

**LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL  
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS  
Tuesday, October 14, 2014  
9:00 a.m.**

**Members:** Council Member Turner Perrow, Chair, Vice Mayor Ceasor Johnson, Council Member Joan Foster, Mayor Michael Gillette, ex-officio

**Staff Present:** Kim Payne, Bonnie Svrcek, Gaynelle Hart, Jim Talian, Tim Mitchell, Greg Poff, Scott Parkins, Erin Hawkins, Marjette Upshur, Kent White, Tom Martin, Heather Kennedy, David Malewitz, Don DeBerry, and Starlette Early

**Others Present:** Justin Faulconer (News & Advance)

**Contract Awards:**

There was one (1) contract awarded this month. Mr. DeBerry also noted there was only one (1) bid received for the Kemper Street Bridge project and it was substantially higher than staff's estimated amount. Due to the bid history for this project, there was additional discussion regarding possible need to adjust the budget for this contract. There were further comments regarding a possible impact from the current bidding climate (contractors indicating full workloads) that may result in higher bids in general.

**Update on Priority Projects:**

Mr. DeBerry provided an update on projects since the last PDC meeting:

- Timberlake / Logan's Lane Intersection-- Interchange Modification Report approved by VDOT.
- Wards Road Pedestrian X-ing 2B-- Scheduled to complete mid-November.
- Greenview Drive Phase 2-- VDOT will open proposals on November 4.
- Kemper Street Bridge / Interchange-- Bids were opened October 9.
- Miller Center Renovations-- Certificate of Occupancy early November; Move into Building Nov/Dec. Open to public January.
- Odd Fellows Road – P3-- VDOT opens proposals on December 16.
- Lakeside Drive Improvements @ L.C.-- 30% Design Reviews October 24.
- Old Forest Road Sidewalk – Project is complete.

In response to PDC questions, Mr. DeBerry indicated the projected completion date for Harvard Road Improvements is by Christmas, the traffic management system on Wards Road has been tested with successful performance during a Christmas season, and upcoming discussions with Lynchburg College regarding Lakeside Drive Improvements will include cost sharing options.

**General Business:**

1. ***College Lake Dam Update*** -- *The spillway at College Lake Dam does not meet the new dam safety regulations. A consultant, URS, has been hired to help determine the optimal solution. The Department of Water Resources, Lynchburg College, and URS have been meeting over the past few months, and URS has been conducting field investigations on which to base an analysis of alternatives. On October 30, a public meeting will be held at the City Library to solicit input from*

*citizens on the potential alternatives. The two alternatives under consideration will be presented for public input. The alternatives are: 1) armoring the dam (that is coating it in concrete so that in the event of an extreme rainfall event, water could overtop the dam without destroying it), and 2) removing the dam and restoring the lake bed.*

Mr. Talian indicated details were constantly changing on this project, making even the most recent updates provided to the PDC out of date. The speed of the process is being driven by the December 1<sup>st</sup> application permit deadline to DCR. While we will not meet this deadline, Mr. Talian explained DCR is willing to work with the City as long as we are showing substantial progress. He also stated that information is being coordinated with Lynchburg College so that everyone is kept in the loop.

Mr. Talian announced plans for a public meeting scheduled for October 30<sup>th</sup> at the Lynchburg Public Library. At this meeting there will be two options presented to the public for feedback: 1) armoring the dam (strengthening the dam with a coat of concrete enough to sustain a catastrophic rainfall event), and 2) removal of the dam and replacing it with a bridge. The details about these two options are what are constantly changing. He reported the cost estimates for each alternative are closely matched (\$8 million), with the big difference related to dealing with the lake bed if the dam is removed. Current estimates of handling the lake bed range from \$1.9 million to \$7.5 million depending on variations of what is included in the restoration of the lake bed (minimum stabilization to a full restoration of entire lake bed and adding wetlands to create a model ecosystem).

Mr. Mitchell pointed out there are pros and cons to both options. Removing the dam eliminates the need for compliance with dam safety regulations and aspects of emergency planning related to monitoring the spillway. It also gives the City a new bridge and roadway through that area. Armoring the dam doesn't include any work to the lake itself, leaving it to continue filling with sediment and eventually die. The armoring will also create disruption during the construction process.

