

City of Fruita – Livability Commission

Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2023

Members in Attendance: Dave Karisny, Terri Potente, John Rodwick, Al Condor, Connie Overton, Tom McNamara, Sheila Adamson, Jeannine Purser, Jessica Ruffule, and Chris Taggart

Members Absent: Jamie Vavra (excused absent)

Staff in Attendance: Shannon Vassen, Jennifer Cupp

Guests in Attendance: Jean Rodwick

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Dave Karisny, Chair for the Livability Commission, called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm

II. Public Comment

Mr. Karisny opened the meeting for public comment. After seeing none or anyone that wanted to provide a comment to the Livability Commission, Mr. Karisny closed this item.

III. Review and Approve Minutes from September 21, 2023, Regular Meeting

Mr. Karisny then moved onto the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting. There were no changes to the minutes from the September 21, 2023, meeting. John Rodwick made a motion to approve the minutes, and Tom McNamara seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Member Reports

Mr. Karisny then opened the meeting for member reports.

- a. **AARP Bike Audit Tool Kit** - John Rodwick suggested looking at an AARP Bike Audit Tool Kit and the commission may want to look into implementing that. Also, the AARP has an article on super agers and how to keep the 80+ community mind healthy.

V. Staff Report

Shannon Vassen, staff liaison to the Livability Commission, provided a brief update to the group. Highlights of the update included:

- **Budget Process and 2024 Capital Projects** – Mr. Vassen informed the commission that he had been working on the 2024 Budget and it's the largest budget Fruita has ever had at \$42 million dollars and a lot of it is capital projects. Some of those projects are:
 - 19 Road – The City will be improving 19 Road, which includes widening and adding turning lanes, which will cost approximately \$6 million.
 - Maple Street Bridge – The next bridge that needs to be replaced is the one on Maple St. just North of Ottley. There is \$2.5 million in the 2024 budget for this

project but the City is receiving Federal money to offset the cost of the new bridge.

- South Mesa St - \$2.5 million has been set aside in the 2024 budget to provide renovations to S. Mesa St. from 6&50 to the Circle. This will include replacing sewer line, changing parallel parking to diagonal parking, adding continuous sidewalks, and adding planters.
 - Reed Park – There is \$2.5 million set aside for the renovation of Reed Park. These renovations include new bathrooms, sidewalks, a mini-pitch court, wheels park, outdoor shelters, and new playground equipment.
 - Sewer Project – Mr. Vassen explained that there is a large sewer project happening in the City next year. The City will be replacing the remaining clay sewer pipe with a more sustainable and modern pipe. The old clay pipes present a hazard to the City and are expensive to fix.
- **City Council Elections 2024** – Mr. Vassen informed the group that there will be an election for a new Mayor and City Council members in 2024. Mayor Kincaid and Councilmen Kreie are term limited and Councilmen Hancey and Breman’s seats will be open. The City will hold an election in April for Mayor and 3 Councilmen seats. There will also be a Tabor measure on the ballot.
 - **Mulberry Street Parking** – Mr. Vassen informed the commission that the City had recently rented space on S. Mulberry St. for temporary parking. The City also purchased a lot at 169 S. Mulberry St. and will be turning part of that lot into parking as well. Mr. McNamara asked if the City was going to tear down the existing building. Mr. Vassen said he wasn’t sure what the plan for the entire space was. Mr. McNamara thought that would be a great location for apartments. Mr. Vassen explained that there were apartments going up at both 18 Road and on E. Aspen St.
 - **Questions for Staff** – Mr. Vassen asked if anyone from the group had questions for him.
 - Mr. Rodwick asked about Little Salt Wash Park and if there would be any additions to it. Mr. Vassen said once Reed Park was completed there was a lot near Little Salt Wash Park that will be incorporated into the park. The City is looking at designs for the property.
 - Mr. Rodwick asked about the Mountain Properties. Mr. Vassen said that the City Council had approved a resolution to divest the City of the properties. They had offered it to various state and federal agencies, but no one wanted to assume the liability of maintaining the dam.
 - Mr. McNamara said he heard rumors that the City was putting in parallel parking on Aspen St. and that FHW was buying the FCC. Mr. Vassen said that neither was true.
 - Mr. McNamara wanted to know if the City was aware that the new manholes

on Maple St. catapult you to the right if you hit them while you are driving. Mr. Vassen said that he wasn't aware of that but would put in a note with Public Works. Mr. Karisny said that the Public Works website has a tool where you can put in your concern and that they are very good at responding.

VI. Discussion Items

a. Livability Index Score –

John Rodwick talked about the Livability Index Score that was just announced. The new score for Fruita is 56/100, it was previously 54/100. Affordability of housing was a major contributor to the score being lower. All cities in the valley scored roughly the same, with Palisade being the lowest. In the state, Aspen scored highly with a 73/100. Mr. McNamara asked how big of a factor housing was. The housing score was 41%. The group thought that the results warranted more discussion at another meeting, after they had a chance to review the Index. Mr. Rodwick said the Index measures things like 0-step entrances, amount of multi-family housing, housing costs, and other varieties of data. Dr. Taggart asked if there were suggestions to present to local government to make changes on why we didn't get a great score. There was some discussion around the data that they were gathering and what the commission can use. Mr. Vassen will send out the Index and the committee will discuss it at the next meeting.

b. Year-end Wrap Up

Mr. Karisny went over the initiatives of the past year.

i. Adopt A Trail Program –

The Adopt A Trail program was quite successful with many trails being adopted. Mr. Rodwick wanted to know if there would be signage for those who have adopted trails. Mr. Vassen said that once the group has adopted for one year, they will get signage and recognition from the City Council. There are three groups that have been at it for over a year, including the Fruita Seniors. Kimberly Preisser said that they have increased their group from 1 to 10 members and are possibly looking to adopt another trail. Some trails are clean, and others are more heavily trafficked, making them a little more difficult to maintain.

ii. Farmers Market Booths –

Everyone volunteered for the Farmers Market booth and the observations from the booth were that everyone who visited the booth hadn't lived here for very long. Mr. Karisny thought the maps, swag, and gravel guides went over well and that more would be needed for next year. AARP information was also good, but it was hit and miss on who wanted to take those. Mr. McNamara said that when he ran the booth, they didn't have a tent and they couldn't find the swag. They ended up using the swag from the chamber. Mr. McNamara said that they needed something to draw the kids over – candy, coloring books, swag – and

they bring their parents. Next year sharing the Farmers Market booth times with other commissions may be good so that they would have the opportunity to join the Liability Commission and advertise what they do.

iii. Proactive Wellness -

The Commission invited various speakers from groups within the community that help seniors to speak at commission meetings and discuss proactive wellness measures. Some of these speakers included Dr. Klein from FHW, Katie Skalla with A Little Help, and Joshua Steward with the American Red Cross. This was a tie in to try and address loneliness and wellness in the senior community in a comprehensive way. Some of the suggestions were: food bank, meals on wheels, mutual aid partners, tech support for seniors, although this is beginning to be addressed within the community. The group needs to decide where they would like to go next with this idea and what other groups may be helpful.

VIII. Action Items

a. Cancellation of December Meeting –

There was discussion around the December meeting being cancelled. It was decided to cancel the December meeting. The next meeting will be held January 18, 2024.

VIII. Adjourn

There were no other items discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

