

Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team
MINUTES
Thursday, January 5th, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: Chairperson Katie Zefran called the Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team meeting to order at 6:01pm.

ATTENDEES: Katie Zefran, Deb McNamara, Erin Debish, Susie Atcavage, Amy Bean, Lynn Conrad, Hannah Debish, Paul Daugevlo, Christopher Ginton, Richard Suraci (Kost Tire), Nick Cost, Gus Fahey, Valerie Senese, and Andrew Panessa (Kost Tire). ABSENT: Juliann Doyle

MINUTES: Susie Atcavage made a motion to approve 12.1.22 Minutes; seconded by Erin Debish. All in favor 4-0. No opposition. Motion passed.

A. ADMINISTRATION (Katie Zefran)

The letters to the Forest City's business district along with letters to partnering entities are printed, signed and ready for mail. Katie Zefran stated that these letters are our formal introduction to the community. Katie welcomed Nick Cost from Forest City Parks and Recreation and asked Nick to kindly assign someone from Parks to sit on the Center Street Park Steering Team. Nick volunteered himself to sit on the team.

B. MARKETING TEAM: (Juliann Doyle)

Due to the absence of Juliann Doyle the marketing team did not have a report.

C. CONTINUED BUSINESS/PROJECTS

Lynn Conrad told us the Erie Street Welcome Arch is fabricated. Katie Zefran will contact Andy Falonk regarding the next steps. The Team decided that this project will be held off until the spring due to the digging and concrete that needs to be used to install the archway.

Erin Debish reported on the Center Street Park project. She reached out to Paul Bechtel from McLane Associates, a landscape engineering firm, after the last FCOTAT meeting. Paul has since replied with a proposal for the park design and deliverables. The total cost of this proposal is \$2455.00. Paul recommended that the FCOTAT contact Emily from PA Recreation and Park Society as they have a grant opportunity (RecTap) specifically set up to cover this type of proposal. Erin has tried numerous times to contact the PRPS to no avail. She will continue to reach out for more information but encourages the Team to lean on the GFCBA for the funds. In 2022, the GFCBA ran a fundraiser specifically for the Center Street Park project. The event raised \$1700. The

Team decided to ask the GFCBA to pitch in the remaining \$755 for the proposal to get the ball rolling. Susie Atcavage, president of the GFCBA will bring this to their January meeting for a vote. Nick Cost had concerns regarding the stairs that run alongside the Park as the stairs need repair. The Team explained to Nick that the stairs have now become part of the Park project and will be included in the DCNR grant that is written to complete the project. Deb McNamara suggested to Nick that any money that FC Boro had set aside for the stair project be used as match money for the grant. Gus Fahey of Valley in Motion chimed in saying matches are important for a strong grant application as are separate, specific fundraising events. He said this is a great opportunity to “unlock a ton of money”.

Nothing new to report on the sidewalk from Erie Street to Main Street. This project is a GO!

No official word yet on the reception of the Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau Room Tax Grant for the Trailhead Sculpture; however rumor has it that the FCOTAT did not receive any money. Deb McNamara is hoping to lean on the Rail Trail Council if that is the case. The Executive Director of the RTC was present at the meeting and she is in full support of the project. Valarie also stated that the RTC is committed to better security at the FC Trailhead as vandalism has been an issue. She stated that security cameras will be installed and she hopes to work closely with the FC Police Department. Susie Atcavage said that the 25% match that the GFCBA had declared is still committed to that project.

Erin Debish will reach out to Machi Systems regarding their offer for a pro bono social media presence for the FCOTAT.

Gus Fahey of Valley in Motion had a full report of the facade program for the Team. Gus went on to say the facade program has a 4 member design team. This team reviewed the applications and ranked them according to a set criteria. 20 applications were received. 12 received a notice to proceed with their project. These building owners have 12 months to complete their projects and once completed they will be reimbursed 50% up to \$5000 through the program. The money for the facade program was obtained through the Boro’s Covid Relief Fund and totalled \$46,000. The remaining 8 applications would require \$23,000 more and the facade team is looking to the Boro to renew the program for 2023. Gus is suggesting a smaller match for the remaining 8.

Hannah Debish an 8th grader at Forest City Regional has taken on leadership of the FCOTAT Junior Board. She reported that she has asked a teacher to be their advisor and is looking to recruit some students.

D. GRANT TEAM (Susie Atcavage)

Nothing new to report.

NEW BUSINESS/PROJECTS:

Lynn Conrad told the Team that she and Valarie Senese of RTC are working on a historical, interpretive sign for the Forest City Trailhead. This sign will display our rich coal mining and railroad history. Lynn is also working with the Forest City Area Historical Society on this sign.

PUBLIC COMMENT OR QUESTIONS:

Richard Suraci and Andrew Panessa of Kost Tire and Auto attended the meeting to let the Team know that the bike repair station is a priority for the company and have committed completion for April 15th, 2023. This bike repair station will allow for 24 hour access and will act like a kiosk with air for tires and select tools that bikers may need to make repairs. Susie suggested that Richard use the GFCBA marketing team to “create a buzz” around the project. Richard also congratulated the Team on their efforts to move the town forward. He stated that FCOTAT has full support from the Kost organization and the Kost family. Kost Tire is celebrating 85 years in business.

Valarie Senese commented that she is grateful for the Forest City Outdoor Town Action Team and is proud of Forest City Borough’s support of this team.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next FCOTAT meeting will be held on Thursday, February 2nd, 2023 at 6pm at Elegante’s Pizzeria.

Katie Zefran and Deb McNamara will attend the FC Boro Council meeting on Monday, February 6th. The Center Street Park Project will be the main topic.

ADJOURNMENT:

Erin Debish made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Susie Atcavage seconding. All in favor 4-0. Zero opposed. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:52pm.