



City of Greensboro

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

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council Special Meeting

Tuesday, June 7, 2016

3:00 PM

Plaza Level Conference Room

Special City Bond Discussion Session

1. Call To Order

This City Council Special meeting of the City of Greensboro was called to order at 3:00 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 Marikay Abuzuaite, Mike Barber, Jamal Fox, Sharon Hightower, Nancy Hoffmann, Justin Outling, and Tony Wilkins.

Also present were City Manager Jim Westmoreland, City Attorney Tom Carruthers, and Deputy City Clerk Angela Lord.

2. Presentations

1. [ID 16-0509](#) Proposed Future City Bond Discussion

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to the need to finalize the proposed bond item prior to the June 21st meeting of Council; to an update on the Council Committee structure to be facilitated by Organizational and Development Training Manager Tiffany Brown; and provided history on the proposed bond.

Mayor Vaughan asked for confirmation on the finalization of the bond.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to the various bond categories.

Councilmember Wilkins inquired about the decrease in the total bond amount.

Discussion took place regarding the current proposed list; availability of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 budget; financing the Fresh Food Access plan; staff providing an action plan to Council; and allocating funds.

City Manager Westmoreland outlined upcoming events for bond approval; and spoke to the debt service profile.

Councilmember Wilkins asked about the structure of the ballot; inquired about the deadline to include redistricting on the ballot; spoke to voting for a referendum; and voiced concerns with legal fees.

Mayor Vaughan confirmed that Council had previously received a copy of the proposed ballot; and spoke to legal restrictions to placing the redistricting item on the ballot.

City Attorney Tom Carruthers clarified direction received by Council regarding the litigation; confirmed staff could reconvene with Council to discuss additional options; and referenced the status of the case.

City Manager Westmoreland made a PowerPoint Presentation; and provided the Proposed November 2016 Bond Referendum by category and Housing Bond Project Description handouts.

Councilmember Hoffmann spoke to a balanced point of view; making adjustments that would leverage private investment; spoke to needed changes in Downtown; recommended increasing the Downtown Infrastructure Improvements category to \$25 million; spoke to project implementation; and to current outside investments in the Downtown area.

Discussion ensued regarding Downtown investments; the importance of a quick project completion; infrastructure focused improvements; collectively working with the selected vendor of the Business Improvement District; current plans that needed to be updated; the goal of capping the proposed bond total; concerns with the focus on Downtown as opposed to other areas of the City; providing the Finance Department with amounts for the bond; and a public hearing to be held on August 1st.

Councilmember Outling commented on community concerns regarding focuses on East Greensboro; spoke to return on investment; equity and fairness; and voiced agreement with the increase for Downtown improvements.

Councilmember Hightower spoke to the underutilization of East Greensboro; and voiced the area had been neglected.

Discussion continued regarding previous investments in East Greensboro; increased costs for Police, Fire, and EMS in District 1; a quality of life issue; being strategic and balanced; and return investments based on districts.

Councilmember Fox voiced concerns with the increase; and stated he would not support the increase to \$25 million.

Council discussed projects that would be included in the allocated funds for Downtown; dangerous sidewalks in Downtown; the lack of sidewalks in East Greensboro; the history of bonds being approved based on the total amount; concerns and research on housing bonds; and District meetings that had been held to discuss housing bonds.

Mayor Vaughan called for a vote to increase the Downtown Improvement item to \$25 million. The vote passed by with 5 to 3 majority with Councilmembers Abuzaiter, Fox, Hightower and Johnson voting 'No'.

Councilmember Hoffmann requested the Small Infill Development Program to be increased to \$5 million dollars.

Mayor Vaughan asked for a vote to increase the Small Infill Development Program to \$5 million. The vote passed by voice vote of 7 to 2 with Councilmembers Fox and Hightower voting 'No'.

Councilmember Fox requested the Windsor/Chavis Joint Facility Initial Development funds to be increased to \$8.5 million.

Discussion took place regarding why the amount had been lowered since the initial proposal.

Mayor Vaughan asked for a vote to increase the Windsor/Chavis Joint Facility Initial Development funds to \$8.5 million. The vote passed with a 9 – 0 voice vote.

Moved by Councilmember Barber, seconded by Councilmember Wilkins to budget \$10 million for paving streets. Councilmember Fox requested the allocated funding be \$20 million. Councilmember Barber amended the motion to \$20 million for street resurfacing. The motion carried by a vote of 8 to 1 with Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson voting 'No'.

Councilmember Abuzaiter requested an increase to the Pedestrian/Bicycle (BiPed) Enhancements and Intersection Improvements and Sidewalk Projects categories to \$10 million each.

Mayor Vaughan requested staff research outstanding bond funding still available.

Discussion took place regarding the BiPed plan; funding for transportation; sidewalk projects; expediting projects; dangerous intersections; public safety; community development; accelerating use of current bonds; the vehicle registration fee increase as a permanent and immediate source of revenue; and voter support for the bond.

Council voted for an increase of \$10 million for sidewalk projects by 6 to 3, with Councilmembers Hoffmann, Outling, and Vaughan voting 'No'.

Council voted for the increase to \$10 million for the BiPed Plan by 6 to 3, with Councilmembers Hightower, Outling, and Vaughan voting 'No'.

Councilmember Hoffmann spoke to the need to address an increase for the Downtown Greenway Phase 4 by one million dollars; funding for three years with a million dollar investment; and recognition for being an innovate city.

Council discussed bike sharing programs; an increase in demand for bike lanes; and the range of a potential property tax increase as a result of the increased bond figures.

Mayor Vaughan asked for a vote to increase the Greenway category to \$7 million. The vote passed by a 9 to 0 voice vote.

Councilmember Hightower requested an increase to the Barber Park/Gateway Gardens category to \$5 million.

Discussion ensued regarding completion of the Visitors Center, gardens, and additional phases; Parks and Recreation partners; return on investments; indoor tennis and volley ball activities; the need for a HVAC system; and the option of renting the Welcome Center for potential revenue.

Council voted in favor to increase the Barber Park/Gateway Gardens to \$5.5 million by a vote of 7 to 2 with Councilmembers Barber and Outling voting 'No'.

Discussion took place regarding the East Greensboro Focus area; the inclusion of parts of District 5; the East Greensboro Comprehensive Study; a demographics driven study; a decrease in Depot renovations and bus shelters; potential federal match fund grants; a sponsorship program; allocating funding from the Greensboro Transit Authority operating budget; project timelines; and tax increases. It was the consensus of Council to not decrease the categories for the Depot and bus shelters. Discussion continued with how the ballot would look; using bond funds as allocated if approved by the voters; and staff focusing on a public campaign.

Councilmember Wilkins spoke to road construction on Gate City Boulevard; requested the work be extended to Interstate 73; that \$14 million be added for streetscape; stated there was not any funding left in the existing bonds for the project; and spoke to the entertainment corridor.

City Manager Westmoreland recommended \$25 million for the project.

Moved by Councilmember Wilkins, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson to add \$20 million to the bond for streetscape. The motion carried by voice vote 5 to 4 with Councilmembers Fox, Hightower, Outling, and Vaughan voting 'No'.

Councilmember Barber requested street resurfacing be an individual category aside from streetscape.

Discussion ensued regarding the bond item being vetted at the work session; and the item not being presented at the General Government Committee meeting next week.

Mayor Vaughan voiced concerns with the Committee structure; spoke to the need for a hybrid model; and to items being vetted by committee's and Council.

(Copies of the PowerPoint Presentation and Handouts are filed in Exhibit Drawer Y, Exhibit No. 25 which is hereby referred to and made a part of these minutes).

2. [ID 16-0517](#) Council Feedback on Committee Structure Discussion

Ms. Brown requested Council to share what was and what was not working with the Council Committee structure.

Positive feedback on the committee structure included shortened Council meetings; the public ability to view meetings on Greensboro Television Network (GTN); citizen participation and attendance; an in depth view of Departments; schedule friendly meetings; personal development for Committee Chairs; and transparency of items.

Negative feedback on the committee structure included the structure being underutilized; staff driven meetings; Committee Chairs efficiency in leading; duplication of items on various committee's; the need for clarity of the process; short unproductive meetings; repeated discussions at Council meetings; conflicts with other Community meetings; and adjustment of meeting times.

Councilmember Wilkins left the meeting at 4:23 p.m. and returned at 4.24 p.m.

Councilmembers made suggestions to improve the committee structure including special meetings prior to City Council meetings; policy, budget and bonds items to be presented before Council without going through Committees; and honoring recommended items from Sub-Committee to be forwarded directly to Council.

City Manager Westmoreland referenced the Winston Salem structure of Committees; stated all Council members attended Committee meetings; that Greensboro had a more formal structure; and stated there was an element of the Committee structure that had not been utilized.

Discussion took place regarding the productivity of the special meeting today; and a lack of focus at previous work sessions.

Mayor Vaughan referenced conversations with City Manager Westmoreland with regard to small group meetings; voiced the need to limit that type of meeting unless they were classified as Economic Development or personnel items; confirmed the small group meetings held had been lawful; spoke to addressing concerns as a Council; and suggested if Council held a Work Session, that those meetings should be held prior to City Council meetings.

City Attorney Carruthers spoke to the benefit of the Committee structure; and recommended consecutive meetings for the whole body of Council to increase efficiency.

Councilmember Fox requested the July Committee meetings to be postponed to August.

Mayor Vaughan requested staff to bring recommended guidelines regarding the Committee structure to Council for approval.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced concerns with the Participatory Budget (PB) process; with funding being used for game tables; requested Council to direct staff to transfer the \$20,000 to food; and asked for Council support.

Discussion ensued regarding the PB process.

Mayor Vaughan stated she had not been in favor of the PB process in the beginning; spoke to the people that had voted for the use of the District 5 funding; voiced agreement with allocating funds from the budget for food product; and requested staff to research allocation of \$10,000 per District for food product.

3. Adjournment

Moved by Councilmember Abuzuaiter, seconded by Councilmember Hoffmann, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by voice vote.

THE SPECIAL CITY BOND WORK SESSION ADJOURNED AT 4:43 P.M.

ANGELA R. LORD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

NANCY VAUGHAN
MAYOR