

Downtown Commission – March Updates

TO: Downtown Commission
DATE: March 10, 2017
PREPARED BY: Dana Frankel, Downtown Development Specialist
SUBJECT: Updates on City initiatives relevant to downtown

Pritchard Park

At its Feb. 14 meeting, Asheville City Council approved a budget amendment, in the amount of \$232,349, to establish a capital budget for Pritchard Park improvements. The improvements are designed to contribute to a safe and inviting urban public space.

The approved plan was revised from an original plan presented to City Council in December. The revision was informed by public engagement and includes changes to the fencing plan, creating a mulched area on the east side of the park with the addition of boulder seating.

Construction is expected to take place March through May and include improved lighting, landscaping, irrigation, an all-season drinking fountain and fencing to protect a large tree and areas of the landscaping.

The park will not be closed in its entirety during the improvements, though there may be rolling closures to portions of the park while lighting, landscaping and other improvements are installed.

Haywood Street Bond Project

The City's Capital Projects Department is gearing up to hire a contractor for the design of the Haywood Street improvements (street and sidewalk) funded by the transportation bond. The project will be discussed at the next Downtown Design Review Committee meeting (on 3/21) and then at the full commission to get some early feedback.

Downtown Commission Ordinance Amendment

Following the Downtown Commission's recommendation at the February 10, 2017 Downtown Commission meeting, a resolution amending the affiliation requirements for the Asheville Downtown Association seat are proceeding to City Council's Boards and Commissions Committee on March 14, 2017. The amendment requires that the Asheville Downtown Association seat be filled by a board member or executive director of the Asheville Downtown Association.

Enhancements to South Pack Square

On Thursday, March 9, improvements were made to South Pack Square including new benches, new planters (fabricated by a local metal worker) and relocation of the trash/recycling bins to maximize use. Rhubarb is working with the City to maintain the planters.

Earlier this month, signal timing was adjusted at this intersection to maximize pedestrian crossing times.

Goals of these improvements are to enhance safety, reduce congestion and beautify the area.

Project Updates

68 Patton Avenue – Level II Project was approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on February 1 with a vote of 6-1. The applicant plans to go to City Council on March 14 to request the purchase of air rights (602 SF) for the balcony being added onto an existing roof that encroaches over the right of way on Commerce St., as well as easements for the existing columns (16 SF) that are in the sidewalk right of way.

192 Haywood Street – Level III CUP was denied by City Council on January 24 with a vote of 7-0. There are no further updates at this time.

Downtown Open Office Hours:

On the third Thursday of every month, staff is be available at the Pack Square Park Pavilion from 2 – 5 PM to share information, answer questions and discuss ideas about downtown with citizens. On March 16, Sam Powers, Director of Community and Economic Development and Alan Glines, Assistant Director of Planning and Urban Design will be at there.

Other (for discussion during the meeting): Haywood Street Visioning, Parking Study, South Slope Visioning