

MINUTES
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL
RETREAT- JANUARY 15, 2009

The Mayor called the meeting to order and deferred to Eric Davis, City Manager. Mr. Davis discussed the ground rules, schedule and “parking lot” items for the retreat. Mr. Davis also reviewed the 2008 Retreat Priorities with the City Council.

The following is a list of items that the City Council stated that staff should investigate:

1. Check on the status of the glass doors at the Citizens Center.
2. Check on the window speakers at the Collections Office at the Citizens Center.
3. Check on efficiency lighting and energy analysis at the Citizens Center.
4. Check on the expiration terms of the Parks & Recreation Commissioners.
5. Check on the attendance of the Parks & Recreation Commissioners.
6. Have the new Parks & Recreation Director submit a report to Council.
7. Discuss the use of proceeds from the sale of the former police station and the vacant land in front of the Holiday Inn Express.
8. Contact Duke Energy regarding proposed park development the Mountain Island Boat Landing area.
9. Discuss ETJ during the Council Topics segment of the retreat.
10. Notify Council regarding P&N rail line Public Meeting.
11. Notify Assistant County Manager Phil Ponder regarding the possible location of the local library at the Citizens Center.
12. Check with L&E Properties regarding a proposed rental fee for the lease space at the Citizens Center.

The City Council then recessed the meeting until 9:00A.M. on Friday, January 16, 2009.

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The Mayor at 9:00A.M. reconvened the meeting from the previous night. The first session for discussion was a Financial Update provided by Jamie Guffey, Assistant City Manager for Finance and Administration.

Mr. Guffey presented a follow-up the recent Audit Report. He informed the Council about a written report submitted by Dale Oplinger, Fire Chief, regarding the Firefighter's Relief Fund. Mr. Guffey discussed the Mid-Year Report. Mr. Guffey discussed a proposed Ten (10) Year Financial Forecast Report.

The next item for discussion was the Water and Wastewater Treatment Update provided by Eric Davis, City Manager. Mr. Davis submitted a spreadsheet of the city's options with wastewater treatment. Mr. Davis stated that before the city can move forward with CMUD the State needs to resolve some issues with CMUD. Councilman Bishop gave an update from the Utility Committee. There was a discussion of eliminating certain options and whether or not the city wants to be in the business of wastewater treatment.

The Council and staff during lunch discussed the A&E sewer and greenway easement situation. The Mayor gave an update of his last meeting with A&E Representatives. The Council discussed a list of options regarding the situation with A&E.

The next session for discussion was the Linear Park Update provided by Eric Davis, City Manager. Mr. Davis submitted an updated map detailing the plans for the Linear Park. Mr. Davis also submitted a written report on the plan. He provided before and after pictures of the subject area. The discussion involved landscape, hardscape, sale of Bonds for the project, intersection components, lighting components and bridge enhancements. The Council asked for cost estimates for specific sections and discussed the need for adopting the proposed plan.

The next session for discussion was the Annexation Study provided by Mr. Danny Jackson, Assistant City Manager for Community & Economic Development. Mr. Jackson discussed the submitted written annexation report and map. He stated that he was seeking input from the Council and that the report was still a work in progress. The Council discussed the matter and asked for additional information from staff. The Council recessed for dinner.

The Council reconvened after dinner. The Council wanted to discuss stormwater. They talked about emphasizing public education and prevention. The Council discuss various locations throughout the city where citizens had complained about drainage issues and wanted the city to repair them. The Council discussed the issue of the city doing stormwater work on private property. They talked about issues such as not going beyond the right-of-way, doing the work if there is a culvert involved, checking all ditches, clearing areas that are clogged and maintaining stormwater fees.

The Council discussed the issue of Archives. They talked about a barber chair from the former Jack's Barber Shop being donated to the Archives Committee. The Council talked about whether city staff should be handling archives as opposed to a Historical Society. They talked about other cities using volunteers to handle the matter. It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with the panoramic structure at the Citizens Center. They talked about the Mountain Island Bell being displayed at the Grand Hall of the Citizens Center.

The Council discussed landscaping at the Citizens Center, the fact that NC Law does not allow cities to ban smoking, the contract cost for H&S Media, reducing the newsletter, amending the scope of work for H&S Media and adopting a written stormwater policy.

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The Mayor called the meeting to order. The first item for discussion was Economic Development, provided by Danny Jackson. Mr. Jackson discussed items contained in a submitted memorandum found in the Council's Retreat Manual. He also mentioned that the manual contained submitted information from the Mount Holly Community Development Foundation and the Gaston Regional Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Jackson stated that the City Council can set the tone for how economic development will be handled.

The Council discussed the current city's Economic Development Committee and its members. The Council discussed the possible reorganization of the Economic Development Committee. They by consensus followed the staff recommendation to allow a company known as The Buxton Group, to make a presentation regarding the proposed commercial space at the Citizens Center. The Council discussed the merits of the NC 27 and NC 16 corridors as economic engines for the city.

The next item for discussion was recycling, provided by Eric Davis. Mr. Davis referred to the detailed written report submitted by the Solid Waste Director, contained in the Retreat Manual. The Council discussed Recycling Convenience Centers versus Curbside Recycling. The Council by consensus stated that the city is behind on recycling and the need to do it. The Council directed staff to get cost analysis for curbside recycling and to survey what other cities are doing in that regard.

The City Council ended the retreat by discussing future goals. The Council was asked to ignore cost figures when listing their goals for the city in the future. The objective for the exercise was to see what the city would look like in a perfect world. The list of goals and other discussion topics were put into a spreadsheet for Council and staff review.

The Council and staff discussed the format of the retreat and if things were accomplished as planned. The Council and staff were pleased with the outcome of the retreat. The retreat was adjourned on or about 2:00P.M.