

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 19, 2019  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
303 WEST CHURCH ST.  
7:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, James J. Garby, Jr., Curtis B. Leak, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

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

Councilmember Williamson gave the Invocation and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mayor Block briefly reviewed public comment procedures.

Pastor Michael Edds, 1207 Blue Drive, expressed concern about the abundance of litter in the City. He suggested that the City should be more proactive with code enforcement.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Block reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- a) Consider minutes of January 22, 2019 regular meeting; January 29, 2019 special/joint meeting
- b) Set public hearing to be held on April 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. to consider request to rezone property on Gulf Street from Residential-6 to General Business
- c) Consider Ordinance No. O-2019-06 Closing portion of Main Street for Springfest April 26-27, 2019
- d) Consider Revisions to the Crime and Drug Committee Guidelines

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Garby, Adams, Leak, Williamson  
Nays: None

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **CONSIDER REQUEST FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE A CARNIVAL**

Mayor Block explained that the public hearing was to consider a request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a carnival on 1681 South Main Street. He then opened the public hearing.

Mr. Mac McInnis, Planner and Zoning Officer, being duly sworn, explained that Michael's Amusements had requested a Conditional Use Permit to operate a carnival from March 28 to April 7, 2019 at 1681 South Main Street. He added that this carnival had been operating in Laurinburg well over 10 years. He further added that at its February 12, 2019 meeting, the Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit. He further explained that Mr. Lee, on behalf of Michael's Amusements, has always adhered to City regulations, and staff had no reason to not recommend approval.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. McInnis explained that he heard no complaints about parking last year. He added that Mr. Lee planned to have staff and to hire off-duty police officers to assist with parking and traffic just as he did the previous year. He further added that nothing about staffing and parking stipulations was discussed at the Planning Board meeting.

Mr. Robert Lee of Michael's Amusements, being duly sworn, explained that he had addressed all issues with parking that had been discussed in previous years. He added that he had complied with all rules and regulations. He further added that before the carnival began, he would have the trash removed from the location, and he expressed concern that a possible vagrant had moved in around at the shopping center.

Upon questions by Mayor Block, Mr. Lee explained that he would hire a police officer during busy times to assist with traffic and parking. He added that an employee would also be on hand at all times to assist with parking near the restaurant. He further added that he could not understand why a business owner would not want the carnival near his/her business because the carnival increases traffic and business.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Lee explained that he had discussed other potential locations for the carnival with the City Manager and Mr. McInnis. He further explained that the property has to be properly zoned and the property owner has to approve the carnival locating on his/her property. He added that the location at 1681 South Main Street is a good location, and that because it is on a parking lot, rides and equipment cannot muck down into the ground. He further added that every night after the carnival closes, he and his employees pick up trash in the premises, but also in the parking lots across the street.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Lee stated that his employees camp in Rockingham at the drag strip. He added that he always makes a request that the Police Department ride through the carnival overnight for security.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Lee stated that the liability coverage is \$10 million. He added that there had not been a single claim since the carnival had been coming to Laurinburg.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mr. Lee clarified that the carnival hours of operation would be 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. on weeknights, and open around 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and close around 10:00 to 11:00 p.m.

Mr. Mikhail Vlahos, being duly sworn, explained that he was representing Captain Larry's Restaurant. He added that he was opposed to the request because it hurts his business and because of safety concerns. He further added that the carnival has been at this location before and it creates unsafe intermingling of vehicles, carnival guests and restaurant patrons. He discussed the inadequacy of parking because he had observed carnival patrons parking in his parking area stating that they were going to the restaurant, walk up to the front door, and then turn around and go to the carnival instead; and that patrons had told him that they did not stop at the restaurant during the carnival because it looked like the restaurant was full and had a wait time. He stated that numerous unaccompanied youth would walk to and from his restaurant to use the restaurant restrooms which creates unsafe conditions in his parking lot and that the unaccompanied youth had caused damage in his restrooms and would harass his customers. He added that a lot of cars use the parking lot as a cut through, and drive at unsafe speeds through and around the parking lot. He stated that he is very concerned about his business's potential liability for injuries that could result in the parking area. He further explained that his staff would have to clean up the parking areas in the mornings when the Carnival was operating and remove carnival food items such as funnel cakes and candy apples.

Upon question by Councilmember Garby, Mr. Vlahos explained that he could not provide dollar amounts of financial impact from the carnival; however, he knew his business was down and that customers had told him they did not stop in because the parking lot was full, so they assumed that the restaurant was full as well, when in fact, there were empty tables.

Councilmember Williamson discussed the parking spaces located near Captain Larry's Restaurant, and that the parking spaces are not owned by Captain Larry's Restaurant.

Mr. Vlahos explained that the building and the parking are not owned by Captain Larry's Restaurant.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mr. Vlahos explained that to the best of his knowledge no one from Captain Larry's Restaurant or his family attended the Planning Board meeting.

Mayor Block explained that Council was tasked with a difficult decision due to citizens enjoying

the carnival and not harming Captain Larry's Restaurant. He asked Mr. Vlahos if he had any possible solutions.

Mr. Vlahos suggested that the carnival move to a field because he and his family do not want the carnival because it hurts the business. He added that having the carnival in a field would be better for the safety of children.

Councilmember Evans explained that she was concerned about the safety issue and that the opening of Hardees Restaurant made the area even more congested.

The City Attorney explained that Council was still taking testimony and was not deliberating at this time.

Mr. Vlahos explained that a homeless woman had begun spending a lot of time at the former Save-A-Lot location.

The City Attorney explained that if Mr. Lee had any questions for Mr. Vlahos, he should ask at this time. He added that at the completion of Mr. Vlahos' testimony, Mr. Lee could add rebuttal which is testimony in opposition to what Mr. Vlahos had said.

Mr. Lee explained that he had never encountered a business that did not want the carnival in close proximity. He asked Mr. Vlahos what he studied in college that would make him understand that location of the carnival near his business was not good.

The City Attorney stated that Mr. Lee's question was not relevant.

Mr. Vlahos stated that he knew that the carnival hurt his business.

Ms. Michaela Ferris, manager of Taki Restaurant, being duly sworn, explained that Mr. Fong could not be present; therefore she was representing Taki's. She added that the main concern was safety. She explained that Taki's has a drive-through which many cars utilize it, and that when the carnival was in operation, there are many unsupervised kids running around. She stated that last year Mr. Lee had agreed to contribute to Taki's water bill if allowed to hook onto Taki's water; however, the carnival did not contribute any funds to Taki's water bill. She further added that Taki employees were offered free and/or discounted entry into the carnival last year; however, this was not met by the carnival. She explained that carnival-goers utilized the restaurant's restrooms and left them trashed and also left the parking area trashed. She further explained that she did not have enough staff to continually monitor the restrooms and the parking lot. She expressed concern about carnival-goers loitering in the parking lot after Taki had closed.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Ms. Ferris explained that the carnival hindered the business at Taki's because customers thought the restaurant was busy because the parking lot was full. She added that she did not have any figures on the business impact.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Ms. Ferris explained that she nor anyone from Taki's attended the Planning Board meeting. She added that she was not aware of the Planning Board, and that when Mr. Lee approached her about the carnival and using Taki's water, she told him that she was not in favor of the carnival.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. McInnis explained that two (2) signs were posted on the property where the carnival was to be located and that letters were sent to property owners within 200 feet of the subject property.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, the City Manager explained that there were water taps for the buildings in the shopping center.

Mr. Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director, being duly sworn, explained that he was not aware of any temporary water taps in the vicinity of where the carnival proposed to operate. He added that if necessary, he could investigate the matter further.

Mr. Lee explained he and Mr. Joe Frankowski of the carnival were told by a man who told them that he was a manager at Taki's that the carnival could use the water at the can wash station at the back of the restaurant for the vendor that sold turkey legs and the vendor that sold funnel cakes. He added that Mr. Frankowski gave the man at Taki's \$250.00. He stated that the carnival has never left without paying anything. He added that he was the individual responsible for giving away armbands for entrance to the carnival, and that there must have been miscommunication with the employees of Taki's receiving the armbands to the carnival. He added that he asked the property owner exactly what he was leasing with her, and that he was told that it included everything in the shopping center not within the confines of the two (2) restaurants (Captain Larry's Restaurant and Taki's). He explained that if Council would allow the carnival to take place this year because so much work had been done already in advance, that he would not bring the carnival to Laurinburg next year.

