

Community Improvement Advisory Committee  
Mar. 25, 2019  
6:00pm  
Lowell City Hall

Attendees: John Cantrell, Michelle Sebastian, Candy Funderburk, Bob Mulholland, Anne Massey, David Busshart, Scott Attaway, Thomas Gilespie and Martha Burris.

Bob called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Bob asked for everyone to review the last meeting's minutes. Martha made a motion to approve the minutes with a change of "Hobson Park" to "Hudson Park". Bob seconded the motion. Minutes approved.

The CIAC welcomed new member David Busshart. David lives in the River View Community.

Cecila Benoy is also a new volunteer who will be joining the CIAC, and we look forward to welcoming her soon.

A plaque is in the process of being designed/constructed with the names of the individuals who were honored in the American Flag project. The plaque will be displayed at the Lowell Community Center.

John reported that City Manager, Kevin Krouse, met with the Lowell Fire Chief regarding the suspension of the use of the alarm, which was disturbing to residents in the general area of the station. Using the alarm for all emergencies was deemed unnecessary, since there are other means of communication being used today. The decision to only use the alarm only during a hurricane was decided and it was supported by City Council.

Discussions regarding updates to the aesthetics of City Hall are currently placed on hold as City administrators and City Council members are looking into possibilities and plans.

Scott reported that he and Kevin Krouse have been in communication with the Department of Transportation regarding the completion of repaving roads in town. Once the repaving is complete then the new improvements, such as the painted crosswalks and signage, can occur. With the weather warming up more improvements uptown can get underway.

Martha and John are taking on the task of changing out the plantings/flowers in the planters uptown. With the financial support of the Lowell Women's Club these are changed out seasonally. We look forward to the spring time selections to make the area more beautiful.

Bob reported that the new spring time banners have arrived, and that the Lowell maintenance department will be installing them soon. There was also some discussion regarding the Patriotic banners, since they are ten years old and have faded. Bob will investigate fabric/dyes that hold up well to weather and sun. Scott will also report back regarding the possibility of replacing them and if this can occur using funds from the beautification budget established by City Council.

Adding the Business and Building Inventory for Lowell to the city's website was discussed. This inventory could be helpful in identifying available spaces/properties for those looking to open a businesses in town or for those businesses looking to relocate.

The CIAC looks forward to working with Gaston Outside to highlight events, businesses, opportunities, and other great things about living in Lowell.

The city is excited to welcome Sonic Automotive, and we look forward to the opening of their customer service contact center in Lowell. An on-site job fair is in the plans for the near future.

Thomas and Scott attended the recent Gaston County Historic Preservation Meeting. They reported that the preservation society passed a resolution to include the areas of Lowell known as "The Flats" and "The Knob" to be recognized as historically important areas. The CIAC discussed information regarding what the plaque to represent the area might look like, and where this historic marker might be placed. Thomas will get more information regarding the wordage for the plaque and the names to be included. Bob will look into more options and prices of plaques.

The CIAC revisited the findings from the 2014 community survey regarding the changes/improvements the citizens of Lowell were interested in and hoped the then Master Planning Committee might address. The top four were 1) new businesses opening in Lowell 2) demolish vacant/dilapidated buildings 3) curbside recycling, and 4) upgrades for the Lowell Community Center.

- 1) The CIAC will continue to look at ways to encourage new business in Lowell.
- 2) Since the survey, there have been buildings that have come down. Also, we are excited about the recent grant that Lowell was awarded to help homeowners who need monetary assistance to improve their properties. Applications for these funds will be available in the near future.
- 3) And although we don't have curbside recycling, we are very excited about the new recycling center that is in operation at Rankin Park. There is an attendant there to help residents, and the hours of operation are Tuesday and Thursday 12:00pm – 6:00pm and Saturday 10:00am – 6:00pm. See the Lowell website for additional information.
- 4) Some of the grant money Lowell received is earmarked for improvements to the community center. Updating this historic building is a priority for the city.

The CIAC will continue to discuss ways in which we can help support and improve the city.

Bob shared some ideas he found from the Centralina Council of Governments, which is a voluntary organization of municipal and county governments serving the Greater Charlotte region. The 2019 regional conference was titled "Creative Solutions for Thriving Communities". Bob shared information from one of the workshops of this conference (Love Where You Live: Putting Emotional Engagement into Practice), and he encouraged us to think outside the box as we brainstorm ideas toward making our community better. More to come on that front.

The next CIAC meeting will be April 22 at the City Hall. A motion was made and passed to close the meeting.