

2022 Downtown Plan Steering Committee



Meeting #9: Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 23, 2022

Huntersville Town Hall, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Attendees:

Voting Members Nate Bowman Gatewood Campbell*
 Doug Ferguson Sean Flynn
 John Foster Barbara Gerhardt
 Charles Guinard Lee Hallman
 Janelle Harris Elaine Kerns*
 Sarah McAulay Cindy Trevisan*
 Jessika Tucker

Ex-Officio Members: Kathy Jones John McClelland*
 Diane McLaine John O'Neill
 Stephen Swanick

Town Staff: Dave Hill Jack Simoneau
 Tracy Barron Jackie Huffman
 Bobby Williams

Consultant Team: Terry Shook Larry Zinser

* Attended via Conference Call

- 1. Call to Order** – Chairperson McAulay called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM. A recorded video of the meeting is available at:
<https://www.facebook.com/HuntersvilleNCTownGovernment/videos>
- 2. Roll Call** – Meeting attendance is noted above.
- 3. Approval of Agenda** – Charles Guinard made the motion to approve the agenda, adding Item 9A to allow discussion regarding the pause approved by the Town Board; Janelle Harris seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4. Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 9, 2022** – Charles Guinard made the motion to approve the meeting minutes, with two amendments: the results of both straw votes taken under Agenda Item #7 were changed from failed to approved. Lee Hallman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5. Chairman's Remarks** – Chairman McAuley mentioned that Town Board members would be present to discuss the pause in the project.
- 6. General Public Comment** – There were no speakers for public comment.

7. **Meeting Purpose / Progress Update** – Dave Hill said that the presentation by Shook Kelley would be the stopping point for the project while the project pause is in effect. In the meantime, the Committee will have time to review the Final Alternative Future. As a composite, the draft should be considered to be a draft and not a final product.
8. **Presentation: Final Alternative Future (Initial Version)** – Terry Shook and Larry Zinser provided a PowerPoint presentation that can be found at https://www.letsplanhuntersville.org/files/ugd/68fb0a_b9673bdb116c406185348abcba1d0a1c.pdf. Mr. Shook indicated that the “Mr. Potato Head” analogy was used to develop the composite. It is the product of both Committee and public input and describes a balance of different options. The Organizing Principles continue to be the driving forces behind development of the composite. Larry Zinser presented the composite Alternative Future and the implications as they reflect each of the Organizing Principles.
9. **Committee Discussion: Final Alternative Future** – Chairman McAulay thanked the consultants for their presentation, and for the work they have put into development of the composite. Mr. Guinard asked about the roadway related to the CMS property. Mr. Zinser indicated that CMS preferred the southern alignment out of the different possible alignments considered. There was more discussion about the future status of existing buildings on the CMS property. Mr. Hill said that CMS has not intention of building another school, other than one elementary school, on the site. It was mentioned that school traffic queuing and stacking was intended to be accommodated on the school property. Compared with the past, CMS has imposed very specific and rigid rules related to traffic operations for new schools. It was mentioned that the existing school structures and excess property represented possible redevelopment opportunities, such as civic or private development uses. CMS will also explore a multi-story structure that could accommodate a shared gymnasium. Part of the CMS property could be used for regional stormwater management – nearby properties continue to experience stormwater runoff from CMS and this needs to be considered. A question was raised regarding the possibility of Maxwell being pedestrian-only; a woonerf may be appropriate, but such a detailed feature has not been decided. The impact of this on Main Street traffic flow and on-street parking is a major concern. The ability to disperse traffic in other downtown areas will have a significant bearing on providing relief in currently congested areas. The core area needs careful attention to get the kind of downtown access and walkability we want. Resetting the Ag Building means the recommendation is to improve the environment around the building to possibly include park space instead of parking. The character of the roadway on the CMS property is important, and the Plan will contain design recommendations in accordance with the Organizing Principles. The traffic report produced by Gannett Fleming, subconsultant to Shook Kelley), which can be found at (https://www.letsplanhuntersville.org/files/ugd/68fb0a_2863adc6b3cf4f9daf0d35590ad5a21a.pdf) was discussed. If the rail crossing at 2nd Street cannot be achieved, there is still a benefit, though not as much. The point was made that the study does not recommend any specific improvements – it identifies options and outcomes from those options. A big part of the traffic study purpose was to address the potential widening of Gilead to 4 lanes. The concern raised was whether or not the connectivity options in the study would make traffic through the downtown easier and worsen travel volumes. The source and dates of data were questioned. Construction and pandemic impacts made the use of more current data unreliable. Methodology used in the study is consistent with NCDOT guidelines, which is very important. Town takeover of Gilead from the state is an option that could remove NCDOT’s authority over the roadway. Current

improvements underway or programmed were mentioned as significant projects that will improve traffic conditions.

- 9A. Pause Discussion** – Mayor Melissa Bales appreciated the service of the Committee. She said the Town Board voted to pause the project. Committee members can expect to receive a survey asking questions about how to improve the process. Commissioners Phillips and Bidwell, working with staff, will use the survey to make recommendations for Town Board consideration on September 6th. Community engagement efforts will continue. Commissioner Bidwell echoed the Mayor’s comments. Commissioner Phillips asked Committee members to be honest when answering the survey. Everyone wants to make the Plan better.
- 10. Next Steps** - Dave Hill had not comments.
- 11. Adjourn** - The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

DRAFT