

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

**Work Session
October 27, 2008
6:00 pm**

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

Staff present: Eric Davis, City Manager, Jamie Guffey, Assistant City Manager, Mike Santmire, Streets and Solid Waste Director, Chief Dale Oplinger, Fire Chief, and Chief David Belk, Chief of Police, Kemp Michael, City Attorney

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

CALL TO ORDER BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Whitt called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

INVOCATION

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

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Whitt asked for any changes to the work session agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.

1. Discussion of the South Gateway Corridor

Mr. Jackson advised that Council expressed three (3) concerns after the October business meeting. He further advised that all three (3) concerns have been addressed. Therefore, brought before them tonight is a final list of motions that staff recommends for approval. There was only one (1) question brought forward and that was in regard to private clubs. After Council reviewed the list of motions, they agreed to place this item on the November 10, 2008 Consent Agenda for approval.

2. Discussion of the Community Foundation Proposal for Lease Space at the Old City Hall

Mr. Davis reported that the Mount Holly Community Foundation has approached him in regard to renting office space in the old City Hall building. This proposed office space would house the Foundation as well as a Mount Holly branch of the Gaston County Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Davis reviewed the going market rate of \$10 a square foot for commercial rental space with the Council. Mr. Davis added that the Foundation also mentioned that they would like some relief on the rent for a period of time of which it would take them to get established. At this time, Mayor Whitt went around the table and asked Council's feelings in regard to this issue. Council was divided on the issue of rent. At this time, Ms. Heroy, the Executive Director for the Foundation, was asked to address the Council. Ms. Heroy advised that the Foundation would request that Council waive the first years rent of which would also

include utilities. With Council being undecided on this issue, Staff was asked to bring a proposal back to Council at the November 10, 2008 business meeting.

3. Discussion of Marketing of City Property

Mr. Jackson reported to Council that CB Richard Ellis was no longer interested in marketing city owned property. He asked if Council would once again like to interview potential candidates to market city owned property. It was the consensus of Council that Staff interview potential candidates and bring back a recommendation to Council.

4. Fire Department Presentation

Chief Oplinger reviewed the serious need of renovations at the Catawba Heights Fire Station. He gave a brief back ground of the Catawba Heights station and explained how the station is outdated and in need of renovations if not total demolition and rebuilding. Chief Oplinger commented that Council has three (3) options, the first would be the do nothing option. Second would be renovation to the current station and the third would be building a new station at Catawba Heights. At this time, Mayor Whitt thanked Chief Oplinger for his presentation.

Mayor Whitt called a short recess. The meeting reconvened at 7:44 p.m.

5. Discussion of the Stormwater Project List

Mr. Friday reported that so far this budget year approximately \$72,000 has been collected in stormwater fees and approximately \$62,000 has been spent on projects. He advised that there have been several requests for stormwater projects on private properties. Mr. Friday explained that it has always been policy not to go onto private property due to liability issues. There was discussion among Council regarding changing the policy to allow staff to go onto private property. It was the consensus of Council that they should have the opportunity to review stormwater projects to ensure each project is a priority. Mr. Friday commented that there have been more stormwater projects completed than the actual dollar amount shows because projects such as cleaning ditches are done in house.

6. Discussion of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

Mr. Davis advised that the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) was first discussed at the Council retreat but due to higher priority items has somewhat been put on the back burner. Mr. Davis explained that the purpose of an APFO would be to divert start up costs of future development back to the developer. He advised that this would be similar to an impact fee. Council directed staff to produce a draft ordinance and bring back to Council at a future meeting.

7. Presentation of Austria Trip

Mr. Davis presented Council with a presentation of his trip to Austria. Mayor Whitt advised that this trip was not paid for by tax payer money but funded through the Gaston County Chamber. Mr. Davis reviewed the information regarding bio-diesel fuels, electricity and recycling.

8. Update on the Request for Proposals for Banking Services

Mr. Guffey advised that proposal will be opened on October 29th. After that each proposal will be reviewed and staff will make a recommendation for Council approval at the November 10, 2008 Council meeting.

9. Discussion of a Special Activities Permit

Mr. Davis explained that there is a growing number of special activities that are being done that are not City sponsored. He advised that his main concern is that there is no type of permit issued by the City for these activities that would free the City of any liability issues. Council directed staff to create a special activities permit and bring back to Council for approval.

10. Discussion of the High Grass and Noxious Weed Ordinance

Mr. Jackson explained that the current ordinance regulates high grass at eighteen (18) inches. He advised that after checking other local municipalities the Planning Department found that most are regulated at twelve (12) inches. Mr. Jackson recommended that Council change the high grass regulation to twelve (12) inches in Mount Holly. It was the consensus to make that change and place on the November 10, 2008 *Consent Agenda* for approval.

11. Discussion of the Use of the Walking Trail at the Middle School

Mr. Jackson explained that the City has an agreement with the Gaston County School system to use the walking trail at the Middle School. There was discussion among Council regarding leaving the lights on at night. Council felt that due to the woods behind the track it is not the safest place to walk after dark. It was the consensus to monitor the number of people that walk there after dark and then make a final decision regarding leaving the lights on after dark.

12. Committee Reports

Councilman Brookshire reported that the Archives Committee is scheduled to meet Thursday night in the archives room at the Citizens Center. He advised that the committee will have available the long collage of pictures that will be placed on the archives wall. He invited all Council members to attend.

Councilman Bishop reported that there will be a Utility Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday.

Councilman Toomey reported from the Construction Committee that there is a very short list of items left on the Citizens Center list. He advised that Tuck Park Phase I is nearing completion, the walk through is scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on Thursday morning.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore reported from the Beautification Committee that the new fall banners are up and the sod in front of the Citizens Center should be complete tomorrow.

Councilman Toomey reported that the Economic Development Committee met last week and it is a very productive group.

Councilwoman Breyare reminded everyone of the open house scheduled for Sunday from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Councilman Bishop reported that the Retail Space Committee should have a recommendation to Council at the next meeting.

Council Toomey asked what the City policy is for removing garbage from rental property. Mr. Guffey advised that it is the property owner's responsibility to remove the trash

from the property. He further advised that the property owner usually charges a deposit that would cover the cost of removing any excess trash from the property.

Mayor Whitt announced that the Thread Trail is having a celebration at Crowders Mountain State Park Saturday, November 1st from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

13. Closed Session

There were no items to be discussed in closed session.

14. Adjourn

With no additional items for discussion, Mayor Whitt entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilman Toomey made the motion to adjourn the October 27, 2008 work session meeting. Councilman McLean seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. ***(Motion carried)***
Then meeting adjourned at 10:06 p.m.