

MONDAY – 6:10 P.M.

AUGUST 30, 2004

JOINT CITY/COUNTY

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City and the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met on the above date and time in the conference room at the Quality Inn, in Elizabeth City. Attending were: Mayor J. H. Bell, Jr., Council Members C. C. Austin, J. M. Baker, L. A. Hummer, R. E. King, W. A. Lehmann, E. K. Rivers, D. K. Stallings, Sr. and J. B. Walton, City Manager R. C. Olson, City Clerk D. S. Pierce, City Attorney W. H. Morgan, Commissioners B. Trueblood, M. Wood, L. Griffin, J. Kitchen, M. Stevenson and H. Krebs, County Manager R. Keaton, Assistant Manager R. Bunch, County Attorney M. Cox and County Clerk K. Jennings.

Mayor J. H. Bell, Jr. called the meeting to order by welcoming those attending. He called upon Commissioner J. Kitchen to give the invocation after which Commission M. Stevenson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Mayor Bell stated that it was his feelings that the City of Elizabeth City and the County of Pasquotank today have a greater opportunity to work toward determining the future of the area than they have ever had in the past. Both areas are experiencing unprecedented growth and it is vital that the two governing bodies work together and address the needs of the future.

Chairman B. Trueblood also welcomed those attending. He expressed his desire for both units of government to work together and it is his hope that we continue the joint city and county meetings on the fifth Monday throughout the year. Common issues and concerns can be resolved if the city and county work together.

Mayor Bell advised that the first item for discussion would be the proposed closing of Elliott Street. County Manager Keaton presented drawings showing the layout of the proposed new library and public safety building. The parking situation has created a lot of concerns as to if there would be enough parking provided to replace the parking lots that will be built upon and the on-street parking that would be eliminated. Mr. Keaton presented a drawing of the current parking situation in the county parking lots as well as the on-street parking. He referenced the proposed drawings that showed the proposed configuration of the new buildings depicting the parking that would be needed to accommodate the employees and the parking that would be available to the public. He emphasized that the portion of Elliott Street between Colonial Avenue and Elizabeth Street is the area that is being proposed for closing therefore from that point to Elizabeth Street would be open for two-way traffic.

City Manager R. C. Olson went over the process for closing a street. First the County should submit a Petition for Closing a Street. Once this petition is received, a legal notice must be published in the newspaper for four consecutive weeks. If it is the desire of City Council to continue, a preliminary resolution or resolution of intent will be adopted and

all adjacent property owners would be notified of the City's intent. The whole process takes approximately six weeks to complete. He further stated that the City's main concern is that there be adequate parking provided to replace the parking lots being built upon and the on-street parking which will be eliminated.

Mr. O. C. Abbott and Mr. Herbert Mullen, property owners adjacent to Elliott Street presented a letter to all members attending. They were concerned that Elliott Street would be closed completely between Colonial Avenue and Elizabeth Street which would eliminate entrance to their office. But, after listening to Mr. Keaton's presentation they were satisfied that the closure of Elliott Street will not adversely affect their parking lot since the street will actually be two-way in front of their parking lot entrance and their accessibility will not be lost.

The next item for discussion was the Opticom System. Mr. Olson advised that City Council declined to approve the Opticom System Agreement because of concern that the county had been reimbursed its capital costs for the system by the Albemarle Hospital and had no expense associated with the system. He further stated that the need and benefit for the system is not in question, but payment for the system remains an issue. County Manager Keaton clarified questions that had been raised by the City regarding how EMS is paid. The original proposal from the County was that if the City wanted to participate it would be a 50/50 cost-share. Since that time, the County has amended their proposal and offered that the City could participate in the existing intersections at no cost for the capital expenses and for any future intersections that may be added, the City would participate at an 18% rate. He also stated that the City would however have to equip the fire trucks with emitters at a cost of approximately \$1,000 each. He advised that currently thirteen major intersections inside the City and two major intersections outside the City are equipped with the opitcom capabilities.

The two boards discussed a proposal by Pasquotank County to retain a consultant for the developing regulations to be used by those wishing to develop property along the Halstead Connector Road. These regulations would have to be consistent with the Land Use Plan. City Manager Olson explained that the City is interested in a project like this as well as the possibility of an overlay zone district since Halstead Boulevard is the newest access to the City. It would be nice to have architectural features that were common in appearance.

Assistant County Manager R. Bunch stated that the County hopes to receive proposals by the 7th of September and afterwards hire a consultant to begin the work. He further advised that the requirement for proper regulations are needed in order to help guide the growth and to ensure that the City and the County's regulations are consistent.

City Manager Olson stated that there is growth pressure in this area and the City believes that there should be some type of moratorium put into place especially for that period of time while the overlay zone district is developed.

Councilman W. H. Lehmann stated that when he read his agenda regarding this item that was the first time he had heard about this plan and the possibility of a six-month moratorium. He strongly expressed his concern that he felt that the entire City Council should discuss this proposal before being discussed in a joint meeting with the County.

Chairman B. Trueblood asked to make sure that the moratorium is not a part of the County's equation and it was entirely a suggestion of the City. He also advised that the County is proceeding at a steady pace without a moratorium. He further advised that it was the consensus of the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners to proceed with the development along the Halstead Boulevard Connector Corridor with the development of an overlay district.

Councilwoman L. A. Hummer made a motion, seconded by Councilman R. E. King to begin the process of retaining consultant services for the preparation of the development standards for the Halstead Boulevard Connector Corridor. Those voting in favor the motion were: Hummer, King, Austin, Rivers and Walton. Against: Baker, Lehmann and Stallings. Motion carried.

Chairman Trueblood stated that the next item that the County would like to be discussed between the two units of government was the increase in court facility fees. The County is proposing to request introduction of a local bill to increase court costs by \$5 or \$10. Currently the cost of court is \$100 which is used to cover expenses for maintenance of the court facilities and providing office space for the District Attorney. County Manager Keaton stated that for the past thirty years the seven counties in the First District had an informal arrangement whereby they have shared the cost of office space for the District Attorney and his staff. He said that if the County moves forward with the construction of a new Public Safety Building, the current building that houses the DA would be torn down. The increased costs of operating and maintaining a new building, a new Public Defender's Office as well as providing interim office space for the DA has been proposed to request the General Assembly to consider a local bill requesting an increase in court costs of \$5 to \$10. Funds generated by the increase would be dedicated towards the cost of providing office space for the DA and the Public Defender in the seven county districts. What the County is asking is when the bill is placed before the General Assembly that the City of Elizabeth City send a letter of support for this legislation. Mr. Keaton further advised that at this time, the exact amount of the proposed increase is yet to be determined.

City Manager R. C. Olson advised that at the last work session of Council, a "draft" Flood Zone Prevention Ordinance was presented. A public hearing was called for the proposed ordinance and is scheduled for September 13th. The County Commissioners also had a work session to discuss the ordinance and have scheduled their public hearing for September 20th. It was the understanding that the commissioners were somewhat divided on the issue of "freeboard" requirements. He said that it is the City Council's consensus to not have a freeboard.

Assistant County Manager R. Bunch reported that the County's Special Projects Committee met and review the proposed Flood Ordinance. One of the issues discussed was the possibility of having a freeboard of one foot. The Committee requested that he investigate the cost of raising the elevation by one foot above the base flood elevation on various sizes of homes. The City staff is recommending deleting the definitions "repetitive loss" and "substantial damage" but the County is recommending that "repetitive loss" be taken out of the ordinance and "substantial damage" remains in the ordinance. Another proposal from the County is the requirement of two elevation certificates for a job. Once at the time of a building permit application and the other upon final inspection.

Commissioner M. Stevenson stated that the one foot freeboard would obviously lower the cost of flood insurance for those property owners required to have flood insurance. Hopefully, the numbers will be available so that the Board can make an informed decisions based on those numbers.

Councilman W. A. Lehmann stated that he agreed that it would be much easier for the developers if the City and the County had an ordinance that was uniform in concept however the City feels that requiring the one foot increase in elevation would increase the cost of construction thereby placing a burden on the builders and homeowners. He feels that the least restrictive would be much better.

Discussion ensued regarding the service territory for water departments. City Manager R. C. Olson reported that the City and County staffs have had discussions regarding the creation of a service territory for the city and county water departments. This would be similar to those presently established for the electric utilities. If this is done, it would allow for future growth for both systems.

Mayor Bell called for discussion of holding the joint City/County meetings on the fifth Monday throughout the year. It was the consensus of both boards to adhere to this agreement and the next Joint City/County meeting would be held on November 29, 2004.

Following comments from Counselors and Commissioners regarding issues of the Coast Guard City designation, the Dismal Swamp Canal and signage on the By-pass, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Dianne S. Pierce, MMC
City Clerk

John H. Bell, Jr.
Mayor

