

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 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, February 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. Tippet, City Clerk; and William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney.

Mayor Block called the meeting to order at 6:57 p.m.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Block briefly reviewed public comment procedures.

There was no one present to speak.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Block reviewed the Consent Agenda:

- a) Consider minutes of December 11, 2018 regular meeting
- b) Consider Ordinance No. O-2019-03 Amending FY 2018-2019 Budget Appropriations Ordinance (Ordinance No. O-2018-07) by Receiving ElectriCities Grant in the amount of \$5,000.00

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

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

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2019-03 on file in City Clerk's office)

DELEGATIONS

SHERIFF RALPH KERSEY – LAW ENFORCEMENT MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

Mayor Block explained that Sheriff Kersey had contacted him to explain that he could not attend the meeting this evening.

A brief discussion ensued concerning the 1993 Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Agreement between the City of Laurinburg and Scotland County.

Chief Williams explained that there could have been an issue with a false alarm bill that was sent to the Scotland County Sheriff's Department. He added that the police officer who prepared the false alarm bill did not know that the property was under control of the Sheriff's Department, and if the officer had known, the false alarm bill would not have been issued.

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of Council for the Police Chief to speak with Sheriff Kersey, and if there was an issue, for the Sheriff to come to Council another month.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

CONSIDER REQUEST FROM DR. WILLIAM MORGAN CONCERNING ELECTRIC BILL

The City Manager explained that Dr. Morgan was a co-signer on an account for one (1) of his tenants who died and the account was not closed upon her death, resulting in utility bills for two (2) months. Dr. Morgan requested that Council consider waiving some of the amount due on the account. The City Manager added that it was City policy for the co-signer to be responsible for bills when no deposit was required.

Councilmember Williamson expressed concern about treating Dr. Morgan differently than other customers in similar situations.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, the City Manager explained that bills are not sent to co-signers on utility accounts as that would be extremely burdensome on staff.

Following a brief discussion, it was consensus of Council to not honor Dr. Morgan's request to waive part of the utility bill.

CONSIDER REQUEST FROM CRIME AND DRUG COMMITTEE

Mr. Brian Gibson, Chairman of the Crime and Drug Committee, explained that he first wanted to update Council on Operation Pill Drop. He added that the location in the Police Department was the only location for citizens to leave unused medications in Scotland County. He further added that since discussion several months ago in a Crime and Drug Committee meeting, the Scotland

County Sheriff's Office and the Scotland County Emergency Management Services Office have discussed adding pill drop locations.

Mr. Gibson explained that the Committee had discussed the use of Crime Stoppers/tip line for the City and County. He added that the Police Department and the Sheriff's Department both have online tip submissions as well as other ways for people to report information; however, there is no anonymous way for individuals to provide tips to law enforcement. He discussed the requirements to use the Crime Stoppers logo. He explained that the Crime and Drug Committee was proposing to City Council, the Scotland County Board of Commissioners and to other municipalities in the County to form a joint group to research the Crime Stoppers program further.

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Mr. Gibson explained that the Police Department has an anonymous online tip system. He added that over the last three (3) years, the Police Department had received seven (7) tips.

Following discussion concerning the lack of anonymity, cost, and operation, it was consensus of Council that it would support the Crime and Drug Committee's concept of an anonymous tip system.

Mr. Gibson explained that he would present the idea to the other governing boards and report back. He added that if supported, the governing boards would need to appoint members of the group, and that he would volunteer to serve on the group.

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 16, ENVIRONMENT, ARTICLE II- NUISANCES OF THE CITY CODE OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG

The City Manager explained that Council had discussed addressing boarded windows in the downtown area, and that the City Attorney had drafted an ordinance that would include boarded windows as a nuisance in the downtown.

The City Attorney explained that the proposed amendment to the City Code adds two (2) definitions of nuisances in the Central Business District. He added that the first additional definition of nuisance is such that if a commercial building contains broken, cracked, missing or boarded up window, door or storefront. The other additional definition is such that commercial building that is unsecured that would allow public entry during non-business hours and appears to be vacant would also be considered a nuisance.

Upon question by Councilmember Evans, the City Attorney explained that the Code Enforcement Officer would send notices to potential violators and would provide them with time for response and corrective action if needed.

Upon questions by Councilmembers Garby and Adams, the City Manager explained that the proposed ordinance had been reviewed by the Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) and by the Main Street advisors. He added that the Main Street advisors were a little hesitant with some of the wording, but did give their approval.

Councilmember Williamson moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2019-04 amending Chapter 16, Environment, Article II-Nuisances, of the City Code of the City of Laurinburg. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garby, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Williamson, Garby, Leak, Evans, Adams

Nays: None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2019-04 on file in City Clerk's office)

ELECTRICITIES 30-DAY NOTICE OF RATE CHANGE

The City Manager explained that two (2) years ago when the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) asset sale was completed, ElectriCities planned for three (3) years of rate increases, with a three percent (3%) increase for FY 17-18, and three percent (3%) this year. He added that because the costs of the coal ash cleanup were not as high as anticipated, the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) did not increase rates last year; and instead of the schedule three percent (3%) increase this year, the NCEMP Rate Committee and NCEMPA recently approved a one and two-tenths percent (1.2%) wholesale rate increase to be effective April 1, 2019. He further added that since it is so close to Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget preparation, staff believes that this increase can be absorbed at this time.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that the City purchases between \$15 million and \$16 million in wholesale electricity each year.

CONSIDER ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 12, CIVIL EMERGENCIES, OF THE CITY CODE OF THE CITY OF LAURINBURG

The City Manager explained that after Hurricane Florence, the Civil Emergencies section of the City Code was reviewed to ensure that the City was in compliance with North Carolina General Statutes. He added that the proposed revisions to Chapter 12 of the City Code would bring that section in compliance.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve Ordinance No. O-2019-05 amending Chapter 12, Civil Emergencies, of the City Code of the City of Laurinburg. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Evans, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Adams, Evans, Leak, Williamson, Garby

Nays: None

(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2019-05 on file in City Clerk's office)

UPDATE FROM POLICE CHIEF WILLIAMS - MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Police Chief Darwin Williams explained that as requested, he researched more detailed information concerning speeding tickets issued in December, 2018. He added that 13 speeding tickets and 99 citations which could have been driving without a license, license revoked, expired registration, etc., were issued in December. He further added that the department has 17

certified radars, with nine (9) officers radar-certified. He further explained that the department was very young with many training needs. He added that Officer Survival and Field Training are more important than radar certification for the young officers; however, plans are in place for radar certification and Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) training when these can be scheduled by the training coordinator.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Chief Williams explained that more radars were not needed. He added that the City received some of its radars through the Governor's Highway Safety Program through speeding campaigns in the area. He further added that a speed campaign was held last week with corporation from the City of Southern Pines and the Richmond County Sheriff's Office.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Chief Williams explained that a radar is not necessary to issue a speeding ticket; however, the officer must be certified to do so.

Chief Williams discussed the activity log requested by Mayor Block. He explained that everything an officer does is tracked through the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) at the 911 Center.

Upon question by Mayor Block, Chief Williams explained that each officer is assigned a zone and has a pattern of how he or she checks the zone to include checking businesses. He added that there are responsibilities depending upon what day of the week, such as handling school traffic.

UPDATE ON STORM WATER PLANS – OBTAINING BIDS FOR ISABELLE STREET AND CYPRESS DRIVE

Mr. Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director, explained that on February 8, 2019, he met with Mr. Logan Dugger and Mr. Billy Sheets from the Department of Agriculture to inspect some of the areas where there has been a lot of flooding, specifically Cypress Drive, Isabelle Street, Leith Creek, North Main Street, Wesleyan Drive and Azalea Drive. He explained that according to Mr. Dugger and Mr. Sheets, they would be trying to get the State to assist with fixing some of the storm water projects. He added that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for storm water engineers will be sent out, and that perhaps the Mayor and some Councilmembers would like to serve on the selection panel.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that staff could conduct the selection panel for storm water engineers, but since it had been such a hot topic, perhaps Council wanted to participate.

Councilmember Garby stated that he would not mind being involved with the panel.

Mayor Block stated that when Councilmember Garby could not be present, he would help on the panel.

UPDATE ON JOINT MEETING WITH SCOTLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, SCOTLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF SCOTLAND HEALTH CARE SYSTEM ON RECREATION/COMMUNITY CENTER

The City Manager explained that this item was a follow-up from the joint meeting with the Scotland County Board of Commissioners to see if Council had any comments concerning the meeting.

Councilmember Adams explained that she had requested this item and the appointment of two (2) councilmembers to the joint committee to look at options for the recreation/community center to be on the agenda.

Councilmember Williamson apologized for missing the meeting; however, he had to take a family member to the emergency room.

CONSIDER SETTING PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER REQUEST FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO OPERATE A CARNIVAL AT 1681 S. MAIN STREET FROM MARCH 28 TO APRIL 7, 2019

The City Manager explained that this request for setting a public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit for a carnival was the same request submitted every year in the parking lot at the former Big Lots.

A brief discussion ensued concerning the request, and the City Attorney reminded Council that a Conditional Use Permit hearing is a quasi-judicial hearing and that Council and the Mayor cannot go out and canvas the area for information or opinions.

Motion was made by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Garby, and unanimously carried to set a public hearing to be held on March 19, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. to consider request for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a carnival at 1681 S. Main Street from March 28 to April 7, 2019.

The City Manager stated that Planning Board recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit unanimously.

CONSIDER RELEASES, DISCOVERIES AND ADJUSTMENTS TO TAX LEVY

Ms. Diana Chavis, Tax Collector, explained that annually she must report to the governing body the amount of releases, discoveries and adjustments to the tax levy. She added that releases totaled \$17,665.83, and discoveries totaled \$71,661.53, and the following are the releases and discoveries:

DISCOVERIES

NAME	PP/R E	VALUE	YEAR	RATE	TAXES	REASON
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AT&T COMMUNICATIONS	PP	\$380,830.00	2018	\$0.40	\$1,523.32	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AT&T MOBILITY	PP	\$547,881.00	2018	\$0.40	\$2,191.52	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AMERICAN TOWER	PP	\$95,543.00	2018	\$0.40	\$382.17	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
AT&T (BELLSOUTH)	PP	\$4,909,313.00	2018	\$0.40	\$19,637.25	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CELLCO PARTNERSHIP	PP	\$691,672.00	2018	\$0.40	\$2,766.69	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CENTRAL UNITED CHURCH	RE	\$172,870.00	2018	\$0.40	\$691.48	PARSONAGE BEING RENTED
CENTURY LINK COMM	PP	\$1,543.00	2018	\$0.40	\$6.17	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CROWN CASTLE USA	PP	\$120,763.00	2018	\$0.40	\$483.05	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
CSX TRANSPORATION	PP	\$816,093.00	2018	\$0.40	\$3,264.37	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
DUKE ENERGY	PP	\$2,872,809.00	2018	\$0.40	\$11,491.24	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
DUKENET COMM.	PP	\$739,627.00	2018	\$0.40	\$2,958.51	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
FIRST AMERICAN COMM	PP	\$85,963.00	2018	\$0.40	\$343.85	KEYED IN WRONG PROPERTY
FRC, LLC	PP	\$109,774.00	2018	\$0.40	\$439.10	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
GREYHOUND LINES	PP	\$21,969.00	2018	\$0.40	\$87.88	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
LBG/SOUTHERN RAILROAD	PP	\$355,740.00	2018	\$0.40	\$1,422.96	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
LBG/SOUTHERN RAILROAD	RE	\$119,860.00	2018	\$0.40	\$479.44	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
LMK COMMUNICATIONS	PP	\$509.00	2018	\$0.40	\$2.04	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
LUMBEE RIVER	PP	\$132,186.00	2018	\$0.40	\$528.74	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
MCI COMMUNICATION	PP	\$1,408.00	2018	\$0.40	\$5.63	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
NC ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP	PP	\$1,402.00	2018	\$0.40	\$5.61	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
NIC'S PIC KWIK #14	PP	20,941.00	2018	\$0.40	\$83.76	PER COUNTY/NEW LISTING
NIC'S PIC KWIK #15	PP	\$32,954.00	2018	\$0.40	\$131.82	PER COUNTY/NEW LISTING
NICHOL'S PROPANE INC	PP	\$27,353.00	2018	\$0.40	\$109.41	PER COUNTY/NEW LISTING
NICHOL'S PROPANE INC	PP	\$109,403.00	2018	\$0.40	\$437.61	PER COUNTY/NEW LISTING
PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS	PP	\$3,170,778.00	2018	\$0.40	\$12,683.11	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
SCOTTISH PINES LAND	PP	\$1,378,340.00	2018	\$0.40	\$5,513.36	LISTING FORM MISPLACED
SPOK, INC	PP	\$10,022.00	2018	\$0.40	\$40.09	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
SPRINT WIRELESS	PP	\$39,481.00	2018	\$0.40	\$157.92	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
T-MOBILE	PP	\$133,366.00	2018	\$0.40	\$533.46	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
TIME WARNER CABLE	PP	\$223,473.00	2018	\$0.40	\$893.89	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.

TWC DIGITAL PHONE	PP	\$418,917.00	2018	\$0.40	\$1,675.67	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
WELLS FARGO VENDOR	PP	\$21,609.00	2018	\$0.40	\$86.44	CORRECTION/PER COUNTY
WELLS FARGO FIN/SERVICE	PP	\$35,158.00	2018	\$0.40	\$140.63	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
WINDSTREAM	PP	\$110,689.00	2018	\$0.40	\$442.76	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.
WORKFORCE	PP	\$5,146.00	2018	\$0.40	\$20.58	PUBLIC SERVICE CO.

RELEASES

NAME	PP/RE	VALUE	YEAR	RATE	TAXES	REASON
ANNIE PERKINS	RE	\$18,230.00	2018	\$0.40	\$72.92	ELDERLY EXEMPTION
ASHLEY HICKMAN	PP	\$10,500.00	2018	\$0.40	\$0.00	BILLED IN ERROR
SYLVIA BOWEN	RE	\$27,045.00	2018	\$0.40	\$108.18	ELDERLY EXEMPTION
CITY OF LAURINBURG	RE	\$4,340.00	2018	\$0.40	\$17.36	CITY OWNS/ EXEMPT
CITY OF LAURINBURG	RE	\$8,650.00	2018	\$0.40	\$34.60	CITY OWNS/ EXEMPT
COMMUNITY INNOVATION	PP	\$13,784.00			\$55.14	SOLD PROPERTY TO RHA
FOOD LION #690	PP	\$49,141.00	2018	\$0.40	\$196.56	REAL PROPERTY
HAMPTON INN	PP	\$181,171.00	2018	\$0.40	\$724.68	INCORRECT VALUE SUBMITTED
HOUSTON RICH	RE	\$3,380.00	2018	\$0.40	\$13.52	FORECLOSED CITY/CO. OWN
LINDA ELLISON	RE	\$3,330.00	2018	\$0.40	\$13.32	FORECLOSED CITY/CO. OWN
MICHELLA MANLEY	RE	\$8,080.00	2018	\$0.40	\$32.32	FORECLOSED
NC DIST. COUNCIL OF GOD	RE	\$1,013,490.00	2018	\$0.40	\$4,053.96	CHURCH EXEMPT
PINNACLE FAMILY SERV	PP	\$2,510.00	2018	\$0.40	\$10.04	CLOSED 2017
RANIBOW 66	RE	\$2,890,430.00	2018	\$0.40	\$11,561.72	BILLED IN ERROR/EXEMPT
SALLIE MCDONALD	RE	\$10,660.00	2018	\$0.40	\$42.64	FORECLOSED
SCOTLAND COUNTY	RE	\$61,130.00	2018	\$0.40	\$372.89	COUNTY OWNS/EXEMPT
WM ADAMS	RE	\$1,200.00	2018	\$0.40	\$48.00	FORECLOSED/CITY CO. OWN
WM ADAMS	RE	\$10,800.00	2018	\$0.40	\$43.20	FORECLOSED/CITY CO. OWN
WM ADAMS	RE	\$64,570.00	2018	\$0.40	\$258.28	FORECLOSED/CITY CO. OWN
WATCH DOG SECURITY	PP	\$1,625.00	2018	\$0.40	\$6.50	CLOSED 2016

Upon question by Councilmember Williamson, Ms. Chavis explained that most of the discoveries are public utilities and discovering new values.

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to accept the releases, discoveries and adjustments to the tax levy.

AUTHORIZE TAX COLLECTOR TO ADVERTISE TAX LIENS THE WEEK OF MARCH 11-15, 2019

Ms. Diana Chavis, Tax Collector, explained that annually she is required to request that Council authorize her to advertise tax liens. She added that as of today, the total of delinquent taxes was \$266,993.02. She requested to advertise the week of March 11-15, 2019.

Upon question by Councilmember Leak, Ms. Chavis explained that this year's collection percentage at this time was 91%, and that last year at this time, it was 89%.

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Evans, and unanimously carried to authorize the tax collector to advertise tax liens the week of March 11-15, 2019.

CONSIDER AWARDING BID FOR TRANSFORMERS FOR NEW ELECTRIC SUBSTATION

The City Manager explained that staff received the bid recommendation from the engineer this past Friday after the agenda packet had been distributed. He added that because of timing, the transformers needed to be ordered as soon as possible for the second substation. He further added that three (3) bids were submitted, and the low bid was Anixter Incorporated at \$1,059,600.00 for the two (2) transformers.

Upon question by Mayor Block, the City Manager explained that the urgency on the transformers was so that they could be ordered, constructed in order to be connected to Duke Progress Energy's transmission line in the fall of 2019.

Motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Adams, and unanimously carried to award bid for two (2) transformers for new electric substation to Anixter Incorporated in the amount of \$1,059,600.00, and authorize the City Manager to sign any necessary documents related to such purchase.

BUDGET MEETING/CITIZEN INPUT SESSION

The City Manager explained that in the past the Citizen Input Session begins the budget process each year.

Following discussion, it was consensus of Council to hold the Citizen Input Session on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the council chambers of the Municipal Building.

APPOINTMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON RECREATION/COMMUNITY CENTER

Mayor Block explained that two (2) Councilmembers were needed to serve on the subcommittee on recreation/community center.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he would be on the subcommittee unless Council prefers someone else since he is already serving on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Councilmember Adams stated that she would serve on the subcommittee.

Councilmember Leak asked Mayor Block if he would like to serve on the subcommittee.

Mayor Block responded that he had expressed his opinion at the joint meeting held on January 29, 2019 in that he was in favor of a recreation center, but discussions with Scotland County and Scotland Health Care System have been held for a decade and nothing had been done.

Councilmember Williamson questioned if there had ever been a joint meeting such as was held on January 29, 2019. He added that he believed that Council needed to decide if a recreation center was something that Council wanted to do. He further added that if everyone was not interested, then continuing discussions with Scotland County and the other entities would not go far and could possibly cause more harm than good.

Mayor Block stated that there was not much discussion at the joint meeting. He stated that in 2012 or whenever the joint report from Scotland Health Care, the City and Scotland County resulted in the suggestion for a \$7-8 million recreation center with \$500,000.00-\$600,000.00 annual operating costs, nothing came of the study. He added that as discussed at the joint meeting on January 29, 2019, Scotland County does not have any money. He explained that he believed that based on feedback from citizens as well as his own personal opinion, that the best thing for the City of Laurinburg is a more centralized center with a community center flair, and not just for recreation. He further added that if Council believes the recreation center/community center is possible, then the "City should develop a plan with the City taking the lion's share of the funding and sell it to the County, and not that I feel like the City has to run this thing, that it can be folded into Parks and Recreation."

Councilmember Williamson explained that if the City decided to handle a recreation/community center by itself rather than partner with Scotland County, the product would be smaller and less finished, and that the City would pay more by funding it alone. He added that it perhaps the \$8 million facility, the outdoor pool and the waterslide is too far removed. He further added that he believed that there was value in the City discussing the idea with partners to determine what the City could do to make the recreation center possible. He explained that his concern was that if the City moved forward trying to partner with the other entities with Mayor Block publicly opposing it and bashing it, then the efforts trying to do something would be difficult.

Mayor Block stated that he would have like to have seen the recreation center go forward as was proposed this past fall, but he did not believe it would happen. He added that the other idea that discussed at the joint meeting was that the three (3) entities - the hospital, the City and the County - mutually support each other's efforts in having three (3) venues. He further added that the City could have a centralized indoor recreation/community center, the county would add a pool and outdoor family feature enhancing the splash pad that could be funded with a referendum in the spring of 2020, and the hospital have a facility similar to FirstHealth's fitness center with an indoor pool.

Councilmember Williamson explained that the hospital might like for there to be a large enough facility in the community to hold its Annual Putting on the Ritz affair so that tents would not have to be rented. He added that he felt that if Council moved a step further with the partnership to see if the idea would go further, and if there is not support for a partnership, then Council could explore other options.

Councilmember Garby explained that he thought it would be more affordable to have separate venues such as a centralized community center and add on water features at the splash pad. He suggested utilizing stages for the community center and recreation center.

Councilmember Adams explained that the 2012-2013 study showed the facility being built in stages starting with the facility and adding the indoor pool later. She added that the study showed there were three (3) locations identified by the citizens, and they were the Morgan Complex, the hospital on Lauchwood Drive, and the other in the downtown area with the Morgan Complex receiving overwhelming support. She further added that the study revealed that the citizens wanted the community to work together to make the recreation/community center happen.

Mayor Block explained that he did not believe that it was overwhelming support for the Morgan Complex; however, it was the top choice for location. He added that the survey was a county-wide survey. He further added that he believed that if a survey was done of just Laurinburg citizens, he was not sure the Morgan Complex would outrank a centralized location. He further added that especially citizens from District 1 would like a more centralized location, and that he personally felt from a development standpoint, a nice recreation/community center instead of two (2) to three (3) dilapidated blocks on Main Street would be better for the community. He further explained that he had been looking at properties, and that he believed a great location would be the block across from the tennis courts on Atkinson Street where John Dorsey's used appliances business was located. He added that there were several houses in that block that were being used for businesses, and perhaps the City could acquire the properties. He further added that two other possible locations were the shopping center where Big Lots had been located (1914 South Main Street) and the Scottish Farms property located near the Courthouse.

Councilmember Williamson suggested that Mayor Block should be on the sub-committee. He added that in working together in the community, charitable foundations would look more favorably on any requests.

Councilmember Adams explained that from the 2012-2013 study, 47% of the survey respondents identified the Morgan Complex as the ideal location, 36% identified along Lauchwood Drive, and significantly fewer respondents identified downtown. She added that six (6) out of 10 respondents were less likely to support a tax increase to pay for the recreation/community center.

Councilmember Leak expressed concern about nothing being located on the north side. He explained that the school system needed a swimming pool, so there would have to be four (4) major players, i.e., the City, the County, the hospital and the school system, working together to build such a facility. He added that there was a lot of land available at the Morgan Complex that could be utilized. He discussed the community efforts in tearing down the old hospital in order to locate the Richmond Community College campus on McLean Street. He added that his concept of recreation involves Scotland County because it would be hard to distinguish a citizen from Laurel Hill from a citizen from Laurinburg.

Mayor Block explained that if something was county-wide, then it would be funded equally by everyone in the county, such as the Wagram Recreation Center which was paid for with county money. He added that citizens of Scotland County do not have to pay to use the Wagram facility. He explained that his concept would be that if the County does not have the money to build a recreation/community center, and the City of Laurinburg decides that it is an important investment, then the funds would come from the City's taxes or utilities. He added that it would only be fair that you set up a fee structure where citizens of Laurinburg would use it for free, but there would be nominal user fee for outside the City. He further added that for county-wide products, everyone should use it for the same price with no distinction among citizens. He stated that it had been the feeling of Council from the very beginning that if there is going to be a recreation/community center, then it has to be County originated, County funded, but that idea is not going anywhere since the County has not money.

Councilmember Williamson explained that he could see the idea of a recreation/community center being driven by the City, but ultimately it would be operated by the County even if the City pays more than others involved in the project, if the city can afford it. He added that he was open to other locations, but the Morgan Complex was located very near Wal-Mart, and no one has a problem getting to Wal-Mart. He further added that he believed that the Morgan Complex was a pretty decent location. He further explained that if the County was operating the facility at the Morgan Complex, the staff of Parks and Recreation Department would be moved into the facility to have hands-on supervision and control.

Councilmember Adams explained that she looked at the Pedestrian Plan adopted several years ago, and the plan includes a sidewalk system in that area going all the way down Turnpike Road and then up to Blues Farm Road. She added that the Pedestrian Plan will take many years because it takes the North Carolina Department of Transportation to move on such plans.

Councilmember Williamson explained that many of the items discussed would be huge details that would require everyone to come together and work out terms.

Councilmember Adams explained that the County Commissioners said at the joint meeting that the sub-committee would be added to its retreat agenda for discussion. She added that the School Board indicated they would discuss also, but not funding.

Councilmember Williamson explained that a recreation center was on the long-range plan for the County Commissioners. He added that he would like to proceed and see what happens.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Garby, seconded by Councilmember Williamson, and unanimously carried to appoint Councilmember Williamson and Councilmember Adams to the Subcommittee on Recreation/Community Center.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Adams explained that she everyone was invited by the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to a discussion about raising the age for juveniles and how funding in municipalities and counties will be affected. The event is being held Monday, February 25, 2019 at the Laurinburg Presbyterian Church from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. She added that if anyone was interested in attending to call Ms. Rogena Deese.

ADJOURN

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Matthew Block, MD, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk