

Rotary
Rotary Club of Jonesboro, AR
District 6150, Club 2520



June 9, 2017

Mayor Harold Perrin:

As you know, the Rotary Club of Jonesboro wishes to partner with the City of Jonesboro to upgrade the park at Monroe and Church. This project will be completed as a celebration of our club's 100 anniversary in 2019. As a part of our club's history, the Rotary Club of Jonesboro has supported many city improvements, most recently the Rotary Centennial Park at Craighead Forest. We now wish to assist in the revitalization of downtown by providing a much-needed amenity.

You and your staff have graciously worked with our club to create an appealing site plan that will significantly upgrade the existing space. The upgrades will produce a multi-use park, enhancing downtown Jonesboro by providing a common area to host events and cultural programs.

As part of the site plan, we are requesting that the city close a portion of Monroe Avenue. This will allow the park to have an expanded presence to the front of the Forum plus be more useful and visually appealing in size and scope. Importantly, emergency access will be maintained with the use of removable bollards. Access to the adjoining alley will remain open.

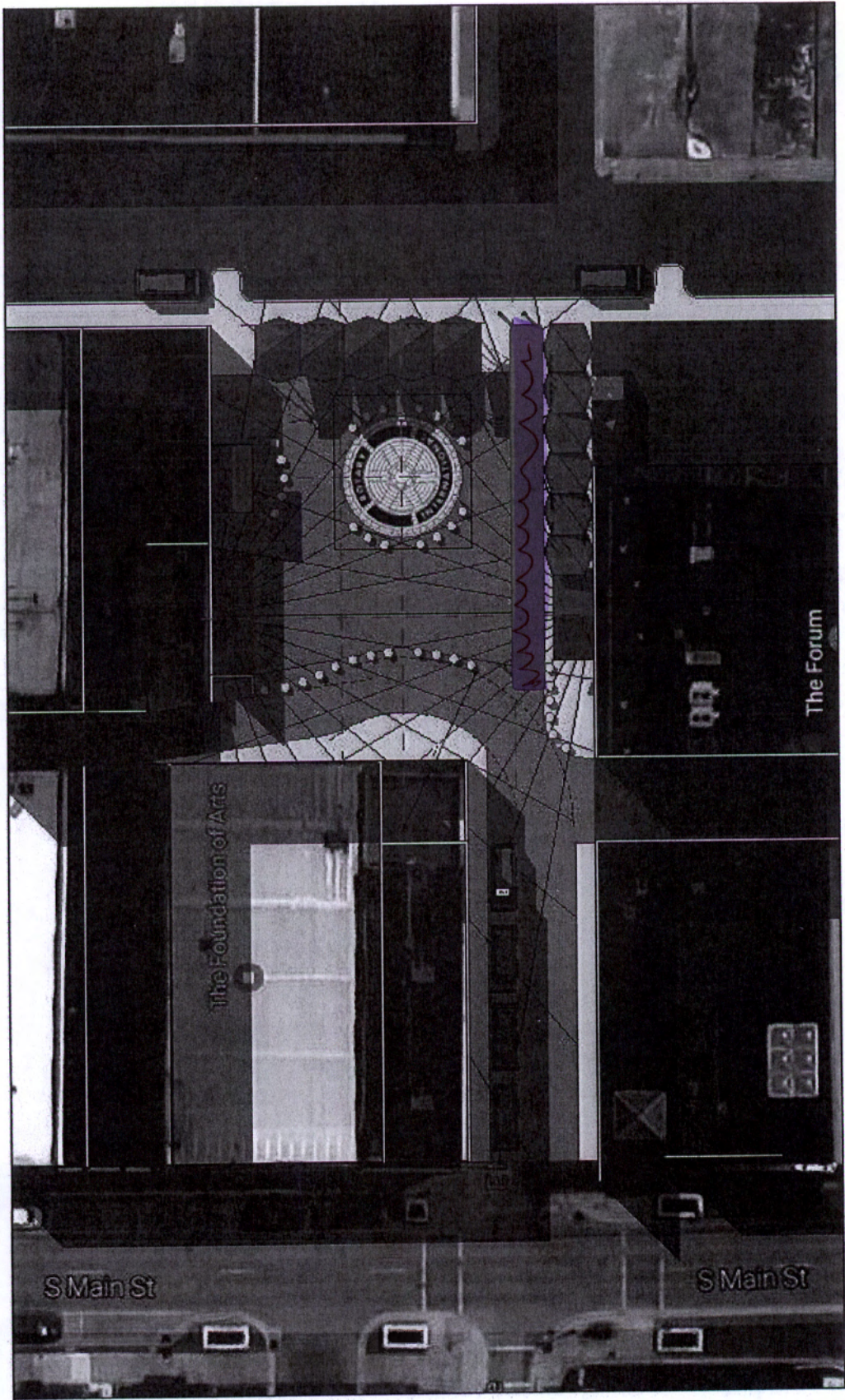
As we have discussed, this closure also provides an opportunity to improve the safety of the children frequenting the Forum. There is inadequate space in front of the Forum and crossing the street creates an unnecessary danger for children and other Forum patrons. The street closure will also improve safety by setting grades to accommodate and improve drainage in front of Forum and entire plaza area. A recessed drop off area is planned for Church Street. All improvements will enhance access and walkability.

It is my understanding that this request will be sent to the Traffic Control Committee. Representatives of the club can be available to present this plan. On behalf of the Rotary Club of Jonesboro, I am requesting the partial closure of Monroe Avenue as an essential component of this downtown improvement.

Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Beverly Parker
IPP, Rotary Club of Jonesboro
Centennial Celebration Committee





The Foundation Of Arts

July 1st, 2017

Dear City Council and Mr. Mayor,

I believe the 30 staff members and teachers, hundreds of volunteers, and thousands of patrons who spend time working, playing, and enjoying the programming at The Foundation of Arts would be best served with the closing of Monroe Avenue from Church St. to the alley. As cast members cross Monroe Avenue to enter The Forum Theater to perform - and students and parents cross Monroe coming and going to class – there is a constant hazard as they dodge vehicles travelling down the street.

With Rotary's project for the Forum Park in its planning stages, there could be no better time than this renovation to include the street's closure in those plans.

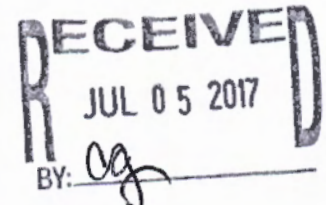
The FOA looks forward to a time when citizens can enjoy an event in the park and also be able to enter the front doors of The Forum Theater safely without concern for passing vehicles.

Thank you for your consideration of this needed improvement to downtown, and we anticipate your decision.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristi Pulliam".

Kristi Pulliam
Executive Director
The Foundation of Arts



Traffic Control Review Committee Minutes

06/12/2017

Attendance:

Kelly Bagget
Steve Tippitt
Ed Tanner
Mark Nichols
Craig Light
Donnie Gibson
Wixson Huffstedler
Larry Jackson
Tracy Clayton
Mr. Brackett - Rotary
Robert Martin - Cromwell

Special called meeting: 2 items

1.) Request to close section of Monroe from the alley back to the east to Church Street with accomadation to emergency vehicles.

Mr. Brackett with the Rotary Club said the club will be celebrating their 100th year in 2019. They would like to do a project to commemorate this. They would like to close a section of Monroe from the alley to the east to Church Street. It would be a 700,000 – 750,000 dollar project. This area is a good central location and walking distance to most things down town. They would have a concrete pad for emergency vehicles. They are asking for participation from the city to close the street and from CWL to move the utilities that are currently overhead and dangerous to underground. The city will be making drainage improvements to the area as well. There would be a drop off zone for Forum activities. They want to do a mural on one side of the old Noble Hotel (Rotary Club had its first meeting there). There would be a stage area. There would also be vendor spaces with power for events such as Alive after Five, Downtown BBQ, Cinco De Mayo, etc. They would improve the lighting in the area with ballard lighting and by re-locating street lights. They would dim the alley way right in front of Foundation of Arts so that it is safer for people heading right out the front door and into the road. They would make sure the turn radius and ballards would make it possible for emergency vehicles to go through. He said the Rotary is fully committed to this project. They have already communicated with the neighbor on one side and have their cooperation and will communicate with the other neighbors since making this change could possibly affect them. Time line wise the project would begin in early 2018 and last about 18 months. In order for grants to be established in time, this would need to go to Council on July 6th and passed with only one reading and with an emergency clause.

There have not been traffic counts but Mark doesn't think closing the alley way would be a problem as far as traffic counts. The main problem would be that in order to do this, the alley would have to be made one way southbound. This could cause problems for the residences of the alley way and for delivery and garbage trucks. It would especially be a problem when the street is closed off once a month for Alive after Five. Hailey Knight was contacted by speaker phone to get her thoughts. She said she can make contact with the property owners and residences to see how they feel about the alley closure. She wasn't sure if Alive after Five could change their location during the construction period or not. She would have to check with some others on the committee.

The recommendation was made to proceed to Public Works to close the alley as long as there are accommodations made for emergency vehicles and as long as other property owners in the area are not opposed to it.

2.) Bicycle Signs – Bicycles May Use Full Lane

At the last meeting, the committee voted to install "Bicycle may use full lane" signs as requested by cyclists, Steve Eward and Bill Smith on Matthews and at Craighead Forest. Since that time, other cyclists have come forward to say they do not necessarily want the signs changed. Mark printed some research he did about what other cities do and some information from the League of American Cyclist.

There was a discussion as to whether it would put the cyclist in further danger by changing the signs. Eventually it would be better to divert cyclist to Washington instead of Matthews.

Recommendation was made to add language to Impeding Ordinance as what we expect of the cyclist as well as the motorist. They need to ride as far right as possible but can move left enough to make them feel safe. As far as the signs, it was decided to do a presentation to Public Safety recommending leaving the signs the way they are since there is no evidence that the signs make it safer for motorist and since there is evidence that the signs could actually make it more dangerous for cyclist.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.