



CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
2023 CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
Friday, March 3, 2023
Mount Holly Municipal Complex
Facilitator: Reeves McGlohon

I. Call to Order—Mayor Bryan Hough

Mayor Hough called the 2023 Council Retreat to order at 9:00 am.

A. Invocation, Ground Rules, Schedule, Parking Lot Items

Mayor Hough thanked the staff for their hard work and their preparations for this retreat.

Councilman Moore gave the invocation. The following was stated as the ground rules for the retreat:

- Respect everyone's opinion
- Do not talk over someone else
- Everyone is asked to participate
- Use common sense

B. Prior Year Priorities/Minutes/Status

Mayor Hough asked Council if there were any questions or comments regarding the prior year priorities, status and minutes. There were no comments, questions or concerns by Councilmembers at this time.

II. Historical Society - Old City Hall Facilities Committee Update—Jeremy Moss / Garrie Brinkley

Jeremy Moss gave a brief review and background on the Historical Society project. Jeremy Moss stated that a condition analysis is expected to be provided to him on or around April 26, 2023. Mr. Moss turned the presentation over to Mr. Garrie Brinkley who is the Chair of the Old City Hall Facilities Committee. Mr. Brinkley thanked the Mayor and Council for forming this committee and reviewed the progress of the committee. Mr. Brinkley stated that Creech and Associates had been chosen as the architect firm to proceed with the project. Mr. Brinkley introduced Michael Supino, project manager for Creech and Associates to provide the facility condition update.

A. Facility Condition Assessment Update – Creech & Associates

Mr. Supino from Creech & Associates presented information on the building assessment schedule for the Old City Hall Facilities. Mr. Supino gave a preliminary report and building overview. Mr. Supino stated that the main building had an addition added at one point. Mr. Supino gave a general building/architectural assessment. Mr. Supino stated that the brick is generally in good condition. Mr. Supino stated that the brick and mortar will need to be repaired to prevent further industrial hygiene issues. Mr. Supino stated that there was brick staining, but normal for the age of the building. Mr. Supino showed images of exterior components such as corrugated panels, awnings and wood details that are high priority. Mr. Supino stated that a good amount of flashing on the exterior components will need to be replaced. Mr. Supino stated that a majority of the windows are in good condition with the exception of two glass block windows that are in the basement. Mr. Supino stated that there is water damage on the second floor. Mr. Supino stated that the sealants between the windows and flashing need to be replaced. Mr. Supino stated that there were visual observations of the roof being a EPDM roof with retrofit fluid applied coating. Mr. Supino stated that this is a temporary solution for the roof and a last step prior to needing to replace the entire roof. Mr. Supino stated that there are several materials that are being used for parapet flashing which include clay and metal. Mr. Supino recommends replacement of parapet flashing and caps during roof replacement. Mr. Supino stated that there needs to be ADA parking spaces adjacent to the building. Mr. Supino stated that there are currently no accessible entry points. Mr. Supino discussed the entry point



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recommendations. Mr. Supino stated that the restrooms are not ADA compliant. Mr. Supino stated that the upper level and basements entries are not ADA compliant. Mr. Supino stated that ADA compliance will be a significant upgrade. Mr. Braswell asked about the middle floor's ADA compliance at the time of previous renovations. Mr. Supino stated that he can not say for sure if the building was ADA compliant at the time of previous renovations, but once any renovations start then ADA compliance will need to be up to date. Mr. Supino stated that significant MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing items are needed. Mr. Supino stated that there are code violations on the first floor. Mr. Supino stated that the ceiling structure used plenum and that this is not allowed with wood structures. Mr. Supino categorized this as a high priority. Mr. Supino gave a structural summary which stated that the building was generally in good condition with the exception of a few repairs. Mr. Supino stated that the rear exterior stairs would most likely require replacement to serve as an egress stairway (depending on the occupancy type). Mr. Supino gave an Industrial hygiene assessment stating that not all samples are in for lead and asbestos. Mr. Supino stated that the asbestos summary shows asbestos in the second floor and basement flooring, roofing paint on parapet, green stair treads and mastic sealants. Mr. Supino stated that the wall compound contains trace amounts of asbestos. Mr. Supino stated that the lead summary showed lead containing paint on the exterior walls, roof vent, exterior windows, interior walls and interior doors. Mr. Supino was asked by Councilman Jeff Meadows about the preliminary numbers of approximately one million dollars. Mr. Supino stated that the approximate one million dollars is purely building systems at this time. Mayor Hough stated that it sounds like we are targeting the April or May council work session for an update.

