

Friday - February 6, 1998 - 1:00 p.m. -

Sunday, February 8, 1998 - 10:30 a.m.

Highland Lake Inn, Flat Rock, N.C.

City Council Annual Retreat

Present: Present: Mayor Leni Sitnick, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Edward C. Hay Jr.; Councilman M. Charles Cloninger; Councilman Earl Cobb; Councilwoman Barbara Field; and Councilman Thomas G. Sellers; and Councilman O.T. Tomes; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; City Manager James L. Westbrook Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Friday, February 6, 1998

Local Thoroughfare Plan - Cathy Ball, City Engineer, reviewed with Council the request to establish a list of local (City maintained streets) transportation projects.

It was the consensus of City Council to have staff follow through with work to create a local Thoroughfare Plan which would utilize the information provide from a consultant, which the City is currently in the process of trying to retain, for a public involvement study for the Asheville area. The date from the study will be utilized to establish our goals and objectives for a local transportation improvement program.

Traffic Calming Policy - Cathy Ball, City Engineer, reviewed with Council a draft residential traffic management policy. This policy will formalize a system whereby citizens can initiate a process for the evaluation of residential streets and roads for the purpose of increasing traffic safety. The policy also provides a citizen with information necessary to understand the parameter under which both the citizens and the government must operate. The policy provides an evaluation questionnaire, petition, step-by-step procedure, traffic calming selections survey and a follow-up survey.

It was the consensus of City Council to solicit comments from the public on this policy and bring back a draft to Council in the spring. The funding will be presented to City Council in their annual budget process.

Small Area Plans - Julia Cogburn, Planning & Development Director, explained that small area plans are land use and development plans that are typically comprehensive in nature but cover a small defined area. Three plans have been adopted since 1989 - Biltmore Village Development Plan in May of 1992, the Hendersonville Road Corridor Plan in March of 1993, and the West End/Clingman Avenue Neighborhood Plan in January of 1996. The Charlotte Street Small Area Plan will be before Council in April of this year. Ms. Cogburn presented a list of small area plans that were either requested by the public, by Council, or were needed from a staff's point of view. Those plans include: the Swannanoa Corridor (from Biltmore Village to Tunnel Road), Broadway (from 19-23 to downtown), and Haywood Road (the entire corridor).

Other plans to be considered are WACT 10 (Census Tract 10 - bounded by French Broad River on the east and south, I-240 on the west, and 19-23 on the north); Sweeten Creek Corridor (from Biltmore Village to Airport Road); Hospital Area - Kenilworth Area; A-B Tech; McDowell and Biltmore Avenues and surrounding neighborhoods; UNC-Asheville/Jackson Park - Woolsey - UNC-Asheville/Weaver Boulevard/Jackson Park - Woolsey neighborhood; Hill Street (area from Montford Avenue down to Hill Street around to Courtland Avenue); Overlook Road (Overlook Road corridor from Hendersonville Road to Long Shoals Road); Merrimon Avenue (corridor study); Central Avenue (Broad Street/Hillside area - area from Charlotte Street to

Merrimon Avenue going back to Coleman); and Tunnel Road (corridor study). Other plans under consideration include the downtown master plan and the river core area plan.

It was the consensus of City Council to review the 2010 Plan and directed staff to recommend a priority among the plans, and to present them as part of the budget process.

Minimum Housing Code Update - Terry Summey, Director of Building Safety, updated City Council on the efforts to increase the number of rental residential properties in the City that are inspected and brought up to Minimum Housing Code. The emphasis is on having inspections made in accordance with the Minimum Housing Code schedule before July 1, 1999. Two recent major changes have occurred: (1) Effective on October 1, 1997, initial Housing Code inspections are made by one of the approved third party inspectors; and (2) Effective on January 1, 1998, before water services changes are made for new residential tenants, a verification is made that a housing inspection has been made in accordance with the Code and schedule. Increased efforts have also been made to address residential structures that negatively impact neighborhoods and need to be demolished. In addition, a systematic Inspection Program has begun in the Clingman Avenue area.

It was the consensus of Council that if we are going to review the goals set in the current Minimum Housing Code ordinance, that it be done in plenty of time before certain target dates in the current ordinance are reached.

Neighborhood Inspection Program - Terry Summey, Director of Building Safety, updated City Council on the Neighborhood Citizen Inspector Program which involves neighborhoods helping to address problem issues in their community. This is a pilot program to occur between May 1 and September 30 to involve two neighborhoods with inspecting and addressing issues in their community. The main objectives of the program will be the following: (1) to clean up the exteriors of residential buildings, grounds, and vacant lands; (2) to stem further blight of neighborhoods; and (3) to foster community involvement in the upkeep of their neighborhood. The anticipated results of the program will be: (1) increase neighborhood participation and input; (2) reduce environmental nuisance conditions and neighborhood blight; (3) allow the City staff to focus more on the problem cases; and (4) reduce the number of conversions from owner occupancy to rental. The program is still in the process of being finalized and two pilot neighborhoods have yet to be identified.

