



MINUTES

February 23 2022

SECOND MONTHLY MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OPERATIONS CENTER | 305 WILLIAMS ST. | 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk and Council Members: Mayor Pro Tem Lyndsey Simpson, Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Debbie O'Neal-Roundtree, and Jerry A. Smith Jr., J.D.

Staff Present: City Manager John F. Connet, Assistant City Manager Brian Pahle, City Attorney Angela Becker, City Clerk Angela Reece, Communications Manager Allison Justus, Budget Manager Adam Murr, and others

Special Guest Presenters:

Town of Holly Springs: Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Berry and Assistant Town Manager Daniel Weeks
Town of Matthews: Mayor John Higdon and Town Manager Hazen Blodgett

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all members in attendance.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. **Lessons Learned in Other Communities** – *John Connet, City Manager*

City Manager John Connet introduced Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Berry and Assistant Town Manager Daniel Weeks from the Town of Holly Springs as well as Mayor John Higdon and Town Manager Hazen Blodgett from the Town of Matthews.

Both distinguished elected officials and managers shared their stories and lesson learned regarding growth and challenges they have faced in their respective municipalities. Mayor John Higdon stated he wished Matthews had addressed affordable housing and fiber companies through legislation and Town Manager Hazen Blodgett stated he would have promoted less dependence on vehicular traffic, and promoted multimodal forms of transportation as well as diversity sensitivity, and relationship building with the general assembly. Mayor Pro Tem Berry added he would have promoted setting aside park lands for citizens to enjoy nature. Mayor Higdon stated he is proud that prior leadership invested time and effort in planning and zoning and of the long-range visioning that took place over the last thirty or forty years.

Mayor Barbara G. Volk inquired regarding housing and commercial development land availability annexations and Mayor Pro Tem Berry stated Holly Springs utilizes their ETJ through interlocal agreements and require connection of water and sewer services as part of voluntary annexation. Mayor John Higdon stated the Town of Matthews has very little room left to grow and said the town has kept taxes artificially low due to low growth and said they are on the cusp of having to reevaluate tax rate specifically due to staffing needs. Mayor Higdon said it is hard to compete with Charlotte and adjacent communities. Town Manager Blodgett discussed affordable housing prices and the need for balance and educating people stating Matthews has not embraced density and stated no new developments means higher taxes for services. Manager Blodgett stated he is proud that prior leadership promoted investment in water and sewer infrastructure which has increased their water capacity. Mayor Pro Tem Berry stated he is very proud of the public private partnerships the town has been able to facilitate over the years. Mayor Pro Tem Berry discussed growth challenges and stated the town has been successful in managing growth through an updated comprehensive land use plan which is centered around community character. Mayor Pro Tem Berry stated the town has implemented a five-year plan update schedule to reflect current values and character of the town.

Council Member Jerry Smith discussed goals and philosophy with Mayor Pro Tem Berry. Mayor Pro Tem Berry suggested figuring out what things a city can be great at and then doubling down on them. He advised Holly Springs has strong parks and recreational programs but are in need of more space. Mayor Pro Tem Berry stated they have saw a lot of growth with young professionals due to their proximity to the Raleigh area and jobs. He said their population is very young and said they are having to find a balance with housing for seniors. Council Member Jerry Smith discussed the same question with Mayor Higdon who said he is very proud to have a vibrant community and great quality of life

in Matthews. Mayor Higdon stated Matthews is home to many festivals and events which help to maintain the small town feel while balancing all the growth pressures.

Council Member Dr. Jennifer Hensley discussed annexation limitations with Town Manager Blodget who confirmed the Town of Matthews has annexed all available property through legislative action. Council Member Hensley discussed opportunities to expand or to invest in water sewer infrastructure with Assistant Town Manager Daniel Weeks who said at times there was excess capacity in the reservoir which Holy Springs purchased at low rates for long periods of times. Manager Weeks stated the town is increasing the capacity of their wastewater treatment plant to manage the demands.

Council Member Lyndsey Simpson discussed economic development partnerships and broadband partnerships with Mayor Pro Tem Berry and Manager Weeks.

City Manager Connet asked guest panelists what advice they would provide to provide to governing bodies dealing with growth. Mayor John Higdon encouraged ensuring decisions do not affect the quality of life in your town. Manager Hazen Blodget encouraged giving people the option to get out of their cars and encouraged policies to get away from a car centric community. Mayor Pro Tem Berry stated updating the comprehensive land use plan, visioning, and establishing priorities are critical to assist staff in prioritizing projects. Mayor Pro Tem Berry also stressed the importance of making sure the city's land use planning reflects the vision elected officials have for the community and said not to be afraid to tell developers no and said to make them come early and often to introduce their projects. He stated doing this sets the bar high and drives the outcomes elected official's desire. Assistant Town Manager Weeks encouraged utilizing system development fees or fees in lieu of to shape development to gain what city wants and needs from development.

Mayor Barbara G. Volk, City Council Members, and City Manager John Connet expressed thanks to panelists for sharing their thoughts and ideas.

B. Presentation of NCDOT's Hendersonville Pedestrian Safety Study – Brent Detwiler, City Engineer

City Engineer Brent Detwiler stated NCDOT commissioned VHB Engineering NC, P.C to complete a Pedestrian Safety Study for the City of Hendersonville. Mr. Detwiler presented and discussed improvement options to various intersections which pose safety concerns for pedestrians. Council Members discussed alternatives and concerns. City Manager Connet encouraged Council to think about funding and prioritization as they head into budget season.

3. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m. upon unanimous assent of the Council.

Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela L. Reece, City Clerk