

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL RETREAT
MAY 31, 2012
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
5:30 P.M.**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg reconvened its May 22, 2012 regular meeting which had been recessed until May 29, 2012 and on that date recessed until this date and time (May 31, 2012 at 5:30 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 (arrived at 6:35 p.m.) and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk; and Greg Icard, Scotland County Economic Developer.

Mayor Parker reconvened the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Councilmember Rainer gave the invocation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Parker explained that Mr. Greg Icard, Scotland County Economic Development Director would provide an update on economic development.

Mr. Icard thanked numerous members of City staff for their assistance with the Small Business Innovation Center (SBIC).

Mr. Icard explained that there are three (3) areas of economic development: Recruitment, Business Expansion and Retention and Entrepreneurship. He then discussed the following:

- In 2011, 11 projects that were new industry were worked on, with 3 of those still being active and carrying over to 2012
- Currently working on a total of eight (8) projects
- Need new tax base
- Important to work with companies that are currently located here on expansion and retention
- In 2011 two companies closed – Mohawk and Qualpak resulting in the loss of approximately 187 jobs
- From 1997 to 2008 Scotland County lost 3,978 jobs

Mr. Icard explained that the Small Business Innovation Center (SBIC) falls under the Entrepreneurship piece of economic development. He added that the SBIC is a partnership between Scotland County, the City and Richmond Community College, with St. Andrews and UNC-P being included as minor partners. He discussed the increase in self-employment as the justification for the SBIC. He added that although there has been an increase in self-employed, there has not been much growth of those small companies to employ more workers, and the SBIC would help create an environment for success for small businesses and to help those businesses grow and employ more workers. He cited the following tools to work towards the goal of growing businesses:

- Business and entrepreneurship courses
- Revolving loan fund for start-up capital
- Incubator space
- Revolving loan fund for established businesses

Mr. Icard also discussed the following:

- leveraging partnerships and the importance of partnerships
- geographic coverage of the Southeast Economic Development Region
- marketing efforts of Southeast Partnership's marketing efforts

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, Mr. Icard explained that there are varying reasons why prospective companies do not locate in Laurinburg and Scotland County, and those reasons vary from company to company but are usually industry specific.

Mr. Icard then discussed the following:

- Industrial park inside the City limits that will increase the tax base and add utility customers
- Processes by which an industry chooses a site
- In 2011 there were 189 announcements in North Carolina and of those, southeast region had 15 projects announced and 2 of the 15 were in Scotland County

Councilmember Spencer discussed marketing and the need for the City to complement the economic development activities. He also discussed the need for the City to develop a vision in order to deal economic development considering the unfunded mandates from the State, unemployment, rising costs of operating the City and population stagnation.

Mayor Parker explained that the SBIC will house two (2) incubator businesses.

Mr. Icard explained that since most start-up businesses are small, the spaces are relatively small. He added that the start-ups will be housed at the SBIC temporarily and move out to more permanent space as the businesses grow.

A discussion ensued concerning the history of economic development in Scotland County.

Councilmember Spencer discussed the need to look at economic development differently than the past and that the City should complement the work done by Mr. Icard and the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC). He explained that the Council as a team should go to Raleigh to lobby for the City with regard to issues that affect the City.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he felt the term “economic development” was still considered recruiting, but there is more that needs to be done. He expressed concern that the City needs to open up discussion on what the City can do to complement Mr. Icard’s work.

Mayor Parker explained that Bob Davis and Joyce McDow are investigating having a 20-25 member advisory committee to the SCEDC in order to involve every segment in the community. He discussed the efforts to get Caterpillar to locate here as well as efforts to determine why it chose not to locate here. He added that the SCEDC is trying to be proactive. He also discussed an economic development summit to include the community’s stakeholders to be held on June 14, 2012.

Councilmember Williamson discussed the need for City and County representatives to meet with State representatives in Raleigh.

Discussions ensued concerning the following:

- Economic development efforts and the need for all entities involved in economic development to work together
- Retail recruitment
- The spec building at LMAC
- The possibility of an alternate member for SCEDC in the event the Mayor and Councilmember Leak cannot attend meeting

Mayor Parker thanked Mr. Icard for his presentation.

Councilmember Williamson explained that Laurinburg is the population and retail center of Scotland County. He added that he felt City Council has an obligation to make the growth of the City its number one priority and to develop a strategy to accomplish this.

A discussion ensued concerning the need to sell the community in positive ways and to foster positive feelings about the community. Councilmember Spencer discussed the need for the City to market itself positively and not rely on the media.

Mayor Parker called for a break for dinner at 6:38 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 6:57 p.m.

Councilmember Leak stated that he would like Council to have a closed session for personnel reasons at the end of the meeting.

NO SURPRISES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Mayor Parker requested that there be no surprise issues at Council meetings. He discussed the need for staff and Council to work together as a team and for the council meetings to have decorum. He added that if an item is not discussed at the agenda workshop, then it should not be brought up at a regular council meeting. A lengthy discussion then ensued concerning this matter.

A lengthy discussion ensued concerning minority hiring and recruitment efforts in the Police Department.

Councilmember Spencer stated that he felt the City's role was to recruit the best qualified candidates for any job. He added that diversity encompasses all races, genders and backgrounds. He further added that the City needs to be balanced and fair as well as follow the letter of the law.

A discussion ensued concerning the need to make the agenda workshops productive. Mayor Parker requested that Council tell the City Manager or himself if additional information is needed following the agenda workshops.

Councilmember Adams explained that she felt it important to stick to the agenda as much as possible. She added that it was important to treat employees with respect and to maintain a non-adversarial atmosphere.

CURB AND GUTTER REQUIREMENT

Mayor Parker explained that there are places in the City such as Huntington Park and McLaurin Acres that will not be developed as long as curb and gutter are required. He added that in the annexed areas there is no curb and gutter; however, if property adjacent to such areas is to be developed, curb and gutter is required. He further added that housing development means increased population and water revenue, tax revenue and sanitation revenue for the City. He suggested that unless there is a steep incline, the curb and gutter requirement be considered on a case by case basis.

Councilmember Spencer suggested having a moratorium on the curb and gutter requirement.

A discussion ensued concerning construction standards of roads in subdivisions. The City Manager explained that they must be built to State standards. He added that impact fees can be levied or the developer can be required to place a bond for a certain number of years to warrant that the streets will hold up.

Councilmember Leak suggested that the City set aside funds from new developments in order to pay for curb and gutter in the future if needed.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, the City Manager explained that the subdivision ordinance requires curb and gutter in order to develop a subdivision. He added that the City had a local bill through the NC Legislature so that street improvements, and therefore curb and gutter assessments, could be levied without petition for street improvements of the property owners.

Mayor Parker explained that the annexed areas of the City are the affected areas by the curb and gutter requirement. He added that if development occurs where curb and gutter exist, then the requirement might not be waived.

Councilmember Adams explained that in the areas that are being discussed have homes that are in foreclosure now. She added that the challenge will be a marketing strategy to get people to move to Laurinburg and buy those houses.

Councilmember Spencer explained that the tax base is stagnant and shrinking, and Council may come to the point where taxes may have to be raised. He discussed the strategy of determining what ordinances impede growth, and a moratorium could be used since it is not permanent.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, the City Manager stated that he was not aware of any developer that had proposed developments but because of the curb and gutter requirement, the developer did not follow through with the development.

Councilmember Leak explained that Sam Cribb had discussed this issue.

Councilmember Adams added that Mr. Cribb has a subdivision with no curb and gutter and there are issues with drainage and the roads cracking.

Councilmember Rainer stated that neighborhoods look better with curb and gutter.

Councilmember Spencer discussed the lack of uniformity with curb and gutter.

Following further discussion, the City Manager stated that staff would research curb and gutter requirements and present a report to Council in August.

BASIC COMMUNICATION

Councilmember Adams expressed concern about the following items:

- Having information about City items that may appear in the newspaper before it appears in the newspaper
- Include the City Manager's calendar for the following week in the Weekly Update
- Heads-up concerning projects about which Council may receive phone calls such as street improvements

A discussion ensued concerning the need to keep Council informed and maintain a good relationship with the media.

BIDS ON WEBSITE

Councilmember Spencer suggested putting the City's open bids on the website so that local businesses would have an opportunity to bid.

The City Manager stated that a page would be added to the website to advertise City bids.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Councilmember Spencer explained that since this topic does not have budget implications, it can be deferred to the next meeting. He added that he would like the position of Community Development Director (Brandi Deese) clearly defined and determine what support systems or resources are needed to include partnering with Mr. Icard and the Chamber of Commerce. He further added that another part of organizational development is diversity to ensure that the City is providing the resources in development of staff as well as looking at opportunities that have not been explored.

The City Manager explained that Mrs. Deese is not involved in economic development other than assisting with understanding of the Zoning Ordinance. He added that her role involves the following:

- CDBG grants and other grants for infrastructure needs
- planning and zoning
- code enforcement
- keeping the Comprehensive Plan current
- updating the Unified Development Ordinance
- assisting department heads with infrastructure projects
- Manages Beautification and Cemetery

The City Manager explained that if Council wanted to reshape the Community Development Director, it would have budget implications and he would need input from Council wants the position to be.

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, Mayor Parker explained that the budget included three (3) Management Trainees at a cost of \$100,000.00.

A discussion ensued concerning development of a training program and recruitment for the Management Trainees.

Councilmember Adams requested that the Human Resources Director discuss steps he utilizes for recruiting personnel at the next budget meeting.

Upon request by Councilmember Rainer, the City Manager explained that the estimate to install speed bumps at the lake at St. Andrews is \$1,400.00.

Councilmember Rainer expressed concern about the Police Chief also being the Fire Chief because of the serious crime issues in Laurinburg. He added that he would like a paid full-time Fire Chief be included in the budget.

A discussion ensued concerning crime.

Councilmember Adams requested a job description for a Fire Chief.

Further discussion ensued concerning the need for a full-time Fire Chief. Councilmember Leak suggested that the City Manager present Council with a job description and a recommendation regarding a full-time Fire Chief.

The City Manager explained that Chief Evans has been a volunteer firefighter for a long time and has not missed a fire call in 13 years. He added that Chief Evans would continue to be a volunteer firefighter.

Upon question by Councilmember Rainer, the City Manager explained that the proposed employee evaluation plan would be discussed at the next meeting. He added that all employee evaluations would be completed by the end of June.

Councilmember Rainer requested the following information on all police officers be provided at the next meeting:

- Hire date
- Starting salary
- Current salary
- Promotion history

RECESS

Motion was made by Councilmember Spencer, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to recess the meeting to Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in the council room of the Municipal Building.

The meeting recessed at 8:21 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker, III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk