



SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
May 22, 2023, at 8:30 a.m.
Municipal Building Conference Room
16 S. Main Street
MINUTES

Downtown Waynesville Commission (DWC) Chair Jay Spiro called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM with the following members present:

Alex McKay
Jon Feichter
Jeremiah Smith
Joyce Massie
Susanne Blumer
Jessica Garrick

Staff members present: Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager
Beth Gilmore, DWC Executive Director

Others present: Cory Valliancort, Smoky Mountain News

Chair Spiro explained that a time for public comment was included on the agenda and will be a part of DWC meetings from now on. Non-board members who wish to address the commission will be given 3-minutes each to speak at the beginning of monthly DWC meetings. This is consistent with Robert's Rules of Order and in line with the Town of Waynesville's meeting format.

There were no public comments.

Jon Feichter, as a member of the Town Council who will ultimately hear the DWC's recommendation, excused himself from the meeting prior to the discussion. Feichter said he felt it was best so he did not influence the commission in any way.

Commission members discussed the results of the social district survey and next steps.



100 survey responses were received from merchants, property owners, residents of the MSD and employees of Main Street businesses. Of those, 90 percent are in favor of establishing a social district and 10 percent opposed. Detailed survey results were distributed to commission members that included a breakdown of responses, recommended “special conditions” and added comments by survey responders.

Assistant Manager Fowler said if the DWC chooses to recommend that a district be established, it also needs to address three core questions: when will it be active, where does it exist and how should the logistics be handled- for example, does the commission suggest issuing district cups, or stickers?

Spiro asked if there is a consensus for or against establishing a social district.

DWC Member Susanne Blumer said she is not in favor of a social district and would not recommend that it be established.

Fowler referenced a vote among the DWC during a prior meeting, when “two or three” people voted in opposition.

The focus of the discussion turned to the social district boundary. Commission members agreed that the social district boundary should be entirely contained within the Municipal Service District. There was a brief discussion about extending the boundary to include Bogarts.

Gilmore has spoken with some restaurants to find out if they plan to participate if a social district is established but has not yet spoken with Bogarts.

Commission members recommend the boundary should extend from Pigeon to Walnut, and include portions of Church, Miller and Depot Streets (to their intersections with Montgomery Street), and East Street to Wall Street, extending to Wells Events Way. These areas are all located within the MSD. Montgomery Street will be excluded from the DWC’s recommended social district.

With a consensus on a social district boundary, the discussion moved to hours.

DWC Member Blumer suggested that district hours start during the evening, after retail shopping hours- to reduce the burden on store staff having to “police” and clean up spills. Although the option is there



for stores to prohibit patrons from entering with drinks, it also places the burden on them to have to regulate it.

DWC Member Garrick agreed that spills are a real concern and

McKay is surprised that so many voted to have social districts active “all the time” versus only during “special events” – which would be his recommendation.

After some discussion, commission members agreed that although the majority voted in favor of “all the time,” there is no justification for a social district after 10:00 p.m. when retail stores are closed, and all special events have ended.

Chair Spiro noted that ordinances “are fluid” and can be changed by the Town Council at any time, expanded or contracted whatever the case may be. He asked what other municipalities in western North Carolina are doing.

Gilmore shared input from other Main Street community directors about how they are implementing social districts. No one is reporting a spike in crime, or any negative issues.

The commission agrees that maintaining consistent hours every day will make it easier to keep up with when it’s allowed and when it isn’t. Most restaurants open and start serving food and drinks at 10:00 AM.

The commission agreed to recommend that social district hours within the MSD operate from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Sunday.

Discussion moved to how a Downtown Waynesville Social District should operate.

Statute requires that alcohol be served in a cup branded with the name of the social district, as well as the ABC licensed establishment that sold the beverage. The three main options for the commission to consider are:

1. provide nothing and leave it up to participants to meet stator requirements,
2. DWC provides a cup branded with a district logo and participants are responsible for coming up with a branded sticker to affix to the cup, or



3. The DWC provides a sticker with a district logo and participants are responsible for furnishing their own branded cups.

Commission members agree that providing stickers is the most economical way to start.

DWC Member Massie said, “it’s important to note our recommendation does not deviate from the survey results.”

A motion by Jessica Garrick, seconded by Alex McKay, carried unanimously to approve The Downtown Waynesville Commission’s recommendation as follows:

- 1. To adopt a social district within the Municipal Service District (MSD);***
- 2. To operate the social district from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week;***
- 3. To establish the Downtown Waynesville Social District boundary to include Main Street from Pigeon Street to Walnut Street, including portions of Church-, Miller- and Depot Streets to their intersections with Montgomery Street, and East Street to its intersection with Wall Street, and Wall Street to Wells Events Center.***

The DWC will request a public hearing to hear the recommendation during the Town Council meeting on June 13.

A motion to adjourn by Joyce Massie, seconded by Jeremiah Smith, carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jay Spiro, Board Chair

Beth Gilmore, Executive Director