

CBAC:

Notes from the January 26th meeting. Members present included Tacy Newell, Michael Thom, Donna Speaks, Linda Wurtzburger, Karen Drake with Meghan Dorsett and David Franusich arriving after the meeting began. Staff members Randy Wingfield and Sarah Belcher (Farmers' Market Director) and Valerie Tweedie (Financial Officer), along with Mayor Barber, Councilmen Bishop and Showalter. Other visitors including Lisa Bleakley (Tourism Director), and Councilmen Collins and Huppert.

1. Representatives of the proposed 100 West Main Street project had requested to be on our agenda (see <http://www.100westmainstreet.com> if unfamiliar), but had to cancel that day due to a family medical issue. The group (which included participation by DCI, Inc.) had conducted a market study which had previously been shared with Town Council. Being on our agenda would have been to present the 68-page study and request our advisory group move it back toward council. This study included financial forecasting; however was silent on how to raise ~\$3million (purchase, renovations, initial operating budget) necessary to move it forward. The Mayor indicated he was aware of another entity which now has an option for this property, explaining they were in the due diligence phase and appeared to have required financing capacity.
2. Lisa Bleakley provided an overview of the Virginia Tourism Corporation "Drive Tourism" initiative, noting the Town Manager, Wingfield, Thom, Bishop and others had been involved in the required certification process. This initiative is part of a broader State Tourism Plan (STP) which focuses on making community's more authentic and connected to create an overall visitor experience. A micro grant in the amount of \$10,000 is a near given if applied for by the deadline, with much latitude in how these funds could be utilized. Randy also announced that \$20,000 in grants specifically for non-operation costs for the farmers' market had just been awarded. Group discussion centered around whether to use "Drive Tourism" grant to contract for a "Central Business District Master Plan" or whether some in group, having expertise yet wanting to maintain "advisory" role, and staff dedicated to project could do Master Plan in-house. Also noted "Master Plan" needs to be included in the Comprehensive Plan (which should be updated before summer), yet doesn't have to be complete to be referenced, and that this administrative step could expand grant potentials. Meghan pointed out historical success in local businesses donating materials relative to suggestions around Hickok Street "market" structures for use by farmers' market and for special events such as food truck rodeos, concerts and festivals. She also pointed out that grants could be "stacked" (combined) and often used as the locality's matching-funds portion. Agreeing that how these funds would be used could be decided later, the consensus was to have Lisa, Randy and Tacy draft "Drive Tourism" micro-grant application and share it electronically with all CBAC members for review and allow enough time to file the application early. *(Subsequently, Karen Drake identified a grad student who could assist, if desired.)*
3. Rail 2020 project presentation for Feb. 2 unconfirmed, so that meeting was cancelled. Part of the initiative is now in the phase where they want to engage the wider community.
4. Henry and Mayor indicated council had requested the New River Valley Regional Commission (formerly New River Planning Commission) to identify grants the town is qualified to apply for, and they were expecting feedback soon while expressing hope some would be applicable for CBAC. The NRVRC will be asked to attend future CBAC meeting to bring members up to speed on many of the regional initiatives in progress (Rail 2020, Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan, etc) and grants.
5. Adjourned due to Town Council meeting. Next meeting date not established; "Drive Tourism" grant application will be shared electronically with CBAC (mid-February target).

Linda and Tacy stayed and attended council meeting.

Sue Farrar, director of the Montgomery Museum, presented annual report and announced two new events for 2016 which will be held downtown, as well details about a new history exhibit that focuses on Cambria and the railroad. The events are a Crooked Road concert and a car-cruise in with music and food trucks. Also reported was a grant awarded to make digitalization of family mementos possible to the general public without cost. Want more info? Join the museum or visit their Facebook page and website.

Randy, acting as Town Manager in Barry Helms' vacation absence, informed council of the \$20,000 in grants for farmers' market (excludes use for operating expenses). Noting that grant administration requires a steering committee and public input meetings, the Mayor appointed Sarah Belcher (Farmers' Market manager), Randy, Tacy (CBAC and Planning Commission), and Dr. Pam Ray of the New River Health District (instrumental in providing 2015 bike/walkway and farmers' market grant funding). Henry asked if the steering committee could be expanded, and Mayor said council should submit additional candidate names.

If you want more specifics on either of these two council items (which will affect Central Business District footprints), please see web link to meeting video @ christiansburg.org.