

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City held its monthly work session on the above date and time in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building with Mayor Pro Tem J. M. Baker presiding. Those Council Members in attendance were: D. B. Evans, L. A. Hummer, R. E. King, B. S. Meggs, E. K. Rivers, J. A. Stimatz and V. C. Watts. Mayor S. S. Atkinson was absent. City Staff members attending were: City Manager R. C. Olson, City Clerk D. S. Pierce-Tamplen, City Attorney W. H. Morgan, City Manager Intern R. A. Lyons, Deputy City Clerk V. D. White, Finance Director S. E. Blanchard, Human Resource Director K. W. Felton, Planning Director J. C. Brooks, Parks and Recreation Director J. D. Overman, Inspections Director S. E. Ward, Electric Director K. F. Clow, Fire Chief L. M. Mackey and Public Utilities Director P. A. Fredette.

Mayor Pro Tem J. M. Baker opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. She recognized a quorum was present and called upon Councilwoman B. S. Meggs for the invocation after which the Pledge of Allegiance was given.

1} APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mayor Pro Tem Baker called for action regarding the prepared agenda.

Councilwoman L. A. Hummer asked to add a Closed Session item as per NCGS 143.318.11(a) (4) – expansion of industry.

A motion was made by Councilwoman B. S. Meggs, seconded by Councilwoman V. C. Watts to approve the prepared agenda to include the above noted item. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Meggs, Watts, Baker, Evans, Hummer, King, Rivers and Stimatz. Against: None. Motion carried.

2} ROANOKE AVENUE DRAINAGE:

Mayor Pro Tem Baker called upon Pat McDowell for comments.

Mr. McDowell, McDowell and Associates, provided a little history on the improvements in the Roanoke Avenue Drainage Basis. About twenty-five years ago our office started helping the City deal with storm water management issues in the Roanoke Avenue Drainage Basin. Over the twenty-five years there has been a series of projects to improve the collection of storm water and to try to

convey it to the river. The entire basin is like a bathtub in the fact that all the water that goes into the bathtub has to go out the drain. That is what a drainage basin is supposed to do. There are about 140 acres that goes through this drainage basin. The way it does is through ditches and pipes. Essentially when you go into a drainage basin you try to start downstream at the lowest point. You start making improvements there and work yourself up. The initial project in the mid 80's was a Community Development Block Grant that actually put in the pipe system from Harrington Road across Martin Luther King Drive, Cale Drive and Road Street. Then after we got the Road Street there was a project that took the pipe system from Road Street to Roanoke Avenue and just upstream of Roanoke Avenue. After that there was a project that went into the Laurel Avenue area which is upstream of the Roanoke Avenue area. The final project which was approximately two years ago we came in and piped Tatum Lane all the way out to Perry Street. Tonight our purpose is to deal with what we call Phase II. It was long understood that the Roanoke Avenue Drainage Basin is essentially controlled by the Pasquotank River. This means until you can deal with the river there will always be drainage issues. Ten years ago we laid out a phasing process which includes pipe work but ultimately ponds and pump stations like we have at the Camden Bridge and next to the Daily Advance. You already control two major down streams downtown areas by pump stations. For Roanoke Avenue to have the best control that it can you will need a pump station. Phase II will deal with these two ponds. Phase III will address the pump station. There are four properties that will need to be dealt with. Two are critical in order to be able to dig the pond. Drainage has two components one is quantity and the other is quality. In the past we have focused on quantity and we still do a lot of the times, but quality is now entering into the picture certainly from environmental and permitting standpoints. The ponds serve two purposes. One is quantity and the other is quality. These two ponds will provide a buffer for the pump station that will go in the area.

Mr. Rivers asked what the price was in addition to the pumps to add fountains to the ponds. He would like to have the prices of putting fountains in the ponds because these are our neighborhoods. Would we have to put a fence around it?

Mr. King said he would like to turn the pond into a place that looks good. It is a focal point when you go by it. Perhaps we could put benches around it.

Mr. McDowell said it would probably be an additional \$10 to \$15,000 per pond depending upon the kind of fountain. There is electrical involved. A fountain is a major source of aeration and air helps to keep the algae down. As to the fence you look around and you see fences and then again you don't see any fences. What we can do is we can bid alternates. He thinks that the fence issue needs to be talked about because of the liability issue. He suggested to Council to

decide if they wanted to turn this site into a recreational area or not. As soon as you put benches in that will encourage people to come to it.

Mr. Stimatz said he would be interested in how the people in the area feel and what they would like to see there. They only live a block or two blocks from the creek now where you can drown yourself in a heart beat if you are a little kid. It might be interesting to find out what the folks in the neighborhood would like. It if was him, the idea of stocking it with fish, put up a barbeque pit and it becomes another recreation area sounds good. Put some trees up and you could go out and relax and set around.

3} TAXICAB ORDINANCE:

Mayor Pro Tem Baker called upon Sergeant Rick Pureza for comments.

Sgt. Pureza advised that our current City Code reveals that there are specific guidelines concerning vehicle equipment stipulations, which are outlined in Section 86-54 of the Taxicab Ordinance. Section 86-54 outlines basic equipment requirements for taxicabs, including that they all be of sedan or similar model with four doors, operational windows and doors, windshields free of cracks, operation headlights and brake lights and other basic inspection requirements. Section 86-51 requires that taxicabs be identified with permanent markings and that the letters and numbers be in sharp contrast to the color of the surface paint in order to be seen visibly at night. In order to have more uniformity and a greater quality of fleet, it is being recommended outlining guidelines pertaining to exact color and like appearance for taxicabs of same owners. Subsections could be added to this section to include the following:

*Subject to approval of the Chief of Police, or his designee, each franchise shall adopt a color scheme for painting the franchisee's taxicabs distinct from that of any other operator and may adopt an identifying design, monogram, or any other insignia. The Chief of Police or his designee will monitor color schemes of each cab company. All taxicabs of each company shall be of the same color scheme and design.

*No vehicle subject to this chapter shall be authorized to operate if the color scheme, identifying design, monogram, or insignia to be used thereon shall in the determination of the Chief of Police or his designee, conflict with, imitate or substantially resemble any color scheme, identifying design, monogram, or insignia used by another taxicab company.

If the above mentioned color scheme/like appearance regulations were approved, staff would recommend there be a two year period for franchise

owners to comply with and make the transaction to this amendment, so as not to place an undue financial burden upon the franchise operators.

Councilman J. A. Stimatz questioned the number of cabs a franchise owner could have. He feels that we should do away with franchises entirely and allow as many cabs as wanted and then the owners would compete for the fares.

Councilman E. K. Rivers said that he could not support 200 cabs running around the city. If that were to be then the one with the largest number of vehicles would run those with one or two vehicles out of business.

Councilman R. E. King stated he feels that the Mayor should appoint a Mayor's Task Force to study this situation and make a recommendation back to City Council for consideration.

Councilman Stimatz said that he felt that the Task Force should cover all vehicles for hire and that members should be chosen from the Chamber, AEDC, Tourism Board, Downtown Inc. and owners of taxicabs.

A motion was made by Councilman R. E. King, seconded by Councilman E. K. Rivers for the Mayor to create a Mayor's Task Force, appointing three members from persons of the group Mr. Stimatz suggested; three members from the cab owners (with one being a driver) and one member from the community at large for a total of seven members. Those voting in favor of the motion were: King, Rivers, Baker, Evan, Hummer, Meggs, Stimatz and Watts. Against: None. Motion carried.

4} OAK GROVE DRAINAGE:

Mayor Pro Tem Baker called upon Public Utilities Director Fredette for comments.

Mr. Fredette stated the revised plans for the drainage system for Oak Grove are complete. They have been submitted to the state and according to the schedule that we received on March 1st that it was to be approved by the State by June 1st. The drainage ditches that you presently see in the Oak Grove area will remain there. The difference is that they will be shaped and the bottoms will have a concrete trough. This would improve the flow of the ditch. The other positive news is that the original design that we had in front of us back in February has been revised to cost \$450,000.

Ms. Watts said the concrete bottom that you are saying, what is the purpose of doing that instead of the other idea that we had prior to that. Are we always going to look at doing concrete troughs?

Mr. Fredette said in the original plan there was a closed drain system. The pipe was being put in the ground and the ditch was being closed. When the engineer came here he advised the council against that. It was the advice that Council had received several times before that it would contribute to more problems than it would solve. As we talked about options over the last three months what we want to do is create a bottom that when we go into there to clean it we would know where the bottom is rather than having a dirt bottom or unstructured bottom. It would improve the flow characteristics of the bottom for the conveyance of water.

5} COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mayor Pro Tem Baker advised that she would go around the table for reports from the various committees.

a} Albemarle Economic Development Commission: Mayor Pro Tem Baker, Councilwoman Hummer and Councilwoman Watts said they had no report.

b} Central Communications – Councilman King said he was unable to attend the last meeting.

c} Elizabeth City Airport Authority – Councilman Stimatz said the next meeting is tomorrow. He would like to report that ECSU is moving forward with their project and they are looking into a small hanger for the University.

d} Fireman’s Relief Fund Board – Councilwoman Watts said that she had no report.

e} Joint Land Use Planning Committee – Councilman Stimatz said he had no report.

f} Joint Redevelopment Commission – Councilman King said he had no report.

g} North Carolina Eastern Municipal Agency – City Manager Olson said that they have a meeting tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. in Wilson.

h} Solid Waste Committee – Councilman Evans said he had no report.

i} Tourism Development Authority – Councilman Rivers advised that the next meeting will be on Thursday.

j} ECDI – Councilwoman Meggs said she did not make the last meeting.

k} Water Committee – Councilwoman Hummer said the last meeting was very technical. The RO Plant is ready to be put out for bids with the opening of the bids schedule for June 18, 2009.

6} CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Councilwoman B. S. Meggs to retire into Closed Session for discussion of the possible location of an industry into the City Limits as per NCGS 143-318.11(a) (4). Councilman J. A. Stimatz seconded the motion. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Meggs, Stimatz, Baker, Evans, Hummer, King, Rivers and Watts. Against: None. Motion carried.

Councilman E. K. Rivers was excused from the Closed Session.

Upon the end of the Closed Session:

A motion was made by Councilman J. A. Stimatz, seconded by Councilman D. B. Evans to return to regular session. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Stimatz, Evans, Baker, Hummer, King, Meggs and Watts. Against: None. Motion carried.

7} ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, Mayor Pro Tem Baker adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Dianne S. Pierce-Tamplen, MMC
City Clerk

Jean M. Baker
Mayor Pro Tem