

**City Council Regular Session  
February 13, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in regular session on Monday, February 13, 2023 in Council Chambers, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence  
Councilman Johnson Biggs  
Councilman Joe Peel  
Councilwoman Rose Whitehurst  
Councilwoman Katherine Felton  
Councilwoman Barbara Baxter  
Councilman Johnnie Walton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Javis Gibbs

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Montre' Freeman  
City Attorney Bill Morgan  
Interim Electric Department Bob Vannoy  
Interim Chief of Police J. Phillip Webster  
Deputy Chief of Police James Avens  
Interim Human Resources Director Monica Cole  
Fire Chief Chris Carver  
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant  
Finance Director Alicia Steward  
Assistant Finance Director Brian Lewis  
Public Utilities Director Dwan Bell  
Assistant Public Utilities Director Ryan Howell  
Parks and Recreation Director Sean Clark  
Parks and Recreation Superintendent Darris Sawyer  
Grants Management Specialist Jon Hawley  
IT Director Matthew Simpson  
IT Systems Analyst Pedro Holley II  
City Clerk April Onley

The City Council regular session was called to order by Mayor Kirk Rivers at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Rivers welcomed everyone to the meeting provided the invocation, after which Councilwoman Whitehurst led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:**

Mayor Rivers requested the Council's pleasure regarding approval of the prepared agenda.

Mayor Rivers requested that Department of the Month and Department Head of the Month be tabled until March. Councilman Walton requested that 8E on the Consent Agenda be moved to the Regular Agenda.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton to approve the agenda as amended. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter, and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**2. Mayoral Recognition:**

**a. Department of the Month – IT (Removed During Agenda Adjustments);**

**b. Department Head of the Month – Matthew Simpson (Removed During Agenda Adjustments);**

### **c. Employee Retirement – Jason Fletcher;**

Mayor Rivers recognized Jason Fletcher as a retiring employee, although he was unable to be present this evening. He served the City for 29 years in the fire department, with his retirement effective February 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **3. Comments from the Public:**

Mayor Rivers inquired of the Clerk whether there were any persons present who wished to speak before the Council. Upon the Clerk's reply that there was one, Mayor Rivers asked that they be called to the podium.

**Andrea James – 1203 West Church Street, Elizabeth City, NC** - Mrs. James said that she was a newer resident of the City and was excited to get to know the town. She'd been watching Council meetings for about a year and a half. She noted that she'd sent a letter to two councilors, Councilwoman Felton and Mayor Pro Tem Spence, who'd asked that she come before Council to address her issues. She said she had two requests, one was pertaining to the traffic on Church Street. More specifically, the portion that fed into Pritchard Street, which is used as a cut-through for morning and afternoon traffic. She's not certain if the street is officially designated as a cut-through with proper striping, signs, signals or sidewalks, and bike lanes. She would like to request that they add to a traffic study list an assessment of what's happening on both the north and south end of Pritchard Street. If it's being used as a cut-through, it probably needs to look different. The curb there is not made for that immediate turn, so people turn from Church right onto Pritchard and turn into the left lane, which results in cars facing one another because the road is not wide enough for feeder traffic. She noted this was included in her letter that was being passed around at this time. She also would like this to be done while school was in session because traffic was different during school days. She'd also like to encourage a pedestrian bridge for safe passage. The closest food store is Food Lion and a pedestrian bridge crossing over the green space, which could be used as a beautification area could make for a safe route as well. She said she'd be happy to help with the issues if they'd like to reach out.

### **4. Public Hearings:**

#### **a. Hold a Public Hearing – Renaming of Dog Corner Park;**

Mayor Rivers declared the public hearing open and inquired of the Clerk if there were any speakers. Upon the Clerk's reply that there were none, Mayor Rivers closed the hearing.

**Motion to approve the ordinance was made by Councilman Johnnie Walton, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence to rename Dog Corner Park as College Park. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter, and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

### **5. Consent Agenda:**

Mayor Rivers read the Consent Agenda items into the record, as follows:

- a. Consideration – Authorize Acceptance of Governor's Crime Commission Grant;**
- b. Consideration – Authorize Application to Albemarle Community Trust for Storage Shed;**
- c. Consideration – Adopt Project Ordinance and Budget Amendment for George Wood Park;**

**ORDINANCE # 2023-02-01  
GEORGE M. WOOD PARK RESTORATION PROJECT  
GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE**

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project ordinance is hereby adopted:

**I.** The project authorized is the George M. Wood Restoration Project.

**II.** The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the project within the terms of the project documents and the budget contained herein.

**III.** City budget line item 10-6200-1510 (Parks and Rec / Maintenance and Repair) is hereby reduced by \$9,733, for the purpose of reallocating funds to the project.

**IV.** The following revenue is anticipated to be available to complete this project:

[10-3490-6219]	NC DCM (Access Grant)	\$88,542
[10-6200-1510]	Maintenance and Repair funds	\$9,838
	Total Revenue:	\$98,380

**V.** The following amount is appropriated for project expenses:

[10-6200-7302]	Construction	\$98,380
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**VI.** Copies of this capital project ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer and Finance Director for direction in carrying out this project.

Adopted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April D. Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**d. Consideration – Accept Award for Water Street Transformation Project and Adopt Ordinance;**

**WATER STREET TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

**GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE**

**#2022-02-02**

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, that pursuant to Section 13.2 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following grant project ordinance is hereby adopted:

Section 1 The project authorized through this Grant Project Ordinance is the Water Street Transformation Project, to be funded through the Rural Transformation Grant Fund award administered by the NC Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division,

Section 2. The officers of this unit are hereby directed to proceed with the grant project within the terms of the grant documents and the budget contained herein,

Section 3. The following revenues are anticipated to be available to complete this project:

Rural Transformation Grant Fund Award (NC Commerce-REDD): \$641,000

Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc. Matching Commitment:

\$25,000

**Total: \$666,000**

Section 4. The following amount is appropriated for the project:

Engineering/Design, Construction, Contingency: \$666,000

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$666,000</b>
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Section 5. Copies of this grant project ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer and Finance Director for direction in carrying out this project.

ADOPTED, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

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E. Kirk Rivers,  
Mayor

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**e. Consideration – Authorize Application to TDA for River City Skippers**  
*(Moved to Consent Agenda During Agenda Adjustments);*

Mayor Rivers requested the Council's pleasure on the Consent Agenda.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel to approve the consent agenda. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**6. Regular Agenda:**

**a. Consideration – Authorize Application to TDA for River City Skippers** *(Moved from Consent Agenda During Agenda Adjustments);*

Councilman Biggs said he was told they needed to vote on an actual application and not just the request itself, so he felt that we may need to table until such time that we had one to consider. Councilman Walton said he wanted to give a characterization of TDA at the current time because he'd not had a pleasant two years during his time there. He felt there was a lack of leadership. He wanted to bring some things to the attention of Council. He said even if you fill out the application, it's up to the powers within that organization to determine if they want it to go forward. Right now, the director has given notice that she'll be resigning. When people deal with money, resources and power, they'll go to many lengths to get things done. Tomorrow, they'll be meeting as a group to talk about the lease with the Museum of the Albemarle. He felt they'd already made a decision on what they were doing. He said he had no say so until tomorrow, but the decision had clearly already been made, but that's how he'd seen the TDA do things. He hoped the TDA began to do things fairly. They only met once a month, but the meetings felt very programmed. You had to be there to believe it. When you select someone to be a certain position, you go through a process. Someone puts a name up and they vote on it, or they should, like how the Council selects their Mayor Pro Tem. The TDA does the process differently.

Mayor Rivers asked if we could table the application for the Skippers for now and then have Councilman Walton continue his comments? Councilman Walton said he didn't mind.

