

**MINUTES**  
**Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee Meeting**  
**February 19, 2014, 3:30 p.m.**  
**Council Conference Room – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor City Hall**

The Central City Revitalization and Housing Committee met on Wednesday, February 19, 2014, at 3:30 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Council Conference Room, City Hall.

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Chairman Todd Pierceall  
Councilman Walter Kimble  
Mayor Pro Tem Brenda Craig

**Guests:** Mr. Gerald Sosebee, Gastonia Building & Development Task Force  
Ms. Melanie Stines, Events on Main  
Mr. John Ghencian, EuroStar Construction

**Staff in Attendance:** Mr. Ed Munn, City Manager  
Ms. Melissa Magee, Assistant City Attorney  
Mr. Jason Thompson, Planning Director  
Ms. Rachel Bagley, Managing Executive  
Mr. Flip Bombardier, Assistant City Manager  
Mr. Rusty Bost, City Engineer  
Mr. Tucker Johnson, Civil Engineer  
Police Captain Rodney Aldridge  
Police Sergeant Nancy Capistran

Chairman Todd Pierceall welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

**ITEM 1: Presentation by Building and Development Task Force:**

Chairman Pierceall recognized Mr. Gerald Sosebee, Chairman of the Gastonia Building and Development Task Force (GBDTF) for the presentation. Mr. Sosebee presented the GBDTF's previous requests in response to City staff's earlier follow-up regarding changes to Land Development Policy. The items are as follows:

- The GBDTF agreed that recent State Statutes resolved their original request on 'Change of Use' Inspections.
- The GBDTF requested that the City repeal the Park and Recreation Fee ordinance and refund the revenues from those fees.
- The GBDTF clarified that their request for 'Failed Inspection Notifications' does not apply to subdivisions or site plan reviews. The Task Force requested that notification of a failed inspection be received the next day for a failed inspection and that the specific section of the North Carolina Building Code was to be provided.

The GBDTF also presented three new suggestions for consideration:

- The City implement a "grandfather" status to subdivisions that were approved prior to the implementation of the System Expansion Fee.
- The City establish a policy to reimburse developers for costs of newly installed water and sewer lines.
- The GBDTF move forward with the creation of 'subcommittees' (comprised of private citizens who are engineers, developers, architects, etc.) to review City design standards, compare them to other municipalities, and bring forward recommendations for applicable changes.

**Committee Recommendation:** The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to:

- Forward the request to repeal the Park and Recreation Fees to the Gastonia Planning Commission for consideration; and

- Forward to the City Council Utilities Committee the request to modify the City's Water and Sewer System Expansion Fees.

The Committee also requested that Staff:

- Provide information to the Utilities Committee regarding reimbursement for installation fees of water and sewer lines by developers; and,
- Notify building contractors within 24 hours of a failed inspection, and upon request, provide specific North Carolina Building Code references related to the failed inspection.

Staff reported to the Committee that the process of notifying building contractors within 24 hours of a failed inspection and providing specific building code references is already in place.

**Necessary Council Action:** Approve or reject the Committee's recommendation.

**ITEM 2: IDEAL Application: John Ghencian, EuroStar Construction:**

Chairman Pierceall recognized Ms. Rachel Bagley for staff's presentation. Ms. Bagley advised that Mr. John Ghencian, who owns the property at 200 W. Main (formerly the Trakas law office building), adjacent on the west side to the South Street Plaza Pavilion, has renovated the upstairs of the building into two 750-square-foot apartments and one small office. Mr. Ghencian is in the process of renovating the back of the downstairs area on the first floor into a commercial space. Mr. Ghencian has submitted two applications for up-fit and façade improvements for the two apartments he constructed on the second floor of the building and a third application for commercial space on the first floor. Mr. Ghencian addressed the Committee as to his future plans for the building. The Committee discussed the grant options that staff presented.

**Committee Recommendation:** The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend to full Council to provide a grant of \$7,500 for the up-fit and façade improvement to the two apartments. They postponed a decision on Mr. Ghencian's request for grant assistance on the commercial space until it is completed. They instructed Mr. Ghencian to resubmit the IDEAL application for grant assistance when the commercial up-fit and façade improvements are complete. The Committee will reconsider the third request at that time.

Mr. Ghencian stated he was very appreciative of the Committee's considerations.

**Necessary Council Action:** Approve or reject the Committee's recommendation.

**ITEM 3: Artspace Proposal: Downtown Parking Considerations:**

Chairman Pierceall recognized Mr. Tucker Johnson for staff's presentation. Artspace, a private development firm, would like to develop a multi-story residential building with live/work art studios and possibly include some mixed retail space on the ground floor. They have identified city-owned property at the corner of South Street and Franklin Boulevard as their preferred location for the project. Currently, this site is a parking lot used by downtown businesses and parking for the vehicles used by the City's meter readers. Mr. Johnson presented the Committee with several options, including costs of each option, to offset the impact of converting this parking lot into a multi-storied development.

- Reassign City vehicle parking spaces to public parking spaces at the parking lot on South Street and Franklin Boulevard. Consider relocating the City's meter readers.
- Restripe intersection at Second Avenue and South Street to create additional parking.
- Add additional on-street parking on South Street between Main Avenue and Franklin Boulevard.
- Open the Gastonia Conference Center parking deck and additional surface lot to allow free parking.
- Insure City employees are parking in assigned spaces adjoining the Garland Business Center and City Hall parking lots, not in public parking areas, and assign public parking closer in proximity to South Street.

- Consider expansion of additional parking into the southern-most portion of the City Park on Main Avenue.

The Committee also heard from several concerned members of the downtown community. Members of Saint Stevens AME Zion Church and representatives from Support, Inc., spoke about the impacts to their organizations from the potential loss of parking. Members of the Community Foundation, who are partners with Artspace in this project, thanked those that came and expressed their concerns. Among those who spoke before the Committee were:

Dr. Edward D. Sadler, St. Stephens AME Zion Church  
 Rev. John Sadler, St. Stephens AME Zion Church  
 Mr. Fred L. Lowery, St. Stephens AME Zion Church  
 Mr. Jason C. Hollingshead, H&P Properties  
 Mr. Ryan Karpinsky, Art Station & Zoe's  
 Mr. Nathan Kirby, Developer  
 Mr. Ernest Sumner, Community Foundation  
 Dr. Richard Rankin, Community Foundation  
 Ms. Merryman Cassels, Community Foundation

**Committee Recommendation:** The Committee accepted the discussion for informational purposes, and no action was taken. The Committee further directed Staff to evaluate the comments received at the meeting and continue to look into options and solutions to the concerns raised. Further discussion will continue at the next Committee Meeting.

**Necessary Council Action:** None at this time.

**ITEM 4: Discussion of 2014 Summer Concert Series:**

Chairman Pierceall recognized Ms. Rachel Bagley for staff's presentation. Ms. Bagley provided detailed information, including the estimated event costs, on Options 1, 2, 4, and 5 for the 2014 Summer Concert Series. Ms. Melanie Stines presented information on Option 3. (Descriptions of the options were included in the handouts.)

The Committee reviewed and discussed the options for a summer concert series. Since the Red, White and New Festival is scheduled for July 4, 2014, the Committee discussed having three concerts in May, June, and August, with a potential rain date in September.

**Committee Recommendation:** The Committee voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend to full Council that the City fund three concerts featuring additional intermission entertainment (Option 3) at participation level of \$7,500 per event. The concerts would be held the first Friday in May, June, and August, with a potential rain date in September. Existing and FY 2014/2015 budgets would have to be modified to accommodate City participation in funding.

**Necessary Council Action:** Approve or reject the Committee's recommendation.

**ITEM 5: Other Related Matters:**

Discussion of a proposed Lease Agreement for 212 W. Main was not undertaken and was continued until the next Committee meeting scheduled for March 12, 2014.

Having no other matters to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.