

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, September 25, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
6:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hough called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The following were present:

Mayor Bryan Hough	Danny Jackson, Interim City Manager
Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris	Brian DuPont, Assistant City Manager
Councilman Ivory Craig	Brian Reagan, Police Chief
Councilman Jeff Meadows	Ryan Baker, Fire Chief
Councilman David Moore	Greg Beal, Planning Director
Councilwoman Christina Pawlish- NOT PRESENT	Tony Walker, Streets and Solid Waste Director
Councilwoman Lauren Shoemaker	Jonathan Wilson, Director of Utilities
Marie M. Anders, City Attorney	Mark Jusko, Recreation Supervisor
Tara Douglas, Interim City Clerk	Michelle Wood, Finance Director

Mayor Hough stated that Councilwoman Pawlish would not be present for tonight's meeting.

INVOCATION

Councilman Craig led the Council, staff and attendees in prayer.

SET THE AGENDA

With no changes to the agenda, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilman Craig seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Release of Letter of Credit for River Park Phase 4, 5 and 6.
2. Approval of Fire Department Administrative Assistant / Fire and Life Safety Educator
3. Approval of Minutes from the September 11, 2023 Council Meeting
4. Approval of Minutes from the September 11, 2023 Closed Session

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

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NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation from Better City

Jason Godfrey and Meng Guo

Mr. Godfrey presented from Better City. Mr. Godfrey stated that the intent is to give monthly reports to Council. Mr. Godfrey stated that at the next meeting, they will present a detailed action plan for Councils review. Mr. Godfrey stated that Mr. Jackson and Mr. DuPont have been extremely helpful in pointing the team in the right direction. Mr. Godfrey stated that there has been a change in staffing and that the primary point of contact moving forward will be Meng Guo. Mr. Godfrey presented on what has been completed to date regarding a parking analysis. Mr. Godfrey explained that they are coming up with a custom dashboard with key metrics. Mayor Hough gave Council the opportunity to ask any questions. There were no questions from Council at this time. Mayor Hough thanked Mr. Godfrey for his presentation and all of the hard work that is being done.

2. Presentation on River Bend Access Area Improvements- Duke Energy Ethan Pardue

Jeff Lineberger presented for Ethan Pardue. Mr. Lineberger is the General Manager of Hydro Strategy and Licensing for Duke Energy. Mr. Lineberger stated that River Bend is the largest of the public access areas on Mountain Island Lake. Mr. Lineberger discussed the history of the licensing requirements and stated that the license expired in the early 2000's. Mr. Lineberger discussed the comprehensive licensing agreement process and examples of how this process has been implemented. Mr. Lineberger explained the three-year process and the extent to which the river basin had been studied. Mr. Lineberger stated that the goal is to give people more access to the river other than the people that live around the area. Mr. Lineberger stated that there had been over 300 public meetings around this process. Mr. Lineberger stated that the comprehensive licensing agreement is the product of this community event. Mr. Lineberger stated that there is an opportunity for the City to lease this access area from Duke Energy for \$1 per year in exchange for the City operating the facilities that are there. The only requirement is that Duke Energy makes the offer and that the City considers the offer. Mr. Lineberger stated that the City is not obligated to lease the access area. Mr. Lineberger stated that construction would occur from 2023-2027 and that if the City were to lease this site the lease agreement would be for the term of the new license which would expire 10/31/2055. Mr. Lineberger stated that this is a 40-year license that was issued in 2015. Mr. Lineberger discussed what is there now. Mr. Lineberger stated that this is largely a wooded site. Mr. Lineberger stated that Duke Energy would construct the following facilities independently of whether the City of Mount Holly leased the area or not: restrooms, fishing pier, swimming area, and parking for approximately 130 single car parking spaces.

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Mr. Lineberger stated that fees could be charged for use of the facilities if the City chooses, but would need to be reasonable and customary. Mr. Lineberger stated that the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission maintains the boat landing for Duke Energy under contract which gets the Wildlife Commissions presence there. Mr. Lineberger stated that this has been a beneficial addition and encourages the City to keep them as partners if the City chooses to lease the access area. Mr. Lineberger discussed the benefits of leasing this access area. Mr. Lineberger stated that he knew that management is not free and that it would be a cost to the City, but it would enhance the quality of life in Mount Holly and the surrounding area.

Councilman Meadows asked Mr. Lineberger to go back to the required and suggested items slides and asked about the items colored in blue which is the trail and the campgrounds. Councilman Meadows asked Mr. Lineberger to confirm that Duke would not build out that campground and it would be up to the City of Mount Holly to decide whether that campground would come or go. Mr. Lineberger stated that the City would not be obligated to go in and build that campground currently. Councilman Meadows asked if the Federal Government typically comes in and dictates particular items. Mr. Lineberger stated that Duke makes it clear to the FDRC that this is a regional plan and that the government does not wish to micromanage. Councilman Meadows asked Mr. Lineberger if Duke Energy would meet with neighborhoods that did not exist prior to the previous planning events. Mr. Lineberger stated that Duke wishes to be a good neighbor.

Councilwoman Shoemaker asked what their stance is on the traffic sustainability and the closeness to neighborhood with regards to access and Duke's involvement in upgrades? Mr. Lineberger stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) typically would do studies to determine if new developments equal the need to expand the roadway.

Councilman Meadows asked if there is a possibility to explore folding the current entry through the church parking lot into the main road so that there is one way in and one way out? Mr. Lindenberger stated that this is a good point and that it is being looked at right now by the engineers. Mayor Hough discussed lighting and that there is no safe way to get from the church to the boat landing and asked what can Duke do to get some lighting out there? Mr. Lindenberger stated that the issue is being looked into right now. Mayor Hough stated that because it is not clearly marked, people wander into yards and private property due to no clear stop designation. Mr. Lindenberger stated that this would be looked at and addressed. Mr. Lindenberger stated that the intent would be to start out soft with signs and then move to fencing if needed.

Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that there are concerns about trash, trespassing, and boating accidents and that it sounds like some of these concerns would be addressed with the development of the focused usage areas. Mr. Lineberger stated that this concern would be mitigated by the property management controlled by the City should it choose to enter into a lease agreement. Mr. Lineberger stated that property management, to include city staffing, would be an expectation of the lease

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agreement. Mr. Lineberger stated that this site would need to be closed at times during construction and he feels like that this would be a great time to reset expectations of usage, but that it will take a focused effort. Mr. Lineberger stated that in some instances they have had to remove trash receptacles.

Councilman Meadows asked about the amount of time that the ramps would be closed during traffic? Mr. Lineberger stated that construction would be months long and could start in spring of 2024. Councilman Moore asked about the entry fees at some of the other locations and how that works? Mr. Lineberger stated that Duke would have to review and approve any fees charged to ensure that the fees are reasonable and customary depending on the locations. Mr. Lineberger stated that fees could not be so high that it would exclude visitors. Mayor Hough confirmed that Belmont South Point area is charging \$7 per hour. Councilman Moore stated that one of the biggest concerns is for the safety of the neighborhoods and that whatever is done there that it will be complementary to the neighborhood. Mr. Lineberger stated that Duke Energy intends for this to improve the area and be good for the neighborhoods. Councilman Meadows asked if Duke has had any examples of other partnerships between multiple counties? Mr. Lineberger stated that they do not have multiple local governments coming together on one side, but that this would be a great opportunity to test out this type of partnership.

Mayor Hough stated that a follow up would be to contact Mecklenburg County Commissioner Elaine Powell who leads that effort there. Mayor Hough stated that an additional follow up would be to contact Gaston County and Lincoln County. Mayor Hough stated that an additional concern is with the entry fees and that the Wildlife Commission historically not wanting to charge for fishing and boat use. Mayor Hough stated that we would want to make sure that the City can differentiate how and what people are using the access for since the fees would offset the cost to properly maintain the site. Mr. Lineberger stated that he thinks that there should be a meeting between the City of Mount Holly, Duke Energy and the Wildlife Commission. Mayor Hough asked Mr. Lineberger if such a meeting could be scheduled. Mr. Lineberger stated that a meeting could be scheduled. Council had no further questions for Mr. Lineberger. Mayor Hough thanked Mr. Lineberger for his presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Offer to Purchase PID 122990 on Woodlawn Avenue Marie Anders

Ms. Anders brought to Council a proposed offer to purchase and contract for vacant land for PID #122990 in the amount of \$1110.00. Ms. Anders stated that the due diligence period is 14 days from when the contract is signed by both parties and the proposed closing date is 30 days from when the contract is signed by both parties. Ms. Anders stated that if Council wishes to move forward with purchasing this property, the next step would be a motion to approve this offer and to allow the City

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Manager to sign and forward the contract to the attorney for the estate. Ms. Anders stated that once the estate accepts the offer, the attorney indicated that there would be an upset bid period so that the attorney could follow the appropriate disposal procedures for a property that is inside an estate.

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve the consideration of offer to purchase PID #122990 in the amount of \$1110.00 Councilman Craig made the motion to approve the consideration of offer to purchase PID#122990 in the amount of \$1110.00. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion.

All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a) (3 and 5)

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and enter into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a) (3 and 5). Councilman Craig made a motion to go out of the regular meeting and enter into closed session at 7:15 pm. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to come out of closed session and back into the regular meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to come out of closed session and back into the regular meeting at 8:39 pm. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

ADJOURN

With no additional items for discussion, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilman Moore made the motion to adjourn the September 25, 2023 Council Meeting. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor.

(Motion Carried)

The meeting adjourned 8:39 pm