



# CITY OF HENDERSONVILLE DOWNTOWN ADVISORY BOARD

Downtown Program Office | 125 Fifth Avenue West, Suite 200 | Hendersonville NC  
28792



Tuesday, October 10, 2023 – 4:00 PM

---

## MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – In attendance in person – Chris Cormier, Nancy Neikirk, Phil Wilmot, Aaron Adams, Michele Woodhouse, Jerry Fitzgerald, Caroline Gunther, Joe Dinan, Sam Simmons were present at approval of agenda. John Ryan, Mark Pavao, and Heang Uy joined after approval of agenda.

Absent – Carole Sitzler, Matthew Hickman  
Staff present: Jamie Carpenter, Dakota Parker

### 2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Phil Wilmot made a motion to approve the agenda as accepted. Joe Dinan seconded. All were in favor.

### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Downtown Advisory Board August 2023 Minutes – Joe Dinan made a motion to approve. Phil Wilmot seconded.

### 5. OLD BUSINESS

1. Gen H / Comprehensive Plan Update – J. Carpenter gave an overview of the upcoming meetings and timeline for the Comprehensive plan. Those items were included in the agenda packet. There will be a roundtable with the consultants on November 20 at 9:30am and the downtown advisory board is requested to attend. The board recapped the Council Conversation that had the downtown focus that was held in lieu of the October meeting. Caroline Gunther, Nancy Neikirk, Aaron Adams, Joe Dinan, Sam Simmons, John Ryan and Heang Uy all attended the meeting and discussed what they heard, and reviewed the ‘post it’ board that was generated by the plan consultants from the feedback from the meeting. Some items that were brought up at the meeting are items we are currently working on, and some are items to discuss to have a bigger focus for the board as we make plans for the future workplans:
  - Vacant buildings – This topic came up many times during the meeting. Carpenter noted that people are looking for spaces to go and are attempting to go into the vacant spaces and run into problems that include the condition of the space comparative to the rent being offered and lack of return calls. Suggested that the Community Character Team has been pushing for a vacant building ordinance that would have some penalties for the exterior condition of a building and the planning/code enforcement staff are aware of this interest.

Carpenter noted that there are five buildings on Main Street that are vacant:

- Former Jane Asher Antiques – for lease
- 201 N Main Street (next to Sweet Frog) – for lease – has been vacant for
- Former Village Green Antiques – for sale or lease
- Former Scotties Jewelry (next to Hannah Flanagans) – property owner has plans to renovate building
- 117 S Main Street (Former Jongo Java – next to Never Blue) – listed for sale or lease.
- There are also some buildings on the avenues that are vacant.
- Downtown business resource page – opening a business and directing new businesses to meet with Jamie/ Downtown office early in their stages of opening. The downtown website has information and a business guide, however we run into the problem of new businesses not checking the downtown website. Carpenter noted that she gets referrals from the Chamber and Small Business Center on occasion, and that when the entire community development apartment is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of city hall they will have a better way to direct people to the downtown office. Board members are encouraged to look at the website for recommendations to add - <https://www.hendersonvillenc.gov/downtown-resources/downtown-business-property-resources>
- Discussion on the window project – staff have been working on prints that have gone in the Jane Asher building. Suggestion to add information about calling us for new business interest.
- Recommendation to survey property owners with vacant buildings – ask what their plans are, why do they not have tenants. Discussion among the board that businesses are looking for spaces, they are either not getting return calls from property owners or the price/condition of the building is not suitable for their business.
- Bike Racks – increased visibility, accessibility and locations. Including e-bike parking/racks and making it better for people to bike into town and lock their bike in a safe space.
- Connections to biking / trails and review/discussion on corridors and lighting. Carpenter noted that the pedestrian plan was just updated with recommendations and the board should review that rather than conduct any review of our own.
- Discussion on ‘3<sup>rd</sup> places’ that came up frequently in the input from the Comp-versation meeting. Ways to enhance our outdoor atmosphere downtown – evening hours for businesses, more entertainment options
  - Discussion regarding a ‘late day’ monthly to encourage business owners to stay open during the peak season where the downtown advisory board/staff/partners/merchants can organize on-street entertainment (no closures) and promote those days for enjoyment of downtown. Suggested evening time / later time in summer. Carpenter suggested that this year Terrye Jacobs (event coordinator) is doing a lot with Olde Fashioned Christmas to show it is worth being open. This can be a test case for future events.
- Discussion on South Allen – continuing the serpentine and further connections to Ecusta Trail.
  - Carpenter noted that that topic was a big reason for applying for and receiving funding from the TDA to add the Downtown Master Plan component for the Comp Plan. This will be a big part of the discussion and plans – connecting to trails and connecting districts.

- Brief discussion on social districts – this came up from a few attendees at the ‘Compversation’ – Carpenter noted that this was brought to council recently and there was not an appetite to do it. The board had also considered it when Covid limitations were in place and there was not a desire to move forward with planning for it. The idea came up to do only for special events – there may be some limitations with how the law is setup to allow for it but Carpenter will look.
- Joe Dinan brought up limiting chain / franchise involvement downtown in the ordinance and noted there are some cities that have that in place. Staff requested information that he is aware of for that, as the laws to differentiate types of business would be difficult and limiting on property rights, unsure how they could have that requirement. M. Woodhouse noted that she previously owned a franchise business and the parking limitations would prevent a lot of chain/franchise stores from coming downtown.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Downtown Workplan Updates – Carpenter reviewed the downtown workplan updates that were included in the agenda packet.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT** – Jerry Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn

*The City of Hendersonville is committed to providing accessible facilities, programs and services for all people in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should you need assistance or an accommodation for this meeting please contact the City Clerk no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting at 697-3005.*