

MINUTES

January 27, 2021

SECOND MONTHLY MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 2ND FLOOR, CITY HALL | 160 SIXTH AVE. E. 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk, and Council Members: Jeff Miller, Lyndsey Simpson, and Dr. Jennifer Hensley

Remote Participants: Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Smith

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all members in attendance. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Smith participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom electronic software.

2. CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA

Council Member Jeff Miller moved that City Council approve the agenda as presented. A unanimous roll call vote of the Council Members followed. Motion carried.

3. PRESENTATIONS

- A. ESB Update, SolSmart and Cities Initiative Overview – *Michael Huffman, Stormwater Administrator, Beth Stang, Environmental Sustainability Board Chair, Zach Ambrose, Ambrose Strategy Consultant*

Beth Stang, Chair of the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) presented an update to City Council which focused on Bee City USA, plastics education, and the ESB Sustainability Plan. Ms. Stang thanked City Council for supporting Bee City USA and outlined accomplishments including educational events and fund-raising activities to include The Good of the Hive Bee Mural downtown. Ms. Stang discussed the importance of reduction of plastics and stated the ESB is working with Mountain Tru and the Henderson County Environmental Advisory Committee to develop a single use-plastic reduction program which is a voluntary program that will recognize businesses who commit to reducing or eliminating single-use plastics. Ms. Stang stated the ESB would like to work in conjunction with City Council and staff to develop a City-wide Sustainability Plan and encouraged the City to participate in the SolSmart Program which is a national program that recognizes cities, counties, and regional organizations who foster the development of mature local solar markets. Stormwater Administrator, Mike Huffman recalled participation progress in the program including completion of a baseline assessment of City policies and regulations related to solar energy, City Council approval of the Solar Statement in May of 2020, and ongoing review of the Zoning Ordinances. Mr. Huffman requested City to engage in the SolSmart program and to seek designation.

Zach Ambrose of Ambrose Strategy Consulting gave an overview of the Cities Initiative NC program stating the program is a collaborative effort among North Carolina local governments to work to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The non-profit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is leading this initiative. Mr. Ambrose discussed the Initiative's action items which included renewable energy procurement, developing local government supported green energy banks, and revisions to the NC Building Code.

City Manager John Connet recalled City Council initiatives which include sustainability measures to reduce light pollution and tree canopy degradation and asked City Council for direction to continue participation in the SolSmart and Cities Initiatives programs. City Council Members conceded to direct staff to proceed with the participation in both programs.

4. DISCUSSION

A. Berkeley Mills Park Trade to HCPS

City Manager John Connet recalled discussions with John Bryant regarding the potential property trade with Henderson County Public Schools (HCPS) stating the City of Hendersonville is proposing trading a portion of Berkeley Mills Park for Edwards Park on N. Main Street. Manager Connet stated HCPS would receive a large portion of the park on the northern side of Balfour Road which includes the historic baseball field and picnic area and said that the City would maintain a small park area on the northern side as well as the entire acreage on the southern side of Balfour Road. Manager Connet stated in return for a portion of the Berkeley Mills Park, the City would assume ownership of Edwards Park, minus a small portion on the southern end of the park that includes a driveway for Bruce Drysdale Elementary School. Manager Connet stated the City's proposed use for Edwards Park would be for public recreational activities and said the Boy Scout Huts would be allowed to remain. Manager Connet stated HCPS has intentions to construct athletic facilities for Hendersonville High School including improvements to the historic baseball field, construction of a new softball field and six lighted tennis courts. Manager Connet outlined conditions of the proposed trade stating that an agreement would need to be developed with HCPS to allow continued use by the public of Berkeley Park when not in use by HCPS, including future use of the lighted tennis courts. Use by the public for the interior portions of the baseball field and future softball field may not be permitted. Manager Connet stated no Henderson County funding would be allocated for improvements for a five-year period and said that all improvements will be dependent up on private donations and donor priorities. Manager Connet addressed concerns of Council Members Miller and Smith regarding replacing trees which may be lost during development and said staff are investigating alternative planting areas and would work with HPCS to implement this in the final design. Manager Connet stated in order to continue moving forward with the proposed trade City Council would need to consider approving a letter of intent.

Council Member Jerry Smith discussed the proposed division of the property and funding challenges reminding Council there is no funding allocated by Henderson County for installation of new lighted tennis courts for at least five years. Council Member Smith also stated there was a parking concern, tree removal and replacement, and easement rights for future greenway construction to be aware of when considering this project. Council Member Jeff Miller stated he would like City Council to explore building two new tennis courts at Patton Park. Council Member Jerry Smith reminded everyone if the Council approves proceeding with this trade then they are committing to installation of a future City park and said that restroom facilities would become necessary in the future. After much discussion City Council Members conceded to proceed with forming a letter of intent to be presented for approval at the next City Council meeting.

B. Community Development Department Workplan – *Lew Holloway, Community Development Department Director*

Community Development Department Director Lew Holloway presented the Department Workplan to City Council and outlined the challenges and opportunities facing the department. Director Holloway introduced new staff members and discussed the focus of the department. Director Holloway recalled the formation of this Department in September 2020, stating the newly formed Department of Community Development began an internal process of generating an annual Workplan and said staff developed a project/task list which includes both discretionary and non-discretionary priorities for the department. Director Holloway stated the Department goal is to facilitate the alignment of departmental strategic priorities with City Council's vision for community development. Director Holloway outlined long-term goals encouraging the use of small area plans or district master plans as well as transportation infrastructure plans and housing master plans. City Manager John Connet stated City Council would begin to see more detail in staff reports with regard to City ordinances and the Comprehensive Plan. The City Attorney reminded everyone that the purpose of the staff report was to serve as a record of what was considered and encouraged more documentation. Council Member Lyndsey Simpson praised staff for their effort in preparing this report and stated she appreciated having more information included in the staff reports for transparency.

5. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m. upon unanimous assent of the Council.



Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

ATTEST:


Angela L. Reece, City Clerk