

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
October 11, 1999**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE MAYOR

The regular meeting of the City Council of Mount Holly was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Mayor McLean. The following were present:

Mayor Frank McLean

Mayor Pro-Tem Phyllis Harris

Councilman Michael Helms

Councilwoman Phyllis Harris

Councilman Jim Hope

Councilman Bryan Hough

Councilman Bobby Black

Public Works Director Eddie Nichols

Planning & Zoning Dir. Danny Jackson

City Attorney Kemp Michael

Police Officer

INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Rev. Mitchell Murrow.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Thirteen girls of Girl Scout Troop 75 with their two troop leaders led the Council and audience in the ceremony of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Boy Scouts from Troop 59 were also present.

MINUTES

Councilman Helms **MOVED** to approve the minutes of September 13, 21 and 28th, and October 5, 1999, as written, seconded by Councilman Hough, with all in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UFB#1 To Consider Water Pressure Issues in Oakcrest Subdivision

Public Works Director Eddie Nichols stated that the North Main Street project is near completion to increase water pressure in that area in response to a number of complaints over the years about low water pressure. Since the hook up, we had several complaints from Oakcrest Subdivision residents about the water pressure being too high. He stated that the pressure in there is now between 85 and 110 psi. We have also had several water leaks which we have had to repair. City Manager David Kraus said he obtained cost estimates for pressure reducer valves at \$150 each. He included the complaint letters in the agenda.

Motion: Councilman Helms **MOVED** to approve the proposed resolution to handle the complaints in Oakcrest Subdivision, seconded by Councilwoman Hubbard. The resolution reads: "The City Manager is hereby directed to review complaints pertaining to increased water pressure in the Oakcrest Subdivision and surrounding areas. The City Manager is authorized and directed to alleviate excess water pressure conditions at residences where such reduction in pressure is deemed reasonably necessary by the City Manager. Likewise, the Manager is authorized to make reimbursement to citizens who

have prior to October 11, 1999, expended their own funds to correct pressure problems, in this area, when it appears to the City Manager that the expenditure was reasonably necessary and performed at a reasonable cost. Any citizen not satisfied by the actions of the City Manager shall be allowed to bring such complaint directly before the City Council for its determination. This motion shall pertain to complaints received by the City from September 24, 1999, through October 31, 1999."

Vote: all in favor. CARRIED.

Councilman Black said that Council has asked staff to improve communication with residents of changes to be made in services. Mr. Nichols said the notices were hand delivered in June; however, many people have said they did not get them. In the future, we will hand deliver and also mail the notices. He also said there are about 30 houses in that area that have not yet been hooked onto the new lines.

UFB#2 To Consider Subdivision Ordinance Amendment on Decorative Street Lighting

Mr. David Hart, Duke Power District Manager, appeared before the Council. He stated that the monthly cost for decorative lights is higher than the regular street lights, and there is also additional charge for underground wiring. There is an option to pay a one time fee of \$738 each with the monthly fee being over \$6 instead of \$5 per month. The difference in lighting level depends on the size requested and spacing. The decorative poles are usually shorter and so do not give as much light, but it would depend on the wattage. If the developer installs them, Duke Power will not maintain them; they only maintain the ones they install, because there are so many styles and brands. The usual ratio is 5 decorative to 3 regular. There is an option of sodium or mercury. There is also a difference in color. Councilman Hough said with the new subdivisions being built, he would like to see decorative lighting required on all of them. Mr. Hart said that a starter home subdivision may not want the higher price; whereas the higher priced subdivision may want the higher cost light. Councilman Hough said he would like to see decorative light required on all of them, but let them choose from the Duke Power list and require them to use the same one within their whole subdivision. Councilwoman Hubbard asked about the option between the monthly fee and the one time payment. Councilwoman Hubbard asked if there are any other cities in their system that require decorative lights. Mr. Hart said there are none. He said he would be happy to work with the Council to work this out. Councilwoman Hubbard asked if the residents in the Deerfield Subdivision can themselves pay for decorative lights to be installed. Mr. Hart said that would be possible. Eddie Nichols asked if there would be a charge to remove the standard poles if that happened. Mr. Hart's associate said that would depend on whether they are still under contract or not. Councilman Hough said the cost is higher than he thought, and he felt we would have to go to proposed Option #2.

Motion: Councilman Hough **MOVED** to set a public hearing at the November regular meeting to consider an amendment to the subdivision ordinance, Section 3.15, per Option #2 (non-mandatory decorative lighting); seconded by Councilwoman Hubbard.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

UFB#3 To Consider Fire Contract With Lucia-Riverbend Volunteer Fire Department

City Manager David Kraus said we had a verbal agreement with them since the annexations, and this contract would formalize an agreement. City Manager Kraus had several items for Council's consideration which he provided in the agenda memo. Councilman Hough asked about the base amount to be paid yearly. Chief David Toomey said that his VFD Board decided since the offer went from ten years to five years, they should change the base payment from \$15,000 to \$17,500. He expects they will also do hydrant maintenance when the development occurs. Mr. Kraus noted that the proposal originally anticipated 750 homes, but now the estimate is 350, since Waters Edge will not be built. Mr. Kraus did not feel that a minimum payment is appropriate. He recommended a two year contract retroactive to the effective date of the first annexation, with payment of the same amount they would have received from the County fire district tax, and keep them on the mutual aid agreement. Councilwoman Hubbard suggested a compromise between the tax value payment and the requested \$17,500, a one half payment for the first year, and then the second year the \$17,500 and then after that the actual tax value payment since development will increase by then. Councilman Black suggested \$15,000 the first year, \$17,500 the second year, and then the tax value payment. Councilman Hope said we have another volunteer fire department to consider, and we have to be sure we are handling this in a similar manner to them. We are looking at 10% of our tax rate. Councilwoman Hubbard said Phyllis Harris made a good point that if we had not annexed, they would still be in the County, and when the development is done, they would get the same tax rate, but the increase in tax value would amount to an increase in dollars they would receive. Councilman Hough said they have 5 trucks, and trucks cost at least \$230,000. If we do the coverage ourselves, the real cost to us is much higher than \$17,500 per year. Mr. Kraus said he does not have any information yet on the impact on ISO ratings. Councilman Helms said he agrees with Councilman Hough that we should give them the \$17,500. Councilman Hough asked the fire chief if a two year or five year would be preferable, with a six month out clause. He said five year.

Motion: Councilman Hough **MOVED** to adopt a five year \$17,500 per year minimum with a tax rate at 4.5 cents per 100 value, cancelable with six months notice on either party. Seconded by Councilman Black.

Vote: all in favor. CARRIED.

UFB#4 To Consider Changes to Administrative Services Director Position

City Manager David Kraus suggested we downgrade the position to a grade 16. He presented a proposal for the new job description. It would not be supervisory.

Motion: Councilman Helms **MOVED** to adopt the amended job description for Project Officer/Administrative Services Officer as presented; seconded by Councilman Helms.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

five minute recess

UFB#5 To Consider Annexation of Riverbend Steam Plant and Boat Access

City Manager Kraus stated that after the annexation study presented by Judi Simac, Council discussed annexation to make the StoneWater Bay property contiguous. She spoke about a larger tract, but he is recommending a smaller tract that leaves out the coal stack and the ash pit and a larger tract of land. Mr. Kraus asked for instructions from Council. Council concurred to have an annexation study done on the smaller tract.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Hough **MOVED** to accept and approve all four items on the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Black; and unanimously carried. They are:

CA#1. Acceptance of Bids and Awarding of Contract for CIAP Grant (Rollins Square)

The low bid of Central Builders, Inc. in the amount of \$111,222 exceeds the grant; and the contract is awarded to Central Builders, Inc. for \$110,775.00.

CA#2. Approval of Budget Amendments for Street Paving

To complete paving Spring, Dutchman, and Gaston Streets at a cost of \$18,505. (copy attached)

CA#3. Approval of Closing Deerfield Drive on October 31, 1999 for Halloween

Per request of Homeowners Association, Deerfield Drive will be closed from 6:30 to 9:00 pm for safety of children and a carnival; neighborhood traffic and emergency vehicles will be allowed to pass.

CA#4. To Call for a Public Hearing on Amendment to Watershed Overlay

A public hearing is set for November 8, 1999, to consider amending the watershed overlay ordinance, Section 5.13, to establish a 15-foot buffer around wetlands.

NEW BUSINESS

NB #1 To Call for Public Hearing on Voluntary Annexation off Sandy Ford Road

Petition for voluntary annexation has been received from Henry Henkel Rhyne to annex his property on Dutchman's Creek off of Sandy Ford Road. Mr. Kraus said we are not ready to provide certificate of sufficiency.

Motion: Councilwoman Hubbard **MOVED** to adopt the resolution to instruct the City Manager to investigate the petition for sufficiency; Councilman Black seconded.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

NB#2 To Consider Placing Stop Signs on Deerfield Drive

City Manager Kraus received a petition from the president of the Deerfield Homeowners Association with 63 signatures, requesting stop signs at three intersections and a children playing sign.

Motion: Councilman Helms **MOVED** to put a four way stop at the intersection of Deerfield Drive, Ash Court, and Silver Birch Lane; a three way stop at Deerfield Drive and Tupelo Court intersection; and a three way stop at the intersection of Deerfield Drive and a new street; and to install a children playing sign; seconded by Councilman Hough.

Vote: all in favor. CARRIED.

NB#3 To Consider Application for Wellness Grant

City Manager Kraus said the city's insurance company is offering funds for wellness or employee assistance programs, with no match requirement, up to \$30 per employee up to \$6,000. He sent the request for program ideas with the employee paychecks. A proposal has been made to establish a fitness program for employees that offers a variety of exercises each month.

Motion: Councilman Hough **MOVED** to authorize the City Manager to apply for the wellness grant; seconded by Councilman Hubbard.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor McLean opened the floor for public comment.

Bill Abernathy, Glendale Avenue. He stated there are several problems with that street. It needs widening, but that lot on the corner seems to be owned by a lot of heirs and the real owners have not been determined. Even worse is the drainage problem. Every rain it floods water off the street, overflows the drainage ditch onto his yard, and then it goes across his neighbor's yard. Mrs. Abernathy said they also want to build up where the drainage ditch is with dirt and plant trees and shrubs, but the water would ruin them. Public Works Director Eddie Nichols said that this is an old problem, and the Council has looked at this in the past, several times. He said that spot is a low spot and the water cannot get over the hill at Crest Drive to go on down Glendale. To fix that situation would require storm drain being installed down Glendale Avenue. Mr. Nichols said that water used to go under Hollis Dunn's house. Mr. Nichols said we have had problems getting the street widening done because of a need for more right of way that we have not been able to obtain. Councilman Hough asked if the road could be built up so that it would flow evenly and straight down the street. Mr. Nichols said he could look into that.

Richard Duren, 177 Antelope Drive. He was concerned about the contract with the fire department tonight. It is his understanding that ISO has done evaluations of Mt. Holly and we were told we need more fire stations in order to keep our current rating of 6. He wondered when these will be built, and hope the contract tonight was not to delay the building of them. City Manager Kraus said we have to provide coverage from day one of annexation. Mr. Kraus said he is pursuing location sites at this time, to bring to Council proposed sites to acquire the land necessary to build. Mr. Duren said that the contract allows for re-negotiation and he wanted to know if they need more equipment, would the City have to pay for that. Mr. Kraus said no; that the City is only obligated to pay what the contract says. Mr. Duren asked what liability the City now has with this contract. Mr. Kraus said it would be similar to our liability with our contract with Catawba Heights VFD. Mr. Duren asked if we have determined whether or not their firemen are qualified as they should be. He said these issues should be addressed to protect the city's liability and to keep insurance costs down for the taxpayers who move into that area when it is developed. Mayor McLean said those matters will be addressed.

ROUND TABLE

Councilman Hubbard asked the City Manager to check into the status of the Lentz Springs house repairs.

Councilwoman Harris asked about the stoplight on the bypass at A&E which was promised to us. Mr. Kraus said it has been approved but not funded.

Councilman Helms asked the city manager to put the electronic speeding sign on Glendale Avenue for the residents.

Councilman Helms said we need a "do not block" sign at the intersection where the bypass begins.

Councilman Black asked about the appraisal on the church property. It is expected next week.

Mayor McLean said Mrs. Robinson complained that there is no grass on her grandmother's grave at the city cemetery.

City Manager Kraus stated that Donny Hicks has invited the Mayor and Council to a Gaston County press conference tomorrow to announce a major industry coming.

The Council agreed to have its next work session on Thursday, Nov. 4th.

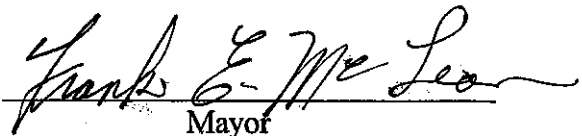
City Manager Kraus said the Mt. Holly Fire Department will be doing free blood pressure checks, and is also trying to get free flu shots, for residents when coming in to pay water bills during this month.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried.



Clerk



Mayor

cpm