

CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY



MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2004

The Work Session of the City Council of Mount Holly was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Bryan Hough. The following were present:

Mayor Bryan Hough
Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Helms
Councilwoman Phyllis Harris
Councilman Jim Hope
Councilwoman Pat Hubbard
Councilman Frank McLean
Councilman David Moore
City Attorney Kemp Michael

City Manager David Kraus
Assistant to the City Manager Danny Jackson
Assistant to the City Manager Jamie Guffey
Utilities Director Don Price
Police Chief Bence Hoyle
Street and Solid Waste Director Mike Santmire
Community Development Planner Greg Beal
Communication Director Megan Hanks

The invocation was led by Councilman McLean.

1. To Discuss Agreement With Charlotte Whitewater, Inc.

Mayor Hough recognized Jeff Wise of Charlotte Whitewater, Inc. Mr. Kraus stated that Mr. Wise was here to answer any final questions about the Whitewater contract.

Mr. Wise thanked Council for the opportunity to speak tonight. He recognized Scott Leo as Counsel for Charlotte Whitewater, Inc. Mr. Leo is also bond counsel to the City of Mount Holly. Mr. Wise showed a short promotional video for the park. He reviewed Mount Holly's involvement with the planning for the park up to this point. He also discussed the service agreement that was drafted to meet the North Carolina state constitution as well as the verbal agreements the organization has made with local governments.

Mr. Wise presented information on the broader plan for a Catawba Outdoor Center. The Center would include not only the Whitewater Park, but possibly Rails to Trails, greenways, camping areas, and other recreational opportunities. He emphasized the economic development opportunities that the Whitewater Park may offer to Mount Holly. He stated that the projected numbers of visitors to the park each year are comparable to some of the most visited tourism destinations in the country, mentioning the Ocoee River in Georgia and Wet and Wild Water Park in Greensboro.

Councilwoman Hubbard asked if each year is considered separate from a financial perspective? Mr. Wise answered yes.

Councilman McLean asked what is the estimated number of employees the Center will have? Mr. Wise answered they estimate 220 people, and most are seasonal help.

Mayor Pro Tem Helms asked if there was a way that the community projects money would go to pay off the debt, before it is used for those community projects? Mr. Wise answered that the trust fund money will not go to community projects until the seven year commitment is expired as per the bank's stipulations.

Mr. Wise discussed the employment aspect further. He said they are also projecting 690 jobs will come to this area just because park is located here.

Mr. Kraus stated that the expense to the City could be offset by the tax base created by a possible development of the Crescent property near the interstate.

Mr. Wise mentioned that the entrance to the Park would be off of Highway 27, near the entrance to Mount Holly.

Councilman McLean asked Mr. Wise to clarify the projections for visitors to the park.

Mr. Wise stated that the park will be open year-round, with visitors there year-round, but the peak would certainly be in the summer season.

Councilwoman Hubbard clarified that this information is for discussion only at tonight's meeting?

Mayor Hough answered that we would like to have the vote next week.

Mr. Wise said he would be happy to show other information to Council if they would like to see it. He thanked Council again for the opportunity to speak.

2. To Discuss ABC Issues.

Mayor Hough recognized Mr. Kraus.

Mr. Kraus stated that staff wanted to provide an update on the ABC store. The City of Gastonia ABC Board still is interested in a merger with our Board. The advantage of a merger would be overall costs for administration of the store to be \$28,000, as opposed to over \$50,000 if we do it alone.

Councilwoman Hubbard stated that this measure was approved in June of last year. To anyone who has not followed this closely, it may appear that we have not done anything since then. She expressed an interest in hearing a perspective from someone who has run an independent store.

Councilman Hope suggested Mr. Hovis, who is involved in the Cherryville ABC Store. We could talk to them. Mr. Kraus stated that we have met with them before, and they could provide good input.

Councilwoman Harris expressed an interest in giving our citizens the chance to hear both perspectives. She would also like to hear from someone from an independent store.

Mr. Kraus stated that no matter which way we choose, the store will be profitable.

Mr. Michael stated that whomever you talk to, they will be in favor of how their store is managed, be it a merged group or independent.

Councilman Hope stated that we do need to hear all perspectives.

Mayor Pro Tem Helms stated that he views this from a broader time frame, long term, 20 years. Mr. Michael clarified that Council wants to hear opposing views?

Councilman Hope stated that he would like to hear from someone who has run an independent store.

Mayor Hough discussed the benefits of sharing the administrative costs.

