CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL
Work Session
August 25, 2008
7:00 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, Danny Jackson, 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 7:00 pm.

INVOCATION

Mayor Whitt led the Council, staff members and attendees in prayer.

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Whitt asked for any changes to the work session agenda. Mr. Michael advised that he compiled a memo regarding the proposed tie-in to the two-inch force main on Old Hickory Grove Road. He asked if Council would like to discuss this as an agenda item. Council agreed to add the item as #12 on the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilman Brookshire seconded the motion. In a voice vote, all members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried unanimously)***

1. Consideration and Approval of the Grand Hall Rental Policy

Mayor Whitt advised that at the last meeting Council voted 4-3 to allow the use of alcohol in the Grand Hall. However, this requires a change to the ordinance which requires a 2/3 majority vote. Therefore the item had to come before Council for a second reading. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made a motion to allow the use of alcohol in the Grand Hall. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion. After the vote, the motion on the floor was tied with Councilwoman Breyare. Mayor Pro Tem Moore and Councilman Bishop voting aye and Councilmen Toomey, McLean and Brookshire voting nay. While during a tie, Mayor Whitt casts the deciding vote. Mayor Whitt voted for the motion therefore the motion passed. ***(Motion carried 4-3)***

Mr. Michael noted that clarification is needed on allowing alcohol in the Grand Hall on Sundays. He commented that the policy only addresses functions Monday-Saturday. Mayor Whitt entertained Council's wishes. There was no motion made therefore, the policy remains as presented with no alcohol on Sundays.

2. Presentation on the Linear Park Plan

Mr. Flink presented the Mayor and Council with three (3) options for the Linear Park. The first option is to make a physical connection to the downtown using existing streets and sidewalks. The second option is to add a walking trail across Central Avenue connecting the greenway to the Catawba River. The third option is constructing a pedestrian bridge over Highland Street to connect the Citizens Center to the downtown area. Mr. Flink advised that the third option was best received at the public input meetings. However, option three (3) is the most expensive option with a total estimated budget of $2.2 million. Mayor Pro Tem Moore asked if there is grant money available for this type project. Mr. Flink advised that there is enhancement money available that the City can apply for and that the city can also alter the plan to suit budgetary needs. Mr. Davis explained that the City has approximately $1.4 million in bonds that can be sold to help with the funding portion of the Linear Park Project. There was further discussion regarding the railroad right of way and how to approach CSX in regard to the Linear Park and improvements to the right of way. Mr. Davis commented that CSX knows that the request for the Linear Park is in the near future and have already commented that they would like to see the design and construction drawings.

At this time, Mayor Whitt called a short recess.
Mayor Whitt reconvened the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

3. Discussion of the Gateway Corridor Overlay

Mr. Davis and the Planning Staff discussed the three main points of the south gateway corridor. First is the land use, second are the design guidelines and third are the streets. Staff reviewed road improvements, zoning changes and design guidelines. The was brief discussion between Staff and Council regarding the traffic on the highway 273 corridor and ways to improve traffic congestion. Mr. Davis advised that Staff would like to move forward with the public hearings on these issues. Council agreed. Mayor Whitt emphasized that he is very disappointed that there hasn’t been more citizens come out in support of the corridor plan

At this time Mayor Whitt called a short recess. The meeting reconvened at 10:00 p.m.

4. Discussion of the Real Estate Listing Contract

Mr. Davis reported that six (6) months ago, the City heard presentations from Ms. Chirico and CB Richard Ellis in regard to becoming the listing agent for the purpose of marketing city property. At that time, Council agreed to enter into contract with Ms. Chirico as the listing agent for the sale of the Police Department property and the commercial property located near the Holiday Inn. The contract with Ms. Chirico recently expired, therefore Council needs to decide whether to renew the contract, enter into contract with CB Richard Ellis or find a different real estate firm.

Mayor Whitt allowed Ms. Chirico time to speak. Ms. Chirico commented that due to the economy, commercial property is not selling and she reminded Council that she had someone interested in the Police Department but due to the condition of the building, the deal fell through.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to enter into a six (6) month contract with CB Richard Ellis. Mr. Brookshire seconded the motion. All council members voted in favor. ***(Motion carried)***

5. Discussion of Middle School Water Meter Request

Mr. Davis explained that the Mount Holly Middle School is requesting the City install a water meter for the purpose of watering their newly constructed baseball field. In return the school has agreed that the City can use the field as long as it is not being used for a scheduled school function. Councilman Bishop clarified that the school will be paying for their monthly water usage. Councilman Toomey made a motion that the City waive all costs associated with the installation of the water meter for the Mount Holly Middle School. Councilwoman Breyare seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried)***

6. Report on Debt Financing and Effect All Bond Rating

Mr. Guffey explained debt financing and effect all bond rating. He further explained that the main organizations that rate debt is Moody's and the S&P. He explained the different rating systems for each and advised that the City of Mount Holly has an A2 rating with Moody's and an A rating with the S&P. Mr. Guffey emphasized that it is hard for a City the size of Mount Holly to get any higher ratings than we already have. Mr. Davis added that the City needs to strive to keep the credit rating high.

7. Update on Ambulance Services in Mount Holly

Chief Oplinger reported that the ambulance service has been pulled out of Mount Holly. The Gastonia Paramedics have been providing services to this area but the response times have not been that great. However, Chief Oplinger advised that he received notification this after around 4:30 that the ambulance service is moving back to the area.

8. Discussion of Transition to a One to One Vehicle Assignment

Chief Belk presented the one to one vehicle policy to Council. He advised that a one to one policy provides rapid deployment at any given time because officers can respond from their homes. Chief Belk further advised that a one to one policy would also help with recruiting efforts for new police officers for the reason that most of the surrounding Cities provide their officers with one to one vehicles. An additional benefit of the one to one vehicle assignment is that it projects Police presence in our local communities. There was discussion among Council regarding the distance that officers would be allowed to drive their assigned vehicle and the locations that the vehicle could be left if the Officer lives outside the allowed radius. Councilman Bishop made some recommendations that Council agreed with in regard to the policy. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made a motion to approve the one to one vehicle policy with an eight mile radius of the City Limits and pursuant to any changes that were discussed at the meeting tonight. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion. With a show of hands, Councilwoman Breyare, Mayor Pre Tem Moore and Councilmen Bishop and Toomey voted in favor and Councilmen McLean and Brookshire voted against. ***(Motion carried 4-2)***

9. Update on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

Chief Belk gave a power point presentation providing a clear explanation of the Commission and Law Enforcement Accreditation. (CALEA). He explained that CALEA will ensure that the Department is structured correctly. Chief Belk emphasized that CALEA strongly promotes that the Department has a strong relationship within the Community.

10. Discussion of Council Touring the A & E Plant

Council agreed to Tour the A&E Plant on Monday, September 15, 2008.

11. Committee Reports

Councilmen Toomey and Brookshire will be absent at the September meeting.

Mr. Michael reported that he composed a memo to Council regarding the two-inch forced main on Old Hickory Grove Road. He advised Council that they need to decide if they are going to let people tie into that main and also if they want to start doing these small satellite annexations. Council agreed to add this item to the work session agenda.

Mr. Davis gave Council their keys that would open the Citizens Center. He also gave them there key cards of which would be activated when Council needs to get into the building for meetings that are held after hours.

Mayor Whitt shared his concern regarding the decision that was made to spend $10,000 to outfit the fitness center in the Police Department.

Councilwoman Breyare reported that she would like Council to write a letter to Senator Forrestor stating our displeasure with him for not supporting the City of Mount Holly in regard to the Occupancy Tax. Council agreed.

Council agreed to have he Citizens Center Dedication on October 19, 2008.

Councilman Toomey advised that the City needs to purchase some push brooms and cleaning supplies for the purpose of cleaning the Grand Hall after events.

Mayor Whitt asked if there is any incentive to start the work session meetings earlier than 7:00 p.m. Council agreed to move the work session meetings up to 6:00 p.m. Councilman McLean commented that Mr. Dobson called him and complained about a high water bill. Mayor Whitt directed him to the ??? Committee.

12. Adjourn

With no additional items for discussion, Mayor Whitt entertained a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made the motion to adjourn the August 25, 2008 work session meeting. Councilwoman Breyare seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried)***