

**COMMON COUNCIL
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT AND PARKS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 21, 2025**

The City of Noblesville Council Downtown District and Parks Committee met pursuant to public notice on Friday, February 21, 2025 in room A213 at City Hall, 16 South 10th Street. Aaron Smith called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. with Dave Johnson, Darren Peterson, and Megan Wiles present.

Also present were City Clerk Evelyn Lees, Deputy Mayor Matt Light, Community Development Director Sarah Reed, Street Commissioner Patty Johnson, City Engineer Alison Krupski, Engineering Project Manager Andrew Rodewald, Parks and Recreation Director Savannah Wines, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Charlie Elliott, Communications Director Lexie Rock, Community Engagement Manager Aaron Head, Noblesville Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bob DuBois, SERVE Noblesville Executive Director Patrick Propst, Noblesville Creates Executive Director Ailithir McGill, Noblesville Main Street Board Treasurer Chris Theisen, Noblesville Main Street Executive Director Kate Baker, Noblesville Preservation Alliance Executive Director Joshua Glassburn-Ruby, and Hamilton County Historical Society Executive Director Sandy Lynch. Brooks Solgere attended as an interested citizen.

Ms. Baker, Mr. Glassburn-Ruby, Mr. Head, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Propst, and Mr. Smith also serve on Noblesville Main Street's Design Committee. This meeting was considered an official meeting of that committee for Noblesville Main Street's purposes.

1) Introduction of Members and Stakeholders.

Mr. Smith welcomed those attending. Everyone introduced themselves. Mr. Smith stated the committee was formed in 2017 by then Council President Wiles to enhance and beautify the Downtown and has since made great progress.

2) Goals and Areas of Focus for 2025

Mr. Smith stated Park concerns had been added to the committee in addition to Downtown. He stated the main goal for 2025 would be to review and champion the Embrace Downtown streetscape project.

3) Status of Funds

Mr. Light reviewed the status of funds in the Downtown Development Fund. He referred to a handout. He stated approximately \$799,193.00 in unrestricted funds was available this year. He reviewed the 2025 appropriations from the fund, including \$75,000.00 for Downtown program support and \$125,000.00 in non-departmental. He stated more detail would be forthcoming in March. He stated current engagements for Embrace Downtown included contracts with an engineer, architect, and communications consultant. He stated currently there were two funding sources: \$300,000.00 from the Downtown Development Fund, and \$408,342.00 from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. He stated those resources were enough to last the first half of

the year. He stated in the second quarter, the Administration would bring a request for more funding to complete project design and a construction cost estimate for Phase I.

Mr. Smith stated the annual allocation of \$500,000.00 to the Downtown Development Fund came from the City's Food and Beverage Tax revenue, which was appropriate. He stated it meant that not only residents would fund the project, but visitors would also contribute.

4) Embrace Downtown Updates

a. Communications and Outreach

Mr. Head stated he had sent notices to all Downtown business and building owners. He stated he held "office hours" for two hours each week at Noble Coffee & Tea to provide information and answer questions. He stated Main Street had invited him to speak at their business summit. He stated he may attend chamber of commerce meetings or purchase graphics at their luncheons. He stated American Structurepoint had created a website, marketing, and a newsletter. He stated the website was embracedowntownnoblesville.com. He stated anyone could sign up to receive newsletters at the website. Ms. Krupski stated there had not been much response to the office hours yet, but it would be most helpful to find out people's needs and concerns early so that the design could be adjusted as needed. She stated there may be a public information meeting in March. Ms. McGill stated a photo on social media could promote the office hours. Ms. Rock stated the IndyStar, Indiana Business Journal, and the Noblesville Current had published stories about the project, so it had received media attention. Ms. McGill stated the project would be added to the agenda for the Cultural Arts District Council. Ms. Baker stated Main Street also would add it to their agenda. Mr. Smith stated it would be helpful to show people with questions other communities who had completed similar projects, such as Franklin, Lebanon, or Shelbyville. Ms. Baker stated she could access the Main Street network as well.

b. Architectural and Engineering Design Process and Timeline

Mr. Smith asked where Phase I would be. Ms. Krupski replied it is unknown at this time and probably would not be determined until this summer. She stated the goal is to start and finish the construction for Phase I in 2026. Mr. Rodewald stated the firms that were chosen to design the project have already done Downtown projects in Franklin, Lebanon, and Shelbyville, so they were aware of what can be realistically accomplished in a season. He displayed a map of the total Downtown project area. He stated surveyors were working and checking sewer locations for separation. He stated basement surveys would begin soon. He stated the water company would update their mains as a part of the project. He stated it may be possible to add fire protection to the buildings as well. Ms. Krupski stated she was very thankful the water company had agreed to upgrade. Mr. Rodewald stated the construction would be the City's project, and the water company would reimburse the City. He stated there was only a preliminary concept at this time. He stated business owners would be invited to a public information meeting. He stated it was hoped that construction would begin next year. He stated phasing of the project would most likely be block by block. He stated the road could be closed, but closure of the sidewalks would be phased to allow access to businesses. He stated every effort would be made to keep parking when intersection work took place. He stated they expect work to begin with the Downtown

core, then branch out from there. He stated sewer work would occur first, then it would be covered by a temporary sidewalk. There were suggestions for making the public aware of the project and where to find information. Ms. Krupski and Mr. Rodewald welcomed meetings with individuals as well.

