

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION
JANUARY 17, 2008
A.B. GIBSON CENTER
322 S. MAIN ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting January 17, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. A.B. Gibson Center located at 322 S. Main St., Laurinburg, NC with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Amanda B. Faulk, Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker, III and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. Councilmember DeBerry arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Also present were Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager and Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk. Management Team members present were: Bill Riemer, Director of Administration and Development; Cindy Carpenter, Finance Director; Johnny Evans, Chief of Police; Bob Bell, Human Resources/Risk Management Director; Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director; Harold Haywood, General Services Director; Harold Smith, Fire Chief; and Ronald Pierce, Electric Utilities Director. Janice Morrison, City Tax Collector and Jenny Tippett, Deputy City Clerk were also present.

Mayor Block welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Leak gave the invocation.

Mayor Block stated that the purpose of this meeting is to hear from the citizens on what they would like to see the City of Laurinburg be more involved in and what direction the City might take in the future.

Mayor Block introduced Councilmembers Faulk, Leak, Rainer, and Parker. The City Manager then introduced staff who were in attendance.

Mayor Block stated that the City Manager would discuss the City's accomplishments over the past year. He then explained that he would discuss issues that he has heard from citizens and then the audience would have an opportunity to voice their concerns.

The City Manager listed the following as accomplishments for the City:

- Process of being approved by the Department of Transportation for landscaping along US Highway 401;
- Updated the City's Nuisance Ordinance to include "clean and orderly" property;
- Working with Scotland County and Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) regarding Economic Development;
- Workforce Development by working with Richmond Community College (RCC) and other entities to obtain funds to structure a RCC campus;
- Demolished the "old hospital" site in order to structure RCC campus; and
- Worked with Scotland County School System in order to obtain a grant for Smartboards for classrooms;

- Received two grants, working with Scotland County and a regional group, to discuss the viability of using WestPoint Stevens' water and sewer plant from changing it from industrial to residential water and sewer use;
- Near completion of shell building at the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport for economic development purposes;
- The City's wireless internet program and work with the school system to provide fiber to schools outside the city limits;
- A grant for sewer line rehabilitation;
- Grants to employ Buxton for retail recruitment;

- Work with Scotland County to complete the walking trail at Washington Park;
- Work with Scotland County and the Chamber to market community;
- Work with Scotland County and the Chamber to become a 21st century county;
- Work with St. Andrews Presbyterian College to obtain a grant to help fund the Community Access Channel (Channel 2)

He stated that the above is only a small list of work the City has done and is continues to do.

He explained that there has been a discussion among staff to develop an annual report to be presented to City Council at its Annual Planning Retreat to show exactly what has happened in the City during the preceding year.

Following the City Manager's comments, Mayor Block stated that he would like to state a few issues that were brought to his attention, and they are as follows:

- Lowering Taxes (citizens usually referring to County taxes and not under City's control);
- Beautification (Mayor's plan to ask City Council to appoint a beautification committee);
- Launching an aggressive anti-litter campaign;
- More aggressive role in enforcing City ordinances;
- Improving appearances of main thoroughfares in City;
- Improving look of downtown by working with Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation;
- Indoor Recreation Complex;
- Economic Development

Mayor Block then stated that his formula for growth in North Carolina is being a place where people want to live, especially retirees, and that Laurinburg stands out as a place along US Highway 74 to live. He further stated that he would like to see the City: be more attractive to retirees; pursue real estate developers to build new development especially with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) (influx of people moving into the Fayetteville, NC area); work with the County to find commercial real estate to build development in the northern area of the County; help St. Andrews Presbyterian College to grow; work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on the future Interstate 74 and the widening of US 401 to Fayetteville; and work with the Chamber and the newly established Economic Development Committee to voice the City's needs and ideas.

He then opened the floor for questions and discussions.

Several concerns and ideas were then discussed and they are listed as follows:

1. Promote water in area
2. Hospital is a plus in community
3. Would like to see the City Council, County Commissioners, and State Legislators work together
4. Focus on other businesses besides industry
5. Foster the growth of current businesses
6. Richmond Community College available to help with needs
7. Listen to and engage youth
8. Open gyms so that youth can be active
9. Clean up junk cars that are in City
10. Be consistent with policies and actions between the north and south ends of town
11. Look at N.G.O. (non-governmental organization)
12. Citizen Advisory Committee

Discussions ensued concerning industry and the school floor in Scotland County.

Mayor Block then re-stated that he would like to see various committees (beautification, advisory, etc.) formed in order that those committees would report its findings and recommendations to Council.

Councilmember Parker stated that issues have been brought up that the Council will have to address. He then stated that it is incumbent upon Council and the other governing bodies to work together to make this community a better place in which to live. He commented that when the discussion is raised concerning taxes that the City's portion is small compared to other municipalities in the area.

Councilmember Faulk stated that she had heard comments regarding litter. She then stated that the Chamber has two litter clean ups per year and encouraged everyone to participate.

Councilmember Rainer thanked everyone for coming and stated that Councilmembers represent the City and that citizens make the City. He then stated that he is glad that everyone expressed what is important to them at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Faulk, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk