

Nicholasville awards bid on downtown renovation project

Work should begin within 30 days

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After nearly three years of public meetings and planning, the Nicholasville City Commission formally awarded a construction bid that will signal the start of the downtown renovation project during a special-called meeting Thursday at noon.

The Allen Company of Lexington was awarded the contract, as it came in with a \$1.678 million bid.

Josh Karrick with CDP Engineers said four bids were received including, ones from Charles Deweese Construction, E.C. Mathews and Spectrum Contracting, but The Allen Company met the requirements and was the lowest bid.

"We reviewed the bids along with the other bidders and discussed what our best options were, and based on our assessment, The Allen Company is going to be our recommendation for the city to move forward with this project," Karrick said.

City commission members and other local leaders were pleased with the contract and all looked forward to the work starting.

"We're looking forward to getting things started, and with Josh's expertise and my, hopefully, day-to-day conversations with the downtown businesses, this will be a smooth process and smooth construction," Nicholasville Now Director Tonya Coleman said.

Coleman said the Nicholasville Now board has discussed ways of keeping business owners informed of the work schedule, including using its e-newsletter, website and Twitter account.

Karrick said work should begin within the next three or four weeks, and while most of the work should be finished before the end of the calendar year, some of the construction will spill over into the spring.

"Within 30 days, there will be significant activity," he said. "We have 180 days set into the project, so basically six months. We're going into the tail end of the construction season, so there may be a few things that carry into the spring when the weather breaks again, but the majority of the work should be completed by the end of the calendar year."

The tearing up and repaving of a section of Main Street will be one of the last things The Allen Company completes in the spring, Karrick said.

"The milling of the actual surface of the road and resurfacing will probably be the last things that occur," he said. "The road surface that is out there right now will stay in place."

In addition, work on the project will not affect the Jessamine Jamboree, which is scheduled for Sept. 10-11.

"No food vendor will be on Main Street in the parking area during the Jamboree," Coleman said. "We have made the decision to take all food vendors off Main Street, so you'll just have the sidewalk."

Once the project is finished, all of the utility lines, with the exception of the traffic lights, will be underground, Karrick said.

Eventually, the traffic lights will be mounted on mast-arm apparatuses, Mayor Russ Meyer said.

The work will be done one block at a time.

"They may be doing some work on various blocks, but as far as having the sidewalk gone and a new sidewalk replaced, that will take place as they move through," Karrick said.

The downtown renovation plan stretches from the new city hall location on North Main Street to the post office on South Main Street with the focus on the area in the center of town near Oak Street.

It also calls for moving utility lines off Main Street and preserving on-street parking while at the same time enlarging the pedestrian area, giving more flexibility for things such as outdoor cafe's while making the distance across intersections shorter and safer for pedestrians to cross.

The completed project also calls for three parks: a music park at the corner of Oak and Main streets that could be used for outdoor performances such as concerts and festivals; Vineyard Square located just behind the music park, an open-air outdoor plaza with water features that could be used for festival-type events; and Palisades Park on York and Maple streets along Town Branch Creek, which would have a limestone wall and green spaces with seats.

The total cost of the project is \$1.5 million. Though the bid came in over that sum, Meyer said the city will be in talks with The Allen Company on ways to reach a \$1.5 million total.

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