



City of Greensboro

Melvin Municipal Building
300 W. Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Monday, May 23, 2016

1:30 PM

Plaza Level Conference Room

1. Call to Order - Plaza Level Conference Room

This Special Budget Development meeting of the City of Greensboro was called to order at 1:35 p.m. on the above date in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building with the following members present: Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Mayor Pro-Tem Yvonne Johnson, Councilmembers, Mike Barber, Jamal Fox, Sharon Hightower, Nancy Hoffmann, Justin Outling and Tony Wilkins. Absent: Councilmember Marikay Abuzuaiter.

Also present were City Manager Jim Westmoreland, City Attorney Tom Carruthers, and City Clerk, Betsey Richardson.

Staff members present: Assistant City Manager David Parrish, Interim Assistant City Manager Barbara Harris, and Budget Director Larry Davis.

Councilmember Wilkins asked that Council send an emergency resolution to Charlotte to thank them for their reconsideration of the ordinance that resulted in the adoption of House Bill 2 (HB2).

Discussion took place regarding clarification as to the action Charlotte was taking; what was in the news; the vote being in open session; timeframe for adoption of the resolution; instruction to staff; and the need to know what Council was being asked to vote on.

City Attorney Tom Carruthers interjected that he needed to ask some questions to ensure the consensus of the body; and to get clarification on the action Charlotte was taking.

Councilmember Barber suggested modification to language in the motion; and clarification of the instruction to City Attorney Carruthers.

Mayor Vaughan voiced concern with items coming before Council that were not on the agenda; the need to have an opportunity to review an item; and stated she wanted to know what she was signing on to.

City Attorney Carruthers stated he would work on a resolution; and provide a draft to Council by the end of the meeting.

Councilmember Wilkins emphasized that the body was a Council of nine who should have input on the item.

Councilmember Hightower voiced concern with items being put before Council at the last minute.

2. Presentations

1. [ID 16-0452](#) Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget and Proposed Future City Bond Discussions

City Manager Jim Westmoreland provided an overview of what would be discussed; stated Council would discuss the committee structure if time permitted; referenced the question asked by Councilmember Wilkins at the last session regarding general revenue; and recognized Budget Director Larry Davis to begin the PowerPoint Presentation (PPP).

Mr. Davis outlined the General Fund Revenues for property taxes; sales taxes, state collected local revenues,

ABC profit distribution, building permits, transfers from other funds, all other and the appropriated fund balance; provided a breakdown of the Fiscal Year 15-16 revised budget; Fiscal Year 16-17 recommended budget and spoke to the percentage changes.

Councilmember Wilkins verified that the additional sales tax revenue was more than expected.

City Manager Westmoreland provided the background for the City Council pay review; stated that Council had last received a pay adjustment in 2005; highlighted what was included in Council's pay; provided an overview of the process for merit awards to Council; and reviewed the cash comparisons for similar cities throughout the state.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced concern that Council had received two minor increases in 26 years.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to information from the North Carolina League of Cities; to the work that Council did throughout the community; to the increased demands of elected officials; outlined the salaries of cities with populations over 200,000; and spoke to the City's pay structure system.

Councilmember Outling arrived at 1:53 p.m.

Councilmember Hightower asked for City Manager Westmoreland's proposal.

City Manager Westmoreland responded that he was providing data; did not have a recommendation; and advised that the decision would need to be made by Council.

Councilmember Fox stated he would support the ten percent above market referenced in the PPP.

Discussion ensued regarding support of Councilmember Fox's approval; budget impact; the amount being approximately \$70,000; staff identifying resources to make the adjustment; Councils' requests for project funding; savings as a result of de-bundling security contracts; and timeframe for an increase.

Moved by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Wilkins to approve the ten percent above market effective July 1 or soon thereafter.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to staff identifying funding resources; reminded Council staff had been asked for funding for transit and repaving; spoke to savings that the organization had seen over recent months; and verified staff would find the resources should Council wish to do so.

Councilmember Outling voiced concern with the timing of the increase; stated his preference would be that any increase be awarded after the next election; and that he respected the motion.

Mayor Vaughan voiced agreement with Councilmember Outling; and stated she would support this becoming effective for the next election.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson spoke to the Council salaries being below other cities in the state; voiced that she was not in agreement to wait; and spoke to the need for an adjustment.

Councilmember Hoffmann voiced that elected officials had a significant time commitment; referenced the need for legislative bodies to award an increase to themselves; and spoke to the salaries of peer cities and Guilford County.

Mayor Vaughan suggested that there be a transition period similar to the process used for City employees.

Discussion ensued regarding the transition period; amount of funding needed to meet the ten percent above market; Greensboro being behind the City of Durham; and the process used for employees.

Moved by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Wilkins to increase Council's compensation to 10% above market. The motion carried 6-2 with Mayor Vaughan and Councilmember Outling voting 'no'.

City Manager Westmoreland stated that staff would provide an overview of the proposed November 2016 Bond Referendum; and recognized Interim Assistant City Manager Barbara Harris.

Interim Assistant City Manager Harris provided the background of how staff had developed the categories; spoke to community groups that had been involved in the process; reports that were online; continued the PPP; provided an overview of the proposed Housing items as follows: Workforce Housing Initiative, Code Compliance Repair Initiative – Revolving Loan Fund, East Greensboro Housing Development – Revolving Loan Fund, Handicapped Accessibility & Housing for Special populations, Supportive Housing Units for Homeless/Disabled/Veterans, Non-Profit Homebuyer Lending – Revolving Loan Fund, Emergency Repair Programs, Multifamily Repair Programs and Homeowner Rehabilitation; provided the amount of the bond request; and the amount of other funds that would be leveraged for the programs.

Discussion took place regarding ownership of the properties; various districts that the bond funding would go towards; timeframe for funding the proposed bonds; and looking at ways to expand the housing program throughout the City.

Councilmember Barber voiced concern with approximately 33% of the bond request going towards housing; referenced the economics of investment into low income housing within the jurisdiction of limited land; economic arguments; stated he would like for Council to lower the amount for housing; and advised that the best thing for blighted areas was to turn them into commercial/industrial areas that would have a lower impact on infrastructure improvements and reduce costs. Councilmember Barber referenced changes that had taken place in Harlem, New York; and voiced concern with challenges that could be created as a result of building low income housing.

Councilmember Outling voiced concern with the timeframe for when the bonds would be funded; stated he was advised it would be 2020; asked how it could be done in 2017-18; and voiced concern with the debt being taken on when another Council was seated.

Mr. Davis confirmed that the earliest date for funding was 2017-18.

Additional discussion occurred around short term debt; mechanics of the bond issuance process; Winston-Salem adopting a \$140 million bond package; debt service components; the need for infrastructure and road resurfacing; direction of Council not to increase property taxes; and ensuring the citizens were aware of the impact on taxes should the referendum be adopted.

City Manager Westmoreland stated staff would come back to Council with more defined options once they knew the specific projects and costs.

Councilmember Hightower suggested that there might be other areas in the referendum that could be pared down; spoke to why the conversation regarding housing had taken place; outlined the different types of housing needed in the community; who would utilize said housing; spoke to the difference between affordable and low income housing; voiced the need to have an available workforce to bring in economic development; and emphasized she was not willing to see this portion pared down.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson referenced work that had been done with affordable housing several years ago; the benefits of safe, affordable housing to all citizens of the City; emphasized that everyone deserved a safe and decent home; and that the focus on affordable housing was worth it as it created many advantages.

Mayor Vaughan reminded Council that this would not include all new units; spoke to stabilizing neighborhoods that already existed; that the neighborhoods were already distressed and investing in those houses and ones that need repair would improve the neighborhoods; added that they were talking about the working poor; referenced the bus tour with the Greensboro Housing Coalition; and reiterated that most of funding would be for repairs, not new units.

Councilmember Outling stated although he agreed with a lot of the projects, his concern was if it would be necessary to have a tax increase to complete the projects; voiced the need for transparency to the voters regarding the cost; and spoke to the need to do the analysis of the tax increase in order provide that information to voters.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to let people know up front the tax consequences if the referendum was adopted; language that was permitted to go on the ballot; continuing to educate the community; appreciation of the discussion; percentage of items allocated the separate districts; and where the majority of housing in disrepair was located.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced concern with the low percentage of items proposed for District 5; and stated that he would not support the referendum in this form until there was a more even distribution throughout the City.

Councilmember Hightower spoke to where the organization could cut in other places; the focus on housing, piece of economic development; voiced that housing was more of an East Greensboro problem; referenced the Heritage House closure; added that affordable housing was deficient; referenced the lack of units that passed housing inspections; emphasized the need to provide safe and affordable housing for all residents; and asked for the numbers should a three cent tax increase be imposed.

Discussion took place regarding the impact of a tax increase; if there was statistical data to support the proposal; and where persons were living now.

Interim Assistant City Manager Harris explained that the Housing Authority had approximately 12,000 people on their waiting list; spoke to where those persons currently lived; alternative options available to said people; and the opportunity for persons living below middle class.

Councilmember Barber spoke to persons not seeking alternative housing if they could remain on the list; to the housing stock in the City; and voiced that \$34 million was a lot of funding.

Discussion continued regarding college students; increase in the unemployment rates; content of the reports; number of units included in the proposal; the transient population; and there being larger questions on the issue.

Mayor Vaughan recognized Beth McKee Huger to speak.

Ms. McKee Huger explained that a parcel by parcel inventory was currently being done by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) to review the condition of units; stated this was a detailed process; and spoke to what the data would provide.

Assistant City Manager David Parrish continued the PPP; provided an overview of the proposed redevelopment projects that included South Elm Redevelopment (Union Square), MLK North Initiative of Ole Asheboro, Single Family Lot Initiative of Ole Asheboro, Downtown Infrastructure Improvements, East Greensboro Focus Area Implementation, Fresh Food Access in Food Deserts and Small Infill Development Program; spoke to leveraging, and spoke to the work of the East Greensboro Study Committee.

Councilmember Wilkins left the meeting at 2:43 p.m. and returned at 2:47 p.m.

Councilmember Hightower asked for clarification of the portion of East Greensboro that was located in District 5.

Assistant City Manager David Parrish stated he would provide a map.

At Mayor Vaughan's suggestion it was the consensus of Council that the Fresh Food Access in Food Deserts be removed from the bond item and placed into the City's budget.

Councilmember Hoffmann inquired about the amount needed for Downtown infrastructure; and suggested a comprehensive plan be developed.

Discussion took place regarding \$10 million to cover street resurfacing; getting a good return for the investment in Downtown; additional money for street resurfacing; condition of a portion of Gate City Boulevard; and prior discussions and plans regarding making Elm Street in the area of Irving Park four lanes.

Transportation Director Adam Fischer advised that the 2008 bond funding allowed for improvements along

Church Street which would allow for it to be the main corridor access to Downtown.

Councilmember Fox asked staff to research the opening of roads that had been closed Downtown.

Interim Assistant City Manager continued the PPP outlining the proposed Parks and Recreation projects including Barber Park/Gateway Gardens, Community Tennis Improvements, Land Acquisition, Community Recreation Centers & Neighborhood Park Improvements, Battleground Parks District Initial Development, Downtown Greenway Phase 4, A&Y Greenway and Windsor/Chavis Joint Facility Initial Development.

Councilmember Hightower inquired if the proposal included the Visitor's Center at Gateway Gardens; added that the Center could be an amenity to create revenue; and voiced the need to get the Center opened.

Mayor Vaughan advised that someone would need to buy the naming rights.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced he was uninformed about the Greenway development; and asked for an update.

Discussion took place regarding funding for the Greenway project; if there was funding for Arts Greensboro; and funding 17 Days and the Folk Festival.

Assistant City Manager Parrish reviewed the proposed street/sidewalk improvements and public transportation proposal that included sidewalk projects, pedestrian/bicycle enhancement and intersection improvements, GTA bus replacements, Depot Renovations and bus shelters.

Councilmember Wilkins asked if the \$10 million allocation for street/sidewalk improvements could be prioritized with street improvements.

Mr. Fischer spoke to the impact on federal funding received should that be done; and spoke to the match process for federal funding.

Discussion occurred regarding removing the depot renovations and bus shelters from the proposal; the need to collaborate with private entities for bus shelters; issues with adding things back into the budget without raising taxes; the overall bond proposal; not losing the entire bond package; and allowing the community to decide on the bond referendum.

Mr. Davis reviewed the Bond approval and issuance calendar provided to Council.

City Manager Westmoreland referenced the good discussion; and advised that he would like to have another meeting between now and June 21st for the bond item discussion.

It was the consensus of Council to meet on June 7th at 3:00 p.m. for additional discussion on the bond referendum.

Mayor Vaughan left the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

City Attorney Carruthers provided Council with a copy of a draft resolution to support Charlotte's consideration to repeal its nondiscrimination ordinance; spoke to the goals he had focused on; the dispute of litigation; the interest of the City and Legislature to engage in discussions; referenced the threat to economic growth; and provided an overview of the resolution.

Discussion took place regarding the perception of taking a swing at the Legislature; revising to the second to last paragraph; appreciation for the challenging position of the Legislature, Charlotte and others; reference to news articles; and taking the matter up under the advisement of staff.

Councilmember Outling requested Council not do this; and to possibly offending Charlotte's City Council.

Councilmember Wilkins spoke to why this was an emergency resolution; patting Charlotte on the back; and getting the vote of Mayor Vaughan and Councilmember Abuzuaiter.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson asked for a show of hands of those in favor with the item. The item failed by a 2-5 vote of Council with Councilmembers Barber and Wilkins voting in favor of the item.

City Manager Westmoreland stated Council would meet at 3:00 p.m. on June 7th prior to the regular meeting of Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced concern with a letter received from Village Tavern regarding difficulty in working with the City on an expansion; and asked that a committee be formed to discuss a major overhaul of how the City did business with local businesses who wanted to expand.

Assistant City Manager Parrish interjected that he had just received information on the issue today.

City Manager Westmoreland requested that Council allow staff time to review the item; spoke to what was being changed in Development Services; and requested staff be allowed to get back to Council with information.

(Copies of the PowerPoint Presentation and handout is filed in Exhibit Drawer Y, Exhibit No. 24, which is hereby referred to and made a part of these minutes.)

3. Adjournment

Moved by Councilmember Fox, seconded by Councilmember Wilkins, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by voice vote.

THE CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 3:26 P.M.

ELIZABETH H. RICHARDSON
CITY CLERK

NANCY VAUGHAN
MAYOR