

**CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL**

**Work Session
February 25, 2008
7:00 pm**

Members present: Mayor Robert Whitt, Councilmen David Moore, Jerry Bishop, Frank McLean, Bennie Brookshire, Perry Toomey, and Councilwoman Carolyn Breyare.

Staff present: Eric Davis, City Manager, Jamie Guffey, Assistant City Manager, Danny Jackson, Assistant City Manager, James Friday, Director of Utilities, Greg Beal, Planner, and Mike Santmire, Maintenance

Others present: Brooke Shephard, Attorney, Kemp Michael's office

CALL TO ORDER BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Whitt called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

INVOCATION

Councilman Brookshire led the Council, Mayor, staff members and attendees in prayer.

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Whitt asked for any additions or changes to the agenda. There were none. Mayor Whitt asked that Item 8, *Proposed Habitat Houses in Mount Holly* be added to the agenda. There being no other items to add or discuss, Mayor Whitt entertained a motion to set the agenda as amended.

Motion: Councilman Moore made a motion to set the agenda as amended. Councilwoman Breyare seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA

1. Strategic Plan Implementation Schedule, presented by Deb Ryan, The Charlotte Community Design Studio and the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

Mayor Whitt stated that Ms. Ryan will talk about the Strategic Plan Implementation Schedule this evening. This item will go to a Public Hearing and Council will vote on adopting this Plan.

Ms. Ryan stated that she wanted to go over some information concerning the Strategic Plan for Council and the Mayor before their March Retreat. In the agenda packet, Ms. Ryan provided an **Overall Initiatives Plan** schedule to review.

Ms. Ryan wanted to concentrate on the first year of **Overall Initiatives** and outlined some of them by target dates:

By April 30, 2008:

- Adopt Plans
- Monthly Work Session to establish updates on implementation progress and have staff report on the progress of the Strategic Plan.
- Whitewater Center – consider the Center as a marketing opportunity to display Mt. Holly marketing materials at the Center and to link with their website.

By June 30, 2008:

- Civic Engagement - there are local companies the City needs to partner with and National Gypsum is a good example of one. The Council and Mayor can form a partnership with local businesses and encourage them to participate in the community.
- "Walk along the River" as an event.
- Establish a Greenway goal: build one mile of Greenway per year.
- Hire a Zoning Officer to implement the initiatives of the Plan.
- Hire an Economic Development Director.
- Conduct a photographic contest and make it a marketing opportunity and an event – post the photos on the website.

By September 30, 2008:

- Way Finding Program – establishing signage from I-85 and NC-16, install signs to identify downtown parking. Mt. Holly Dam is a good example of a great place to visit but it is not easy to find.
- Incorporate Small Area Plan/Design Guideline recommendations regarding street improvements into ordinance language.

By December 30, 2008:

- Rewrite the Zoning Ordinance so it reflects the changes in the Design Guidelines.

Ms. Ryan asked Council and the Mayor to refer to the **Downtown/Riverfront Initiatives** handout and reviewed a few of them by target dates.

By June 30, 2008:

- Extend streetscape improvements in downtown to the new City Hall.
- Install pedestrian safe crossing at Highland Avenue at Central.
- Acquire property location at "River Street Park Cove" (the Boat Landing) which would gain strategic options for future improvements and use. This will allow the City to build a Greenway.

By September 30, 2008:

- Create a downtown Municipal Services District for a dedicated tax revenue district.
- Artistic works hung in vacant storefront windows.
- Begin discussions with Clariant about future use.
- Allow and promote outdoor sidewalk dining.
- Expand River Festival and Farmer's Market.

By December 30, 2008:

- Encourage East Central Avenue infill development
- Protect contributing buildings by establishing Ordinance Overlay District.
- Encourage a Day-Care Center to locate downtown.

- Provide City-owned property for grass-roots events and cultural activities. Old City Hall would be an excellent location. Once old City Hall is vacated there will be a hole in the downtown and a new immediate use is needed for this building.

Ms. Ryan asked Council and the Mayor to refer to the section, **South Gateway**, as she referred to some highlights by target dates.

By June 30, 2008:

- Gateway Street Network Improvements - establish the Ordinance language to reflect street improvements as detailed in the South Gateway Small Area Plan/Design Guidelines.
- Buffer Overlay District must be established.

By December 30, 2008:

- Establish Woods and Waters District.
- Promote property across from the Medical Center for office use.

Ms. Ryan stated that these are big initiatives and she asked for questions. There were none at this time. Mayor Whitt thanked Ms. Ryan for her presentation.

Mr. Davis stated that various aspects of the Plan will be discussed at the Retreat and he felt that Ms. Ryan might wish to return to Council at either the March 10, 2008 City Council meeting or the March 24, 2008 Work Session meeting. She said that she would be pleased to attend either.

2. Central Avenue Road Design, presented by Eric Davis, City Manager

Mr. Davis stated that he, Danny Jackson, CSX, and Chuck Flink, of Greenways, Inc., attended a meeting regarding the Citizens Center and Linear Park. Mr. Davis stated that there is 40 feet at the edge of the Citizens Center and the right of way. He wanted a consensus from Council and the Mayor regarding a couple of key factors and they were a one way street or a two way street in front of the Citizens Center on Central Avenue and parallel or angled parking.

Mayor Whitt asked Council for their consensus. It was the consensus of Council that there be two way traffic and angled parking on Central Avenue in front of the Citizens Center if it can be negotiated. With this information from Council and the Mayor, Mr. Davis stated that he would have US Infrastructure design accurate cross sections.

There was also some discussion that there should be pedestrian traffic on the south side of Central Avenue, landscaping on the north side or the railroad side, and a 10-15 mph speed limit in this area.

3. Committee Reports

Mayor Whitt requested that all Committee meet at least one time before the next Work Session on March 24, 2008. Tonight, he asked for a brief report from each Committee.

Beautification Committee

Councilman Moore stated that he will be working with the Foundation and Wendy Foster to get funding for signage and other projects.

Archives Committee

Councilman Brookshire stated that the Committee has not come to a consensus on archives and where they will be located in the Citizens Center. He will be planning a walk through at the Citizens Center with the Committee in the near future and that there will be a meeting tomorrow night.

Construction Committee

Councilman Toomey stated that he will have an Action Item to report this evening and he wished to give Council an update on the Citizens Center. The mechanical work in the building is 99% complete, the electrical work is 90 - 95% complete, and the plumbing is 95% complete. The parking lot is 55% complete due to some areas requiring fabric and other areas requiring Portland cement due to the unstable soil.

Councilman Toomey stated that a walk through the Citizens Center building being planned shortly and he wanted to make a professional video of the walk through showing the different systems. He requested that staff and/or outside professionals who are going to be in charge of troubleshooting our systems in electrical, mechanical, plumbing, HVAC, sprinkler, IT, and fire inspection, etc., be present at the time of the video so that there will be someone who will be an authority on the components of the building as it pertains to their field. He stated that we need to know what type of systems are in this building and what we need to do to maintain the building ourselves. Mr. Davis stated that our department heads will be involved in the walk through as well as other outside professions who will be involved with this building. Mr. Toomey added that in two to three weeks time, we should have a temporary Certificate of Occupancy for the Citizens Center.

Mr. Toomey stated that the Construction Committee's recommendation to Council and the Mayor is to complete the concrete sidewalk between the Citizens Center building, the retaining wall, and the curb. The Committee recommends concrete for the sidewalk as it is already used around the building, it is in keeping with the building, it will keep the area presentable, and most importantly, for erosion control.

Councilman Toomey stated that there is a concern regarding water draining off the roof of the Citizens Center being funneled through to 5 drains to a drainpipe to a central point drain basin. The size of the pipe is undersized and will be discussed at the Construction Committee meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Davis stated that he received word from the architect today recommending stamped concrete for this area and this recommendation will make a connection with the downtown. The Change Order would amount to around \$17,000 to \$18,000. It was the consensus of Council and the Mayor to go with the stamped concrete as recommended by the Construction Committee and the architect. For approximately \$1,000 extra, the concrete can be tinted and the Council and Mayor had no objection to this additional cost, if applicable.

Mayor Whitt reminded Council and staff that the construction manager takes instruction from the architect and we should always communicate with the architect first per the contract.

Councilman Toomey asked Mr. Jackson if he would make sure that WK Dickson will be at the Tuck Park meeting at 10:00 am at the Tuck Park Center on Wednesday, February 27, 2008.

Parks and Recreation

Councilwoman Breyare stated that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on February 18, 2008 with Patrick Connelly, Project Manager for WK Dickson, regarding Phase 1 and Phase 2 cost estimates. Councilman Moore stated that signage was discussed for the Tuck Center and the Committee will bring an idea back to Council at another meeting.

4. Discussion of Voting Districts

Mayor Whitt stated that this item has been requested by Councilman Toomey for discussion of establishing voting districts in Mt. Holly. This matter was brought forward to previous Councils' attention but no action was taken. Mayor Whitt wanted to know if there was any interest from Council on this matter at this time.

