

Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team
MINUTES
Thursday, January 4th, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Katie Zefran called the Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team meeting to order at 6:02pm.

ATTENDEES: Katie Zefran, Deb McNamara, Erin Debish, Amy Bean, Lauren Canfield, Chris DeGonzague.

ABSENT: Susie Atcavage, Juliann Doyle

MINUTES: Deb McNamara made a motion to approve 11.2.23 Minutes; seconded by Erin Debish. All in favor 3-0. No opposition. Motion passed.

A. CENTER STREET PARK

FCOTAT still has not received word on the original DCED grant for the Center Street Park Project. Katie Zefran has reached out to Representative Jonathan Fritz regarding the status of the grant money. She is still waiting on a response. Deb McNamara recommended that Katie reach out to Senator Lisa Baker as well. Deb has submitted a second grant for the Park project through the Local Share Account (LSA) which is also administered by DCED. No word on the reception of this grant yet. Deb mentioned the only stumbling block with the 2 grants already submitted is that they won't cover the same things like sculptures, water features, etc. FCOTAT can look to other grants for coverage of those items.

B. ERIE STREET TO MAIN STREET SIDEWALK PROJECT (Deb McNamara)

Chris DeGonzague told FCOTAT that at a special meeting on January 29th he hopes Council will approve the direction of Erie Street to one way heading south (Grande Ave toward Center St.). Erin Debish recommended that Council and FCOTAT contact the residents on Erie Street regarding the plans for all the changes to Erie St. as soon as possible. Chris D. agreed to contact town solicitor Marissa McAndrew regarding this process.

C. FOREST CITY SCULPTURE TRAIL

The Team hopes to receive word on the latest grant from the newly formed Susquehanna County Tourism Agency in January. This money will come from the room tax collected in Susquehanna County and will be allotted for the second sculpture of FCOTAT's Sculpture Trail Project. The Team will work with the Forest City Area Historical Society and sculptor Scott Nicols to create a coal mining inspired sculpture which will be placed at the Erie Street Trailhead on the D&H. Deb will reach out to Pittston's mayor for advice on how to proceed with the

following sculptures which the Team hopes will line Erie St. and Center St. up across Main St. to the Center Street Park.

The unveiling of the first sculpture was held on December 9th, 2023. It was a well-attended ceremony drawing much attention to the sculpture and the main trailhead in Forest City.

D. FACADE PROGRAM

Katie Zefran reported from an email sent by Valley in Motion's director Gus Fahey that the facade program was well received with 15 projects completed and 3 projects in progress with hopes to be completed by February 2024. There was no mention if Borough Council approved this program again for the 2024 year.

E. MURAL PROGRAM

Katie mentioned that a client of hers is a world renowned mural artist with focus on honey bees. His work can be seen on his website The Good of the Hive. She hopes to get Forest City on his waiting list.

F. JUNIOR BOARD

A resolution has been drafted and will be presented at the February Council meeting for approval. Some students from the Forest City Regional school district have already expressed interest in the program. FCOTAT hopes to gain approval from both FC Council and FC School Board by the end of February. Amy Bean will confirm with FC secretary Sharon Vannan that the resolution is in fact on the Council's February agenda.

G. EAST SIDE STREETScape PROJECT

Deb McNamara talked with April Hannon from PennDot. April is recommending that the Borough hire a landscape architect. She also recommended that this be done sooner than later since the Borough has plans to update the sidewalks on the East side of Main Street already. April told Deb that Kingston is doing the same type of project and she shared Kingston's plans. Deb will forward the plans to Council president Chris DeGonzague. A discussion was had regarding the narrowness of the sidewalks and the removal of the trees. Chris mentioned replacing the trees with large planters. Erin Debish suggested trash and recycling receptacles for Main Street to hopefully deter people from throwing trash into the planters. Chris is concerned with people dropping their household garbage in the street receptacles. More discussion will be needed regarding this topic.

H. CREATIVE COMMUNITIES GRANT

Katie Zefran reported from an email from Gus Fahey stating "with FCOTAT's help, we submitted a Letter of Interest to the PA Council of the Arts for their Creative Communities Initiative. We will be notified by February 12th if Forest City (and Carbondale) is selected for a site visit, the next round in the application"

This grant is also for the Sculpture Trail Project.

I. MARKETING PLAN

Social Media - The Team decided to wait until the approval of the Junior Board program with hopes that the students will help with the Social Media project.

Column in the Forest City News - Lauren Canfield, FC Librarian offered to write the column. The policies and procedures for this program are a work in progress. Erin will get the deadline from the Forest City News and she and Lauren will come up with a timeline for the column. Erin also suggested a picture should be submitted with the column to make it more attractive for readers.

NEW BUSINESS/PROJECTS:

At the unveiling of the first sculpture on Dec. 9th Deb received a lot of feedback from the public regarding the lack of bike racks on Main Street. She noted that people are coming up from the trail but are not exactly patronizing the businesses as they have nowhere to put their bikes. Deb believes this to be a high priority project since the public is talking about it and asking for it.

The Team is currently looking for locations on Main to put some racks. It was also mentioned that the Team ask community entities to donate the racks as a way to give back to the community and advertise their organization.

PUBLIC COMMENT OR QUESTIONS:

In the email that FCOTAT received from Gus Fahey, he shared a link to the T-Mobile grant that is due by March 31st. The Team shared the grant program with both Chris DeGonzague and Amy Bean and will look to pursue the grant.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next FCOTAT meeting will be held on Thursday, February 1st, 2024 at 6pm at The Forest City Borough Building 2nd floor Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT:

Erin Debish made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Deb McNamara seconding. All in favor 3-0. Zero opposed. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.