

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 22, 2012
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 May 22, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building with the Honorable Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Curtis B. Leak, Herbert M. Rainer, Jr., Kenton T. Spencer, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk, and William P. Floyd, Jr., Assistant City Attorney.

Mayor Parker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Rainer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Parker explained that the agenda needed to be amended to add the swearing in of the Tax Collector after consideration of the Consent Agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Leak, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one present to speak.

Mayor Parker explained that prior to the Council meeting, a bench was dedicated in memory of Chuck Hicks, a faithful public servant.

Mayor Parker also thanked Mrs. Brandi Deese, Mr. Stacey McQuage and their staff for maintenance work done on US 401.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Parker explained that since the Consent Agenda included 14 items, unless anyone objected, the City Manager would not be required to review each item.

Upon question by Councilmember Spencer, the City Manager explained that the public hearings

are posted on the City's website.

The Consent Agenda was as follows:

- a) Approve minutes of the March 13, 2012 agenda workshop; minutes of the March 20, 2012 special meeting; minutes of the March 20, 2012 meeting; minutes of the March 28, 2012 meeting
- b) Set public hearing to be held June 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St. on the proposed 2012-2013 Fiscal Year Budget
- c) Set public hearing to be held June 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St to consider request to rezone from Industrial to Office/Institutional the property located at 412 Fairley St.
- d) Set public hearing to be held June 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St. to consider amending Article V, Section 146, Permissible Uses and Article XI, Supplementary Use Regulations, by adding Section 180.3
- e) Set public hearing to be held June 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St. to consider amending Article V, Section 146, Permissible Uses and Article XVII, Section 287, Off-Premises Signs
- f) Set public hearing to be held June 19, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St. to consider Ordinance which amends Chapter 6, Buildings and Building Regulations, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Laurinburg
- g) Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-08 which condemns the property located at 1506 Woodlawn Street and authorizes the Building Inspector to demolish and clear the property
- h) Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-09 which condemns the property located at 16290 Joy Street and authorizes the Building Inspector to demolish and clear the property
- i) Consider Ordinance No. O-2012-10 which condemns the property located at 430 Carver Street and authorizes the Building Inspector to demolish and clear the property
- j) Consider Resolution No. R-2012-12 approving the sale of lot on Cary St. (PIN ID 010013A170041) for the amount of \$750 and authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute deed conveying said property to Mr. Billy Campbell
- k) Consider Resolution No. R-2012-13 approving the sale of 2 lots on Fayetteville St. (PIN ID 0100132809 and PIN ID 01001328010) for the amount of \$4,500.00 and authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute deed conveying said property to Mr. William Dowdy
- l) Consider Resolution No. R-2012-14 appointing the Acting Tax Collector as the process agent for tax foreclosure suits
- m) Consider Resolution No. R-2012-15 authorizing the Mayor, City Manager and City Clerk to execute Financing Agreement with BB&T for automated side-loading refuse truck and front-loading refuse truck for 10 years at 1.83% and for the custom pumper fire truck for 10 years at 2.18%, total amount financed \$818,790.00
- n) Consider Resolution No. R-2012-16 authorizing the Mayor, City Manager and City Clerk to execute any and all documents related to the City of Laurinburg Rural Economic Development Center Grant/2012 Clean Water Partners Planning Infrastructure Grant

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilmember Rainer seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Adams, Rainer, Williamson, Spencer, Leak

Nays: None

SWEARING IN OF TAX COLLECTOR

Mrs. Cindy Carpenter, Finance Director, introduced Diana Chavis as the City's Tax Collector. She stated that Ms. Chavis has wonderful customer service skills.

Mayor Parker then swore Ms. Chavis into office as Tax Collector for the City of Laurinburg.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

CONSIDER REQUEST TO REZONE FROM RESIDENTIAL-15 TO OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 318 E. CHURCH ST.

Mayor Parker declared the public hearing open to consider a request to rezone from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional property located at 318 E. Church Street.

Mrs. Brandi Deese, Planning and Development Director, appeared before Council and explained that the First Baptist Church had requested that the property located at 318 East Church Street be rezoned from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional to expand its parking. She further explained that the house previously located on the lot was demolished because the repair costs were prohibitive. She added that Planning Board considered this request at its April 10, 2012 meeting and unanimously recommended approval of the request.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Mrs. Deese explained that the applicant would have to provide adequate storm drainage in its parking plan.

Mr. Parks Mullis, Chairman of the First Baptist Church Deacons, appeared before Council and explained that the proposed parking area would be 170' X 86'. He added that the proposed lot would be merged with the existing lot so that water would flow down to McKay Street.

There was no one present to speak against the request.

Mayor Parker closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2012-11 which rezones from Residential-15 to Office/Institutional property located at 318 E. Church Street as it is consistent with other development in the area, advances the public safety or welfare, and provides a positive impact to the public at large. Councilmember Spencer seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Adams, Spencer, Leak, Williamson, Rainer

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2012-11 on file in the City Clerk's Office)

REQUEST TO AMEND ARTICLE X SECTION 146, TABLE OF PERMISSIBLE USES, OF THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Mayor Parker declared the public hearing to consider a request to amend Article X Section 146, Table of Permissible Uses, of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Mrs. Deese explained that the proposed ordinance would amend Article X and Article XI of the Unified Development Ordinance to require Conditional Use Permits for multi-family housing units with eight (8) or more units. Staff recommends approval of this request specifically so that the few prime commercial lots that exist can be protected from residential development and utilized at their highest value. Planning Board considered this matter at its April 10, 2012 meeting and unanimously recommended approval.

Mayor Parker opened the public hearing.

There was no one present to speak in favor of or in opposition to the proposed ordinance.

The City Clerk requested that Mrs. Deese verify that the proposed ordinance amends Article X and Article XI.

Following a brief discussion, it was clarified that only Article X would be amended as indicated in the proposed ordinance.

Mayor Parker closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Spencer moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2012-12 which amends Article X Section 146, Table of Permissible Uses, of the Unified Development Ordinance of the City of Laurinburg. Councilmember Adams seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Spencer, Adams, Rainer, Williamson, Leak

Nays: None

(Ordinance No. O-2012-12 on file in the City Clerk's Office)

DELEGATIONS

Scotland County Humane Society

Mr. Phillippe Laurent of the Scotland County Humane Society Board of Directors appeared before Council to present a highlight of the past year's accomplishments and discuss the budget request for Fiscal Year 2012-2013.

- The Humane Society has seen an increase in animal population at the Shelter due to take in of animals through the Animal Control Officers, drop-offs and surrenders by the public.
- The Shelter has also seen an increase in adoptions and rescues.
- The strategic goals for the Humane Society include an aggressive spay/neuter program, temperament assessments and education efforts, especially at the grade school level.
- Obstacles include facility security, pen expansion and differentiation and building repair.

Mr. Laurent explained that the Humane Society had increased its budget for 2012-2013 to meet its goals.

A discussion ensued concerning the proposed budget for 2012-2013.

Councilmember Rainer requested a breakdown of Shelter employees' salaries and a copy of the Humane Society's 2011-2012 budget.

Mayor Parker explained that the City is in the middle of the budget process and the Humane Society's request would be taken into consideration. He requested that the information requested by Council be provided to the City Manager. He concluded by expressing appreciation to the Humane Society for the help provided with feral cat problems.

Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation

Mr. Jim Willis, Chairman of the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC), appeared before Council to provide an update on LDRC activities. He presented a lease agreement for the parking lot between Railroad, Atkinson and Roper Streets. He then discussed the following:

- Installed three (3) new awnings.
- Continue to pursue removal of obsolete signs. Two (2) businesses removed signs.
- LDRC wants to be the advocacy group that represents the collective interests of property owners, merchants, tenants and downtown employees.
- Discussed the location and appearance of the planters that were provided by NCDOT and the need to develop a plan for better utilization and visibility and less maintenance.
- Other issues LDRC will consider to partner with the City: trash cans, the brick planters, the fountain, the Davie Poplar and security
- Recommending ordinances such as color schemes to make the downtown more historically appropriate.
- Challenge of economic restructuring and to identify and recruit businesses and enterprises to enhance downtown and make it self-sustaining.
- No longer have a director and plan to use that money in effort to make improvements downtown.
- Partner with the City and better enhance the relationship by better defining expectations and aligning goals.

A discussion ensued concerning funding for downtown and the Special Tax District, and the idea of LDRC working more closely with the City on projects downtown.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern that LDRC has been an independent organization for years and that several years ago when Council considered adding a division to manage downtown many of the merchants did not like the idea.

Councilmember Adams clarified with Mr. Willis that he suggested the LDRC serve in an

advisory capacity and make suggestions and recommendations to Council.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he serves on the LDRC Board as the Chamber of Commerce representative. He added that he felt Council should welcome a partnership with LDRC to have the full benefit of both organizations.

Councilmember Spencer explained that he had advocated that LDRC did not have enough money to operate. He added that LDRC should be advisory but also true participants in terms of execution of ideas and projects.

Mr. Willis explained that downtown is the governmental center and historical center of Laurinburg, and in many ways the “front porch” of our community.

Further discussion ensued concerning LDRC and partnering with the City.

Mayor Parker stated that he concurred with Councilmember Spencer in that more money needed to be spent downtown. He added that he wanted a vibrant downtown.

Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission

Ms. Jo Ann Gentry, Interim Executive Director of the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport Commission (LMAC), explained that the budget was approved by the Airport Commission on April 26, 2012. She discussed the following:

- The budget does not include any water or sewer rate increases
- Include a 1.5% cost of living adjustment for employees
- Completed the 5/23 Runway Project in October at a cost of \$5,017,248.00
- NCDOT Aviation Division is launching new web-based project submittal and grant system this summer
- Airport has three (3) construction projects in preliminary design phase:
 - Asphalt Parallel Taxiway, \$3,446,265.00
 - Taxiway G, H, L & I Rehabilitation, \$1,199,200.00
 - 10 Unit Hangar, \$781,615.00
- Ribbon Cutting/Open House for Runway 5/23 Rehabilitation Project on Saturday, June 2, 2012, drop in from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Councilmember Rainer expressed concern with the lack of detail of the proposed budget. He requested detailed information to justify the amounts.

Mayor Parker requested that Mrs. Gentry provide additional information to the City Manager.

A discussion ensued concerning the salary information and the retirement contribution by the Airport. Mrs. Gentry explained that in 2011-2012 there was an excess in the salary line item of \$40,000.00 in the event a part-time employee was hired. She added that in the proposed budget, that amount had been moved to Contingency.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mrs. Gentry stated that the Airport Commission considers information from the City of Laurinburg and Town of Maxton concerning employee cost of living increases.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mrs. Gentry explained that heavy aircraft can land on the new runway. She added that the Airport Commission had been lobbying to get funding to put an additional two (2) inches of paving, but there had not been a problem with landing heavy aircraft.

Mayor Parker explained that a waiver must be obtained to land heavy aircraft on the runway.

Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce

Mrs. Brenda Gilbert, Interim President of the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), explained that the Chamber of Commerce continues to look for ways to support the business community and make a positive impact on quality of life. He highlighted several activities of the Chamber:

- Point of contact for individuals who want to learn more about Scotland County, visitors o new residents
- Ribbon Cuttings and Business After Hours events
- Green Committee
- Entrepreneur Network Events
- Free Business Webinars on website
- Laurinburg After Five
- Christmas Parade
- Chamber gift certificates
- The Benefit Bank
- Workforce Development – Prison Reentry Council
- Education Programs to partner with the school system on the following: Academic Achievement Awards, Junior Leadership Scotland, Education Golf Tournament, Third Gear and Career Day

Mrs. Gilbert and Ms. Toni Blount discussed the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA) and introduced Terrence Smith, a sophomore at Scotland High School and a participant in the YEA Program. She added explained that Mr. Smith was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Super Dirt.

Mr. Smith explained that YEA had been wonderful and included a tremendous amount of work. He added that he recommended the program to his friends.

Further discussion ensued concerning the YEA Program. Mrs. Gilbert concluded by requesting that the Chamber be funded at the same level as the current year and that Council also consider awarding \$1,500.00 for five (5) YEA Scholarships.

Councilmember Leak explained that he had witnessed the investor panel and enjoyed it.

Councilmember Rainer explained that he was pleased with the Chamber's programs which give young people an option.

Further discussion ensued concerning the YEA Program.

Report on Teen Challenge Walk-Brent Webb

Ms. Mary Evans explained that Brent Webb was unable to appear to present a report on his Teen Challenge Walk which began on April 14, 2012. She further explained the Mr. Webb chose to conduct his walk to raise funds to support the Teen Challenge, a faith-based rehabilitation program. She thanked Council and the community for the support shown Mr. Webb. She added that a group had been formed to raise awareness of drug addiction.

Ms. Wanda Bethea explained that she wanted to commend Mr. Webb for his efforts and that he had inspired her.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The City Manager explained that at its May 15, 2012 agenda work session, Council requested a report from the Police Chief on the crime situation and the City's Neighborhood Watch Program.

Chief John Evans discussed crime statistics in the City for 2011-2012 as follows:

- Police Department responded to 16,843 calls from July 1, 2011 until May 21, 2012
- Police Department received 7,835 telephone calls and 8,156 E911 calls. Out of these calls, there were 264 assault calls, 437 domestic calls, 422 larceny calls and 316 break-in calls
- Twenty-six air conditioning units had been damaged or were stolen for the copper - 11 from residents, 12 from businesses, and 3 from churches
- 38 reports of copper tubing stolen
- 1,097 arrests made – 314 larcenies and 353 assaults. 1,469 citations written, and removed 67 drunk drivers from the highway
- Animal Control has responded to 983 calls – seized 166 dogs running loose and seized 85 cats

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning minority hiring and recruitment. The City Manager explained that there is an effort to increase recruitment of minorities in the Police Department.

Councilmember Spencer expressed concern that an action plan needed to be developed for diversification of the Police Department.

The City Manager stated that staff will develop a plan and report back to Council.

Further discussion ensued concerning hiring minority officers in the Police Department. Mayor Parker explained that he felt that if the Chief, City Manager and Human Resources Director

concur on a qualified applicant for a police officer position, then the Chief should hire the individual.

Councilmember Adams stated that if there is a position open and there is a qualified applicant, then the applicant should be hired while developing a plan for diversifying the Police Department.

Mayor Parker explained that Councilmember Rainer had requested a budget retreat. He added that one of the nights scheduled for budget discussions could be designated as a retreat for Council. He further added that in the meantime, staff could work on an action plan for diversifying the Police Department.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager explained that he authorized the Police Chief to fill two (2) of the three (3) vacant positions following one of the shootings that happened in the City.

Councilmember Rainer stated that Police cannot stop crime as long as there as guns, drugs, sin in the world. He added that with more diversification on the police force, there should be more communication in the neighborhoods where crime is occurring.

Further discussion ensued concerning diversification of the Police Department and possible budget implications. Chief Evans explained that minority police officers are in need throughout the United States. He added that it was difficult for Laurinburg to compete with larger cities who offer higher salaries.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Chief Evans explained that currently there is not an active Neighborhood Watch Program in any neighborhood. He cited lack of attendance at meetings as one of the factors in the decline in activity of the Program. He added that Ms. Mary Evans and Ms. Wanda Bethea have offered their assistance.

Councilmember Leak suggested that the Police Department's representative for Neighborhood Watch attend the next Crime and Drug Committee.

A discussion then ensued concerning juvenile crime.

PRESENTATION OF FY 2013 PROPOSED BUDGET

The City Manager presented the FY 2013 Proposed Budget to Council. He explained the following:

- The FY 2012-2013 budget totals \$34,177,142.00, compared to \$33,060,946 for the current fiscal year, an increase of 3.3%.
- The majority of the increase deals with new debt service payments for the Automated Meter Reading System, carry-over of some capital improvement projects and some new capital improvement projects.
- The City continues to work on improving infrastructure, address public safety needs, and

to maintain current level of City services.

- Includes new lighting program for I-74/Highway 74 Interchanges
- Addresses the need of the City's employees for salary increases.
- The tax rate remains unchanged.
- There are no increases in rates or fees.

The City Manager discussed the proposed budget review schedule. He added that the budget had to be adopted by July 1st.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was consensus of Council for the City Manager and Department Heads to present the entire Proposed FY 2013 Budget on Tuesday, May 29, 2012 beginning at 5:30 p.m., and for Council to hold a retreat on Thursday, May 31, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. It was also consensus of Council to consider meeting on Saturday, June 16, 2012 if needed for additional budget discussions.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCIL

There were no comments by the Mayor or Council.

RECESS

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to recess the meeting to Tuesday, May 29, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in the council chambers of the Municipal Building located at 303 W. Church St. for the City Manager to review the FY 2013 Proposed Budget with Council.

The meeting recessed at 9:14 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk