CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL
Work Session
July 28, 2008
7:00 pm

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

Members absent: Councilman Bennie Brookshire

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

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

SET THE AGENDA

Mayor Whitt asked that Todd Vandermeid and Wendy Foster be placed on the agenda as the first item of business to discuss an event that they would like to hold in downtown Mount Holly. Mayor Whitt also asked that a discussion of a home daycare facility in the Catawba Heights area be placed on the agenda as the second order of business and the Grand Hall Rental Policy be discussed under Committee Reports. With no other additions to the agenda, Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Pro Tem Moore seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. **(Motion carried 5-0)**

Downtown Autumn Festival

Mr. Vandermeid reported that the Community Development Foundation would like approval tonight to hold an autumn festival in downtown Mount Holly. The festival will be held on October 18th and will be called Autumn on Main. Ms. Foster explained that the festival would begin in the morning with the Farmer's Market, then move into children's activities such as painting and pumpkin carving. The entire day is planned to center around family activities. The festival will highlight local artist, storytellers and musicians. The day will end with an evening of music and dance. Ms. Foster further advised that there will be no food vendors at the event except for the Farmer's Market and the restaurants that are located downtown. Mr. Vandermeid explained that the evening events will be an Alive After Five atmosphere. Mayor Whitt entertained a motion in support for this event and further commented that this approval would include closing the streets as well as street crew clean up. Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the Autumn on Main event. Councilman Toomey seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. ***(With Councilman Brookshire being absent the motion carried 5-0)***

Mayor Whitt explained that as a second part, Council would need to vote to allow the sale of alcohol for the activities that will take place during the evening hours. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made a motion to allow alcohol for the evening event. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Moore, Council members Bishop, Breyare and Toomey all voted in favor. Councilman McLean opposed the motion. ***(With Councilman Brookshire being absent, the motion carried with 4ayes and 1 nay)***

Daycare Facility at Catawba Heights

Mayor Whitt asked that anyone who is present tonight regarding the application for an in home daycare facility in Catawba Heights to please raise their hand. The majority of the audience raised their hand.

Mayor Whitt explained that this is not a Council issue. This application for the daycare facility will come before the Board of Adjustments. The Board of Adjustments is a quasi judicial board. Therefore any decision made by the Board of Adjustments is appealed to the Gaston County Court System, not the City Council.

Mayor Whitt commented that it is his understanding that an in home daycare facility is an allowed use in a residential area. At this time Mayor Whitt asked Mr. Beal to explain this issue further. Mr. Beal re-emphasized that this topic is a Board of Adjustments issue and the Board of Adjustments is a quasi judicial board. Therefore discussing the issue is very much frowned upon. However, Mr. Beal did explain that the City has somewhat stricter regulation in regard to daycare facilities than the State. He advised that the City will only allow five (5) children per adult whereas the state allows eight (8). Mr. Beal reviewed the five (5) findings that the Board of Adjustments has to follow. He advised if all of the findings are met then the Board of Adjustments will allow the daycare facility in Catawba Heights. Mr. Michael suggested that staff have copies of the application and the ordinance available for the public to come by and pick up. Mr. Davis responded that the copies will be available at the front window.

Website Presentation ***David Jordan***

Mr. Jordan with Gaston Technical Support presented the redesigned website to the City Council. He advised that he has been working to ensure that the Council meeting minutes and agendas are on the site as well as several forms for the City Departments. Mr. Davis commented that the goal is to set the website up so that information can be located quick and easily. Mayor Whitt asked if there will be links set up on the City website to other local organizations. Mr. Jordan replied that anything the Council wants can be added to the site. Mr. Davis asked Council for further direction concerning website. It was the consensus of Council to go back two (2) years with the Council meeting minutes and start working on a list of links to add to the City site. Mr. Davis advised that there is still a lot of content to add to the website but he feels staff has a good start. He wanted the website to come before Council for approval before it is published. Mayor Pro Tem Moore made a motion to move forward with publishing the website. Mr. McLean seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried 5-0)***

Carmichael Conservancy Trail MOU ***Kemp Michael***

Mr. Michael advised that he has not been able to reach the appropriate staff member with NCDENR to discuss the MOU and asked that Council table this item until a future date. Council agreed.

Update on Gateway Corridor Regulations ***Danny Jackson***

Lindsey Hobbs presented the Council with the proposed Gateway Corridor Regulations. He advised that the Highway 27 corridor is the next step in reaching Council's goal as stated in the Strategic Vision Plan. Mr. Hobbs advised that the first recommendation would be to take out the turn lanes on Highway 27. This would make the entrance to the downtown much more attractive.

At this time, Mayor Whitt called for a short recess.

Mayor Whitt reconvened the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Mayor Whitt asked Mr. Hobbs to continue with his presentation.

Mr. Hobbs explained that staff also recommends two (2) new zoning districts in the corridor area. The first is Gateway Commercial District. The purpose of gateway commercial is to establish a zoning district along Mount Holly's main entry corridors for mixed use commercial buildings with retail and office required on the first floor and office and residential uses allowed on the upper levels. The regulations for this district produce development which indicates the entrance into the City of Mount Holly and meets the design requirements of the *Downtown Mount Holly Plan*. Mr. Hobbs presented visuals of how these buildings would appear. Mr. Hobbs continued with the details that will be required within the Gateway Commercial District if approved by the Council.

The second district would be the Residential Downtown Zoning District. He advised that the purpose of a residential downtown district is to establish a residential zoning district for the City of Mount Holly's downtown area which promotes increasing residential density to support the Central Business District retail and office development and incorporates the Design Guidelines of the *Downtown Mount Holly Plan of 2005* into the recent *Downtown and Riverfront Corridor Plan*. Mr. Hobbs went into detail regarding the uses and requirements for the proposed residential downtown zoning district.

Council discussed the proposed gateway corridor plan and agreed that the proposal would make downtown Mount Holly much more assessable. Mr. Hobbs added that it would also increase property values and the Cities tax base.

Mr. Davis informed Council that he wanted them to have this opportunity to go over the proposed gateway corridor regulations in detail before the public hearing coming up on August 11, 2008.

There was further discussion from Council regarding the Highway 273 corridor and the moratorium that was put in place halt any new development within the gateway corridors of Mount Holly. Council agreed to extend the moratorium for sixty (60) days at the August 11, 2008 Council Meeting.

At this time, Mayor Whitt called for a short recess.

Mayor Whitt reconvened the meeting at 9:17 p.m.

Presentation on Waste Treatment Options ***Eric Davis***

Mr. Davis presented the options for Wastewater Treatment. He reviewed with Council the status of the existing plant emphasizing that the State will not allow more capacity than the City can treat. Mr. Davis presented the following wastewater treatment options:

- Do Nothing
- Contract with Other Gaston County Municipalities
- Expand Existing Plant
- Participate in New Regional Plant with Charlotte Meckenburg Utilities (CMUD)

Mr. Davis reviewed and gave cost estimates of each option. All options except for the do nothing option have an estimated timeframe of two (2) to three (3) years completion. The do nothing option will require nutrient removal by the year 2020 if not before. There was further discussion regarding tying into Belmont sewer as well as the financial responsibilities of the Town of Stanley under their current contract. Mr. Davis emphasized that all options are costly but proper planning and scheduling can minimize the impact on the Cities water rates. He added that the State is in favor of minimizing the amount of sewer treatment plants and therefore is pushing for the City of Mount Holly to join CMUD. Mr. Davis concluded the presentation by recommending to Council that staff move forward with the CMUD option. He added that this project should be assigned to the Utility Committee for periodic review and staff should be directed to develop cost scenarios and timelines for joining CMUD as well as expanding the current plant. It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the CMUD option.

Commercial Zoning Beside Apartments ***Greg Beal***

Mr. Beal reported that he has not received any calls regarding the property that is for sale beside the Cloister Apartments. He added that multi-family is not the best use for that particular piece of property. Council agreed that the property's that join highway 273 should be placed in an overlay district and included in the gateway plan because of the large amount of traffic that travels through Mount Holly on Highway 273. Mr. Davis advised that he believes the next steps for the Planning Department would be to extend the gateway corridor further down Highland Avenue and onto Highway 16. Council directed staff to move forward with addressing the next steps and bring back to Council for further direction.

Mayor Whitt advised that before the Manager's Report he wanted to touch on the draft rental policy for the Grand Hall. He commented that his only concern was charging civic organizations only half the rent. Mr. Jackson advised that policy is only in the draft stage. The committee wanted Council to have the draft copy for added input before a final version is brought before Council for approval. Mr. Michael reminded Council that there is still the issue of allowing alcohol in the building. Mr. Jackson added that the

Committee is also still waiting on cost estimates for the kitchen. Council agreed that this item would be placed on the August regular meeting agenda.

Mayor Whitt commented that in the past few months several things have been added to the agenda last minute. He added that sometimes this prolongs the meetings but he tries to keep them around two (2) hours. Mayor Whitt asked Council's feelings in this regard. Mr. Davis added that there is sometimes confusion because someone will ask to be added to the agenda at the last minute and staff will say no; the person will then go to the Mayor or Council and will be added. Mr. Davis emphasized that staff needs clarification on how to handle these situations. It was the consensus to handle this on a case by case basis.

Manager's Report ***Eric Davis***

Mr. Davis reported that there are concerns in regard to moving the fitness center to Tuck Park. He advised that he agrees with Mr. Jackson's recommendation to leave the fitness center at its current location and change the hours of operation. If Council has no concerns the City would try to have the fitness center opened back up next week. Mr. Jackson advised that it would take a few days for notification purposes and get everything back in order. It was the consensus of Council to open the fitness center back up in the same location.

Mr. Davis reported that Council has received an updated punch list regarding the completion of the Citizens Center. All of the Cox and Schepp items are complete. The items left on the punch list are all staff and architectural related. He advised that Cox and Schepp are eager to receive their final payment. Councilman Bishop asked for a staff recommendation. Mr. Davis recommended that the City release the balance of the funds owed to Cox and Schepp minus ten percent (10%). Councilman Bishop made the motion according to staff recommendation. Mayor Pro Tem Moore seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. ***(Motion carried 5-0)***

Mr. Davis distributed information to Council regarding a bio-energy initiative/economic development recruitment trip to Austria. He explained that this trip could have significant impact on the City whereas the two (2) main goals of this trip are alternative fuel options and waste treatment facilities. Mr. Davis advised that there are approximately twenty (20) representatives from this area participating in this trip. He explained that the Economic Development Division of the Gaston County Chamber of Commerce has agreed to pay for travel costs associated with this trip. The length of the stay will be one week. Councilman Toomey made a motion to allow Mr. Davis to attend the bio-energy/economic development recruitment trip to Austria. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried 5-0)***

Committee Reports

Councilman Toomey reported that Council needs to move forward with Phase II of Tuck Park. Council agreed to place the item for consideration and approval on the August 11th Council meeting agenda.

Councilwoman Breyare advised that Council needs to set a date for the dedication of the Citizens Center. Mr. Davis reported that it is staff's goal to have all departments moved into the building and functioning before the dedication. It was the consensus of

Council to hold the dedication in conjunction with the Autumn on Main on October 18, 2008.

Adjourn

With no additional items of business, Mayor Whitt entertained a motion to adjourn the July 28, 2008 business meeting. Councilman McLean made the motion with a second from Councilwoman Breyare. All members present voted in favor. ***(Motion carried 5-0)***

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 p.m.