There was a question from PDC of whether there is any grant funding available to assist with cost of the lake bed restoration; however, staff indicated it was unlikely. Mr. Mitchell noted there may be a possibility of VDOT cost sharing for construction of the bridge. None of the funding estimates include measures to save the lake, with earlier estimates to dredge the lake at approximately \$18 million and no longer being considered. The options being presented to the public are to specifically address the City's requirement of how to deal with College Lake Dam, categorized by DCR as a "potentially high hazard dam". Council Member Johnson questioned the life expectancy of the lake, suggesting public response to the dam options may be linked to this time frame. There were additional comments regarding the lake's current state and comparison to condition in earlier years.

Mayor Gillette defined the lake as an artificial human construct and suggested working to maintain a lake where one never belonged in the first place may neither be cost effective or the best decision for the environment. He reasoned that spending some additional money now to stabilize the lake bed would reduce the City's liability and possibly save costs over time. This would seem to be the best use of the land for everyone in the long term, resulting in a self-regulating wetlands area that could be used by students as a natural lab.

Mr. Mitchell suggested the next steps should be to conduct the public meeting, complete the preliminary engineering report to obtain more specific cost estimates for each of the options, and come back together for further review. In response to a general environmental question, Ms. Hawkins discussed some of the potential environmental impact and water quality issues related to each option. Council Member Foster suggested, since the land is owned by Lynchburg College, that creating the ecosystem might be a partnership opportunity among the area colleges. Mr. Mitchell viewed the City's

responsibility is to address the dam regulation requirement and stabilize the lake bed if the dam is removed.

Council Member Perrow clarified details shown on the concept plans for the armoring option, and suggested a 15 foot wall designed for channeling the water would be an overly obtrusive feature along the highway. He further explored the likely movement of the water and control of the sediment if the dam were removed. Due to his concerns regarding both options, he questioned whether building a new dam might be another alternative. Staff responded that building the dam up higher and increasing the size of the spillway would not address the potential high hazard classification. Even over time when the lake is eventually filled with sediment the dam would still be considered potential high hazard due to the unconsolidated nature of the sediment behind the dam. Council Member Perrow indicated he would like to hear a general response from URS regarding the feasibility of this option.

- 2. **FY 2016 Transportation Alternatives Grant Application for Sidewalk on Nationwide Dr.** -- This application requests 80% federal reimbursement through the Transportation Alternatives Program to construct a sidewalk on Nationwide Dr. Design is under way and should be complete prior to receiving the funding authorization next October. Cost estimate is \$350,000.00 (requiring \$70,000.00 local match). At the public meeting property owner funding of the match was discussed.*

Mr. DeBerry reported a public meeting was held at Wiley & Wilson on October 9<sup>th</sup> regarding this TAP application process. The proposal is to install sidewalks on Nationwide Drive from the four-way stop to the end of Nationwide Drive and down the side street to the cul-de-sac. This project would be an 80% - 20% match. Council Member Perrow indicated he would like to see the sidewalk built if the City can afford it, and Council Member Foster agreed.

Mayor Gillette indicated he liked the idea of walkability but expressed concern about investing in sidewalks located in a commercial area that did not serve to connect to other points, as opposed to constructing sidewalks in a neighborhood where people may want to leave their homes and walk to a destination. There was discussion about access to medical buildings along this street from a bus stop at the four-way intersection and a residential area located nearby. Council Member Foster proposed that sidewalks would possibly encourage further development in that area, offering wellness opportunities to employees working in adjacent facilities. She stated she would like to share the cost of the sidewalks with those businesses that would benefit if possible and Mr. DeBerry indicated two businesses had already committed to contribute at the public meeting and Economic Development was assisting with coordinating others.

There was discussion regarding the current policy of requiring residential communities to bear 50 % of the cost of sidewalks. Members of the PDC agreed this standard should apply in this proposal as well, and consented to move the application forward to Council with recommendation to approve with a minimum of a 50% match from the businesses.

- 3. **FY 2016 VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant Applications** – Staff is proposing to participate in the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program to help with the funding of four projects: Main Street Bridge Additional Funding (\$2,300,000), Wards Ferry Road Widening (Right of Way) (\$1,000,000), Un-named Road off Candler’s Mtn. Rd (\$3,200,000), and City Resurfacing Program (\$3,000,000). Wards Ferry widening is in from Timberlake to improve access to the new Heritage High School. The un-named road off of Candler’s Mountain Road proceeds to the east towards the proposed Odd Fellows Interchange and is a partnership project with Liberty University. If this is approved, the right of way will be donated to the City and Liberty University will make an additional financial contribution.*

Mr. DeBerry summarized the projects for the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program and Council Member Perrow clarified Liberty University would provide funding for their portion of the match related to their project (Un-named road off Candler's Mtn. Rd.). PDC members supported the application and by consensus agreed to move this item forward to full Council with their recommendation for approval.

**4. *Downtown Improvements Discussion – Discussion of opportunities for improvements linked to the downtown waterline replacement project, including Waterline replacement phasing, Streetscape improvements, Conversion of Main and Church Streets from one way to two-way traffic, Paid Parking, Loading, Traffic calming, and Financing.***

Mr. Payne led the discussion, with Mr. Martin presenting a PowerPoint to provide visual enhancements and highlight key points. Mr. Payne explained that these improvement opportunities are driven by the ongoing planning for the downtown waterline replacement project due to begin in 2016. The project is currently divided into 12 phases scheduled over approximately a 12 year period. The phases were developed based on anticipated available funding for the estimated cost of \$1 million per block for both waterline replacement and streetscape improvements. Staff is looking at alternatives for completing this work in a much shorter time frame, and has scheduled a conversation with the City of Fort Myers, Florida to explore more about their recent similar size project completed over a four year period.

Mr. Payne noted the area of Main Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street is the first phase scheduled to begin following completion of the Phase III work on 5th Street. A concern is the closure of streets during this project, with the 5th Street project showing work can be accomplished at twice the speed if the street is completely closed as opposed to partial closure. Street closure becomes even more problematic downtown with all the one way streets; therefore, one primary discussion with stakeholders will be exploring reversion of our streets back to two-way traffic. Mr. Payne opined the success of downtown will ultimately include two-way streets and cited the original design of the streets and recent traffic studies support a two-way traffic system. Several benefits of two-way streets are the enhanced exposure for retailers, better shopping and dining experience with slower-pace, and greater ease of navigating through downtown with two-way traffic flow.

Some of the challenges for this project include working out the process for how goods will be delivered to businesses and funding the CIP for the desired streetscape improvements (Waterline replacement is funded by the Water Fund). The City plans to conduct a public outreach campaign over the next several months to talk with our downtown stakeholders about what will happen during the waterline replacement and the opportunities that come with that process for creating a better downtown.

Mr. Payne indicated the next steps moving forward after today's presentation to the PDC is the discussion with Fort Myers (scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>), begin meetings with downtown stakeholders to explore alternatives for phasing and financing this project, finalize the project scope, phasing and schedule, and present the plan to the community and City Council. He reiterated the waterline replacement work in downtown cannot start until completion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Street project, but is scheduled in the 2016 CIP.

Mr. Parkins discussed the reason for the waterline replacement (age of the waterlines are at least 100 years old and have exceeded their life expectancy) and current repair complications including isolating the source when a waterline breaks. Mr. Mitchell added details regarding complications of the existing two pressure zones that would be converted to one pressure zone during this project to simplify operations.

There was additional discussion regarding the original phasing schedule, cost factors involved, scope of work during the process, street closure options, and projected timeframe for completing each phase without funding restrictions.

Council Member Perrow indicated he would like to see how a two way traffic flow with connections will work. Specifically, how connections to Rivermont and the Expressway will work and an implementation plan for the conversion. Mr. DeBerry indicated he would forward the recent traffic study to the PDC.

**Roll Call:**

Council Member Johnson indicated need to discuss gas metering system in one of the neighborhoods with Ms. Svrcek.

Council Member Perrow inquired about changing the date of the next PDC meeting. Agenda items will be determined and the date stands at November 11th unless otherwise notified.

**Next meeting:** November 11, 2014