

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2008
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular monthly meeting January 22, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Rembert DeBerry, Amanda B. Faulk, Curtis B. Leak, and Thomas W. Parker, III. Councilmember Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. was absent.

Also present were Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, and William P. Floyd, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember DeBerry gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Leak, seconded by Councilmember Faulk, and unanimously carried to approve the proposed minutes from the special meeting held December 18, 2007 and the regular meeting held December 18, 2007.

ORDINANCE DESIGNATING PROPERTY KNOWN AS CENTRAL SCHOOL, LOCATED ON TAX LOT PIN 01005404001 AS A LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Mayor Block explained that this is a joint public hearing between the City of Laurinburg and the Historic Preservation Commission to consider an ordinance designating Central School as a local historic landmark.

Mayor Block then introduced the Historic Preservation Commission members.

Chairperson Harvey B. Butler, Jr., Historic Preservation Commission, called the Historic Preservation Commission to order.

Mayor Block then declared the public hearing open.

Mrs. Nancy Walker, Executive Director, Laurinburg Housing Authority, spoke in favor of this request. She explained that this was the last step in declaring Central School a local historic landmark. She explained that the facility is being renovated to provide approximately 31 one-two bedroom apartments for the elderly. She also explained that designation as a local historic landmark would ensure that the outside of the building will keep its historical appearance. She stated that the historic designation would also allow for 50 percent in tax credits to also ensure that the landmark remains a viable part of the community.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Walker stated that this is the first historic designation for the City.

There was no one further to speak for or against this proposed ordinance; therefore Mayor Block closed the public hearing.

Historic Preservation Commission Chairperson Butler called for a vote on a proposed resolution recommending to City Council designation of Central School as a local historic landmark to City Council and proceeded to read as follows:

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING DESIGNATION
OF CENTRAL SCHOOL
AS LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Laurinburg has investigated the report on the historic, architectural, and cultural significance of Central School, and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has been provided the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed designation; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the report and the comments from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources support eligibility designation of Central School as a local historic landmark based on its historical and architectural significance; and

WHEREAS, a joint public hearing to designate Central School property as a local landmark was held by the Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council on January 22, 2008; and

WHEREAS, all prerequisites for designation have been met; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has taken into full account all statements and information presented at the joint public hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Laurinburg recommends adoption of the ordinance designating Central School as a local historic landmark.

ADOPTED this the 22nd day of January, 2008.

Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Laurinburg

BY: _____
Harvey H. Butler, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Kimmie Johnson, Secretary

Following adoption of the foregoing resolution by the Historic Preservation Commission, Councilmember Parker moved for the adoption of Ordinance O-2008-01, which designates property known as Central School located on Tax Lot Pin 01005404001 as a Local Historic Landmark. Councilmember DeBerry seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Parker, DeBerry, Leak, Faulk

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2008-01 on file in the City Clerk's Office)

RESOLUTION CONFIRMING ASSESSMENT ROLL AND LEVYING ASSESSMENTS TO FIRST STREET

Mayor Block explained that the public hearing is to consider a resolution confirming the assessment roll and levies assessments for street improvements on First Street. He then explained that the public hearing is being held because Council passed a resolution on May 22, 2007 to improve a portion of First Street at the intersection of East Vance Street after a petition was submitted to the City Clerk which was certified as insufficient. He further stated, however, that under House Bill 1552, the City can levy special assessments for street improvements without petition. He then explained that the cost of the improvements have been declared to be \$3,655.00. A copy of the assessment roll was available in the Clerk's Office during the past 30 days.

He stated that all property owners have been notified and if approved, the following assessments will be levied to the following property owners and said assessments will be delivered to the City Tax Collector for collection:

City of Laurinburg	15 LF	\$ 255.00
MPW Investments	200 LF	\$3400.00

Mayor Block then declared the public hearing open.

Mrs. Nancy Walker, Executive Director, Laurinburg Housing Authority, stated that she was the petitioner for this project and that the Laurinburg Housing Authority is willing to split the costs of the assessments with MPW Investments.

Dr. Moses Watson of MPW Investments stated that he is concerned about the assessment to his firm because he had not received notification of the proposed improvements prior to receiving the preliminary assessment.

Mayor Block then declared the public hearing closed.

Upon further discussion concerning notification, other streets that have not been paved, and the process of how the street was improved, motion was made by Councilmember Leak, seconded by Councilmember Parker, and unanimously carried to table this request until the February meeting so that Dr. Watson and Mrs. Walker can meet with the City Manager to discuss the street improvement project and determine the monetary commitment of the two parties.

DELEGATIONS

STORYTELLING ARTS CENTER OF THE SOUTHEAST, INC.

Ms. Jan Schmidt, Co – Chair of the Storytelling Arts Center of the Southeast, Inc. updated City Council on the activities for the Storytelling Arts Center of the Southeast (SACS). Some of the activities reported on were that SACS has been approved for IRD code section 501(c) (3) status by the Internal Revenue Service; grants that have been awarded to SACS; the upcoming Bold-Faced Liars' Showdown will be held February 2, 2008 at St. Andrews Presbyterian College; and the upcoming 2nd Annual Storytelling Festival on Carolina will be held in April, 2008.

Ms. Schmidt stated that she would like a letter of support from the City in order to apply for grants and would also like the Council's support by members' attendance at the events.

Councilmember Parker stated that the City could help with applications for the grants if needed.

LAURINBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT-CITIZEN ACADEMY

Captain Kimothy Monroe, Laurinburg Police Department, appeared before Council to explain the new Citizen Police Academy.

Captain Monroe stated that the department fully believes that this program will allow better communication between the Laurinburg Police Department and its citizens. He also stated that the Academy is a tool to educate the public on what police work is all about.

He explained that each participant must apply to the Academy and that any interested citizen who resides or works in Scotland County can apply. The other criteria are that they must be 18 years of age or older and must not have any prior felony conviction. He also explained that at this time there is no additional cost to the City for the program and that there is no charge to the citizens who wish to participate.

He continued by stating that each participant must complete a three-hour class once a week for ten weeks to complete the program. He concluded by asking for Council's support of the program.

Following further explanation of the Academy, motion was made by Councilmember Parker, seconded by Councilmember Faulk, and unanimously carried to support the Citizen Police Academy developed by the Laurinburg Police Department.

TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS TO HIGHWAY US 401 & WEST BOULEVARD-STAPLES PROJECT

Mr. Kenneth Robinette, CBS, Inc., appeared before Council to provide an update on the traffic improvements to Highway US 401 and West Boulevard. Mr. Robinette thanked City Council for its support for the project and thanked staff for its professionalism and that it has been a pleasure working with them.

He explained that the process in which led to this site being zoned for this type of venture. He then explained that he has followed the procedures and recommendations that the North Carolina Department of Transportation as set forth improvements. He stated that he has been seeking funding for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) and had not had favorable results. The traffic improvement project will cost approximately \$676,000.00.

He informed Council that on January 16, 2008 he received information from Senator Bill Purcell that he has acquired funding in the amount of \$200,000.00 from the North Carolina Senate discretionary funds. He explained that he has not yet heard from members of the House delegation with respect to the availability of House discretionary funds.

He stated that corporate Wal-Mart representatives had been contacted and at this time Wal-Mart is not willing to help in the project. He further stated that he has had conversations with local Wal-Mart representatives that those discussions had been positive, and they do see a benefit in the traffic improvement project. Wal-Mart is currently constructing and additional 24,000 square feet of retail space on its location.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mr. Robinette stated that his company is working on several other projects in Laurinburg including a possible tenant for the old Winn Dixie building.

Mr. Joe Byrd, CBS site selection expert, appeared before Council and explained the process of how companies determine a site location.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Byrd stated that local government can help in retail recruitment by letting franchises know that the City is interested in a particular business and is willing to provide assistance (for example, utility line relocation).

AUTHORIZE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LAURINBURG AND MELROSE SOUTH PYROTECHNICS, INC. FOR A FIREWORKS DISPLAY

The City Manager explained that Melrose Pyrotechnics, Inc. has contacted the City and is still interested in conducting the 4th of July fireworks display. The cost for a show similar to last year has increased by \$1000.00. The City Manager stated that an email had been sent to the County Manager to inquire if the County is interested in participating in the funding of this event.

Councilmember Leak suggested that a formal request be sent to the County requesting funding in this event.

Motion was made by Councilmember Parker, seconded by Councilmember DeBerry, and unanimously carried to table this request until information from the County has been received.

CONSIDER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF LAURINBURG AND SCHOOLLINK, INC.

The City Manager explained that as requested by City Council at its December 2007 meeting a Fiber Optic Agreement with Schoollink, Inc. for the lease of fiber to them and the terms of that lease has been drafted. The document outlines responsibilities and payments to the City for the lease of two strands.

If approved, the City would then proceed to execute the contract for the purchase, installation and construction of the necessary fiber.

Upon question by Councilmember Parker, the City Manager that along with the proposed agreement a letter will be sent emphasizing that payments are to be current.

Motion was made by Councilmember Leak, seconded by Councilmember DeBerry, and unanimously carried to authorize the Mayor to execute the proposed lease agreement between the City of Laurinburg and Schoollink, Inc.

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NCDOT) IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY LIST

The City Manager explained that the Region 8 NCDOT Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) public comment period will be held on February 19 at the Grady Cole Center on the campus of RCC in Hamlet. In the past, the City has made recommendations to the Chamber Transportation Committee on City priorities and projects, and the Committee has presented the projects at the meeting.

Projects that have been previously identified as priority DOT projects for the City are as follows:

- Completion of Lauchwood Drive – this project has been delayed numerous times due to ROW issues and funding issues. Originally part of the NC Moving Ahead program, this is now a TIP project. We would request that this project be funded and constructed ASAP.
- Completion of I-74 – we first want to thank the DOT for removing the “future interstate” designation of I-74 and for the placement of the exit numbers along 74 that designate City exits. We still must move forward with this project with urgency and deal with the Laurel Hill bypass issues of design and construction. This project is vital to our community’s economic growth.
- South Main Street – South Main is an important gateway into our historic downtown area, and needs major redesign work for sidewalks, lighting, intersections and landscaping issues. We feel that this project must be done for our community.
- Widening of 401 N – with the pending growth of BRAC at Fort Bragg along with continued Fayetteville/Hoke County growth coming south towards Scotland County– we feel that we must be able to make it easier for those wanting to live in our community to commute back and forth.
- Funding for 401/W. Boulevard Improvements – this is the most congested intersection within Scotland County, and now there is 24,000 sq. feet of development at the Wal-Mart site along with a proposed new Staples across the street. Even without this new retail development, the intersection needs major improvements, and with the new development improvements are a necessity.
- Pedestrian Bridge Over 74 at West Boulevard – the City and County both have identified this as a safety issue, as the bridge is very narrow with no room for pedestrians. With the new Recreational Complex and County offices on the other side of 74, this has become a major area of pedestrian traffic.
- N. Main Upgrades – with new commercial development along N. Main (on the south side of the 501/401 bridge) this area has become more traveled by vehicles as well as pedestrians. Also, there are issues with drainage and with road shoulders. We would like to request that we look at adding curb and guttering along with sidewalks in this area.

Councilmember DeBerry expressed an interest in having DOT look at the area on the north side of town on Aberdeen Rd. to provide turning lanes near the Northside Square Shopping Center. He stated that with the development in that area there has and will continue to be an increase in traffic. He also stated that there is also a lot of pedestrian traffic and that pedestrian upgrades should be considered also.

Councilmember Parker stated that the speed limit on John's Road at the bridge over US Highway 74 is 55 mph and would like to ask the state to reduce the speed limit especially within the City Limits.

The City Manager stated that he would contact DOT about both concerns.

He also reported that the contract had been let for the long postponed mast arm project in the downtown area. He also reported that the Lauchwood Drive Project is now scheduled to begin in 2009.

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Parker, and unanimously carried to approve the priority list with the addition of the turning lanes on Aberdeen Rd. near Northside Square Shopping Center.

RETAIL RECRUITMENT NEXT FIVE BUSINESSES TO BUXTON

The City Manager explained that at Council's December 2007 meeting a list of five businesses were approved for Buxton to send marketing packages for retail recruitment. The following list of five businesses was approved:

Movie Theatre – CINEMARK THEATRE
Chick-Fil-A
Kohl's
Texas Roadhouse
Applebee's

He stated that it is Buxton's recommendation to send out marketing packages as soon as possible so that the data does not get outdated.

Following discussion, it was a consensus that Council discuss the next five business submissions at the Annual Planning Retreat.

LAURINBURG CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT

The City Manager stated that in working towards updating our 5-year plan and our 10 year financial plan (and getting ready for the upcoming 2008/09 FY Budget) dates and times need to be set for the City Council Annual Planning Retreat.

The City Manager recommended the dates of the afternoon of February 29-March 1; or the afternoon of March 7- 8 for consideration.

Following discussion, it was the consensus among Councilmembers to begin at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 14, 2008 and continue on Saturday, March 15, 2008 if needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one to speak during the public comment period.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk