developed. The walk over the site was an eye opener. They saw how beautiful the site was and how beautiful the sites could be. There would be challenges in developing the area of the lake to enhance it and accomplish what they are trying to do. The engineers developed a projected use of the lake, and the estimated cost. The topography is very challenging, and also dealing with the regulatory agencies such as the State Highway Commission, the bridge designs, Duke Energy, which enforces some of the regulations and restrictions on use of the lake and the use of the perimeters of the lake. The committee would like to have a greater use of the water for the development of businesses. They visualize how nice it would be to have businesses on either side of the lake west of the Highway 321 Bridge toward the Rhodhiss dam. They would not want to end the development at the 321 bridge. They would like to see it go some distance west toward the ballpark. They would like to have the use of the park to be implemented and combined with the other things out there. There will be the Lackey project that is going to be eye catching. The Lackey project is going to be more accessible than the area of the lake that we have to develop. That is a very high toll of development. That area has tremendous opportunities because of the Rotary Park, through the bike paths and walking paths that are there now. The committee would like that adjacent land to be integrated with the Lackey Project to what they are trying to do along the riverfront. They would like to see a high vision where people have overlooks, so they can admire the lake. They would also like to have boat access, bike and walking paths, to utilize the

beautiful layout and the developments that they hope they will be able to develop and afford. Mr. Dixon commented that it would be nice to get the TIGER grant and to spend, maybe, 25 percent on the Riverwalk. He commented that we need to be as careful as we can with the dollars so there will be some funds left for the Riverwalk. He commented that he saw the proposal from the engineers as to what they were proposing as an alternate possibility. That indicated how much the committees are involved in hoping to get as much mileage as possible out of the limited funds. On behalf of the committee he commended the engineers and the City for taking time to make a study and present alternate choices. There is a great desire to do a good job with this project. They also want to get as much mileage as possible out of the available dollars.

Mr. Dixon advised that he and City Manager Mick Berry had the pleasure of going on a boat trip to take the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Development Committee. They saw the lake on a very beautiful day, and shared the enthusiasm to that group of potential future leaders. They were very enthusiastic about what might happen on the lake. He commented that it was a pleasure to work on this project. We are at a crossroads to make intelligent decisions to get as much as we can to carry out the future development of our City.

Bond Commission Chair Burk Wyatt commented that he had sat in on most of the meetings, and had listened to all of the comments. There had been a lot of great ideas that had been brought up. What had been realized was there was not enough money to do it all. We have to be fiscally responsible to get this done. He advised that they had suggested doing a phased approach. These are all great ideas. They need to get an order as to which ones ought to be first to get these projects kicked off. The rest of the projects would then be put in a long term plan. The ones that are viable and are best for the City. There are some major thoroughfares to focus on; 321, 70, and 140. They need to think about signage, and the look and feel of those things. They need to think about more planned development, zoning, that would be phased in overtime to help the look and feel of what is trying to be achieved. They need to think about getting more conceptual drawings so they can get that out to the community and show what we can do. He advised that there was an area west of 321 which was a prime location for private investment and development that could be a public/private partnership. If we could get some investment dollars to come in and make something really nice for our City right there, something iconic. He commented there is another iconic area which is the 321 bridge that is going to be built. If we could build two of them and put Hickory on the map when people pass through town. He commented that he felt that was a great idea to do that, but right now we need to turn our attention and focus on Riverwalk.

Mr. Wayts advised that they had been working through the projects with the Subcommittees, the Bond Commission, Staff, and Council. He showed a list of the projects which defined seven different streetscapes, five gateways, options on the Riverwalk from Geitner Park to US 321, and city walk prioritization from 4th Street SW to Lenoir Rhyne Boulevard NE. He advised that based on feedback they had added into their scope how to make the money go further and looking at the Riverwalk concept plan from US 321 to LP Frans Stadium. The second piece of this being the Riverwalk, city walk connection. He advised that they would have these two different projects and determine how to connect these two together. He advised that they were looking at the railroad spur. "Rails to Trails" the feasibility, can you make that connection there? If that is not feasible the other option is using Old Lenoir Road and 12th Street. How can we make that connection between city walk and Riverwalk?

