

**City Council Work Session
October 25, 2021**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in work session on Monday, October 25, 2021 in Council Chambers, located on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Bettie Parker
Mayor Pro Tem Johnnie Walton
Councilman Billy Caudle
Councilman Kem Spence
Councilman Chris Ruffieux
Councilwoman Jeannie Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Michael Brooks
Councilman Darius Horton

OTHERS PRESENT: Interim City Manager Ralph Clark
City Attorney Bill Morgan
Interim Finance Director Alicia Steward
Deputy Chief of Police James Avens
Human Resources Director Montique McClary
Public Utilities Director Dwan Bell
Parks and Recreation Director Sean Clark
Grants Administrator Jon Hawley
Community Development Director Kellen Long
Fire Chief Chris Carver
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant
IT Director Matthew Simpson
IT Systems Analyst Pedro Holley II
City Clerk April Onley
Deputy City Clerk Doris Walton

Mayor Parker called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m. She gave the invocation, after which everyone joined for the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:

Mayor Parker asked the Council's pleasure on the prepared agenda.

Councilwoman Young requested that the discussion pieces for downtown beat cops and Adopt-a-Block be removed from the agenda.

Motion to approve the agenda with the requested adjustments was made by Councilman Billy Caudle, seconded by Councilwoman Jeannie Young. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Spence, Ruffieux, Walton, Young and Caudle. Against: None. Motion carried.

2. Statement of Disclosure:

The City Clerk read the statement of disclosure. No conflict of interests regarding items on the presented agenda were made.

3. Presentation – Speed Bumps;

Director Bell advised there was a request during the last meeting to provide a presentation on the speed bumps the City purchased and was looking at putting down on Main and Church Streets. He noted that the particular ones he would be showing were also being used at ECSU and the Hickory Village mobile home park, as well as areas of Chesapeake. He explained that this conversation had come up back in 2007, when the Council had discussed putting in traffic tables, but that idea was abandoned due to the expense. He said his department is also looking at installing speed bump signage to give

notice to motorists that there are speed bumps ahead. He added that they have purchased 14 speed bumps total, but we may need to buy two or three additional ones. He stated that these will suffice for a temporary solution, but are not meant to be permanent.

Councilwoman Young said she'd requested the Clerk put together a background package with info dating back to 2007, which illustrated how Neighborhood Watch groups originally came together requesting traffic calming and eventually led to the policy being put in place. She said she asked Director Bell to meet her at the garage and she'd looked at the speed bumps and found them not to be terribly intrusive. She said, "Church Street and Main Street are residential streets but they get traffic almost like a regular highway, so we definitely need to do something." She said she felt we might need to have more police visibility in the area as well because she did not believe speed bumps alone were going to be the answer to stop the speeding. She asked Director Bell if he knew how many fatalities were involved at the intersection before we put up the stoplight in 1997? Director Bell said he wasn't sure, but he knew there was at least one.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked Director Bell how the process for the speed bumps happened. Director Bell explained the former manager called a meeting after a few people in the community spoke with him and requested something to be done. Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked if the directors met on the streets too? Director Bell said the Street Superintendent and Deputy Chief Avens met on the locations as well, which is where the locations for the speed bump placements came from. Mayor Pro Tem Walton said he felt like it seemed like a normal process.

Councilman Caudle said he was not opposed to the speed bumps, but worried that they would not last with the commercial truck traffic that area experienced. He asked how they would work with the streets being brick underneath. Director Bell explained that they had spikes on the bottom and would be tapped in. He added that they would not go all the way across the street, as they weren't supposed to cross the middle lane, but we could purchase longer ones or put several down in one place if we needed to.

Councilman Spence wondered if, since these are temporary, could we possibly do speed humps like we have at Enfield Park for a more permanent solution? Director Bell replied that we could. Councilman Spence said he liked that they were movable. Director Bell opined that we could definitely get our money's worth out of these, but noted that he hadn't seen the weight limit. He added that they would bring traffic down to 5-10 mph.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton said he didn't feel like commercial vehicle travel on Main and Church Streets all that often anyway.

Councilman Caudle asked if any other options had been looked into, such as stop signs? He said he didn't feel this would be the "magic bullet" for solving the problem. Director Bell advised that originally they wanted to remove the stop light and install stop signs, but the former manager made this decision. He reiterated that he felt this should just be a trial at this time and these were a temporary measure.

4. Discussion – One-Waying of Arbutus Street;

Councilman Spence said he'd received several calls from residents on Arbutus Street who were concerned about how narrow the street was. If two cars were going down the street, you'd nearly run into the ditch trying to move past, which was concerning. Director Bell said he visited Arbutus Street and there wasn't a lot of traffic at the time, but he did take note of the flow of traffic while he was there. He said Jordan Street was the same way. In his opinion, half the traffic should come from each end up to Davis Avenue, so no one should have to make an illegal turn to get into their respective driveways. Councilman Spence said the people he spoke with didn't really care which way the one-way was, just so long as it became a one-way. Director Bell said he spoke with a gentleman on Davis who told him the majority of traffic came off Perry Street onto Jordan, which was only 11 feet wide and had no shoulder, which was quite concerning.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton agreed that it was a good idea to move forward with one-waying the street. He pointed out that Southern Avenue was beginning to deteriorate down to the state it was in a few years ago and it was a better idea to have traffic rerouted down Herrington Road as suggested.

Motion made by Councilman Kem Spence to call for a public hearing on November 8th for one-waying of Arbutus and Jordan Street. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jeannie Young. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Spence, Ruffieux, Walton, Young and Caudle. Against: None. Motion carried.

5. Downtown Beat Cop / Adopt-A-Block (Removed During Agenda Adjustments and Approval)

6. Committee Reports:

- a) **EC-PC Economic Development Commission: Councilman Caudle, Mayor Parker** – Councilman Caudle reported that the last meeting had been devoted to hiring their new director, Mr. Berry, who would be starting next Thursday.
- b) **Central Communications Advisory Board: Councilman Brooks** – Absent.
- c) **Fireman’s Relief Fund Board: Councilman Spence** – Councilman Spence reported that the board had not met and the next meeting was not scheduled.
- d) **NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency: Mayor Parker-** Did not meet.
- e) **Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc.: Councilwoman Young** – Councilwoman Young reported that the downtown business trick or treat will be held October 30th. Upcoming events include the downtown holiday celebration and illumination, Small Business Saturday, the 1st Friday Artwalk and the lighted boat parade. Downtown discount cards are now available for 2022, and can be purchased at several businesses downtown.
- f) **Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Board: Mayor Parker** – Mayor Parker reported that ex-officio members are not meeting at this time.
- g) **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Mayor Pro Tem Walton** – Mayor Pro Tem Walton stated they had not met.
- h) **Storm Water Advisory Board: Councilman Spence, Councilman Ruffieux and Councilman Horton** – Councilman Spence advised the board had not met.
- i) **Tourism Development Authority: Mayor Pro Tem Walton** – Mayor Pro Tem Walton said the Finance Committee had met, but the items had not come before the full board as of yet.
- j) **Community Relations Commission: Councilwoman Young** – Councilwoman Young reported that the board had not met.
- k) **Airport Authority: Councilman Caudle** – Councilman Caudle advised the next meeting would be Wednesday.
- l) **Albemarle RPO Transportation Advisory Committee – Councilman Ruffieux-** Councilman Ruffieux said the board had not met.

Interim Manager Clark said he spoke with Developmental Associates, and they can begin the managerial search process sometime in early December, with an assessment center in January and a hiring in February. He asked for instructions on how the Council wanted to proceed. Did they want him to move forward with that now? Were they satisfied with that? The only out-of-pocket expenses would be miscellaneous things such as for testing, etc. with the applicant. Councilman Spence said he felt it should be started as expeditiously as possible. He was in favor of him beginning it now. Councilman Caudle concurred with Councilman Spence and said working with them was fairly smooth the last time. He said he was supportive of that as well. Mr. Clark said Dr. Straus had relayed that he’d just not received the applicants he’d have liked before and Mr. Clark told him it might be beneficial to contact ElectriCities as well. He said he understood that it was somewhat

difficult to recruit to this area at times, but it was getting better. He said we needed to find some good applicants to choose from. Mayor Pro Tem Walton said he thought it was good that this was being brought forward, but we had two Councilors who were absent, so we might want to wait and bring it up when they got here because they might come later.

Councilman Caudle said we should add this to the regular session agenda. Could it be discussed in open session? Attorney Morgan agreed that it could.

6. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Parker adjourned the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

Bettie J. Parker
Mayor

April D. Onley
City Clerk, NCCMC