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel to table the consideration of the application until the February 27<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, seconded by Councilman Johnson Biggs. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

Councilman Walton continued that the TDA allows their current chairman to bring back a list of names of people that they'd want to have succeed them in running the organization, which he felt was strange and not true to the democratic process. This year, they've decided on someone working at a hotel, and they've also decided on a vice chair who is a county commissioner. That's not how the process should go. They're lining it up so they can "win" every time. This is not a good feeling. He said he knew he should talk to them about it, but he'd tried to bring it forward with them before but they didn't want to discuss it. He said he worried that because the application came from him, they might not pass it just because. Now they're selecting an executive committee, which will let four people decide who will be eliminated and then the rest of the people get brought forward to vote on. He had been kept out of the process, which was upsetting as he was a council member and that board was funded from occupancy taxes. We as the city have nearly \$400,000 in funding there. The things we take to the board, they cut down or eliminate. The things other people bring forward go through. We could have someone good apply for that position, but they could eliminate them. The City Council should have as much say so as the County does and we don't. He said he wanted the Council to help him work through this. He said they were told in an email not to even talk to the representatives from the MOA. He asked that if we did move forward with the application, it should go from someone's name other than his because he felt they'd deny it on purpose.

Councilwoman Felton asked if there was anything we could do about this? Councilman Walton said he felt that we could meet with the County Commissioners but we don't have a meeting scheduled right now. He said we could also write a letter to MOA and let them know we're not responsible for breaking their lease. Mayor Rivers asked if the meeting tomorrow was open to the public or was it closed? Councilman Walton said it was a special meeting, but they were going into closed session.

#### **b. Presentation – Fire Department ISO Rating;**

Manager Freeman noted that the Fire Department's hard work was going to help everyone's home insurance lessen. Chief Carver said their ISO inspection was done at the end of last year, which is when the insurance agents come in and look at the fire department, water department and some of the activities going on in the community. An ISO inspection is when a numerical value is assigned to the Fire Department, which insurance companies can go by. We have gone from a four to a three and the lower the number, the better the department. This was achieved by hard work through the Fire and Public Utilities Department and the 911 Center. Nationwide, there are only 5,567 departments in the country that are a class 3 or lower. In NC, there are only 307 that are class 3 or less, and only 385 class 4 departments. Only 30 in the state are class 1s. To be a class 3 department, a point scale is assigned. We were only

about a point and a half from being a class 2 and we have plans to improve to that point. Out of the 10% of the points, 911 received 8%. He wasn't sure if we could get the full 10 there, but we would try. The overall fire department performance received 35.4% of 50% of the score. The engine company received the full credit, pumpers and pumper capacity also received full credit. We don't have a reserve ladder truck, so we did not receive the 1/2 percent for that. 5.34% of deployment of 10%. It would be difficult to make up and take a lot of work moving forward because that's something that requires money. That looks at a staff analysis. A department our size should have 17 people and we put a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 13. We do well with what we have, but we're working out ways to make it happen in the future. They want you to have a training tower, which is likely \$1 million and that's just not something we can do, although our guys did start building one on their own to get some of the extra points. We always meet the state requirements for training, but to get maximum credit, we'd have to double our training credits, which is an easy fix. Water supply is 40% of the total score and we got 29.9%. We can improve that with a hydraulic model of the system to identify flow pressure areas before a fire breaks out, which is easy enough to do. The average homeowner within the city may not see a decrease in their rates, but the biggest winners will probably be the commercial customers and those in the ETJ. We're never been rated where we shuttle water and this year we were, so those people living within five miles of the station will be able to take advantage of our new rating. At the end of 2021, an analysis on the department was completed as far as needs for personnel and stations and they outlined the same things that were discussed, which he would like to present at some point, but it does give the data and information needed to help us make decisions and growth. Mayor Rivers congratulated the Fire Department, Public Works and the 911 Center and our citizens. Chief Carver advised this will new rating will take affect sometime in April.

### **c. Consideration – Adopt Budget Amendment for Hospital Project;**

Manager Freeman advised this item was from a previous meeting, which had been pulled off and was now back. The \$1 million is for materials as the Council directed Director Bell and Ms. Steward to begin to order. Director Bell also had the fund balance ready if the Council needed those numbers. The fund balance is from the ARPA funds in salary replacement. Now we're coming to the end of February and we need to ask the Council to move forward with bids for the labor portion as well.

Councilman Biggs said he was having a hard time following some of it and hadn't had a chance to dig through everything. He noted it appeared there was some duplication in the invoices, but that may be a process he didn't quite understand. How much of the materials are on site right now? Manager Freeman said about 85% are on site now. We think about \$1 million is left to receive. The invoices may be duplicated. Councilman Biggs asked how much are we spending though? Is it the \$1 million total? He said he was going off the number in the memo. Director Bell said originally we did not have any idea what the number was going to be, so we just got the okay from Council. At the time, the estimate was about \$980,000. We're asking for the \$1 million to cover what we think everything is going to end up being.

Mayor Rivers noted that we had a range that went up to about \$1.5 million at first. Director Bell agreed and said that was the original number he was given as an estimate at first. Councilman Peel asked why are we not just using the electric fund balance as opposed to using ARPA funds? Mayor Rivers said we could only use the ARPA funds when we did the allocations of reimbursement for salary replacements. Ms. Steward said that until we completed the audits, we could not rely on the current fund balance for electric. It's a fluid number at this time and we do not "know" what we can give out, but we know what's in the ARPA fund balance without a shadow of a doubt. Councilman Biggs noted the memo says \$933,000 and we've already spent \$282,000, is that right? Ms. Steward said yes, the \$282,000 has been spent and we have about \$933,000 left to go, but she cannot approve of any more invoices to be paid until Council agrees and approves. The \$282,000 has already been spent and came from the bottom line. She had to look at the budget as a whole and make sure that we didn't go over. When Council wanted to order the materials, they had enough for the \$282,000, but they did not have enough for the \$933,000. Councilman Biggs asked if we've only ordered the \$282,000? Manager Freeman said we've only paid for \$282,000. Councilman Biggs asked if we just paid for it out of various accounts because it wasn't budgeted? Ms. Steward said that was correct. Councilman Biggs asked if that would be an issue with pre-audits. Ms. Steward said the \$282,000 wouldn't because that would be an amount or items we'd order anyway, but the \$933,000 would be an issue without a budget amendment.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilman Johnnie Walton to approve the budget amendment authorize bid solicitation.**

Councilman Peel said he felt we should revisit this and possibly replace the ARPA funds after we knew what was going on with the audits. Councilman Walton asked if the LGC had any say so in this process? Manager Freeman said they would continue to have say so until the audits were finished. The 2022 audit was projected to be finished in May. Mayor Rivers said that all paperwork for the 2021 audit has been submitted, so we will hopefully be receiving that soon. Once we get 2021, they will be in tax season, so they'll be in a delay and maybe in May we'll have 2022. He noted some of the things they'd been asking for were for projects that had been completed in 1979 and 1980. We should not have to go back to things this far back with the next one after this is completed. Councilman Walton said he felt everyone was doing a good job because it was hard to work with "ghost" numbers and they should keep on doing what they're doing.

**Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

AMENDMENT TO CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE  
CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina:

**SECTION I.** To amend the approved Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2023, the appropriations are to be changed as follows:

Account #	Account Name	Decrease	Increase
30-8300-7305	New Hospital Project (Materials)		\$1,000,000
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,000,000</b>

**Section II.** To amend the approved Budget Ordinance, the following transactions to the Fund Balance are listed as follows:

Account #	Account Name	Decrease	Increase
30-2990-0000	Fund Balance	\$1,000,000	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	

**ADOPTED, this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.**

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**E. Kirk Rivers**  
Mayor

**Attest:**

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**d. Discussion – Harbor Town Ferry / Lighting Project;**

Manager Freeman said staff had met with AR Chesson to discuss how this project gets brought to fruition. This first phase will be a temporary lighting and once the pavilion is built, we can move to more permanent lighting. Mayor Rivers noted there was an informative meeting a few weeks ago, at which time it was announced that the boats were being built. This was just a preliminary discussion and he wanted to make sure that we were in position. They had sent us a letter about lighting and some signage, so he wanted to make sure the Council was aware and we were in front of it. Councilman Peel said AR Chesson was getting ready to start moving forward with the project. He suggested that Manager Freeman touch base with AR Chesson because they were ready to start. Councilman Biggs asked what they were ready to start exactly. Councilman Peel said they were eventually going to build some docks for the boats, but they had to get a CAMA grant first, which was going to take six or seven months. They had permission to use Jennette's pier so they were going to do work there.

Director Bell said he'd been present at the meeting and to start, they were going to do full transport before the fuel setup was ready. As it relates to this particular item, they were interested in putting a few LEDs in the parking lot and one in the boat parking lot to make sure people could see to load and unload. Mayor Rivers said we already had these particular fixtures on site, right? Director Bell said that we did, so it wouldn't actually cost us to order any of this. The lights could also be put on a switch so they weren't shining into the apartments there since they would be brighter than what we had there now. Mayor Rivers noted that right now, no one's really sure about the times the boats will be utilized, so these were preliminary measures. This is a new project for this area. Councilwoman Baxter asked if this would affect citizens light bills? Director Bell said not at all.

Councilman Biggs said he was in favor of more light, particularly in that park because it was extremely dark at night and he felt it might help with the overall crime issue in the area as well. We have been awarded and voted on the Rural Transformation grant – how does this lighting scheme work into what we may do down the road with this? Director Bell said this is just temporary and when the pavilion is built, it will likely be something different. Director Malenfant said the lighting incorporated into the streetscape is decorative lighting and does not go into the park itself, so it will be something different. It will include lighting to the route and public parking and then be different lighting in the parking lot itself. Councilman Biggs said he felt we could leave them on all night if the property owners didn't complain. Councilman Walton said he didn't feel that lighting was ever bad and we could use it for other events as well. He said he didn't want any surprises. They thought they were going to be able to dock in Hertford and they said they weren't ready for it. What else are we going to need to be "cruise ready?" Are the lights all we need? Mayor Rivers said AR Chesson was coming in to start the cuts on the pier. The boats will be docked at Waterfront. They'd have to have a ramp, a plank, but AR Chesson is being brought in by Harbor Town to get those going. The big boat is coming in April or May. They've asked us for lighting and parking and we can do that. Like when you go to Spirit of Norfolk, you follow signs and we need to set up something like that. The department heads are going to bring things they could see as issues to make sure that we deal with them so we're ready when Harbor Town comes to pull up at the dock. Councilman Walton reiterated that he didn't want any surprises, that was all, he just wanted to this work out for us. Mayor Rivers said Harbor Town is paying for the improvements with AR Chesson and hopefully they're getting funding for a bathroom at Waterfront Park as well. Manager Freeman said that currently, both Elizabeth City and Edenton are physically prepared to receive the boats.

**e. Discussion – Potential Donation of Police Boat to Sea Scouts;**

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel to approve moving forward with the next steps in the donation of "Hey Sweetie" to the Sea Scouts. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC NOTICE  
CONVEYANCE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY “HEY SWEETIE”  
TO SEA SCOUTS**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council, on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 authorized the conveyance to the Sea Scouts of a 32’ Irwin Citation with Rhode Island registration 9735M and hull number XYM32204L586, known as “Hey Sweetie” without monetary consideration; and

**WHEREAS**, a resolution is in order to convey without consideration said property to the Sea Scouts; and

**WHEREAS**, NCGS 160A-280 requires adoption of a resolution prior to granting of such a title or deed to the Sea Scouts as well as publishing of said resolution once after its adoption, with no conveyance made there under until five days after its publication;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City of Elizabeth City will convey the Sea Scouts of a 32’ Irwin Citation with Rhode Island registration 9735M and hull number XYM32204L586 without monetary consideration.

**ADOPTED**, this the 13<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023.

Inquiries regarding the conveyance may be directed to Interim Chief of Police J. Phillip Webster by email at [jwebster@elizabethcitync.gov](mailto:jwebster@elizabethcitync.gov) or by mail to P. O. Box 347, Elizabeth City, NC 27907-0347.

This notice is published in accordance with G.S. 160A-280.

April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**f. Consideration- Call for a Public Hearing – Rezoning Case RZ 04-23;**

**Motion made to call for a public hearing to be held on February 27, 2023 on the application for rezoning by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Felton.**

Councilman Biggs said he’d reached out to the manager on Friday about some additional documentation on this item. He said some concerns about the proposed site and the proposed rezoning. Knowing the site and the adjacent property owners, there was a known drainage issue on the site and a known issue that there’s no storm water run-off available. If any housing development or apartments built there, he was unsure of where we’ll push the water to. Secondly, when you look at apartments, there’s not a lot of road frontage. The pushout into Ehringhaus and onto Hughes, the thoroughfares are very busy. He was concerned about even entertaining rezoning the parcels. He did not feel it was consistent with the adjacent zoning around it, so we’d be spot zoning as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Spence asked Director Bell if he was familiar with the flooding situation in the area. Director Bell said he’d maybe had two calls since he’d been back about flooding. They’d cleared the ditches and snaked the culverts and he hadn’t received a call lately. Normally, someone would contact his department if there was flooding, but it was overgrown and they’d taken care of it so they hadn’t gotten a call recently. Mayor Rivers reminded that we were just calling for a public hearing now and would not be voting on the actual item yet, so we could still get our questions and concerns in order now. Councilman Biggs said he was also concerned about how we’d service it from a sewer capacity because it probably flowed back to a sewer area that was at capacity, so we might want to look at that as well.

**Those voting in favor of the motion were: Peel, Gibbs, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton, Against: Biggs Motion carried.**

**g. Consideration – Appointments to the Urban Forestry Commission (By Motion and ROLL CALL VOTE);**

**Motion to approve Grace Atkins to the UFC was made by Councilman Johnson Biggs, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton.**

**Against: None. A roll call vote followed, which yielded the same results. Motion carried.**

**Motion to appoint John Saunders to the UFC was made by Councilman Johnson Biggs, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried. A roll call vote followed, which yielded the same results.**

**h. Consideration – Appointments to the Human Relations Commission (*By Motion and ROLL CALL VOTE*);**

**Motion to appoint Dr. Andrea William to the HRC was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried. A roll call vote followed, which yielded the same results.**

**Motion to appoint Joshua Harrell to the HRC was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kem Spence, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Whitehurst, Spence, Felton, Baxter and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried. A roll call vote followed, which yielded the same results.**

#### **i. Manager's Reports**

Mayor Rivers announced that the Third Ward would be having a community meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the National Guard Armory, which would be open to the public and hosted by Mayor Pro Tem Spence and Councilwoman Katherine Felton. On Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Mayor would be delivering a State of the City address in Council Chambers live. It would be open to the public, but will also be live-streamed on Channel 11 and social media. He requested that Manager Freeman introduce Interim Director Reggie Goodson who would be with us for at least six months while we sought a permanent Community Development Director. Mr. Goodson said he'd enjoyed working here 20 years ago and was happy to be back to help get the department running smoothly again. They were looking to hire some more planners and he would be doing all he could to help the city move forward. Mayor Rivers gave an update on the demolition on Southern Avenue. The demolition should be taking place in the next two to three weeks. The contractor awarded the bid back in November has it on their agenda and was looking to move forward quickly. They'd had a major setback when the company owner passed away, but were back and going to get the project going.

Manager Freeman noted that the budget calendar the Council approved listed May 23<sup>rd</sup> as the date the budget had to go to the LGC, but that was actually the 15<sup>th</sup>. Tomorrow, there was a meeting at 8:30 a.m. prior to the red-lined document going back to Sharon Edmundson, and when he heard back, he would report back to the Council. He'd requested an extension on the water rates and was expecting that completed soon. Director Bell had reached out to Rural Water who would do the study for free, but they were so backed up they could not give us a date, so we've also reached out to Raftelis who performed the previous study and were waiting on updates.

Councilman Peel asked if the 43-page document was a policy of ours? Manager Freeman said it was. Councilman Peel asked if they need to vote on it. Manager Freeman said they did, but he was waiting for them to give him guidance, clean it up and then the Council would adopt it in March. Manager Freeman said that as we worked through the audit process, there were many late nights spent here. His team was on top of everything and the Finance Department was into the 2022 budget and making great strides.

#### **7. Adjournment:**

Having no further business to be discussed, Mayor Rivers adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