Council endorsed this concept and directed staff to conduct a pilot program and to bring back to City Council the results from the pilot program prior to full implementation.

Annexation - It was the consensus of Council to hold a worksession in early March to discuss with the consultants issues on which they need guidance in progressing with the annexation study. Said worksession is to be at 5:30 p.m. in the Public Works Facility. Some items to be discussed at the worksession should include our annexation policy, the history of annexation, what areas have been annexed, what are the services required by law that we provide and the timeframe we have within which to start those services, what is the financial impact on the people who are annexed and on the Asheville citizens who pays both City and County taxes, what some amenities are that the County residents are using but City residents are paying for, the laws regarding annexation, questions regarding if the annexed areas are being properly served, along with a van tour of development taking place outside the City limits. On a related issue, Council also wanted to discuss the extraterritorial jurisdiction areas and its relationship to annexation.

1998 Legislative Agenda - City Attorney Oast updated City Council on several legislative items. It was the consensus of Council to have the City Attorney introduce for the Short Session (1) the local act (applicable to Buncombe and Henderson Counties) requiring Dept. of Transportation reimbursement for non-betterment costs of relocation of water and sewer lines in connection with NC DOT projects; (2) legislation endorsing the proposal by the Asheville-Buncombe Community Relations Council to become a deferral agency for employment discrimination complaints; (3) and legislation to repeal some provisions of Asheville's Charter in

order that our Charter not conflict with State law.

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Saturday, February 7, 1998

City Council Rules of Procedure - City Attorney Oast reviewed with Council some of the issues discussed at City Council's mid-year retreat in August, 1997: (1) Roll call votes - eliminated; (2) Quorum - need to amend rules regarding quorums in order to be consistent with State law and charter. Ordinarily in cities where Mayor votes as a regular Council member, quorum is a simple majority. Our Rules provide that a quorum is a majority of Council plus the Mayor; and (3) Public Comment/Public Hearings - (a) staff has recommended that land use matters be presented to Council at worksessions in advance of the public hearings on those items. Currently they are not. In August, the Council expressed some interest in this approach, but has since expressed concern that public comment cannot be taken a worksessions for items for which a public hearing is required. Staff has hesitated to implement this practice pending further direction from Council; and (b) conditional use permit hearing process has been drafted, implemented and used once. He then reviewed the closed session processes and the open meetings law.

It was the consensus of Council to instruct the City Attorney to amend their Rules (1) regarding quorums in order to be consistent with State law and the Charter; and (2) to be consistent with State law regarding City Council has to meet at least once a month and adopt a resolution or and ordinance at the first of the year outlining their meeting schedule.

It was the consensus of City Council to ask the consultants, who are redesigning the Council Chamber, about a mechanism to alert speakers when their speaking time is up.

After discussion of the meeting time for worksessions, it was decided that this item needed further discussion and thought.

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process began with City Council discussing over 153 topics.

Sunday, February 8, 1998

Strategic Planning Process

The following are the top 10 goals arrived at after discussing and combining over 153 smaller topics: (1) Encourage City/County Comprehensive Multi-Model Transportation Plan; (2) Adopt Affordable Housing Policy; (3) Adopt Parks and Recreation Master Plan; (4) Improve traffic management system; (5) Develop and fund economic development strategic plan; (6) Adopt Civic Center Master Plan; (7) Establish a neighborhood/community outreach program; (8) Celebrate cultural diversity; (9) Adopt comprehensive parking plan; and (10) Review Sign Enforcement - Resources and Efforts.

The following goals were equally important: (1) Develop policy on public art; (2) Adopt comprehensive tower ordinance; (3) Consider federal regulations regarding stormwater; (4) Maintain fiscal policy and financial health; (5) Partner with effort to establish comprehensive riverfront development plan; (6) Enhance community litter clean-up (Adopt a Street, state system streets, education); (7) Review management structure of transit system; (8) Continue to identify and fund infrastructure needs; (9) Enforce street numbering ordinance; and (10) Strengthen day care system.

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Miscellaneous Topics

Many topics were brought up and discussed during this portion of the meeting. Some being, but are not limited to, rotating seating arrangements in Council Chamber; stipends for City Council; concerns about how the process of the retreat was handled; review of the Unified Development Ordinance with guidance from staff and public; need to put all planning processes together; the need to continue community meetings; better communication with the media; look at real estate around the Civic Center when it becomes available; prohibiting of phones and pagers in Council meetings; perhaps one worksession a month devoted to boards & committee reports; forming of an Asheville Film Committee; suggestion for a City-wide bus tour to look at neighborhoods, businesses, streets, traffic, etc.; request for a Unity Statement by the City; look at all revenue producing potential that Asheville is not getting; see if All America Pins can be bought from supplier in the United States, not China; brief explanation of the composition of the Planning & Zoning Commission; need for after-event review of storms and try to remember that kids who don't go to school don't eat two meals a day; address issue of school buses not having seat belts; the need to resolve the issue regarding the Rod and Gun Club; YMI Cultural Center reorganization; and better communication with the media.

Mayor Sitnick adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

CITY CLERK MAYOR