5) Parks Master Plan Updates and Timeline

Ms. Wines stated the Master Plan had received helpful feedback. She stated Mr. Elliott was working on benchmarks. She stated the plan would be submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in November. She stated she hoped the plan would be finished in July. She stated the Master Plan would be effective January 1, 2026, which also would be the 100th anniversary of Forest Park. She stated the Master Plan projects ten years into the future, but it is effective for five years. She encouraged the committee to share any feedback they receive on the parks. Ms. Wiles stated she would contact the Boys and Girls Club.

6) Upcoming Parks Programs

Mr. Elliott stated spring would be here soon. He stated the Princess Ball was scheduled for March 16. Ms. Wines stated volunteers were still needed. Mr. Elliott stated the Parks Department was working with Noblesville Creates on Earth Day events and Fairyville. He stated next week was an event to combat invasive plant species. He stated the department was preparing for the annual Easter egg hunt.

7) Other Infrastructure Projects Starting/Resuming in Spring that Impact Downtown

Mr. Rodewald gave an update on the Federal Hill to Forest Park Trail and drainage project. He stated the drainage work was 95 percent complete. He stated the trail most likely would be paved in late April. He stated he needed the final design for the decorative crosswalks for the trail. He stated installation of the crosswalks most likely would be in the summer. He stated he hoped the trail would be useable by the first of May for the opening of the Farmers Market. Mr. Theisen asked if there would be signals at the crosswalk on Logan Street. Mr. Rodewald replied yes, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) signals would be installed. Ms. Johnson stated pedestrians must push the button to activate the signal. Mr. Theisen stated there would need to be promotion and education about proper use of the signal.

Mr. Rodewald stated the Conner Street (SR 32) project was not yet complete. He stated a ramp at 8th Street still needs to be redone. He stated INDOT had agreed to add a crosswalk on the west side of SR 19 on Westfield Road, but there was no schedule yet for when the work would be done. Ms. Krupski stated staff would make sure INDOT was aware of the summer event schedule. Mr. Rodewald stated the projects would only have lane closures, not a full road closure.

Ms. Krupski stated work on the Pleasant Street project was accelerating for construction season. She stated the Phase II closure between 13th and 16th Streets would be closed for the rest of this year. She stated soft soils must be compressed before building the road, and the time it took

could not be predicted. She stated the project received Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval. She stated there would be intermittent closures on Pleasant Street and on 19th Street near the post office for water line installation. She stated 19th Street would be closed for three days on or after February 24 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. She stated 13th Street north of Pleasant Street would be closed on March 3 and 4. She stated Phase III construction was taking place mostly offline. She stated SR 32 would be fully closed at Hague Road for construction of a roundabout and two pedestrian tunnels beginning in July. She stated Hague Road only would be closed one month prior. She stated staff was attempting to convince INDOT to move the closures one month earlier, ideally immediately after the Indiana Peony Festival. She stated work on SR 32 in Westfield was delayed for now, but they were trying to coordinate the closures. She stated staff were asking INDOT to change the detour route from SR 38 to 146th Street. She stated maps would be prepared for the public showing alternate routes. Ms. Johnson asked how the project at 146th Street and Allisonville Road would affect planning. Ms. Krupski replied the roundabout at that intersection may not be open by then, which could affect a detour. She stated Phase III was expected to be completed by the end of the year, and perhaps Phase II would be completed as well.

Mr. Light stated repair of the rail bridge should be completed in time for the Duck Race, so the ducks could be dropped from the train once again.

Mr. Johnson asked about a pedestrian bridge over White River. Ms. Reed replied preliminary plans were to build it south of Conner Street, from Maple Avenue to the old Kahlo lot east of Riverview Health. She stated the City may need to match the \$400,000.00 grant award. She stated they hoped to kick off the project on March 20. She stated this grant was for planning and engineering. She stated NKSJ had been engaged and helped with the grant application. She stated this was the second year of a three year engagement. She stated she hoped next year they could receive a capital construction grant. Mr. Peterson asked when the committee would see the results of the east and west gateway studies. Ms. Reed stated they would be presented to the committee. Mr. Smith stated most likely the presentation would be in April.

8) Outdoor Dining Proposal

Mr. Head stated the Courthouse Club restaurant at the northeast corner of Logan and 9th Streets would like to set up outdoor dining in parking spaces on 9th Street. He stated the idea was being evaluated by the Engineering, Street, Fire, and Police Departments. He stated the Courthouse Club had proposed outdoor dining on 9th and Logan Streets, but staff denied the proposal for Logan Street. He stated the proposal could only be for one year on 9th Street because of the coming Embrace Downtown construction. He displayed a potential design for barriers and tables. He stated the proposal would be presented to the Board of Public Works and Safety in March. He stated this type of outdoor dining had not been tried here before, but other communities had. Mr. Peterson stated he preferred the wrought iron fencing used by other restaurants for sidewalk outdoor dining. Ms. Johnson replied the fencing was aluminum and had not been as durable as they had hoped. Mr. Head stated the fencing was not designed for temporary use. There was a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the project.

Ms. Reed left the meeting.

Mr. Head stated the building owners and restaurant owner had been cooperative with staff. Mr. Smith stated this project could help show what the Embrace Downtown project would be like. Mr. Johnson asked how this project would affect the valet parking the Courthouse Club has now. Mr. Head replied the valet parking would end while the outdoor dining was in use.

Ms. Rock left the meeting.

Mr. Smith asked that any feedback on the project be sent to Mr. Head.

9) Stakeholder Updates for Situational Awareness and Collaboration

10) Other New Business

These items were not discussed due to time constraints.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.



AARON SMITH, COMMITTEE CHAIR



EVELYN LEES, CLERK
CITY OF NOBLESVILLE