

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 20, 2010
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 July 20, 2010 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: Joy Ellison, Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker, III and Kenton T. Spencer. Councilmember Rainer arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, and Charles L. Hicks, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

The City Manager presented the Consent Agenda indicating all items were considered to be routine and could be enacted simultaneously with one motion and a roll call vote.

The items on the Consent Agenda were as follows:

- a. Ordinance No. O-2010-15 which amends the 2010-2011 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (O-2010-12) \$5,489.00 from the Contingency (990-509900) to Administrative - Salaries (420-500200) - \$3,100.00, FICA (420-500500) - \$237.00, Retirement (420-500700) - \$197.00, 401K Contribution (420-500800) - \$155.00, Car Allowance (420-503100) - \$1,800.00
- b. Ordinance No. O-2010-16 which amends the 2010-2011 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (O-2010-12) \$11,700.00 from Contingency (990-509900) to Fire Department - Building Maintenance (530-501500)
- c. Resolution No. R-2010-11 which relates to the process for the second year of a four-year grant from the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program
- d. Resolution No. R-2010-12 which declares costs, exclusive of costs incurred at street intersections, and orders preparation of a Preliminary Assessment roll, and sets time and place for public hearing on preliminary assessment roll for Deluca Street
The City Manager explained that staff would research the cost for storm drainage along the remainder of the street.
- e. Resolution No. R-2010-13 which declares costs, exclusive of costs incurred at street intersections, and orders preparation of a Preliminary Assessment roll, and sets time and place for public hearing on preliminary assessment roll for Peele Street
- f. Resolution No. R-2010-14 which directs the City Clerk to investigate the sufficiency of a petition received for annexation inside the City Limits (Wagram Rd. - St. Johns

Holiness Church

Mrs. Brandi Deese reported that this 12-acre tract was not part of the subdivision located along Orlando St. This tract faces Wagram Road and entrance to the property would be from Wagram Road.

Councilmember Parker moved for the approval of the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Leak seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Parker, Leak, Ellison, Spencer

Nays: None

Councilmember Rainer arrived at 7:10 p.m.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

The City Manager introduced Ordinance No. O-2010-14 which amends Chapter 16, Article II. Nuisances of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Laurinburg.

Mrs. Brandi Deese explained that staff had received complaints regarding upholstered furniture located on the porches of residences. Mrs. Deese explained she had researched other municipalities and how they dealt with the upholstered furniture, appliances, and other items on porches and other outdoor areas. This proposed ordinance was drafted because of the recent complaints concerning this issue.

Mrs. Deese read the proposed amendment (which adds an additional category of nuisance) as follows:

“The use of carports, open porches, decks, open garages or other outdoor areas that are visible to streets or other public areas as a storage or collection place for boxes, appliances, discarded wood, furniture (including upholstered sofas, couches, chairs or other indoor type furniture, seats removed from motor vehicles or other furniture not intended for outdoor use by the manufacturer but not including typical outdoor or yard furniture that is wood, metal or plastic or that contains weather resistant cushions), tools, equipment, junk, garbage, broken or discarded machinery and equipment, cans, containers, cardboard, household goods or any similar condition that increases the likelihood of fire, may conceal dangerous conditions, may be a breeding place or habitat for mice, rats or other pests or create an unattractive condition or visually blighted property.”

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Deese stated that this proposed ordinance amendment addresses visible violations from the street or that create dangerous conditions at a residence and would be complaint driven. She also stated that if she or Bill Peele, City Zoning Officer, noticed any violation that they would initiate the process. She then stated that if a complaint is received the identity of the person reporting is not revealed to the owner. She explained that, otherwise, this might create a hostile environment between neighbors.

Councilmember Parker moved for the adoption of Ordinance No., O-2010-14 which amends Chapter 16, Article II. Nuisances of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Laurinburg as presented with effective date of August 2, 2010. Councilmember Spencer seconded the motion,

and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Parker, Spencer, Rainer, Ellison, Leak

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2010-14 on file in the City Clerk's

HIRING FREEZE

The City Manager stated that he had been asked to clarify how City Staff handles the hiring freeze that was implemented by Council.

Mr. Bob Bell, Human Resources Officer, stated that the hiring freeze was effective in June 2008. The freeze is still in effect and staff was directed and agreed not to place anyone who was not already a City employee into new positions. An employee can be promoted, but if a vacant position cannot be filled from within, staff will not hire anyone without Council approval. He explained that currently there are 153 employees and that staff would not increase from that number unless there is Council approval.

Bell requested that Council consider modifying the freeze so that staff may fill any position that becomes vacant without Council approval as long as the number of employees stays at 153 employees or less.

There was consensus among Councilmembers that staff did not need to appear before Council to request filling a position as long as the number of employees remained at 153 or less.

OPEN GYMS REPORT

Mrs. Shannon Newton, Scotland County Parks and Recreation Director, appeared before Council to explain the open gyms report.

Mrs. Newton explained that City Council had made a request several years ago for an open gym program. There was a meeting a couple of months ago with the superintendent of schools, the County Manager, Mrs. Newton, Guy McCook (Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board), and Bill Peele for the City of Laurinburg. The School Superintendent did not want the gyms to be open without a safe, structured program.

She explained that a group of individuals had met (individuals from local churches, Carol McCall – candidate for County Commissioner, Mrs. Desiree Block, Guy McCook, Shannon Newton, Paige Pratt, and Ed Burchins, City Manager) to discuss developing the program as a safe structured program.

She then explained that the group discussed age range and programs which will consist of an athletic component, a mentoring, and a life skills section. The fourth through sixth grade was the targeted group.

She stated that the proposed program will provide safe structured activities for youth grades 4-6 with specific goals to reach. There would also be an evaluation of the program. The program would include dealing with problem behavior, obesity, academic failure, teen pregnancy, and

helping with the negative environment that some of the children presently experience in their lives.

She stated that the program will begin at I. Ellis Johnson School. It will be a nine week session with registration starting in August, will take up to 40 participants, and will cost \$2.00 per person for the nine week session. The program will be titled G.Y.M. (Growing Young Minds).

The program will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 4 - 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 2 - 6 p.m. The plan is that each year there would be another age group added.

She stated that the reason 4 - 6 grade students were chosen was because of evidence based research. The research shows that the fifth grade is the time when changes are made in youth.

There was a brief discussion of the number of participants.

Councilmember Spencer explained that his concept for an open gyms program was a recreational sports program for the summer for at risk youth. His idea was not what has been proposed.

There was discussion regarding the proposed program and it not being what City Council envisioned.

Councilmember Leak gave a brief history of how Council decided to approach the open gyms program. He stated that the City's Citizen Input Sessions over the last five years have included requests for recreation for youth, and that is where Council's ideas for the program developed. Several Councilmembers agreed with Councilmember Leak.

Councilmember Rainer stated that the proposed program is a very good program but not what Council had envisioned.

Mr. Guy McCook, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Chair, stated that Mrs. Newton had put together a program in accord with the instructions of the Parks and Recreation Board. He stated that if the Board misunderstood what Council's desires were with respect to the program then that issue should have been brought to the Board's attention during the meetings at which several City personnel were present.

There was more discussion regarding the G.Y.M. (Growing Young Minds) program.

Mrs. Newton suggested that if there is a request from Council regarding Scotland County Parks and Recreation Programs, it be put in writing in order to prevent confusion and for clarity as to what is being asked. She hopes that following this procedure will avoid problems in the future.

Mrs. Newton also requested that Mayor Block appoint someone to work with the G.Y.M. committee in order to have input from the City for next year's program.

Councilmember Parker stated that G.Y.M. program is a good program that Council should support. He also suggested that there should be a component included where gyms are open for supervised play for the older kids.

Mayor Block suggested that the City Manager, the County Manager, the School Superintendent, and Mrs. Newton have a meeting to discuss tonight's input from Council and to see if some kind of program could be put together that addresses the desires of Council. Councilmember Spencer stated that a member of Council should also be at the meeting.

It was a consensus that the meeting be set up between the parties stated.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Block stated that there needs to be an appointment to the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) Board. He explained that Neil Smith's term expires July 30, 2010.

Councilmember Parker stated that he had spoken to Mr. Smith and that Mr. Smith stated that he would serve if no one else is interested.

Councilmember Parker explained that Mr. Jim Willis had approached him and expressed interest in serving on the LDRC Board. He stated that Mr. Willis has 35 years of retail experience and that his business has been in the downtown area for quite some time.

Councilmember Parker nominated Mr. Jim Willis to serve on the LDRC Board for a two-year term which will expire July 30, 2010. Councilmember Leak seconded the nomination and Mr. Willis was appointed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Leak stated that he was receiving telephone calls about the vandalism in the City's cemetery. He explained that there needs to be some kind of protection in the cemetery.

The City Manager stated that he would look into the issue.

Councilmember Parker stated that he would like to comment further about the open gym program. He then stated that the City should rent some gyms and provide supervision immediately to address the group of kids that Parks and Recreation is not addressing.

Councilmember Spencer suggested that the National Guard Armory be the site for the City to sponsor a summer program.

It was consensus from Council that the National Guard Armory be used in order to provide an open gym program for the next three weeks.

Councilmember Leak stated that he would work on a program and put a plan in place to begin the first of August that would include Saturday mornings.

There was also consensus among Councilmembers that funding (\$5,000.00) for the program should come from the \$10,000.00 allocated money for Recreation in the 2010-2011 budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Charles McEachin stated that the gym program that he envisioned was for kids from grade 7 to age 17. He explained that these are the target kids that need some structure in their lives.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Parker, seconded by Councilmember Spencer, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk