

**CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
September 9, 2002**

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 Black. The following were present:

Mayor Robert D. "Bobby" Black

Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Hope

Councilman Michael Helms

Councilwoman Phyllis Harris

Councilman Frank McLean

Councilman Bryan Hough

Councilwoman Pat Hubbard

Adm. Services Officer Jamie Guffey

Asst. Public Works Dir. Jeff Fritts

Planning & Zoning Dir. Danny Jackson

City Attorney Kemp Michael

Police Chief Rick Davis

Fire Chief John Ekiatis

Street & Sanitation Dir. Mike Santmire

Water & Sewer Dir. Don Price

INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Rev. Joe Harding, Catawba Heights Wesleyan Church.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Troop 59 led the Council and audience in the ceremony of the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved with one deletion, namely, of Presentation #3; upon motion by Councilwoman Harris, seconded by Councilman Hough, with all in favor.

MINUTES

Councilman Hough **MOVED** to approve the minutes of August 12, 2002, as written, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, with all in favor.

PRESENTATIONS

PR#1 Recognition of Jimmy Haas on Retirement

Mayor Black recognized Jimmy Haas by reading a proclamation honoring him upon his retirement after 24 years of working for the city. He will still be working part-time for the city. He was presented with a plaque and a watch. The Council and city manager joined in congratulating him. Mr. Haas said he enjoyed his working here, and the support he had by the city managers. (copy attached)

PR#2 Proclamation on September 11th

Mayor Black announced a memorial service to be held at noon on September 11th, at the courtyard, and other events such as one at the fire department and at various churches in our city. In addition, the Mayor and Council joined in a

proclamation sponsored by the National League of Cities to commemorate the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. (copy attached)

PR#3 dropped

PR#4 Recognition of Rene Jackson for Crime Scene Technician Certification

Detective Rene Jackson has completed 120 hours at CPCC for training on crime scene analysis. Chief Davis expressed his appreciation for her hard work and willingness to expend her time beyond her normal duties. The Council and Mayor congratulated her as well.

PR#5 Proclamation on Constitution Awareness Week

Councilman Hough read a proposed proclamation for recognition of the anniversary of the adoption of the constitution for the week of September 17 to 23, 2002, as Constitution Awareness Week. (copy attached)

PR#6 Announcement of September 21st as Litter Sweep Day

Mayor Black said that Mike Santmire and Aaron Suttentfield will take the lead for Litter Sweep Day, with everyone meeting at Dr. Beatty's office that morning. All citizens are invited to join in; there will be several church groups and the Interact Club from East Gaston there to help out.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PH#1 To Consider Amendments to Standard Details

Councilman Helms moved to go into public hearing, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, and unanimously carried. Mayor Black recessed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing to consider amending the standard details, upon request by Chief Ekiatis.

City Manager David Kraus stated that a review of recent subdivisions by city staff has revealed that the fire hydrants are too far apart. Chief Ekiatis said this creates a need for laying out more fire hose affecting our ability to effectively fight fires. This amendment will improve our fire rating for the city. There were no comments for or against.

Councilman McLean moved to go out of public hearing, seconded by Councilman Hough, and unanimously carried. Mayor Black adjourned the public hearing and resumed the regular meeting.

Motion: Councilman Helms **MOVED** to approve the amendment to Section 71B-6 of the Standard Detail Manual, Valve and Fire Hydrant Location, to reduce the maximum distance between fire hydrants in residential districts from 1000 feet to 500 feet; and further, to amend Section 71B-6 to include a review of fire hydrant locations by the Public Utilities Director and the Fire Chief or his designee; motion seconded by Councilman Hough.

Vote: unanimous. CARRIED.

PH#2 To Consider Annexation of Creekside Estates

Councilman Hough moved to go into public hearing, seconded by Councilwoman Harris, and unanimously carried. Mayor Black recessed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing to consider voluntary annexation of property upon request by Greg Dimmer and others.

City Manager David Kraus stated that the first part of this subdivision known as Creekside Estates is already in the city limits. The second and third sections are outside the city, so Mr. Dimmer and the other property owners have petitioned for voluntary annexation. There were no comments for or against.

Councilman Hough moved to go out of public hearing, seconded by Councilman McLean, and unanimously carried. Mayor Black adjourned the public hearing and resumed the regular meeting.

City Attorney Michael stated that the surveyor shows the area to be annexed as 22.99 acres on his map presented for annexation. He presented a proposed ordinance of annexation; it needs an effective date. Councilwoman Hubbard asked for a correction so that it reads that the public hearing date is Sept. 9.

Motion: Councilman _____ **MOVED** to approve Res. # 09-09-02A to extend the corporate limits as petitioned by Greg Dimmer and others, effective October 31, 2002, seconded by Councilman McLean.

Vote: unanimous. CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

UFB#1 To Consider Approval of Fire Hydrant Maintenance

City Manager Kraus stated for clarification that the proposal from Bishop Hydrant Service is to cover all the hydrants each year, rather than spread over a 3 year period. Don Price stated that the city has some 500 hydrants; about 80 we know are substandard. Each hydrant costs about \$900, not including our labor cost estimated at \$400 each. That would cost about \$104,000. Chief Ekiatis reported that we had a fire on Oakland and the hydrant would not work; it had been reported but not repaired yet. This contract would average the cost to about \$35 per hydrant. Don Price stated that in addition to maintenance, the hydrants would be flow tested and mapped, and we would be getting them up to ISO standards. Councilwoman Hubbard asked if we would give them our list to start on, or would they do their own list. Mr. Bishop said they would do as Council wishes; he can put a crew on that list right away, but they will test every hydrant themselves. They only charge extra if they need to raise a hydrant.

Motion: Councilman Hope **MOVED** to award the three year contract to Bishop Hydrant Service for fire hydrant maintenance, seconded by Councilwoman Hubbard.

Discussion: Councilman McLean asked Mr. Bishop if he has references in Gaston County; Mr. Bishop said no, this is the first one in Gaston County. Chief Ekiatis stated that when he was a fire chief in Belton, SC, 11 years ago, this company did the hydrant work there, and they are still using him.

Vote: Unan. CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

NB#1 To Consider Lowering Speed Limits in City Park Areas

City Manager Kraus requested upon staff recommendation that the Council lower the city speed limit to 25 mph for Broome Street, Sports Lane, and River Street from the park entrance to Herms Avenue. The Street Dept. is also asking that the speed limit on W. Central Avenue between Hawthorne and the railroad be 25 mph. In addition, the Police and Fire Dept. want Council to request DOT to lower the speed limit on NC 27 from 45 to 35 all the way from the city limits to Hawthorne Street. Councilman Hough asked why they feel a need for that. Chief Ekiatis said it is a safety factor with large trucks including fuel trucks going to Paw Creek. Chief Davis said that had he has had complaints from people pulling out from Old Bay and other places; it is worse with traffic from Stanley to Mount Holly, especially large trucks that cannot get stopped. Councilman Hough said he had a problem lowering the speed limit because people won't abide by the limit that's there, so that we have put a lower one to get them to do what we want. Councilwoman Harris asked if they would have enough personnel to write all these tickets?

Motion: Councilwoman Hubbard **MOVED** to lower the city speed limit to 25 mph on Broome Street, Sports Lane, River Street from the park entrance to Herms Avenue, and on W. Central Avenue between Hawthorne and the railroad tracks; motion seconded by Councilman McLean.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

There was no motion for a request to DOT to lower the speed limit on NC 27. Council concurred that they prefer to enforce what we already have.

NB#2 To Consider Developing Parking Lot at Tuckasee Park

City Manager Kraus reported an erosion problem at the small field next to the concession stand at Tuckasee Park, with huge erosion ruts. He is concerned that it is a tripping hazard. The City can grade it out. However, there is also a problem with people parking all over the place there due to insufficient parking during baseball and soccer seasons. In addition, there are three or four dead trees in that vicinity that need to be removed before they fall. Mr. Kraus recommended graveling a parking lot and removing the dead trees, at a cost estimate of \$6,000. There is a second erosion problem near the community building and near the softball field, along with a sunken area that we need to fill in with dirt. The boy scouts have said they will build a stairway there. Councilman Hope asked if the parking lot is needed because they are not using what we have or we don't have enough parking. Mr. Kraus said we don't have enough parking

for all the events going on at the same time. Councilman Hough recalled that at the last work session we had a proposal on how to get water to drain down the hill; will this help that? Mr. Kraus replied, no, that is a separate matter.

Motion: Councilman Hough **MOVED** to approve removal of dead trees and installing a gravel parking lot at Tuckaseege Park, for a sum not to \$6,000, said funds to come from contingency, seconded by Councilman McLean.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

NB#3 To Consider Sale of Nextel phones to Gaston County Police and NC Department of Revenue

Mr. Kraus said we have surplused old Nextel phones, which we could sell at auction, but staff suggests they be sold to these agencies for \$1.00 each.

Motion: Councilman Helms **MOVED** to approve the sale of surplused Nextel phones to Gaston County Police and NC Department of Revenue for \$1.00 each, seconded by Councilwoman Hubbard

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

NB#4 To Consider Acceptance of Donation of Exercise Equipment to Police Department

Tonya Helms has donated a GOLDS gym machine to the Mt. Holly Police Department for its officers. Mr. Kraus stated it would go in the basement at City Hall; it will not fit in the Fitness Center.

Motion: Councilwoman Harris **MOVED** to accept the donation of exercise equipment for the police department from Tonya Helms, seconded by Councilman McLean.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

NB#5 To Consider Purchasing Replacement Handguns For Police Department

Police Chief Davis said that his officers have had several jamming events with the Smith and Wesson handguns. He wants to use drug seizure money for new weapons.

Motion: Councilwoman Hubbard **MOVED** to approve a supplemental appropriation for use of drug forfeiture money to buy new weapons for the police department, seconded by Councilwoman Harris.

Vote: All in favor. CARRIED.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilwoman Hubbard **MOVED** to accept and approve all two (2) items on the consent agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Harris; and unanimously carried. They are:

CA#1. To Call for Public Hearing on a Petition to Amend Zoning Ordinance. This is a proposal to amend Articles VI and VII upon request by Carroll Drumm.

CA#2. To Call for Public Hearing on Amending Permits. This is a proposal to amend Section 6.1 of the Zoning Ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Black opened the floor for public comment.

Freddie White, 206 Crest Street. Mr. White stated there has been a water problem for about 15 years eroding the hill down to his property ever since the City paved the parking lot at the apartments on Highland Street. He stated he has spent over \$14,000 over these years to try to correct the problem. He has put a 24 inch pipe in on that lot. He wants to buy that lot so that he will own it because he has spent all that money and put pipe in that cost about \$7,800. The lot is 6,000 square feet of property. City Manager Kraus said they will try to see that some work is done at the apartments to control the drainage. Mr. Kraus stated they met with someone from the apartments, and recommended what he needs to do to fix their part of the water problem, but it has not been done yet. Councilman Hough asked if they fix parking lot will that stop his problem. Don Price said it may help some but it may not solve the problem totally. Councilman Hough & Councilwoman Harris asked if the City can give him an easement? City Attorney Michael said that the City could do that, but we would need a survey map to properly described it. Councilman Hough suggested that would be quicker than trying to sell it to him. City Manager Kraus will check on this and report back to Council.

ROUND TABLE

Councilwoman Hubbard asked that Council receive a report from Chief Davis next month on the tickets given on NC 27 in the 45 mile hour zone. Mayor Black suggested that the flashing speed sign be set up on NC 27.

Councilman Helms noted that the old Optimist building grass needs cutting.

Councilman McLean said that on Hill Street he noticed there was no curbing on the new street that Phil Harris developed. Danny Jackson stated that is an existing right of way; our subdivision ordinance does not cover development of old right of ways, only new ones.

Mayor Black reported that he got a phone call from a man from Charlotte, Ron Morgan, a developer, who wants to meet with me to discuss the potential development for downtown; we did met with him. There was an article on what he did in Belmont at the old Eagle Mill. His specialty is taking old properties and refurbishing and developing them to new uses; he has done this in many areas. He finds private investors. In Mount Holly he is interested in the A&E Mill

building on Central Avenue, and the Leader building on Main Street. He works with cities and asks for a small amount of money, but when the property is developed he reimburses the city. He wants to speak with you at the retreat or a work session for no charge. He would take aerial photos and conception drawings of areas in town.

Council said to invite him to the retreat.

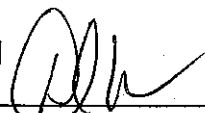
Mayor Black asked if staff is ready to put up door hangers about the coming leaf season. Mr. Kraus said they are ready.

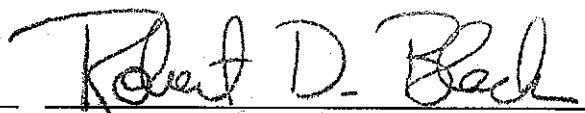
Councilman Hope asked for a status report of the Suttentfield house situation. City Manager Kraus stated that the City sewer line had a stoppage last Thursday on West Catawba Avenue caused by roots in those old clay pipes. In trying to remove the root to correct the blockage, their house was flooded with sewage causing significant damage to their home. It turns out they had a gate valve but no one was home. They did not have a check valve. We notified our insurance agent, but the adjuster has just called Mr. Suttentfield today and he will have someone out there tomorrow morning. Kemp Michael stated that the insurance agent will investigate and we do not know yet what position they would take. They suggested we pay them our deductible, which we did today, with a letter clarifying that at this point liability has not been determined. Mr. Kraus said their house utility line runs into the invert at the lowest part of the manhole. Councilman McLean asked which street it flowed onto; it was Catawba.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, upon motion duly made by Councilwoman Harris, seconded by Councilman McLean and carried.

8:30 PM


Clerk


Mayor

cpm