

Worksession

Present: Mayor Charles R. Worley, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Terry M. Bellamy; Councilman Joseph C. Dunn; Councilman James E. Ellis; Councilwoman Diana Hollis Jones; Councilman R. Carl Mumpower; and Councilman Brian L. Peterson; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; City Manager James L. Westbrook Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

CONSENT:

New Street Name of “Moser’s Place”

Summary: The consideration of a resolution accepting the new proposed street name “Moser’s Place.”

Ron Moser Inc., owner of lots off of Maple Avenue, has petitioned the City of Asheville to accept the street name “ Moser’s Place.” The new street will begin at Maple Avenue and end at the cul-de-sac on Moser’s Place.

City staff recommends adoption of the resolution accepting the new street name.

New Street Names of “Chamberlain Drive,” Longwood Lane,” and “Landis Court”

Summary: The consideration of a resolution accepting the new proposed street names of “Chamberlain Drive,” “Longwood Lane,” and “Landis Court.”

Bostic Development LLC, owner of lots off of New Leicester Highway, known as Westmont Commons, has petitioned the City of Asheville to accept the street names of “Chamberlain Drive,” “Longwood Lane,” and “Landis Court.” The new streets will begin at New Leicester Highway and end on Chamberlain Drive, Longwood Lane, and Landis Court.

City staff recommends adoption of the resolution accepting the new street names.

Re-Designation of the State Development Zone

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to re-designate the Asheville State Development Zone.

The State of North Carolina has designated certain census tracts in and around the City of Asheville as qualified for inclusion in a State Development Zone. Development zones were created to provide economic incentives to stimulate new investment and job creation in economically distressed urban areas.

The current State Development Zone for Asheville will expire on December 31, 2002. Application for re-designation is due and, if approved, will take effect January 1, 2003, for a period of two years.

Pursuant to the state-mandated guidelines, City staff has determined the area for inclusion in the new Development Zone. The total zone must have a minimum of 20% population below the poverty level.

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Staff recommends approval of the resolution defining the State Development Zone to be effective January 1, 2003, through December 31, 2005.

Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2003-04 Budget Schedule

Summary: The consideration of a motion approving the Fiscal Year 2003/2004 budget schedule.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2003/2004 budget schedule identifies specific dates for completion of all phases of the budget process leading to adoption. Key phases of the budget process include submission of departmental requests, presentation of the proposed budget to City Council, a public hearing and formal adoption. Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2003/2004 budget is scheduled for June 24, 2003.

City staff recommends City Council adopt the Fiscal Year 2003/2004 budget schedule.

Vice-Mayor Bellamy asked that consideration be given to the weekend of January 31-February 1 for the Annual Retreat. City Manager Westbrook said that the Retreat Committee would be meeting next week and they would take that request into consideration.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place these items on the next formal City Council agenda.

DOWNTOWN SOCIAL ISSUES TASK FORCE

- Chair of the Downtown Commission Carol King said that over the past year, the Downtown Commission has brought in local expert on issues such as homelessness and had discussions about graffiti, loitering and the panhandling downtown. They have come to understand that these problems are very complex and that the state budget cuts to the mental health system, as well as many factors, are contributing to the increase of these problems in our center city.

As a result of their research and discussions, they propose the formation of a Downtown Social Issues Task Force that would bring together stakeholders from a broad range of interested organizations, to deal with these issues in a positive, coordinated, and comprehensive fashion. They have received a great amount of support and interest in this effort and have gathered several letters of support. She presented Council with a list of interested organizations that have been contacted that would be willing to work on such a Task Force. She invited Council members to be a part of the Task Force if they wish.

Ms. King said that a lot of research has been done nationwide on this issue and the Task Force will define the issues and then come up with well-researched and well thought-out solutions for Council consideration. She anticipated approximately six months before coming back to Council with the well-defined problem.

The Task Force will complement the legal tools provided by the recently adopted amendment to the solicitation ordinance.

Upon inquiry of Councilman Mumpower, Ms. King said that City resources needed would be primarily from the City Development Division.

Ms. King responded to various questions from Council regarding a mental health plan for our community and the possibility of merchants putting up boxes in their stores for the homeless.

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It was the consensus of Council to endorse the Downtown Social Issues Task Force and that the Asheville Downtown Commission take the lead in submitting to Council a suggested list of participants and a leader. Said Task Force can then brainstorm to define what they feel their charge is and then bring that information back to Council for their input and/or approval.

UPDATE ON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION EXPANSION

- Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator Dan Baechtold said that this is a presentation to City Council on the expansion of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are part of a federal process to conduct local transportation planning in urbanized areas. An MPO is required in every urbanized area over 50,000 in population in order to receive federal funding for transportation. The MPO process is a partnership between local and state government to make decisions about transportation planning in urbanized areas and to meet planning requirements established by federal authorizing legislation for transportation funding.

The Asheville Area MPO is made up of two primary committees: a policy-making group of elected officials known as the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC); and the Technical Coordinating Committee, made up of staff from various agencies. Councilwoman Holly Jones and Councilman Brian Peterson are the City of Asheville representatives on the TAC. The TAC is responsible for making decisions related to transportation plans and improvement priorities in the MPO area. The City of Asheville staff serves as the lead planning agency for the MPO, and receives federal funding to conduct transportation planning and administer the MPO.

Every ten years the MPO boundary must be redefined based on the results of the U.S. Census. In the spring of this year,

the Federal Highway Administration and the North Carolina Dept. of Transportation directed the MPO to expand the boundary to include municipalities in Henderson and Haywood Counties based on the results of the 2000 Census. This change is part of an established federal process to redefine urban areas and MPO boundaries that occurs every ten years.

The MPO currently has eight member governments: Asheville, Buncombe County, Biltmore Forest, Black Mountain, Fletcher, Montreat, Weaverville, and Woodfin. At a minimum, eight new member governments will be added to the MPO based on the census results. They are: Haywood County, Clyde, Canton, Waynesville, Henderson County, Hendersonville, Laurel Park, and Flat Rock. In addition, the Town of Maggie Valley is likely to be added. The expansion will involve a restructuring of the MPO and the agreements that establish the MPO. There will be new members of the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordinating Committee, a new voting structure, new procedures, and a new name for the MPO.

The North Carolina Dept. of Transportation has asked the MPO to proceed with expansion of the MPO according to the following schedule:

January 2003	-	Establish New MPO Boundary
July 2003	-	Adopt New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
August 2003	-	New TAC Members in Place

In order to meet the schedule outlined above, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) established a working group of staff from all of the involved local governments to plan the MPO expansion. The committee cooperatively drew a draft boundary for the expanded MPO.

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According to federal guidelines, the draft boundary must include all contiguous areas defined as urbanized, as well as any adjacent areas expected to be urban in the next 20 years.

All of the municipalities and counties in the expanded MPO area will be asked to comment on the draft boundary. The TCC will make adjustments to the boundary based on these comments. In January, the TAC will be asked to adopt the new boundary for the MPO.

No action is required from City Council at this time. City Council may choose to formally or informally provide input on the boundary or other MPO issues directly to the TAC or through the Asheville representatives on the TAC. In the spring of 2003, the Asheville City Council will be asked to sign a revised Memorandum of Understanding between all of the governments in the MPO. The MOU will establish voting procedures and membership of the TCC and TAC. The possibility of weighted voting based on population will receive a lot of discussion. Weighted voting on the TAC may be affected somewhat by the location of the MPO boundary. The process of establishing a new MOU will take place after the new boundary is established in January.

It should also be noted that the State of North Carolina is in the process of establishing Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) for transportation all across the state. These RPOs will be responsible for transportation planning outside of the metropolitan areas. Currently there is a discussion between Buncombe, Madison, Transylvania and Haywood Counties to form an RPO in this region. Henderson County has also been offered the option to join the RPO. The MPO will work closely with the new RPO on the location of the boundary and other coordination issues.

Upon inquiry of Councilman Peterson, City Engineer Cathy Ball said that the lead planning agency is not being negotiated with this new Memorandum of Understanding.

Councilman Peterson lead the discussion of the draft boundary preferring that the boundary be kept tighter around the municipalities. He felt that having a tighter boundary would lend towards more intensive urbanized planning.

It was the consensus of Council that the boundary be tightened than what is proposed.

BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR FILM FESTIVAL IN NOVEMBER 2003

Mr. David Mitchell, Superintendent of Cultural Affairs, said that this is the consideration of a budget amendment, in the amount of \$28,250, to the Parks and Recreation Festival Enterprise fund to allow for the production of the inaugural Asheville Film Festival.

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In connection with the Asheville Film Commission, the Cultural Arts Division has been researching the implementation of a film festival for the Asheville area. This event will draw a national audience, have a positive economic impact to the area, and generate revenue for the enterprise fund. The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting an amendment of \$28,250 to the Festival Enterprise Fund to begin planning and implementation of this event. Projected initial sponsorship sales of \$28,250 will offset this cost by the close of the Fiscal Year 2002-03.

Mr. Mitchell then explained how the film industry directly supports caterers, restaurants, transportation, innkeepers, hotels, motels, pre-production, post-production, advertising, print and television business. Over the last four years, direct revenue from feature film industry totals \$20,000,000.

The Asheville Parks and Recreation Department recommends approval of this request and the support of City Council in establishing the Asheville Film Festival.

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Upon inquiry of Councilman Dunn, Director of Parks & Recreation Irby Brinson said that we need opportunities like this to make revenue for the Festival Fund to continue with other projects and to work down the in-direct costs.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place this item on the next formal City Council agenda.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

It was the consensus of City Council to instruct the City Clerk to prepare the proper paperwork to appoint Debora Holmes-Young as Chair to the ABC Board and to appoint Thomas R. Bell as a member.

It was the consensus of City Council to have the City Clerk prepare the proper paperwork to appoint Ray Sanow, Michael Rangel, Stephen Lutz and Diedra Smith to the Asheville Film Commission.

CLOSED SESSION

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At 4:37 p.m., Councilman Peterson moved to go into closed session to establish or to instruct the City's staff concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price or other material terms of a contract for the acquisition of real estate. The statutory authorization is contained in N. C. Gen. Stat. 143-318.11(a) (5). This motion was seconded by Councilman Dunn and carried unanimously.

At 5:25 p.m., Councilman Dunn moved to come out of closed session. This motion was seconded by Councilman Ellis and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Worley adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