Mr. Wayts discussed the next steps. He showed a table which listed all of the different meetings that are planned out from now until the program is defined. He advised of the purpose of the previous meetings were to get the vision together. In October they will have all of the projects cost, TIGER grant information, and introduce the concept of the prioritization process. How they start to filter down into the overall program budget. In November they are proposing to have another Council workshop as well as Subcommittee meetings to start getting feedback on prioritizing the projects. In December they will take that feedback from the November meeting and put together a draft program and present that to the Bond Commission as well as to Council and get feedback. Using that feedback in January or early February coming back to the Bond Commission and to Council to hopefully finalize that opportunity. In every month, October-February, there is an opportunity for them to coordinate with the Bond Commission, the Subcommittees, the Chairs and Vice Chairs, the Staff, and Council all throughout this process.

Alderman Lail commented that before it would come to Council for approval of the final program that it needed to be out around the community. So they could see it and make some comments. Maybe that would be between the January/February timeframe. He suggested that be a place holder for them to put in their schedule to allow for that.

City Manager Mick Berry mentioned the communications portion of the process. He advised that it had been a year since the beginning of discussions about the projects and that citizens may have forgotten what those projects were. They had talked about having a public event in later November to put up the visuals and they could discuss with the community about what is going on with the projects. They have also started working with the Hickory Daily record. They are looking at partnering with them to do a really nice insert into the Hickory Daily Record which lays out all the pictures and where we are at in the planning process.

Hickory Daily Record Reporter Laney Ruckstuhl advised that on Sunday's their readership was approximately 20,000 and online circulations is up to approximately a million per month.

Mr. Berry commented they have also agreed to put it on their electronic version as well. Staff recognizes that there are a lot more people that need to be kept in the loop of where we are, and get their feedback on some of the design ideas and concepts.

Mr. Wayts discussed Riverwalk Phase 1 – Option 1. He pointed out on the photo Geitner Park, they had overlaid the Lackey proposed site plan in that location. He pointed out the top of the hill, Lake Hickory which contains steep topography from the water surfaces all the way up the top of the ridgeline. He showed the shared use path, which is an asphalt path that runs along the top. He pointed out the existing Boy Scout camp, existing creeks, Water Treatment Plant, US 321 and the bridge. He advised that US 321 is a gateway between this phase of the Riverwalk project and the potential other phase of the Riverwalk project as you go from 321 to LP Frans stadium. He pointed out access locations. He advised that at this point they are envisioning automotive, pedestrian and bicycle access at two different locations. He pointed out the access off of 12th Street, and the boardwalk section, which was a larger section of boardwalk. When coming across 321 you would have that immediate visual. He showed the area which would be for canoe launches, the proposed parking area, the public park. He commented that one of the things that had come up, was is there an opportunity for a public/private partnership? Could this be something like a restaurant, bar, or some sort of outdoor patio, volleyball or a stage for concert venues as an opportunity there? He pointed out another cross section that represented a cantilever boardwalk. One of the reasons they had this proposed as a boardwalk type bridge structure is one of the site limitations. Right from the water's edge of Lake Hickory, back 30 feet we are within a riparian buffer zone. He commented that they had met with DENR and had been advised that within that 30 feet you are not allowed to remove any trees greater than three inches in diameter and you are not allowed to put down anything that is impervious area. Impervious area being concrete, rooftops, wood, anything other than natural ground. DENR advised that they could get a ten foot trail exemption to do this project, but that only allows us to clear a ten foot wide path, and then two feet on either side. That would be a 14 foot width corridor through there to actually construct this project. They had met with a couple of local contractors of Hickory and discussed the challenges of this site with the steep grades and the limited 14 foot access. They had discussed constructing it from a barge, and constructing it from either end within that limited footprint. They asked them could they get their machinery in there to do on grade excavation. The answer was no, they need at least 25 feet. Out of this meeting they talked about making this more of a boardwalk pier being type bridge structure. Which obviously impacts the cost. He pointed out areas which were scenic overlooks, which would be like bump outs on the boardwalk themselves, turn around points, maybe benches, areas that you could just stop and just admire the aesthetic view of Lake Hickory. He pointed out proposed connections from the boardwalk to the Boy Scout Camp as well as from the boardwalk to the existing shared use path that is already out there. He gave a cost range of somewhere between 10 and 12.5 million dollars. That range was dependent on whether you develop it as a park or have a public/private partnership in that area.

Bond Commission Vice Chair, Allison Holtzman asked if there would be a natural connection or a way to connect those trails without a break in the circuit.

Mr. Wayts advised that it would have a pedestrian/bike connection that could be worked out so there was not a break in the circuit.

Alderman Lail asked if the Subcommittee had discussed the public/private partnership.

Mr. Wayts advised that had not been discussed.

Alderman Lail commented that would be important for them to discuss. That would be a real interesting idea because it might kick something off that could happen on the western side. It would be a way to create some activity there, which is really important coming in off of 321. If you create something like that there you would get a little cost swing, maybe it becomes not as cost significant if you were trying to develop a huge open space or public area. That is where people want to be, up on the river. They want to be able to eat there and hangout, and to be able to access the water. It is great to be able to have the walk itself, but taking it to another level is a fabulous idea.

Alderman Seaver commented that it is the first thing you see coming across the bridge.

Alderman Lail stated that you could use whatever structure you build there to be iconic too. The scale of the boardwalk itself would not be enough to really pop attention. Coming over 321 you have got to be able to see it and it has got to be very visible.

Alderman Seaver commented that some private entities might be interested in helping the Riverwalk to fit what they would like to have.

Mr. Wayts advised they could develop the concept plan for this area as well.

Mr. Young questioned the timeframe for the Lackey project.

Mr. Berry advised we don't know, it is a complicated process. For tax purposes, for the Lackey's, they are setting up a conservancy. They are taking a very long term view, which is good. But it means there are all kinds of documents that have to be created, and a nonprofit has to be set up. There is a lot to the initial piece of it. We don't want to start moving forward aggressively with design if they are not designing at the same time the City is designing. It all has to work together. They understand that and they know that a lot of stuff has to happen.

September 24, 2015

Alderman Zagaroli questioned if there was water access at all for boating or canoeing.

Mr. Wayts pointed out canoe launches at the boardwalk. The City has city boat launch capability here that is not for public, but there is a canoe launch on the boardwalk. He pointed out the area where the water surface is about 10 to 12 feet below the bank, there is a pretty good grade separation.

Mr. Berry advised on the Lackey side there is also boat slips and canoe launches as well.

Mr. Wayts discussed Riverwalk Phase 1 - Option 2. He pointed out the same potential connection point, the access for automobiles, pedestrians and bicycles, the boardwalk was the same, and canoe launches. He noted the same P3 or public/private partnership option. He pointed out the section of the boardwalk and advised that it is the same as the first alternative. From 321 maximizing the visibility of the boardwalk. Once you get to the first overlook the bank starts sloping away, and you probably lose visibility from this. That is the point that was chosen to transition back 50 feet from the water's edge which takes it out of the riparian buffer, and takes off the regulatory requirements that we are not removing trees over three inches in diameter, or putting in impervious area. From a construction standpoint they can clear a larger area. We can allow the contractors to get the machinery in. At 50 feet back it is still a waterfront trail, you still have those views. It may be somewhat limited, but it is a partial boardwalk system. You move back and you have given the contractor space to do the work. You are up on some verily steep terrain. They estimated there is approximately eight vertical feet of fall across the ten foot trail. They proposed a four foot retaining wall on the uphill side of it and a four foot retaining wall on the downhill side of it. Towards the Lackey project they transitioned back into the boardwalk structure which integrates the boardwalk back into the Lackey project area. The cost estimate for this option was in the range of eight to ten million dollars. The two million swing being correlated to the public park vs public/private partnership option.

Alderman Guess questioned the cost of option one.

Mr. Wayts reiterated the cost of option one was 10 to 12.5 million dollars.

Alderman Lail commented that being on the edge was very important for a portion of the boardwalk, but you are limited as to width. He felt that it needed to be 12 to 15 feet to ride bikes on it. He commented if you are outside of the 50 feet you could do that.

Mr. Wayts reiterated that riparian buffer is 50 feet, but within the 30 feet they are restricted.

Mr. Burke commented that they envisioned it for bike and walkway.

Mr. Bell commented he didn't think that anybody had said that it would be devoted to ten feet. That is why you can't just do it right along the edge of the river. Part of the walkway is the boardwalk, and part of option one is cantilevered. It is still down in that same area, but you get the same width with either option. The first option costs more because it is so close to the water.

Alderman Guess asked if there was potential to make it wider in option two.

Mr. Bell advised that in all options the width was the same. That is why you have to do the pier, for accommodation of cantilevered park walkway in part two.

Mr. Wayts interjected within the riparian boardwalk the exemption that DENR had discussed with them limits them to ten foot wide impervious area. Whether it is a boardwalk, or concrete, you have some impervious area. If we are doing it within the 30 foot buffer, we are at 10 foot wide. That is on the lower edge of a shared use path. He estimated the existing path there to be 10 foot.

Mr. Bell asked the width of the boardwalk section.

Mr. Wayts pointed out the section where it would be ten feet. He pointed out the section that would be approximately 30 feet, and advised that they would not have to clear any trees in this section.

Ms. Holtzman asked if it was set in stone, the easement for the riparian buffer. Is there room as you go through the project.

Mr. Wayts advised that they do allow mitigation, which they had budgeted for mitigation. At this stage, talking to DENR, they want more concrete plans before they will provide further input.

Mr. Burke asked the width of the concrete trail.

Mr. Wayts advised that they had costed it at ten foot.

Public Services Director Chuck Hansen advised that the existing bike trail out there was 12 foot.

Mr. Wayts discussed Riverwalk Phase 1 - Option 3. Everything was the same except there was a quicker transition back to 50 feet from the water's edge. You still have the immediate boardwalk. They had gone back to 50 from the water, but you still have the waterfront trail, some views, some would be obstructed, similar overlooks. They removed the boardwalk portion that was shown on the Lackey project as well. All of the changes put the cost estimate between seven and nine million dollars.

Mr. Dickerson asked how it affected the trails grade.

Mr. Wayts pointed out an area where they were most worried about the grade. He advised that that area was significant with approximately eight vertical feet of fall across the trail.

Mr. Dickerson asked if doing the setback at 50, would that make it easier to pick a more level grade for ADA type of access.

Mr. Wayts advised that they did not have a survey, the designer would do that when they start the design process. They had two foot aerial topography, which in a heavily wooded area is highly suspect. The topography runs parallel with the water for the most part. If you are staying about the same distance off of the water you are going to be fairly close to the same elevation. The biggest challenge is the vertical difference across the grade.

Ms. Holtzman asked at the possible P3 location would you lose some view range by going with option 3 as opposed to option 2 with the boardwalk.

Mr. Wayts advised that if you are down on the water versus back behind the trees, 50 foot back, you are going to have some better views on the water than you are back in the trees. That is going to vary throughout the sections. There will be some sections that have very good views and some sections where it is obstructed.

Ms. Holtzman questioned for a restaurant, would they be clearing more area or would that be the same because of the riparian buffer. That might be a selling point for them.

Mr. Wayts advised that would be hard to answer at the point we are at now.

Mr. Hansen referenced how long 50 feet would be using the room size for a comparison.

Alderman Lail commented that you could limb up trees.

Mr. Hansen advised that you could do some limbing and some pruning. You get up into the canopy a little quicker because of the height. He advised that 50 feet is not a long way.

Mr. Bell asked if it was 50 feet of vertical climb or 50 feet up a hill.

Mr. Wayts advised it is a vertical climb.

Mr. Wyatt's opinion was that option 3 was too much of a cutback from the boardwalk and option 2 was better. When we get to the west side, we will get some private money in there and do a boardwalk more on the water and take it up to the stadium.

Alderman Seaver commented that getting that property marketed as soon as possible might get some involvement from the private enterprise.

Mr. Dickerson confirmed that the City would retain the property. They would just lease it out.

Mr. Dixon asked if it would help to find out how flexible Duke was going to be about making land available to the City, both east and west.

Mr. Wayts explained Duke. They have a FERC license process that the City would have to go through. Duke doesn't want this entire project in the water. The cantilever boardwalk is okay, but they have told them that trying to get approved doing the entire project in the water is slim from their FERC licensing standpoint. The further back the better from their prospective. DENR is the one who doesn't want us within the 30 foot zone. If we are going to be there they really want to limit the impervious area width.

Mr. Dixon commented that he thought Duke did not want to get involved specifically until they presented a final project. Duke's involvement at this stage would help us reach a decision of what should be the final project.

Mr. Wayts advised that they had met with Duke twice. They have told us everything that they are going to tell us until we get further into the design and can bring those plans. They have been pretty direct, they will not approve the entire project in the water. That is highly unlikely that they will approve that. They had given good feeling about the pieces that they do have in the water. They advised they might be able to put a little bit more in the water than what is shown right now. For the Duke FERC license, he is fairly comfortable with their position.

Alderwoman Patton questioned the contingency built into the numbers.

Mr. Wayts advised that all of the numbers were holistic numbers. They had contingency and design built into it. He advised that the contingency that was put into each of these was 30 percent.

Mr. Wyatt asked the timeframe that it would take to build it.

Mr. Wayts advised that on the first option they estimated 18 to 24 months, and the other ones would be less time. He advised that you would be shaving off months with the reduced cost.

Mr. Charles Archer advised the process that they had used with the subcommittees to gather ideas. No idea was too big, too crazy, or too small. They used voting dots to determine what was most important. He advised Council members that he wanted to do the similar type of exercise. He asked Council what features they thought were most important based on the three options that they had been presented with.

Council members shared their ideas which included: the boardwalk being the most iconic feature from the 321 Bridge; multi-modal access; people walking close to the water, as close as possible; views from the walkway, along the water all the way back to the main area, Highway 321 to Geitner Park; connecting the existing shared trail; make it significantly longer something with distance; wider than the shared use path that is there, width of the walk is critical; destination like a picnic or park, open space on the trail for viewing, and congregating.

Alderman Seaver asked if there had been discussions regarding the lighting.

Mr. Archer commented that lighting is contemplated, depending on which choice, from the boardwalk along the lake edge. If you go up the hill where there is a retaining wall there would be lighting plus potential lighting in the retaining wall to shine down on the walkway itself. All the subcommittees talked about lighting having similar design standards, so that it is a common theme. That is also in the Inspiring Spaces Plan as well.

Alderman Zagaroli asked what the restrictions were going back into the land. He asked if they could also cutback in and make that a picnic area.

Mr. Archer advised potentially as long as we are outside the 30 feet area, you can't cut the trees in it, and the additional 20 feet, which you can actually cut the trees but you have to leave it grassed. Beyond that there is no limitation on it.

Alderman Zagaroli suggested a pocket park.

Alderwoman Patton commented a place where a family could stop at that places, take a picnic, relax, maybe a yoga group. Make it more than just a bike and run path. Make it a destination, a great place to go and spend the day, and have all kinds of opportunities throughout.

Alderman Guess liked the idea of the city walk and the Riverwalk with the use of Old Lenoir Road. Taking that down to two lanes, and taking advantage of what is left and connecting that. Financially that is probably the cheapest piece of that, being able to use that existing corridor that is already there.

Alderman Lail agreed that connection was an important component.

Alderman Guess commented at one time Old Lenoir Road was as busy as 321, but now not so much at all. Now would be the perfect time to use existing structure.

Alderman Seaver commented that it is very dangerous to walk certain spots on that road. He asked if the overlooks were to scale.

Mr. Archer advised that it was not to scale. He also advised that restrooms were planned for as well.

Mr. Dickerson commented that the parks are not currently open at night, he asked if that would change that.

Alderwoman Patton commented that it would be a perfect place at night. She would like to see up-lighting and having them accessible at night.

Mr. Archer asked Council if there were features that were not shown that they would like to see.

Council's comments included the identity that you are going to get coming across the bridge, it is memorable in people's minds; lighting is a big piece of that especially at night to capture people's mind; for people that could not walk it, or bike it, access to ride the rail from downtown to the Riverwalk.

Mr. Archer asked Council to pick one of the options: Alderwoman Patton and Alderman Zagaroli picked option 1; Alderman Meisner and Alderman Seaver picked option 2 and Alderman Lail picked option 3. Alderman Guess liked option 1 or 2, he liked option two with the boardwalk at both ends.

Mr. Archer advised that the information was helpful to them. It helps to narrow down and refine what the cost estimates will be. They will begin the process in October of looking at what the projects are and begin to narrow all of the projects down to stay within the budget.

Mr. Archer discussed Riverwalk Phase 2, which is the other side of 321. He pointed out Highway 321, the baseball stadium and Winker Park. They had asked Staff what they saw in Riverwalk Phase 2 the potential economic development on this side of 321. He pointed out an "L" shaped piece of property which they had started with. After meeting with Staff they added an additional area that could be a catalyst for additional development and redevelopment of the property. He asked Council what they were thinking about as the area for potential development for Riverwalk Phase 2. He asked where they might see some mixed use development, or have some public/private partnership opportunities with the developer(s).

Alderman Seaver questioned who owned the properties.

Mr. Berry advised it was various property owners.

Mr. Archer advised that this is all private property on this side. They will begin doing some base mapping of this site, and look at the topography and the riparian buffer. He pointed out the railroad corridor, and the flood plains on the creeks that flow through the property. They will look at the site and find out what the development potential is for the area to be developed. He advised that there is roughly a drop from the outfield of the baseball stadium to the river of about 60 feet. There is some severe topography. He ask Council what they felt was the greatest asset for this site.

Alderman Guess commented view of the lake.

Alderman Meisner asked if the eastern most access on 321 was controlled access.

Mr. Archer pointed out where the new 321 Bridge would be located, and advised that probably would be limited access, or no access.

Mr. Hansen commented probably no access.

Mr. Archer stated that this bridge is supposed to be 20 to 30 feet higher than it is today. When you come down Old Lenoir Road you come under the new bridge and into the site as a possibility.

Alderman Zagaroli asked if you could have condos, apartments, or grocery stores.

Mr. Archer asked Council what they would like to see in there.

Alderman Zagaroli commented, people, and jobs.

Alderman Guess stated mixed use.

Mr. Archer asked if there were uses in Hickory, which were not in Hickory, that they might like to see.

Alderman Lail commented that people want a lifestyle center. He didn't know if there was enough land there to do it.

Mr. Archer confirmed that Alderman Lail's comment "lifestyle center", he meant live, shop and play.

Alderman Guess asked if he knew the acreage of the area.

Mr. Archer stated he didn't know.

Alderman Seaver the topography could be an asset, terrace it down and make it more visible.

Discussion ensued about the location of the property. Mr. Hansen advised that it was Burke County.

Mr. Archer asked Council if there were other lifestyle communities in other towns, in North Carolina, or other States that have created a vision that they would like to see some version of that developed in this property.

Alderman Zagaroli asked if there was a major problem with the railroad spur, going over, under or through it to get to the lake.

Mr. Archer stated yes sir, it is going to have to be dealt with in some form or fashion because it is not very far off the edge of the lake now. He pointed out the location of the railroad spur on the map.

Mr. Dickerson commented that it is 17 miles long and terminates. Six counties, including, Caldwell County, and the Park Service are trying to get the Overmountain Victory Trail in its entire length. They are going to spend approximately 20 million dollars in Lenoir in the next few years on their section of it. The railroad spur goes right into that, and they are going to connect Lenoir, with Morganton. If we ever had the ability to use that we could connect Hickory. People are going to come here to go and ride up there and they are going to ride back. It already happens in Georgia, the Silver Comet. People actually plan whole weeks where they just travel from town to town and we will be one of those destinations.

Mr. Young advised that the average baseball field is 2.5 acres.

Mr. Archer asked if there were any suggestions on how to get the Riverwalk up to the baseball stadium. Was there a preferred path?

Mr. Dickerson commented that the topography is the architectural feature of it. You would want to run it through the shops, if there were shops there. Maybe it is a San Francisco Lombard.

September 24, 2015

Alderwoman Patton commented that it would slow things down, to peel things back to being nice. The ease of life, not a straight shot.

Mr. Archer asked if Council foresaw the City making any infrastructure investments in this property, roads, water, sewer, storm water. If a developer approached the City and said here is a plan that they would like to work with the City on, would the City proceed.

The consensus of Council was yes.

Mr. Archer spoke about another challenge which was the wastewater. The City would have to look at their wastewater model, and determine which pump stations could handle the growth. That was just one potential limited factor that had not been mentioned.

Alderman Seaver commented with the topography you could make a nice waterfall.

Mr. Archer commented and there are two creeks to work with running through the property. Mr. Archer showed some pictures to Council and asked what they like about them. The first photo was a location in Wilmington. Council liked the view of the lake, it was on the river, businesses, activity, and people were outside enjoying it. The next photo was Greenville. Council commented that it was urban living in that photo.

Alderman Seaver questioned the width of the walkway.

Mr. Archer estimated approximately 15 to 20 feet. He showed another photo located in Knoxville, Tennessee and asked what Council like about it. Council responded, buildings and people in them. They did not like it as much because it was not as inviting. Mr. Archer showed some renderings of mixed use development. Mr. Archer commented that they had been asked to develop some renderings to help the City market this site to developers to show them development potential, to show the commitment of the City for economic development. He wanted to find out what Council liked about the series of renderings presented. He showed a rendering of the Durham Bulls stadium, and condos. He asked if that is what Council could see at their location. He showed a downtown scene, which was not what Council was looking for. They liked the rendering of Wilmington. He showed them slide two which they didn't like either. Commenting it was too organized. Slide three was an aerial view looking down, which was redevelopment of several blocks.

Ms. Morgan McIlwain reminded Council that this is just what the deliverable would be. What they want to see as the ultimate product. This of course would still be on the river.

Mr. Archer advised Council that it is the type of drawing that would be used on their site. Council liked going through the center of it where that is the path. You have to go through the center and everything is right there on each side. For marketing it needs to be something like that, if you show a developer how you are going to get to 321, and where people are going to park. For marketing purposes Council liked the plan view, looking at the street, looking at the boardwalk. Mr. Archer showed slide four with notes and pictures of what different pictures might look like. Council did not like this photo, it was confusing and too busy.

Alderman Lail clarified what Mr. Archer was asking their opinion on, what they would like to see out there with regards to a deliverable. They have to answer the question of what is the economic opportunity there. The market is going to have to drive what they do. You have to be able to get cars in there to that Old Lenoir Road. Without automobiles it won't develop.

Ms. McIlwain explained for this exercise they were asking if Council was trying to market this property, what they would like to hand out to a potential developer. Would it be a concept plan that has different kinds of details in it, a basic concept plan that just has a lot more high level general details in it? They are going back to their office, and take the comments that everyone had said and look at limitations, look at what can be developed out there. They wanted to know what type of format that Council wanted to best serve the City.

Alderman Lail commented his answer would be, what the potential uses are for that. What is there size? Is it a Barnes and Noble? Is it a 15,000 square foot box? They need to talk to some developers before they decide.

Mr. Archer commented that they would create the base maps, and put all of the development limitations on the site, topography, plus lanes, and the riparian buffer. Then they will be able to identify the areas that can be developed on this site. How big they are. They will then have a better idea if it is a Barnes and Noble scale or an ice cream shop property. They wanted an idea from Council. They wanted to be able to provide information to recruit developers, to show them a potential project that Council would be willing to partner with developers if it is a right opportunity. He asked what type of drawings Council would want to show them. Not specifically for this site, but a concept to spark their interest to show the potential in the site.

Mr. Dixon asked when he spoke of partnering if he meant that the City build the infrastructure to the developer through the investments.

Mr. Archer advised that it could be whatever is mutually beneficial and affordable for both the City and the developer.

September 24, 2015

Alderman Patton commented if a developer would come in with a great plan then they all would be willing to put infrastructure in where ever it was needed to develop that. That is going to be driven by a developer.

Alderman Lail asked about the sketch.

Mr. Berry confirmed that Alderman Lail was referring to the sketch that Mitchell did a while back.

Alderman Lail suggested using that sketch to the development community.

Alderman Zagaroli commented that he saw this being more of a residential development rather than commercial. There could be some commercial that would go with it.

Mr. Dickerson commented that the Birkdale concept is what the millennials want.

Mr. Ways commented that it had been a good exercise. They had given Council some details on the two different potential phases of Riverwalk, and where they are going. He summarized the program planning schedule for the upcoming months.

Mr. Berry advised Council that what they are trying to do is determine how this private development will piggyback off of the Riverwalk and the baseball stadium, and traffic on 321. He advised Council that they needed to have something that was conceptual that they could get out into the development world. So that they know that they are doing the Riverwalk, the city walk, and they know that we are connecting them together, and that we are interested in some private partnership for more commercial development piggybacking off this. The market will totally dictate that. What we are looking for is that "calling card" to give us a reason to go sit down with them and talk to them and get into their mindsets. This thought internally, let's get something that we can go externally. He advised they were not talking about tons of research and analysis on it, but just that very first piece of material that you can go sit down and say this is what we have going on in Hickory, come check us out.

Alderman Zagaroli asked if they knew if the private entities that owned this property are interested.

Mr. Berry commented that the City should have a meeting with all the property owners and advise them of what the City is doing. And asked them if they were comfortable about the City talking about people potentially doing development. Do you want to be part of that?

Alderman Zagaroli commented if they are not interested in selling it is moot point.

Mr. Berry commented that it is hard to sit down and have that conversation with those folks if you can't show them a picture. It is hard enough for people who do this for a living to understand what we are talking about. We need something to put in front of people so they can see what we are talking about. They can decide if they are in, out, or want to hear more, just start that ball rolling, and start those conversations.

Mr. Archer advised that they had been asked to create a "pretty picture" of renderings of what the potential is for this site so the City would have that tool to have something to talk from and generate some interest in the development. Leveraging the Riverwalk and its investment to do that.

Alderman Guess asked if all the current property owners knew about everything at this time.

Mr. Berry advised that he doubted it.

Mr. Dixon felt that it would be very helpful to discuss Phase 2 before a final decision was made on Phase 1. He felt it would help to focus on Phase 1 and decide what it should be.

Mr. Young interjected when he was doing the presentation a year ago and got feedback this area really is its own little downtown area. This would be a destination. People coming down the new bridge will see people and children enjoying the walk way to the left. Over to the right you would have the Barnes and Noble and the coffee shops and the residential. If we stop there, then maybe we can take the train from that area into downtown. Maybe we can walk into downtown. That is really the vision. He liked the vision of the Durham Bulls Park, with the condos in the back. Hickory doesn't have the backing to be a Birkdale Village. But it can be its own miniature version in his opinion.

Mr. Archer thanked everyone for their input and advised that it was really helpful to them and they are looking forward to working through the interim process, the program and the priorities finalized to move forward with the designing and building process.

III. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk