



Courthouse Reuse Committee

Kickoff Meeting

353 N Generals Blvd. Lincolnton, NC 28092

February 11th, 2021

2:00pm

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome & Introduction/Purpose

- In roughly 15 months the existing courthouse building will be vacated. The committee's task is to explore opportunities, discuss thoughts and ideas and brainstorm on the possibilities of what the future use of the building could potentially look like. Formal recommendations are requested to be brought back to the Board of County Commissioners by June 2021.

2. Meeting Logistics

a. Meeting Day/Time and Location

- 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month are open for the majority of the committee members. 2pm and may hold one meeting at the Courthouse for a tour in the near future.

b. Schedule

- Meet once a month regularly and every two weeks on an as needed basis. Attempt to schedule meeting with Ted Alexander, Jason Harpe, and redevelopment professionals that may shed some additional light and expertise within next two weeks.

c. Virtual Options

3. What are others doing? A quick overview of the research

- Brief coverage of research report on other court buildings reuse options in NC counties and other counties across the U.S. Several models of programmed use of space were highlighted including museums, retail, office space, loft living, library usage, nonprofit businesses usage, etc.

4. Roundtable Discussion

a. Governing Bodies (County Commissioners / City Council)

- City of Lincolnton Representatives mentioned the attractiveness of a mixture of uses including retail, office, and event space. These options help generate revenue for better long term sustainability of the building being in operation. Also, the buildings geographic

location in the city center is a focal point and should be marketed as a destination for attracting visitors and commerce. Incentives at the City level with small business may be an option to help incentivize the initial startup of retail in the space. The Historical Association has expressed interest in a museum space. The library needs in East Lincoln are seemingly more than that of center city Lincoln. Discussion around the Electricities® Cooperative and potential funding for similar projects was had. City Manager to communicate information about this organization and what they may be able to provide to County Manager's Office.

- Lincoln County Representatives echoed many of the city's comments. Incentives through the city and potentially LEDA could help draw businesses to the location. Consideration should be given to the cost to renovate the building, but also the ongoing maintenance. Recent city and county parking improvements in strategic areas of downtown, will provide parking for visitors that may be attracted to a new use of the building. Green space should be utilized as part of any project that occurs on the property. No single entity or organization will be successful in taking on this amount of square footage. A mixture of uses and tenants would be more viable. The potential for Cooperative Extension offices relocating to the building could make room for additional growth space for development services related county departments at the Citizen's Center.

b. Business & Economic Development

- Chamber of Commerce and Community and Economic Development stakeholders mentioned having diversity within the courthouse building and employing a model that would put standards in place to help ensure not only a self-supporting operation, but sustained businesses. Small business component could be explored to utilize incubators, shared services, and business startups. Upper tier businesses will create attractive opportunities for visitors to a destination. Downtown space is in demand including upper level living.

c. Community Development & Planning

- The courthouse itself could potentially sustain some loft living on the upper floors. In addition, the courthouse should be a venue space. A space for events whether it be on one of the upper floors or make use of the surrounding grounds/lawn space. Play off of the strengths that this location provides.
- Accessibility to the site should be considered. Not only from an ADA perspective but also from a site accessibility perspective with cross walks being addressed and safer pedestrian facilities to access the "square".
- Existing building code can be utilized to help mitigate some potential challenges to renovation obstacles.
- Facilities issues with basement drainage, wiring, and plumbing throughout the building need to be discussed and adequately addressed as a part of any renovation cost projections. In addition, the facility does not have a current set of blueprints or floorplans in the county's possession.

5. Strengths. Opportunities. Aspirations. & Results (SOAR) Analysis Introduction

- Introduced a creative tool that can help the committee brainstorm ideas, obstacles, and how to traverse the process of developing a plan for the future use of the building.