Councilwoman Hubbard stated that in Forsyth County, each board came into an agreement individually.

Councilwoman Harris stated that in Forsyth County, the Winston-Salem Board merged with the each smaller city, including Kernersville.

Mayor Hough stated that we should invite Ron Hovis to speak Monday night and should research Forsyth County and how their merger happened. We have met with Phil Hayes, and we may have the opportunity to acquire the First Health building. It is still a good possible place for the store.

3. To Discuss Architect Fees.

Mayor Hough recognized Mr. Kraus.

Mr. Kraus stated that Chet Helt's attorney has contacted us about the money we owed him. He also wants us to pay him interest. Due to design deficiencies at the Fire and Rescue headquarters, staff feels we should not pay the interest. He did not handle the contract correctly, so we are not fully responsible for when we closed out the contract.

Councilwoman Hubbard stated that she does not understand the relationship between architect and contractor, and asked if this is not the responsibility of the contractor?

Mr. Kraus stated that in keeping with contract, the architect was our representative. We went to him with our specifications, and he went to the contractor.

Councilwoman Harris MOVED to approve paying what we owe the architect, but not the interest as he requested. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Helms and was approved unanimously.

4. To Discuss Closing Hawthorne Street for KidsFest.

Mayor Hough expressed his concern for the many commuters who use Hawthorne Street at that time of day.

Mayor Pro Tem Helms stated that he is in favor of this, but stressed the importance of communicating to public that the road will be closed.

Mayor Pro Tem Helms MOVED to close Hawthorne Street for KidsFest on the evening of Monday, April 26. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Harris and was approved unanimously.

5. Update on Stormwater.

Mayor Hough stated that Mr. Kraus emailed to him today about the Clean Water Management Trust Fund that includes grants available for costs associated with starting a stormwater program.

Councilwoman Hubbard MOVED to grant staff permission to seek grant money to help with this. The motion was seconded by Councilman Moore and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Kraus commented on Bob and Pam Friedls' complaint. Lee skidmore's estimate was \$8,900 to repair the damage, including putting in a new catch basin and 15 inch plastic pipe to the creek. There is no way of knowing that we closed this pipe; council asked us to bring this estimate back to a meeting. There is no evidence that we are responsible for this problem, but there's also no evidence that we are not responsible.

Mayor Hough asked if we would set a precedent by paying for this damage.

Mr. Kraus stated that their stormwater drain is no longer functioning.

Mr. Michael asked did this occur during the interconnect with Stanley? He suggested we advise our liability carrier and see what they would advise. The City is not responsible because of the statute of limitations.

Councilman McLean asked would we compensate this for the easement?

Mayor Hough suggested speaking with Mr. Ponder about this issue.

6. Update on Street Bond Schedule.

Mayor Hough recognized Mr. Kraus.

Mr. Kraus stated that Woolpert would like to meet with Council and staff on April 15, at 2:30 pm. He stated that Tedd Duncan is no longer on the project;

Councilwoman Harris stated that we are the customer, and they should do what we would like to do.

Mayor Hough stated that we chose Woolpert because of their dedication to public input. He emphasized that we should have a public input meeting before the current plan of showing two varying plans.

Mr. Kraus stated that David Creech is planning a three day charette at City Hall on the future municipal building. At the end of the third day, they will draw up plans to show us what we asked for.

Councilwoman Hubbard stated we should include evening hours so everyone can come.

7. To Discuss May Work Session

Mayor Hough recognized Mr. Kraus.

Mr. Kraus stated that we will scheduled a community walk on May 19. He suggested having a community work session in July after the budget and bonds workshops.

Council concurred that the Mount Holly Pentecostal Church would be a good place to have the community work session, if the Church is amenable.

8. To Discuss Agenda Items.

Mayor Hough stated that we need to add a presentation by a representative from an independent ABC store.

Councilwoman Harris stated that she has met with two citizens, Travis Benfield and Jack Henkle, about a skateboard park. They want to visit an indoor park that has competitions and concerts there.

Councilwoman Hubbard stated that she received a call from a citizen in Woodland Park about an area that was full of high grass. The citizen stated that Mr. Santmire's department was very responsive and helpful.

Councilman Moore expressed his thanks to Mr. Santmire's department for their work on the crepe myrtle trees.

9. Executive Session

Councilwoman Harris MOVED to go into executive session for the purpose of attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded by Councilman Moore and was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Helms MOVED to adjourn at 9:30 pm. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hope and was approved unanimously.