III. Parks – Brian DuPont

A. Veterans Park – McAdams

a. Initial Design or Redevelopment PPP

Brian DuPont gave background and reviewed initial park concept. Mr. DuPont introduced McAdams associates Nick Lowe and Dave Malcolm for their presentation on Veterans Park. Mr. Lowe went over the project background and stated that there are natural features and topography that can not be touched. Mr. Lowe presented a case study from Mooresville, NC as an example of ideas. Mr. Lowe introduced Mr. Malcolm from McAdams who continued the presentation to discuss more detailed options and uses for the Veterans Park space. Mr. Malcolm discussed jewel box retail stores to compliment the downtown stores, but stated that we would want to be sensitive to the surrounding areas. Mr. Malcolm reviewed the various options for redevelopment to consider. Mr. Malcolm stated that developers like to be involved in project that are near the downtown areas. Mr. Malcolm concluded his presentation and opened the floor to comments and questions from council. Councilman Meadows mentioned that the business owners want more people and not more retail. Mayor Hough asked for input from council to see what council's perception is on everything. Mayor Hough stated that we have been discussing how to get people to live and work in downtown. Mayor Hough stated that option B brings people downtown as well as integrates downtown. Mayor Hough stated that the parking situation is going to continue to grow and that this is an opportunity to get people living and working downtown. Councilwoman Shoemaker commented on how hard it has been to acquire land. Councilwoman Shoemaker likes option B. Councilman Moore stated that we have gotten away from the original goal which is the park. Councilman Moore stated that he is all for getting people downtown, but his priority is the park and the amenities. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that her priority is the park only and getting people to use it year-round. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that the elements that council



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was focused on was the amphitheater and this keeps the key part of the original plan. Mayor Hough commented that option B at the area to the right of the stage could hold the additional amenities and elements. Councilman Meadows requested a parking lot item regarding TIF (tax increment financing) and stated that recreation has no dedicated funding and there could be a designated savings towards this development. Councilman Meadows stated that the challenge will be how will we pay for this. Councilman Craig likes option B, but is not married to any plan, but would like to see multi-family. Councilman Craig stated that Mount Holly needs the walkability. Councilman Craig received confirmation that the acreage at the theatre site is 3 acres and that is a lot of room for the recreation amenities. Councilwoman Pawlish likes option B as well and wants to keep the splashpad option. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that she feels like option B would be over crowded. Mayor Hough stated that enhancing economic development is the way to have amenities without raising taxes. Mayor Hough stated that the city should be open to the opportunities. Councilman Meadows stated that the Strategic Vision Plan had a participation of 850 citizens. Councilman Meadows stated that the city built a consensus with citizens. Councilman Meadows stated that the original plan was phased, but 3 acres is a large park. Councilman Moore stated that council seems to continue to put recreation down the line. Councilman Moore stated that recreation is important to this town. Mayor Hough stated that we need to create a funding mechanism that is not at the whim of future council. Councilman Meadows commented that the city of Charlotte is not just the taxes of the city of Charlotte, it is also the county. Councilman Meadows stated the city should control the land. Mayor Hough asked council for next steps? Miles Braswell stated that staff could reach out to property owners to find out if there is interest in selling properties. Mayor Hough directed staff to bring back recommendations for discussion at an upcoming work session. Councilman Meadows stated that everything that we have discussed to date is a long-term plan, but is there a short-term plan? Councilman Meadows stated that an interim plan could be to utilize property grading in the meantime. Mayor Hough requested that a cost estimate for the amphitheater be provided. Councilman Meadows discussed possible options for the phasing that could include a straight sale if we built the amphitheater. Mayor Hough mentioned that staff met with the Presbyterian church to get input about the property and the parking. Mayor Hough stated that the church did not want the bathrooms near the church. Councilman Meadows stated that council and staff could put out an RFP on this project to reflect the best options.

B. River Street Park

a. Remain or Redevelopment PPP

Brian DuPont discussed benchmarks requested from council in January 2023. Mr. DuPont stated that the appraisal is \$770,000. Brian DuPont discussed the stakeholder input process. Mr. DuPont stated that the adjacent property owners were notified. DuPont discussed the preference exercise and the results. Mr. DuPont discussed the park amenity inventory list and usage. Mr. DuPont stated that a consultant would be recommended to assist in the layout of the future amenities. Mr. DuPont discussed the initial development investment of the potential tax revenue. Mr. DuPont discussed the redevelopment process. Mr. DuPont concluded the discussion and asked for comments and questions. Councilman Moore stated that the recreation department has had to use churches for ball field use. Mayor Hough asked if there was a plan for recreation if we do not develop this property. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that Mount Holly is growing and that she would like to see upgrades so that the field could be used. Mayor Hough stated that we need to look at what is the best use of the area? Councilman Meadows



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asked how do we get resources to invest and develop it and pay for it? Councilman Meadows commented on the elements on the other side of the creek and how should it be developed once the

bridge is constructed. Councilman Meadows stated that 18 acres is a lot and how would we use it? Councilman Craig stated that Gaston County could be looking to build a new Mount Holly Middle School and that those fields could be utilized if that project moves forward. Mayor Hough would like a plan for full use for the property from the parks and recreation department. Councilman Meadows requested that state funded programming that offsets our budget for park funding be placed on the parking lot item list for further discussion. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that the Recreation Commission discussions show that there is no more land and if we give up our parks then there will be nothing left. Councilman Meadows stated that the city has an annexation policy to offset Park and Recreation needs. Councilman Meadows stated that he would like staff require developers to give ballfield or amenities for use of water. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that the wording should be specific in the requests from developers regarding the type and location of amenities. Mayor Hough directed staff to come back to council with a recreational plan.

IV. Downtown Enhancements – Brian DuPont

A. Market Lights, Building Tops, Parking, Pedestrian Improvements, Wayfinding and Signage
Mr. DuPont reviewed the downtown enhancements and their associated costs. Mr. DuPont presented the quotes at this time. Mayor Hough asked if solar power is an option. Mr. DuPont stated that we are looking at all options. Mayor Hough asked council their thoughts on the rooftop lights and market lights. Council wishes to move forward with market lights and not roof top lighting at this time. Council directed staff to work with DOT regarding the market lights on North Main and not take over the street for maintenance. Mr. DuPont discussed options around parking. Long term options include parking capacity analysis. Councilman Moore made the suggestion that the city talk to the presbyterian church to possibly expand the parking. Mayor Hough stated that those discussions were already in play. Mayor Hough stated that he believed the city did an MOU with the churches for parking. Mayor Hough stated that the churches do not like that the public leaves a mess in the parking lots after events. Mayor Hough challenged staff to come up with creative ways to partner with the churches. Mayor Hough stated that we must have more parking for the city to grow. Mayor Hough stated that Finish Line church is empty in the evenings. Mayor Hough stated that future business' need to know that the city has a plan for parking. Mayor Hough directed staff to come up with a parking strategy and plan. Councilman Meadows stated that the city should have a formal parking strategy. Mr. DuPont continued the presentation with pedestrian improvements to include crosswalks along main street. Councilman Meadows suggested looking into lighting for crosswalks. Mr. DuPont discussed wayfinding and signage. Councilman Meadows asked that the rezoning of the property next to the municipal complex be added as a parking lot item for further discussion.

V. Lunch

A. Connector Road Naming Session – Jonathan Wilson

Jonathan Wilson gave an update on the South Gateway Connector Road. Mr. Wilson is seeking direction from council regarding the naming of the road. Mr. Wilson stated that we do not need to know a name until we get the signs. Councilman Meadows suggested speaking to the property owners. Councilman



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Craig suggested that the name should have Mount Holly in it. Councilman Moore asked if council could get back to staff.

VI. Solid Waste Study—Tony Walker

- A. Background and Consultant Update - *Raftelis*
- B. Fee Implications for FY 23-24

Tony Walker reviewed background and information regarding the solid waste study. Mr. Walker stated that the current contract with Waste Pro will end in July 2024, but could be extended for an additional 2 years. Mr. Walker introduced Elaine Vastis from Raftelis. Ms. Vastis presented current operations, current fees and the financial planning analysis. Ms. Vastis stated that the streets and solid waste cost are around 3 million dollars. Ms. Vastis stated that current challenges are that the recycling contract will end in FY 2024, contract costs are anticipated to increase, staffing is competitive, and that the current solid waste fleet is outdated and requires investment in new trucks. Ms. Vastis stated that for every 800 customers there is a need for an additional truck and an employee. Ms. Vastis discussed options for when the current contract expires and the financial impacts under recycling options when contract expires. Ms. Vastis discussed current operation, current fees and the financial planning analysis for refuse services. Ms. Vastis discussed the advantages and disadvantages of in-house services and outsourcing services. Council discussed options for funding. Mr. Braswell mentioned the possibility of creating an enterprise fund should we move towards outsourcing. Mayor Hough received confirmation from Ms. Vastis that our current cost of services is approximately \$26 per household versus our current fees of \$6.50 per household. Mayor Hough stated that we could still subsidize outsourcing to keep the rates low. Councilman Meadows stated that in a perfect world, we would reduce the tax rate and increase the fee, but that this is not a perfect world. Miles Braswell stated that there are several employees ready to retire and that the remaining 10 employees could perform right away maintenance. Mayor asked would we need to keep some employees for special pickups such as white goods. Mr. Walker stated that the city does make money from white goods. Councilman Moore asked if the city would still have a truck to assist if a can was missed. Mr. Walker stated that the city would still have to manage the outsourced company. Mr. Walker suggested that the city keep the knuckle boom truck for tree removal and other needs. The next steps and staff recommendations were to increase the recycling and refuse monthly fees to reflect cost-of-living adjustments effective July 1, 2023, issue and RFP in January of 2024 for recycling services bids and alternative bid for refuse service, delay 2024 CIP for solid waste (truck purchase) until after bids are received, and freeze 2 current positions in solid waste until after bids are received. Council indicated that they are good with the staff recommendations as listed.

VII. Glendale Property—Mark Jusko

- A. Next Steps and Budget Considerations

Mark Jusko reviewed information regarding the Glendale Property that was once owned by Ransom Hunter. Mr. Jusko discussed the Mayoral appointed committee that began in August of 2022. Councilman Meadows asked what is meant by the archaeologist survey. Brian DuPont answered Councilman Meadows by stating that there would be a phase 1 historical search before any work is done. Marie Anders stated that there is a lot of information regarding the property back to the 1800. Ms. Anders stated that there is a complete chain of title should they need those records provided. Mark Jusko continued the presentation to discuss the meeting with the Ransom Hunter family. Mark Jusko discussed the next steps on the Glendale Property. Mayor Hough requested for staff to move the



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timeline up. Council agreed to move the timeline up. Mayor Hough stated that three years is way too long. Councilman Meadows requested that there be a placeholder put in the FY 23-24 budget and then amended if necessary.

VIII. Finance – Michelle Wood

- A. County Reappraisal Projections
 - i. Budget Implications
 - ii. Revenue Neutral

Michelle Wood presented the Gaston County revaluation and revenue neutral information. Councilman Meadows stated that this is probably one of the most difficult times for this revaluation. Councilman Meadows is concerned about the citizens. Mayor Hough stated that revenue neutral at 40.53 cents is not low enough. Mayor Hough stated that he did not believe the spreadsheet and would like to see the spreadsheet and how the numbers are calculated. Miles Braswell stated that the Local Government Commission (LGC) is the provider of the revenue neutral spreadsheet. Mayor Hough directed staff to ask Mr. Cheatwood from First Tryon for better calculations. Mayor Hough questioned the calculations due to assumed inflation. Councilman Meadows stated that the city will have to tighten their belts. Councilman Meadows stated that the city needs to be conservative and tighten our belts.

IX. Projects Prioritization for FY 23-24 Budget Consideration

Veterans Park expansion

Downtown market lights

Glendale Property- pin point a line item and budget item, move up the timeline

X. Adjourn

With no additional items of discussion, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilman Moore made a motion to adjourn the 2023 Council Retreat. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the motion. All council members voted in favor. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:54 pm. Miles Braswell thanked the council and staff.

Parking Lot Items to be discussed at future meetings:

1. Rezoning the property next to the municipal complex.
2. Setting aside revenue from properties for specific use.
3. State funded programming that offsets City budget designated for specific purpose.