Councilman Toomey stated that he was in favor of voting wards or districts because if someone is interested in running for city government and they wish to help their district in the area they live, they can concentrate and focus on their district in their campaign and their election.

Councilwoman Breyare thought the idea was worth pursuing as it would be better for the community to be represented if the Council member was from that area.

Councilmen Moore and McLean thought that the citizens should have input on this matter as they are the ones who vote.

Councilman Brookshire was concerned that there may not be enough interest from people in established voting districts to run for office.

Councilman Bishop was concerned as well about the interest that is involved from potential candidates in an established area and felt that the citizens should have input on whether voting districts should be established.

Ms. Shepard stated that voting districts are formed through special legislation in Raleigh and April is deadline for submission of the request which must also be approved in Washington, DC. She added that the City would hire an outside consultant to be sure that each district is divided according to census data, race, etc. so that all citizens and groups within that district will be well represented.

Mayor Whitt asked Ms. Shepard to come back to the Work Session meeting in March with follow up information on whether voting districts can be decided by Referendum, by the Council, or by the Statutes.

5. Discussion of Private Road Construction Standards

Mayor Whitt stated that there is a problem in some subdivisions where roads are so narrow that City garage trucks can't travel down and back up the road for trash collection. He added that if

the City had private road construction standards, the roads would have been large enough so that the City garbage trucks would be able to pick up trash for these citizens who pay taxes.

Mr. Jackson stated that according to our Zoning Ordinance, a multi-family development is not the same as a subdivision and they do not have the same regulations. Multi-family infrastructure can be privately or publically owned and usually consist of rental units. If the Ordinance is changed, we will have to determine if the development is public or private. If the development is private, the City does not have to pay the cost of the maintenance of the system. If it is public, then the City will have to pay the cost of the maintenance of the system. Mr. Jackson added that if Council decides to change the ordinance, there will be a public hearing on this matter.

Mr. Davis added that there are two types of development - a traditional subdivision of detached single family homes or an apartment complex of renters with large buildings or something like four connected houses with shared driveways. There have been developers that wanted to maximize the number of units built and wanted them placed on private roads that did not meet City standards. Our Ordinance was not sophisticated enough to deal with this issue. Mr. Davis stated that he would like to see our Ordinance changed and prepared for these types of situations as staff will be seeing an increase in the variety of sophisticated developments such as owner occupied with rentals mixed in or multi-story condos, owner occupied, as we have seen in Charlotte.

Councilman McLean wanted the Ordinance to be uniform. Councilman Bishop was concerned about fire trucks being able to go up and down these streets. Mayor Whitt stated that the City wants more control on this situation and the standards should be uniform. Councilman Moore added that some City streets are over 100 years old and that maneuvering up and down them with trucks is difficult. Councilman Toomey stated that he has seen garbage trucks back out of City owned streets. Councilman Brookshire was concerned that if the owners pay City taxes, they should receive services. Councilman Bishop stated that some of these streets were never built right from the beginning. Mr. Davis suggested that Council can mandate that all streets are public and therefore must meet certain standards.

It was the consensus of Council and the Mayor that there should be street uniformity. Mayor Whitt asked Mr. Davis to come up with some solutions for the next Council meeting.

6. Discussion of Sign Ordinance

Mayor Whitt stated our Sign Ordinance needs work because it is easy to "punch holes in it." Mr. Beal stated that he had previously worked on the Ordinance and brought it before a prior Council who did not change it due to the pressures of a few business owners who did not want government regulating their signs. Mayor Whitt asked Council if they were interested in pursuing the improvement of the City's Sign Ordinance. It was the consensus of Council to move forward. Mr. Davis stated that he will go before the Planning Board for their recommendation and then report back to Council.

7. Introduction of Performance Measurement Program, presented by Eric Davis, City Manager and Jamie Guffey, Assistant City Manager

Mr. Davis stated that included in the agenda packet, there is the Town of China Grove Performance Measures Report for informational purposes. Mr. Davis stated that a performance measurement and monitoring system in a City can offer important support to many management functions and it can play an important role in providing effective and efficient services. True performance measures in local government generally may be categorized as workload or output measures, efficiency measure, effectiveness or outcome measures and productivity measures.

Mr. Davis asked how do we prove that we are doing a good job? How much does it cost to provide a service? He added that it will take a long time to do these measurements as a base line must first be established and then a comparison from quarter to quarter is measured.

Mr. Guffey stated that this Performance Measurement can be used as a tool for the Budget.

It was the consensus of Council that staff should proceed with the Performance Measurement Program as presented.

8. Proposed Habitat for Humanity Houses

Mayor Whitt stated that Freightliner would like to build a Habitat for Humanity house in Mt. Holly. Habitat has been given property located by the River Street Park in Mount Holly but City water and sewer service does not extend down to it. An early cost estimate to extend these services would be around \$20,000. Mr. Davis stated that any time you want to extend a City's water supply, a permit from the state is required and it takes 6 weeks to 8 months to get this from Raleigh. Since Habitat wants to act quickly and Freightliner is ready to volunteer now, Mayor Whitt wondered if another lot was available in Mt. Holly with existing services that someone would like to donate. Councilman Bishop stated that there is a house on East Glendale that the City has a lien on. Mayor Whitt stated that this would be another delay in the court system to get it titled over to the City but felt confident that Council would come up with some other locations.

Mayor Whitt invited Henry Massey, Jr., President of the Community Foundation of Gaston County, Inc. to say a few words about Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Massey stated that Habitat has challenges every day and those who have the opportunity to live in a Habitat house have their lives transformed and they sometimes see whole neighborhoods turned around because of a Habitat house. Habitat for Humanity does not buy property as it relies on donations. If another lot could be found in Mount Holly, it would be great advertising for Freightliner and the City of Mt. Holly.

Mayor Whitt asked Council to look around for properties in Mount Holly and get that information back to Mr. Davis for Habitat. He thanked Mr. Massey for his input into this matter.

Other Matters

Mayor Whitt stated that all agenda items for this meeting have been completed and he invited comments from the Council.

Councilman Bishop stated that he got a call from citizen regarding the flags for the Whitewater Olympic events and that the citizen thought that if the City is willing to support their activities by the displaying their flags downtown then the Whitewater restaurant should allow literature about

Mount Holly to be placed in their restaurant. Councilman Bishop stated that the lights on the water tank as seen from I-85 are back on. He feels that they do not look good and the cost is around \$250.00 a month to keep them on. He asked that Council to look at the water tower and determine if the lights should stay on or off. Councilman Bishop stated that the City Hall Annex awning should be replaced. He observed that the cemetery fence looks very good. He asked if Highway 273 could be cleaned up by the use of prison inmates. Mr. Davis stated that 273 is a state highway and the amount of cleanup that DOT would do as not enough and the frequency of getting prison inmates is not enough to do the job well, so the City decided to clean it up this time. Mr. Santmire added that the State will do a clean up every 4 -5 years but will contract it out and that the State doesn't want the City to plant flowers or plants in a median on a state road.

Councilman Moore stated that he received a call from a citizen regarding their neighbor's house with trash in the front yard. The citizen called City Hall and was told that there was no code enforcement officer at this time. Mr. Davis stated we have advertised a new position for a planner/code enforcement officer but for now, a police officer has been assigned with the task of code enforcement. He added that all departments should be made aware of this officer for reporting code enforcement problems.

Councilman McLean asked that Council be informed when clean up of 273 would occur.

Mayor Whitt stated that Spring Fest will occur on May 3, 2008. He asked Council to call Meg Barnard if they wished to volunteer as servers for the Senior Dinner.

Mayor Whitt stated that Kemp Michael is doing well from his procedure.

Mayor Whitt asked about the hospital intersection danger and how is it being remedied? Mr. Davis stated that it won't be a quick remedy. If the City wants to realign that intersection, it will work with DOT. If the hospital is planning any more development, the City should require them to realign the intersection. Mayor Whitt stated that the hospital is willing to bring engineers in to study this intersection and if that lane is not blocked off now, someone will be killed and he hoped that a solution will be found to this urgent problem.

Mayor Whitt stated that he and the Council are heading up to Asheville on Tuesday night, March 4, 2008, because the class with the League of Municipalities starts at 8:00 am on Wednesday morning. Mr. Guffey stated that the Grove Park rooms are reserved through Saturday night with Tuesday night already paid for. He added that there will be a check available to Council and Mayor on Friday, Feb. 29, 2008 for the cost of their stay at the Grove Park Inn plus a per diem rate for meals. He reminded Council that if they should drive themselves to Asheville that they will get a mileage reimbursement upon their return.

Councilman Toomey asked the Mayor if he would review the duties and responsibilities of a Committee Chairperson and the protocol for Committee assignments.

Mayor Whitt outlined what a Committee Chairperson should do as a procedure:

- Committee Chairperson is responsible for calling the Committee meetings.
- Committee Chairperson should have a staff member at the meetings.

- Committee Chairperson should inform staff in a timely fashion of the meetings for them to notify the Sunshine List.

Mayor Whitt outlined what a Committee Chairperson should do functionally:

- Committee Chairperson should have a clear idea of what the Committee needs to accomplish.
- The Committee reports to the Council, not the Mayor.
- Committees have no authority to make decisions - Council has the authority to make decisions.
- Staff may not always agree with the Committee but they should be able to inform and express opinions.
- The Committee decision doesn't need to be unanimous.
- Committee Chairperson should never hold a closed session, ever.
- The Committee Chairperson should listen to their Committees and keep them organized and they should report back to Council with the Committee's ideas.
- Chairpersons of Committees shouldn't push their own agendas.

Councilman Toomey thanked the Mayor for his review of the Chairperson's duties and responsibilities. However, he had a question about responsibilities of staff. For an example, regarding Tuck Park, Councilman Toomey felt that the Assistant Manager in charge of the Recreation Department should call the meetings, set the agenda, document minutes, and report back to Council regarding the happenings of the Recreation Department. He felt that the Council wasn't using the staff properly. He felt that Councilmembers, working on individual committees, do the work that staff should be doing. Councilman Toomey wanted the roles and responsibilities of Committee Chairperson and the staff to be established.

Mayor Whitt thanked Councilman Toomey for his observations. Mayor Whitt stated that when he was an audience member at previous Council meetings, he rarely saw information placed before the Council that would have helped them make important decisions. He stated that when he was elected Mayor, he decided that he was going to form Committees to help Council be supplied with the best information that the Committees could find and that we were not going to have the confusion we experienced during the Streetscape project with the Citizens Center project. That is why the Construction Committee was formed. Mayor Whitt added that the Citizens Center is a capital project and it is not staff's responsibility to jump into a capital project as they are running the City for us. It is staff's responsibility to pitch in and help and bring ideas to the table.

Councilman Toomey stated that he agreed partly with the Mayor. However, he encountered a difference of opinion in that a Committee issue was brought before staff and what was experienced was a "dressing down" for it. He felt that because of this reaction, something needs to be changed. Mayor Whitt stated that there should never be any "dressing down" for anything but there should be a free exchange of ideas at all times.

Mayor Whitt stated that if he sends staff out on capital projects, they will miss something because they are not trained for that. He would rather appoint committee members who are better trained.

Councilman Toomey stated that he just wanted to have a clear cut understanding of our roles and responsibilities. Up until now, it has not been established.

Councilwoman Breyare asked if Council could be liaisons versus being a Chairperson of a Committee as she felt that there are more qualified people who serve on Committees who would do a better job as Chair. Mayor Whitt thought that this decision would be fine or he would find someone else to be the Chair. It is all part of the communication – the Chairperson communicating with their Committee and bringing information back to Council. Councilwoman Breyare wished to stay on as Chair but needed a better understanding of her role.

Councilman Moore understood what Councilwoman Breyare was talking about as there are so many qualified and talented people in Mount Holly who are willing to chair committees and their efforts would free Council from the responsibilities of chairing many Committees.

Mayor Whitt stated that he was pleased with all of these comments and if a Council member is not comfortable being a Chair of a Committee or if a Committee should not exist, he would like to know and changes can be made.

Mr. Davis agreed that having staff members at Committee meetings is beneficial. Councilman Bishop stated that staff has always been at meetings for Construction, Utility, Public Safety, and Recreation as they have the biggest input.

Mayor Whitt stated that he wants staff to disagree during these meetings. Mr. Davis stated that he would not feel comfortable with staff disagreeing in public with a Committee. Mayor Whitt stated that the public business is to be carried out in public and not behind closed doors and staff's opinion and input is important.

Councilman Moore stated that when we hired the City Manager, we wanted him to tell us if we were off course and we wanted him to suggest something different if we were off course. He added that in the end, though, it is the decision of Council of what we are going to do, not even the Mayor will decide – he can put his “two cents” in and guide us – but the Mayor will not vote unless there is a tie.

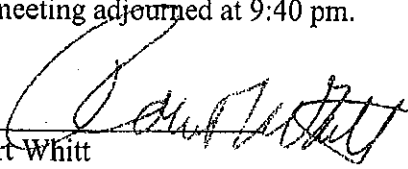
Councilman McLean reminded Council and the Mayor that the ABC store needs to supply a quarterly report to us. Mr. Davis stated that he would get the report.

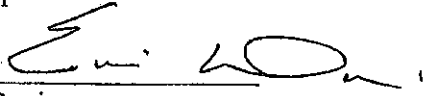
Mr. Davis stated that Michael Butler's father passed away on Saturday. Michael is our GIS technician.

There being no other business to discuss, Mayor Whitt entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Councilman McLean made a motion to adjourn with Councilman Toomey seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.


Robert Whitt
Mayor


Eric Davis
City Manager