



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Councilors

From: Rich Olson, City Manager
Deborah Malenfant, Elizabeth City Downtown Inc.

Date: April 20, 2017

Re: Presentation/Discussion - Colonial Avenue Alleyway Project

BACKGROUND:

The alleyway between Colonial Avenue and Elizabeth Street is owned by the City of Elizabeth City. In the past, the City has implemented encroachment agreements with businesses to utilize the alley for serving their patrons, thus expanding the footprints of their businesses. Alcoholic Beverage Control rules and regulations required the construction of fencing to divide the spaces (because the serving of alcohol has to be in a "secured" location.) Two businesses currently have encroachment agreements with the City for the use of the alleyway. Each area is divided by a wooden fence that spans the width of the alley.

Recently, a property owner decided to develop a previously vacant and unutilized structure near the rear portion of the alleyway (behind Hoppin' Johnz and across from the rear of Coasters). The intended use is for a microbrewery. The only access to the business is via the alleyway. This presents a potential public safety hazard that necessitated a change in the way the alleyway is currently being used, along with review and revision of encroachment agreements. Public safety requirements with regard to ingress and egress require a clear means of ingress and egress in the case of emergency. Fire Code requires ten feet of clear pedestrian ingress/egress spanning the length of the alley. The alleyway is twenty feet wide.

Numerous meetings were held with representatives from Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc., Elizabeth City Fire Department, the City Manager's Office, City Planning and Inspections Departments, Pasquotank County Health Department, Alcohol Beverage Control Commission, Alcohol Law Enforcement, property and business owners to discuss and evaluate options that would allow for use of the alleyway for patrons and still ensure public safety.

ANALYSIS:

Elizabeth City Downtown Inc. served as the project management entity and, with input from the above agencies and individuals, developed a plan. The recommended layout concept is attached. The plan allows for individual fenced areas for interested restaurant/pub-type businesses in the alleyway and still provides for the required ten feet of pedestrian ingress/egress from Colonial Avenue to Elizabeth Street. Five businesses have indicated an interest in installing fencing and entering into an encroachment agreement with the City. The plan meets all regulatory requirements.

The transformation and beautification of the alleyway will recreate the space as a combination pedestrian walkway/pass through from Colonial Avenue to the newly landscaped Elizabeth Street gateway that also serves the businesses located on the alleyway.

The transformation will create a much more pleasing visual area with a vibrant energy and destination for patrons and visitors to downtown, specifically the restaurant and brewery areas.

Specific aspects of the project include:

- Removal of existing wooden fencing currently located in alleyway
- Removal of existing black aluminum fencing currently at the Colonial alleyway entrance
- Cleanup of alleyway
- Removal of brick pad bump out obstruction
- Installation of four, 4-foot high Black Sierra aluminum sections of fencing for five businesses – Dimensions to be approximately 35' x 10'
- Gates for each fence to conform to Fire Code requirements – between 32" and 48", opening outward with panic hardware installed, spring-loaded
- Exit signs permanently attached to each gate meeting NC Fire Code requirements
- Installation and anchoring of all fencing/gates
- Three trash area screenings for restaurants/businesses to enclose temporary trash and grease receptacles in the alleyway
- Installation and anchoring of all trash area screenings
- Two bollards to be installed on the Elizabeth Street end of the alleyway, along with No Parking signs in front of each end to allow room for emergency personnel access.
- Striping of the concrete at the Elizabeth Street end of the alleyway indicating No Parking zone.
- Industrial professional grade string lighting for alleyway (to be installed and maintained by City of Elizabeth City staff)

The project is a partnership between Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc., the City of Elizabeth City, the Elizabeth City Area Committee of 100, and property owners. River City Youth Build and other volunteers will also assist with the project. There will be no direct costs incurred by the City for this project. It is being funded by the Committee of 100, Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc., and the participating property owners.

The project was reviewed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission on April 13th.

Anticipated start date for the project will be the beginning of June.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

At this time, no City Council action is requested. This item is being presented for informational purposes only.

Attachments:

- Photos of Current Alley (4)
- Alley Encroachment Draft Solution
- Alleyway Rendering 1 (no lights)
- Alleyway Rendering 3 (with lights)











