

PRESENT Doreen Albee, Josh Janese, Rick Haight, David Giusiana, Joe Sorce, Shannon Fundis, Donna Vazquez, Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Candella

EXCUSED Nick Schaefer

CALL TO ORDER Doreen Albee called the meeting to order at 6:47pm.

MINUTES A motion was made by Rick Haight seconded by Doreen Albee and passed unanimously to approve the November 13, 2023 minutes. Josh Janese, Joe Sorce and David Giusiana abstained.

OLD **Planning Chairperson Appointment**

BUSINESS A motion was made by David Giusiana seconded by Rick Haight and passed unanimously to nominate Doreen Albee as the Planning Commission Chairperson.

A motion was made by Doreen Albee seconded by David Giusiana and passed unanimously to nominate Rick Haight as the Planning Commission Deputy Chairperson.

A motion was made by Doreen Albee seconded by David Giusiana and passed unanimously to schedule a Planning Commission work session prior to every meeting at 5:30pm to review material and be brought up to speed on the projects.

**Lewiston Public Art Project – Art Frames**

Artist, Dan Buttery, reviewed his site plan for the proposed Art Frames. Buttery said I walked Academy Park with Mayor Welch, Shannon Fundis and Rick Haight to choose possible locations; what I have proposed are not set locations, as the concrete for the bike path is not complete yet. I have proposed a second design with a metal planter box at the bottom; this would hide the base and would prevent people from walking into the frames. Low maintenance bushes could be placed inside the boxes.

Albee addressed concerns about the entire area not being protected. Buttery said the bases can be made larger. An overview of the process for the art project was discussed. Buttery stated that the bike path will need to be complete first, along with repair work to the sidewalk along Center Street where it is uneven and water pools. Albee asked that the Department of Public Works be informed on this project and ask for their feedback.

Additional concerns were addressed by David Giusiana on the area surrounding the art frames where people will be walking. Academy Park gets muddy around this time of year through June. I also think the planter boxes will become impractical, and more work to maintain.

A discussion ensued on the proposed position of the frames. Buttery said the frames would be perpendicular to the sidewalk, so they could be viewed as you are walking by. Rick Haight said having the art frames run parallel with the sidewalk would be preferable to me. The art frames could be placed across from existing bench locations, to establish an art gallery effect. I suggest making them one-sided, if they are double-sided, you will need stable ground on the backside. Buttery addressed concerns with the backside of the art frames having nothing on them. Haight suggested a decorative pattern that would be acceptable to the boards; it does not have to be intrusive.

Rick Haight and David Giusiana addressed further concerns about the ground around the art frames if the frames are double-sided; there needs to be a designated area for people to walk and view the frames, this is a liability issue.

Albee asked if the DPW was consulted about the maintenance surrounding the art

frames. Rick Haight asked who would be in charge of the long-term maintenance. Mayor Welch said the DPW is in charge of maintaining Academy Park. Haight asked if this was an official answer. Welch said no I didn't say that, I said they are in charge of the park. Albee mentioned the condition of the Seneca Street Bug Park. There is no stable ground underneath the benches, which is causing them to deteriorate. I would hate to see you invest your time and money and see the same thing happen.

Josh Janese asked if there were any parameters or guidelines for the artwork that will be chosen for the art frames. Lewiston Council on the Arts Director, Maria Fortuna-Dean said we will have guest curators, but stated there was nothing put in place at this time, and would be willing to establish guidelines for the curators. Janese said we are not going to be here forever, it is important to have the framework written down. Giusiana said there needs to be a policy put in place before the Planning Commission can vote on this. Janese added that it does not have to be overly complex; it will provide safeguards for the Arts Council as well as the village.

Doreen Albee asked if the DPW has been consulted on whether or not it is safe to dig in the ground at the proposed locations for the art frames. Rick Haight added that this project runs in conjunction with the bike path, and the Commission has yet to see the bike path plans. Buttery stated that he did not know the design or dimensions of the bike path.

Further discussion ensued on the governing body responsible for maintaining the art frames. Buttery said he would donate his time to maintain the art frames as he does with the Lewiston Landing sign. Giusiana said Buttery is not always going to be here, we need something documented.

A motion was made by Rick Haight seconded by Joe Sorce and passed unanimously to table the item until we receive information on the layout with the bike path, the actual dimensions of the sidewalk and layout instead of conceptual, a policy with the Lewiston Council on the Arts on the parameters and guidelines for the art to be displayed, a long term maintenance plan, and input from the Department of Public Works.

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

**780 Center Street**

Ellicott Development representative, Jeremy Wassell, presented plans to convert all but one 3,100 SF space from commercial to residential apartments at 780 Center Street. This building opened in Fall 2021. We want to fill in the existing drive thru lane on the left hand side that will match the existing façade. Windows will be added to the front and rear of the building to bring light into the proposed apartments, make it more aesthetically pleasing and fit into the neighborhood better. We have done marketing research and the feedback we have received is the lack of visibility from Center Street and how much lower it is from Center is an issue for commercial renters. Post-Covid world, the demand for larger retail spaces has decreased. Residential rental spaces have a strong market place and are doing well.

Doreen Albee asked what the current occupancy rate is. Wassell said it is above 75%. Albee inquired about parking space requirements, stating that 46 parking spots are required. Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Candella said we want to see the parking plans. Wassell said with the change, we would only need 41 spaces; we have enough on site. Rick Haight said I would like to see a site plan with the parking layout.

Albee stated that in the B-1, General Business Zoning district, you might need to apply for variances. Apartments are only permitted on the second floor, only one bedroom apartments are permitted, and eight apartments are greater than 1,000 SF. Candella mentioned that when this plan was originally approved, the

Planning Commission requested that the apartments have two bedrooms instead of one, due to one bedroom apartments predominantly consisting of transients, and they move in and out too often.

Albee asked if there were any plans to add sidewalks on the north and east exposure. Wassell said there are no plans to change the site itself. Mayor Welch said that Ellicott Development planned to put a sidewalk along North 8<sup>th</sup> Street, but the gas company said there are gas lines running along there, so a sidewalk cannot be installed there.

Candella said this is needed with the trouble renting the space. Giusiana said this is an understandable change.

Josh Janese addressed concerns about the morning traffic and the lights shining into the residential properties. Janese asked if they would consider adding plants or greenery to cut down on the light shining into the complex for the morning hours and during winter with the extended periods of darkness. Giusiana asked how the tenants will access the apartments.

A motion was made by David Giusiana seconded by Rick Haight and passed unanimously to table this item with a request to submit an updated site plan with a parking and apartment schedule, and a delineation of variances that are going to be requested.

**DISCUSSION** A discussion ensued on rescheduling the April 8, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting, which is on the same day of the Solar Eclipse with Lewiston being on its direct path. It was agreed upon to reschedule the meeting closer to the event date, and to keep this as a standing item on the agenda for next month.

**ADJOURN** A motion was made by Rick Haight seconded by Josh Janese and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:43pm.

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Shannon Fundis, Clerk