

## **FORT THOMAS COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Public Works Committee**

Meeting Summary

October 8, 2019 4:30pm

Ken Bowman, Chair

Adam Blau

Jeff Bezold

Others in Attendance: Eric Haas, Mayor

Ron Dill, CAO

Joseph Ewald, Finance

Chris Manning, Human Nature

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The meeting agenda was a continuation and an update regarding projects/initiatives related to roads, utilities and city-owned buildings. Items discussed included:

#### **Review of Property Assessment and Franchise Fee Policies**

Staff shared an update on research related to the current assessment policies, procedures and revenue associated with street improvements, and also the current franchise fee policies and revenue related to franchise fees from utility providers, such as Duke and cable. The research is an outgrowth of concerns that have been expressed by residents regarding assessments, particularly owners of corner lots and large, oddly configured lots. The idea is that increasing franchise fees slightly might allow for the assessments to be reduced or eliminated. Fort Thomas is the last city in Kentucky that uses assessments like this, even though it has generally worked very well.

After some discussion, it was agreed that a hybrid approach of increased franchise fees and reduced assessments would be explored. Staff will look at a couple of different scenarios and report back. In addition, it was agreed that no interest loans could be part of the updated policy for qualifying lot owners.

#### **Community Plan/Grand Avenue Road Diet and Roundabout**

Staff shared an update on discussions related to Grand Avenue improvements, between Highland Avenue and South Fort Thomas Avenue intersections, which was a high priority in the Community Plan, to improve safety and slow traffic. There were two parts to the discussion – a road diet to the length of Grand and a roundabout at the Highland & Grand intersection.

The road diet is an idea that was explored 15 years ago, and staff shared some of the engineering boards that were produced at that time. The diet involves reducing the road from four traveling lanes to two lanes, with a third turning lane added at major intersections. It also involves adding on-street parking in some areas and 4' bike lanes on each side.

The roundabout idea at Highland & Grand is something that the Mayor explored with Rob Hans, in an effort to address complaints from the community about traffic flow and the length of some left turn movements. Rob put together a preliminary layout plan to test the scale and function of an offset roundabout, which would minimize impacts to adjacent properties.

Both ideas had been shared with Bob Yeager of KYTC in a recent meeting, and were favorably received. Similarly, the committee's response were very positive, and it was agreed to take the next step and discuss both in more detail with the City Engineer, CT. The one concern that was shared was related to the pedestrian crosswalks and safety at the roundabout, which needs to be studied in more detail moving forward.

### **Community Plan/Route 8/6335**

Staff shared an update on the future of Rt. 8/6335 regarding the landslides, temporary closure and future viability of the road. The Mayor, Ron and Chris had recently met with Bob Yeager of KYTC to discuss this, and they were cautiously optimistic following that meeting. The Transportation Cabinet, KYTC, has been burdened with the growing maintenance needs of the unstable road for many decades, and given the significant reduction in traffic uses, along with the increased traffic on other north-south arteries such as I-471, AA Highway and US 27, it is difficult to justify more investment in Rt. 8 from a transportation standpoint. At the same time, it is unacceptable to the City, County, utility companies, and private property owners to have a road that is closed off to through traffic.

So, with all of this in mind, the City's approach with KYTC is to build a partnership of the City, County, Southbank Partners (who leads the 6-city Riverfront Commons vision) and utility companies to work with KYTC to reopen the road, slow traffic, and work toward the long-term vision outlined in the Community Plan of the road being more of a park road, with 2-3 stops for crossings and trailheads, where connections to/from the community are envisioned at Tower Park and Highlands Campus.

This approach was viewed positively by Bob, and he agreed to share some preliminary findings with the City of an engineering study that is currently underway, before the study is finalized. The committee agreed with this approach and asked to be kept updated as this unfolds. All agreed that this partnership approach is much more desirable and productive than taking an adversarial approach with KYTC.