**Town Manager’s Weekly Update**

**1-28-22**

**Estes Drive Improvements**

The Town has taken several steps to respond to the safety concerns that have been raised in light of recent crashes involving motor vehicles and pedestrians, including increased enforcement of crosswalk violations; collaborating with residents near Estes Drive and NCDOT to develop and implement new safety measures and promoting the need for motorists to be active participants in safeguarding pedestrians as they make their way around Chapel Hill.

Town representatives met with concerned residents who live near Estes and NCDOT earlier this week to discuss the residents’ list of proposals to improve safety. Here is the list along with responses from the staff:

* Install radar speed signs in both directions where the current school zone begins. Currently there is a radar speed sign for eastbound traffic only.
* **The staff has ordered two enhanced radar speed signs to be placed along both lanes of traffic.**
* Install a low cost, temporary flashing pedestrian beacon at the western Caswell/Estes crosswalk (near the tennis courts) until a Hawk light is installed there as part of Town’s Estes Connectivity Project. As noted, a vehicle recently hit two middle school student girls in this crosswalk.
* **Two Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB) devices have been ordered and will be installed at the Caswell Crosswalk and the Somerset Crosswalk.**
* Install a Hawk light at the Granville/Estes crosswalk near the Chapel Hill Library entrance. This crosswalk, regularly used by school children and others, lacks any kind of signalization, and lies outside the scope of the Estes Connectivity Project.
* **Staff and NCDOT are reviewing this request and will have a response soon.**
* Re-program the stoplight at the Estes-MLK intersection so that the pedestrian walk signal occurs \*before\* vehicles on southbound MLK Boulevard are invited (by a flashing orange turn arrow) to turn left onto Estes Drive. A pedestrian in this crosswalk was hit last week by a vehicle while turning left from MLK Boulevard.
* **This request is being evaluated by Town staff and NCDOT.**
* Convert the existing 25 MPH school zone on North Estes Drive, which currently applies during specific weekday hours, to a full-time 25 MPH zone.
* **NCDOT will be conducting a speed study to determine the feasibility of this request.**

The Town Manager and staff will provide an update on these efforts at a Council meeting in February.

**Affordable Housing and Community Connections**

9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) applications were submitted last Friday, January 22nd for the Trinity Court and Jay Street affordable housing development projects on Town land.

The application deadline for both our Human Services and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs was last week. We received 50 applications to our Human Services Program in the amount of $1.29 Million. We received 8 funding requests for CDBG funding in the amount of $452,371 total. Council will consider the recommended funding plans for both sources this spring.

We are now accepting applications for the Town’s Summer Youth Employment Program, which provides employment opportunities and job training to low-income youth in the community.

**Public Housing**

Julian Gerner has been hired as the new Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor for Public Housing. Mr. Gerner comes to us from UNC and we are happy that he has joined our team to fill this key vacancy.

**University Place Recycling**

Ram Reality Advisors has agreed to allow the drop-off site to remain on site until May 31, 2022. During that time, we will continue to review the history of the current site as it relates to the property’s SUP and will also work with Orange County to find a replacement site for the recycling center.

**Library Services Task Force**

The Task Force met for the first time this week. The meeting was largely dedicated to learning more about the recent history of library services in our area and to discussing the organization of the task force, including the possibility of adding an outside facilitator to assist with the management of the task force’s work.