Upon question by Councilmember Adams, Mr. Lee explained that before the carnival arrived in Laurinburg, he always talked with the Police Chief. He added that he had called and left a message for the Police Chief. He added that last year one (1) police officer was assigned to the parking lot at Captain Larry's Restaurant to assist with keeping carnival-goers out of Captain Larry's Restaurant parking area.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Block closed the public hearing.

Councilmember Evans explained that last year Council told Mr. Jimmy Vlahos that if he had any issues or problems with the carnival to come back to Council, and that Council would try to take care of everything for him. She added that it appeared that Mr. Jimmy Vlahos was not satisfied with what happened last year.

Councilmember Leak explained that the parking area beside Captain Larry's Restaurant was not owned by Mr. Vlahos. He added that the carnival provides amusement for the community. He further added that anyone who leases from the shopping center property owner, would probably encounter the same parking issues. He discussed the need for everyone to work together.

Councilmember Adams explained that the previous year a lot of discussion and special arrangements were made for parking for the carnival. She asked Mr. McInnis if he received any complaints concerning the carnival from law enforcement, anyone from Captain Larry's Restaurant, or citizens.

Mr. McInnis explained that he did not receive any complaints last year about the carnival and that tonight was the first he had heard of problems with the carnival last year. He stated that there was no one at the Planning Board meeting to speak about these matters or against the carnival.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, Mr. McInnis explained that the letter sent to property owners was not sent via certified mail.

Mayor Block explained that he believed that because of the previous year's contentiousness with this request, the carnival owner should have talked with the business owners prior to tonight to resolve any issues. He added that the concerns of Captain Larry's Restaurant and Taki are valid. He further added that there were other potential more suitable locations for the carnival in Laurinburg.

Councilmember Evans moved to deny the request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a carnival at 1681 South Main Street from March 28 to April 7, 2019.

The City Attorney explained that for clarification on the motion by Councilmember Evans, that her motion to deny the request needed to include stipulations for denial such as that the request would materially endanger public health or safety and that the request would substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.

Councilmember Evans amended her motion to include the stipulations as stated by the City Attorney.

Councilmember Williamson seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Evans, Williamson, Garby, Adams

Nays: Leak

## **DELEGATION**

### **TIS THE SEASON – AFTER-ACTION REPORT ON TIS THE SEASON**

Mrs. Terry Parker, of Tis the Season, explained that the Tis the Season group was grateful for the support from Council and had a video prepare to show Council how the money was spent. Mrs. Parker showed a video; however, the audio portion of the video did not work properly because only the music played and not the narration.

Mrs. Parker explained that in October, 2019 thirteen downtown businesses agreed to track their sales with the result being that all businesses' sales increased by at least 15%. She

added that the majority of the money provided by Council to Tis the Season was spent on lighting, and that the group hoped that Council would give the group money again this year. She further added that the group plans to increase the number of Christmas trees and lighting to go past the railroad tracks on Main Street and down the side street to Helping Hand.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mrs. Parker stated that Tis the Season would like the same amount of funding (\$7,500.00) this year, and sooner rather than later.

## **CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

### **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT-INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT**

The City Manager explained that Ms. Karen Kiehna and Yvonne Jenson of McGill Associates would provide information concerning the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Infrastructure grant in the amount of \$2 million for Produce Market Road Sewer Improvements. Ms. Karen Kiehna McGill Associates.

Ms. Jenson explained that there are a lot of strings attached to federal grant dollars, and one of the requirements for this grant is a Fair Housing Assessment. She thanked the members of the Fair Housing Committee and staff for their assistance in conducting the assessment.

Ms. Kiehna explained that she is the Grant Administrator and Ms. Jenson is the Community Coordinator for this grant. She added that in preparing the Fair Housing Assessment, a great deal of census, state and local data are reviewed to prepare the report. She explained that there are discrepancies between the state average on items and Laurinburg, and in particular the Census Tract for the Produce Market Road area. She then presented a PowerPoint with highlights as follows:

- Assessment of Fair Housing (AFA) is a federal requirement.
- AFA consists of fair housing data, a discussion of local issues related to fair housing, contributing factors, and the identification of housing priorities and goals.
- Based on 2017 Census data there are some community challenges:
  - Median income varies greatly from the state average, as well as other areas of the City compared to the Produce Market Road area Census Tract.
  - Median income also varies by ethnicity within the Produce Market area Census Tract with the white median income being \$40,598.00 or less, and the black median income being \$24,566.00 or less.
  - Whites living in poverty in the Produce Market area Census Tract is 21.65%, and blacks living in poverty within the same Census Tract is 35.10%.
  - The Produce Market Road area Census Tract revealed a very young community in the area.
  - Unemployment in Laurinburg is twice the state rate, and it is 25% for the Produce Market Road area Census Tract.
  - Poverty is significantly higher than other Census Tracts in Laurinburg.

- Median home value within the state is \$161,000.00, within the City it is \$98,300.00 and in the Produce Market Road area Census Tract it is \$64,900.00.
- Renter occupancy is 55% of the residents in the Produce Market Area Census Tract, the state is at 35% and the City of Laurinburg is 52%.
- State average where rent exceeds 30% of household income is 38.7%, City average is 58.10%, and the Produce Market Area Census Tract is 76%.
- Goal is to bring the Produce Market Road area Census Tract and the City up to the state averages on above items.
- Transportation to employment and services is a challenge. Most employment is outside of the public transportation corridor which is the Scotland County Area Transit Authority, so access to a private vehicle is a necessity.
- Additional stops for critical services such as access to grocery stores and recreation areas should be added to the transportation system.
- Laurinburg is vulnerable to flooding as it is flat and there are two (2) major waterways in the 100 Year Flood Plain that transverse the City.
- Impediments to opportunity in the community include:
  - Adequate public transportation
  - Affordable housing stock
  - Segregation
  - Skilled workforce
  - Employment opportunities paying living wages
  - Environmentally healthy neighborhood
  - Language barriers
  - Biases in the City's zoning ordinance or Land Use Plan
- Impediments to fair housing include:
  - Location of employment opportunities
  - Lack of private investment
  - Deteriorated and abandoned properties
  - Lack of affordable housing
  - Lack of understanding of Fair Housing Laws
  - Quality of schools
  - Lack of community revitalization efforts
  - Zoning and Land use barriers
- Goals:
  - Empower people through information and education
    - Facilitate or support collaboration between the City's Community Development Department, Richmond Community College and the NC Works Career Center to promote Work Keys Program to help address the persistent high unemployment problem
    - Contact a HUD approved Fair Housing Counselor from Sandhills Community Action Partnership to facilitate a Fair Housing forum
    - Support mentoring efforts and life skills classes
    - Support efforts to reduce teacher turnover
  - Improve safety and condition of affordable housing stock
    - Work with Scotland County Inspections Department to be proactive on the enforcement of Minimum Housing Standards

- Review zoning ordinance and map to update if needed
- Apply for grants that assist low to moderate income, disabled and elderly homeowners with repairs
- Proactive Code Enforcement instead of complaint driven
- Continue to support and participate in the Laurinburg Police Department's Neighborhood Watch and community outreach efforts
- Improve access to opportunity
  - Work with Scotland County Area Transportation (SCATS) and the Transportation Advisory Board to review routes and schedules to better support needs of the community
  - Collaborate with Scotland County Economic Development to discuss incentives that may bring business back to the City

Upon questions by Mayor Block, Ms. Kiehna explained that if the City did not meet all of the goals of the Fair Housing Assessment, the City would not lose the \$2 million grant. She also explained that efforts would be conducted to assist the City with grant funding for more affordable housing.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Ms. Kiehna explained that grant funding is based on need, and there is great need in the community.

Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to approve the Assessment of Fair Housing Certification and authorize the Mayor to execute the Assessment of Fair Housing Certification.

**CONSIDER AMENDING CHAPTER 8 BUSINESSES, ARTICLE 1 IN GENERAL, OF THE CITY CODE**

The City Manager explained that this ordinance amends the City Code to remove Section 8-2 whereby billiards or pool tables are not allowed where alcoholic beverages are sold for on-premises consumption.

Councilmember Garby moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2019-07 amending Chapter 8 Businesses, Article I In General, of the Laurinburg City Code. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Garby, Williamson, Adams, Evans, Leak  
Nays: None  
(Ordinance No. O-2019-07 on file in City Clerk's office)

**CONSIDER AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE (HURRICANE FLORENCE)**

The City Manager explained that the City sustained significant damages to infrastructure and incurred expenditures related to debris removal and emergency response as a result of Hurricane Florence. In order to take necessary actions to recover and repair from this event, FY 19

operating expenditures were used to cover these costs. The City has already received some insurance funding from wind damage claims and anticipates receiving additional funding from FEMA reimbursements and insurance funding from flood damage claims. The proposed budget amendment is being presented for consideration to amend the FY 19 operating budget to receive the additional funding as revenue and increase the departmental line items for expenditures related to this event so that the funds are available to continue operating and expenditures do not exceed budgeted revenue for the remainder of the fiscal year. He added that funds would hopefully be received in Fiscal Year 19-20.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approved Ordinance No. O-2019-08 amending Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2018-07). The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Garby, Evans, Leak, Adams  
Nays: None  
(Ordinance No. O-2019-08 on file in City Clerk's office)

## **DISCUSSION OF NORTH FIRE STATION OPTIONS**

The City Manager explained that currently fire operations are being conducted from the South Fire Station. He added that staff recently was informed that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had calculated the amount that it would provide the City for the North Fire Station, and that amount was \$118,000.00 for building repairs. He further added that staff was notified today that there were issues with getting the North Fire Station insured because it was in an AE Flood Zone.

Mr. Harold Haywood provided the following information concerning the North Fire Station:

- FEMA's inspectors provided inspection to determine extent of damages to the North Fire Station.
- Inspection also done by the City's insurance carrier in order to file insurance claim.
- The scope of repairs determined by FEMA Cost Estimation Center to get building back to pre-disaster state was \$118,000.00 which does not include contents and the parking lot.
- Cost to replace building estimated at \$809,000.00.
- Because the amount of \$118,000.00 for repairs was not at least 50%, the City did not qualify for FEMA to reimburse the City for relocating the North Fire Station.
- One other option that staff is researching is FEMA's Alternate Project Option which would allow the City to take the \$118,000.00 and apply it to another project, such as relocating the North Fire Station. However, the City would have to fund the remainder, pursue grants or determine other funding avenues to complete the construction.
- Another option would be to repair the building to get to pre-disaster state, but if there was another event like Hurricane Florence, the station would flood again, and the City would be in the same situation.
- Staff is still working with the City's insurance carrier and was told yesterday that the North Fire Station was not covered by an existing commercial flood insurance; but the

City would be required to obtain a policy with the National Flood Insurance Program and report the flood coverage.

- Received call from the State Office that they are still trying to get us funding sources for Unmet Needs. The fact the insurance carrier is denying the insurance claim helped the City's cause with the Unmet Needs Program.

Fire Chief Randy Gibson discussed the North Fire Station, and provided the following information:

- Hurricane Matthew flooded the property and water almost came into the building.
- In preparation for Hurricane Florence, sandbags were placed around the building; however, water went over the sandbags into the building.
- Staff saw swift water that brought in logs and stumps and damaged the bay doors.
- FEMA site inspectors and FEMA mitigation team that came, identified some concerns:
  - Stress cracks from water entering the building.
  - Possible mold and mold mitigation.
  - Had to do asbestos abatement due to the tile floor in the building.
  - Metal doors inside the building that will not close.

The City Manager explained that the FEMA Mitigation Team mentioned mitigation issues such as raising the hot water heater off the floor so it wouldn't be affected by water in the future. He added that the North Fire Station is necessary during an emergency so for staff to operate out of since it is one (1) of the City's two (2) fire stations. He added that he and staff would be meeting with the Governor's Hometown Strong Group and would be talking about the Unmet Needs Funds.

Chief Gibson explained that the FEMA Mitigation Team also mentioned hiring an engineer to design a flood wall that would extend from the front of the fire station to Barrett Street, making Hillside Avenue a dead end at North Main Street which would prohibit fire trucks from exiting the fire station onto North Main Street.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Chief Gibson explained that he had looked at potential sites on the north side of town for a new fire station. He added that in order to not affect insurance rates on the north side, and in particular in the rural fire district, a new fire station would need to be parallel or further north of the current site.

Upon questions by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that FEMA had approved \$118,000.00 to repair the North Fire Station; however, the estimated total for repairs and contents was over \$200,000.00

Councilmember Williamson stated that it sounded like the biggest concern was that if the fire station was restored to its original state, it would still be located in a flood zone.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Chief Gibson explained that construction on the North Fire Station began in 1979.

Mayor Block stated that he was not sure if there was reason enough to relocate the fire station for a once in a generation flood.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Mr. Haywood explained that the total amount approved by FEMA was \$218,000.00, with the estimated repairs to the building being \$118,000.00. He added that the repairs had not been bid out; therefore the repair cost could be greater than FEMA estimated.

Upon questions by Mayor Block, Mr. Haywood explained that FEMA mentioned the cracks in the walls and the doors, and also mentioned in the report that there could be items that could not be seen. He added that there was a possibility of appealing the FEMA amount if the bids came back higher than FEMA estimated; however, he believed that the \$218,000.00 was all that FEMA would provide.

Upon questions by Councilmember Leak, Chief Gibson explained that the North Fire Station has six (6) bays, and the South Substation has two (2) bays. He added that the Fire Department had outgrown the North Fire Station with regard to space and technology.

Councilmember Leak suggested Chief Gibson and staff look at all options concerning the North Fire Station including renovation and building a new fire station. He added that if the North Fire Station is renovated, flood insurance would have to be purchased for the facility.

Mayor Block asked why flood insurance would have to be purchased.

Mr. Haywood explained that since the building is located in a flood zone, FEMA would require that flood insurance be purchased.

Discussion ensued concerning the construction of a new facility. The City Manager explained that FEMA estimated the cost of a new fire station at \$809,000.00 based on the same size fire station.

Mr. Haywood explained that FEMA would not require that a flood wall be constructed. He added that a flood wall was considered mitigation and FEMA would provide no funds for a flood wall.

Following a brief discussion, the City Manager explained that he and staff would keep Council informed on progress.

## **UPDATE ON CITY HALL AND POLICE STATION**

The City Manager explained that because of issues with the elevator company and having to get the elevator in the City Hall and Police Station inspected by the State, the move-in date for staff into the City Hall and Police Station would be the weekend of April 27 and 28, 2019, making April 29, 2019 the first day the facility would be open.

Upon questions by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that the Municipal Building would need to be completely emptied, the asbestos removed and abated, and then it would be demolished so that the parking lot and the drive-thru could be completed. He added that the first Council meeting in the City Hall and Police Station would be May 21, 2019.

Upon questions by Councilmember Garby, the City Manager explained that the brick features under the windows were first constructed wrong, but then corrected. He added that it was designed so that the corners and under the windows would stand out, and that due to cost-saving measures, the brick was changed from a buff brick to the same brick as the rest of the exterior. He further added that he could ask the architect and contractor to come discuss this issue with Council.

### **DISCUSSION ABOUT ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT**

The City Manager explained that Mayor Block had requested a discussion concerning ordinance enforcement.

Mayor Block explained that he wanted Council to consider pro-active code enforcement rather than complaint-driven. He added that some towns have code enforcement assigned to the police department. He requested that Council consider changing the way code enforcement is handled and for this matter to be on the agenda the following month.

Discussion ensued concerning the junk/nuisance vehicle ordinance regarding the criteria that vehicles must meet in order to be declared a junk car, the number of vehicles on properties, and overall appearance.

Councilmember Garby explained that due to the economic conditions in the community, the City would need to be careful because someone may have a vehicle in his yard to repair, but just not have the money at the time.

### **UPDATE ON STATE BANK BUILDING**

Mayor Block explained that he had requested this item on the agenda.

The City Attorney explained that he and Mr. Mac McInnis, Planner/Code Enforcement Officer, had been working on letters to property owners in the downtown area to notify them of the ordinance change and the requirement to comply. He added that he would like a closed session on the April 16, 2019 to address this property specifically.

### **UPDATE ON STORM WATER PROJECTS**

Mayor Block explained that he had requested that staff provide an update on storm water projects.

Mr. Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director, explained that Requests for Proposals (RFQ) were sent today to storm water engineers for service. He added that once the RFQs are received,

Mayor Block and Councilmember Garby will be provided copies in order to participate in the assessment. He further added that money will be added to the next year's budget for some storm water projects, but staff would need to wait until it has the recommendations and estimates for work from the storm water engineer. He added that he was working with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Army Corps of Engineers on areas such as Lloyd's Barbershop, Leith Creek, Cypress Drive and Debra Drive for assistance. He explained that he had received a request from Mr. Jerry Glover concerning installing pipe in a ditch that runs across Mr. Glover's property. He added that he and the City Attorney were preparing an agreement because according to the City's Storm Water Policy, the property owner must pay for the materials.

Discussion ensued concerning the flooding on Debra Drive. Mr. McQuage explained that the ditch that is clogged behind Debra Drive is on private property, and therefore, the City cannot do work on it. He added that when the USDA representative toured the area, he mentioned that there could be money to buy out the properties that are flooded.

Mr. Haywood explained that the deadline for proposals was April 9, 2019, and once the Assessment Committee (Mayor Block, Councilmember Garby, the City Manager, Mr. McQuage and himself) rated the firms to narrow down to two (2) to three (3) top firms, he would like to have those firms come to the April 16, 2019 Council meeting and make a short presentation to Council.

#### **UPDATE ON DOWNTOWN CIVIC SPACE PROJECT**

Mr. Michael Mandeville, Community Development Director provided the following update on the Downtown Civic Space:

- Property is being surveyed.
- Met with Hudson Paving to get estimate for paving the property for the next year's budget.
- Electric Department would begin next week to put the electric underground.
- Mr. West's property has been purchased and vacated, and will be demolished soon.

The City Manager explained that Chuck Willis, Willis Engineering, was working on storm drainage since many of the gutters on surrounding buildings drain in that area.

Discussion ensued concerning the possible corporate sponsorship of the Downtown Civic Space. The City Manager explained that the Downtown Advisory Committee had discussed sponsorship.

Upon questions by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Mandeville explained that Mr. Walker McCoy, Beautification Supervisor, was planning the landscaping. He added that he was including in next year's budget that would possibly include additional landscaping in the Art Garden.

A discussion ensued concerning the former Firestone Building that received extensive damage

when the former Market Furniture Building fell on it. The City Manager explained that staff was discussing the property with the owner.

### **DISCUSSION ABOUT LITTER EFFORTS**

Mayor Block explained that he wanted Council to consider whether a more comprehensive approach to the litter problem to include more litter awareness, prevention and enforcement with a full-time position at the City.

Discussion ensued concerning the litter pick-up contract, the former litter position with the City, and the importance of education.

### **DISCUSSION OF LAURINBURG RECREATION/COMMUNITY CENTER**

Mayor Block explained that he wanted this item on the agenda to keep it in the forefront. He added that the Scotland County Board of Commissioners decided not to appoint two (2) members to a subcommittee to discuss the possibility of a Laurinburg Recreation/Community Center.

Councilmember Leak explained that his suggestion of the sub-committee was to get more people involved in the discussion in order to sell the idea to the citizens.

### **CONSIDER ACCEPTING OWNERSHIP OF TWO PORTIONS OF THE SCOTLAND COUNTY WATER SYSTEM**

The City Manager explained that the Scotland County Board of Commissioners voted at its meeting on March 11, 2019 to offer to the City ownership of two (2) portions of its Water System, the one covering Dorset Drive and the corner of Calhoun Road and US 79 to the City of Laurinburg, due to testing requirements by the State. He added that by transferring to the City, there would be no additional testing required by the State.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to accept ownership of two (2) portions of the Scotland County Water System.

### **COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS**

There were no comments from the Mayor or Councilmembers.

### **ADJOURN**

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

APPROVED JUNE 18, 2019

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Matthew Block, MD, Mayor

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Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk