

WORK SESSION MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

Present: Mayor Anthony G. Chavonne

Absent: Council Member Paul Williams (District 6)

Stanley Victrum, Assistant City Manager

Doug Hewett, Assistant City Manager

Tom Bergamine, Chief of Police

Bobby Teague, Engineering and Infrastructure Director

Kyle Garner, Planner

David Nash, Planner

Michael Reaves, Management Analyst

Jim Smith, Planning Commission Chair

Bill Martin, Martin, Alexiou and Bryson Transportation Consultants

Elmer Floyd, Coordinator of the Murchison Road Corridor Group

Billy King, Chairman Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

Ed Melvin, Member Cumberland County Board of Commissioners

Candice H. White, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Council Member Worthy moved to approve the agenda.

SECOND: Council Member Meredith

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (9-0)

Mayor Chavonne called on Elmer Floyd, Coordinator of the Murchison Road Corridor Group. Mr. Floyd referenced his correspondence to the Mayor dated August 29, 2007 and expressed concern for the right-of-way and median sizes contained in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) proposal for the Murchison Road corridor. Mr. Floyd asked Council to help the group arrange a meeting with NCDOT Secretary, Lyndo Tippet, so the group could provide input before state engineers develop their plans.

Council Member Haire stated a meeting was scheduled for Thursday, September 6, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. and would be attended by members of the legislative delegation, engineers and staff from the NCDOT. Council Member Worthy encouraged Mr. Floyd to contact representatives from the Murchison Road community to attend the meeting.

Kyle Sonnenberg, Assistant City Manager, stated the Joint City/County Parking Committee had been working with a parking consultant to further investigate the need for a downtown parking deck and introduced Bill Martin, of Martin, Alexiou and Bryson Transportation Consultants, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Mr. Martin called attention to the Executive Summary and reviewed the study process which began with a review and update of the previous parking study produced by McLaurin in

2006. Mr. Martin stated the conclusion reached was that a parking deck was still justified but the best plan would be to build a small deck initially and another one later, if required, rather than to build one large deck initially.

Mr. Martin stated following the evaluation of eighteen potential downtown sites, the Donaldson Street and Maiden Lane/Ray Avenue lots emerged as potential locations for two parking decks, with the Donaldson Street site being developed first. Mr. Martin reviewed a range of possible designs for the Donaldson Street deck and preferred schemes that included linear buildings for commercial and retail development and a pedestrian route to Hay Street. Mr. Martin stated allowing for existing surface spaces lost, the design would provide a net gain of about three hundred spaces. Mr. Martin concluded by noting that concept plans had been prepared for the Maiden Lane/Ray Avenue site and could be retained for use should development of the site be required.

Mr. Martin responded to questions. Mayor Chavonne asked that costs be quantified and that City Council be kept apprised.

4. PANHANDLING STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

Mrs. Karen M. McDonald, City Attorney, reviewed components of the panhandling strategy developed by a team of staff members and called attention to panhandling ordinances from other North Carolina cities. Mrs. McDonald noted her interest was to seek input from Council to better understand what should be incorporated into the ordinance so she could report back on the effectiveness and associated costs following further research.

Mrs. McDonald and Tom Bergamine, Chief of Police, responded to questions regarding enforcement of the ordinance and panhandling from traffic islands.

Following discussion, consensus was for staff to further explore the Raleigh ordinance.

5. POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF COMO STREET

Bobby Teague, Engineering and Infrastructure Director, provided a brief presentation containing maps and pictures of the area and stated an investigation of the potential closing of Como Street was conducted and comments were gathered from various City departments to include Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Teague stated following the investigation, the recommendation from staff was not to close Como Street since it would not be in the best interest of the public to close Como Street due to the limited access for emergency response.

Council Member Worthy asked about the feasibility of keeping the street open and paving it without assessing adjoining property owners since it was for the benefit of public safety. Mrs. McDonald explained that Council determined the assessment amount; however, following the public hearing on paving, Council voted not to pave Como Street.

Following discussion, consensus of Council was for Como Street to remain open.

6. COUNCIL CHAMBER ENHANCEMENTS

Doug Hewett, Assistant City Manager, presented this item and stated in an effort to provide a more professional appearance to the broadcast of City Council meetings, to increase the reliability of equipment used and to enhance ease of operation while providing the highest broadcast quality, staff commissioned Action Audits, LLC to complete a technical review and report on the City Council Chambers. Mr. Hewett provided a review of lighting, audio, podium, dais, camera and connection recommendations and enhancements.

A brief discussion ensued regarding seating arrangements for the City Manager and City Attorney.

Consensus of Council was to retain the current recommendations and direct staff to look at other options regarding City Manager and City Attorney seating.

Mr. Hewett completed his presentation by providing future solutions for upgrades and information on North Carolina cities with Government Access Channels. Mayor Chavonne asked that discussion regarding a Government Access Channel be postponed until enhancements to the Council Chambers are in order.

Council Member Gonzalez asked about funding to implement the improvements. Mr. Hewett stated the budget for the short-term recommendations as described is the \$60,000 Public Educational Governmental (PEG) access funds held by Time-Warner Cable.

