

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANFORD
SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

The City Council met at the Sanford Municipal Center, 225 E. Weatherspoon Street, on Tuesday, January 2, 2007, at 1:00 P.M. The following people were present:

Mayor Cornelia P. Olive	Council Member Steve Brewer
Mayor Pro Tem Walter H. McNeil, Jr.	Council Member James G. Williams
Council Member Joseph Martin	Council Member Mike Stone
City Manager Leonard Barefoot	City Clerk Bonnie D. White

Absent:

Council Member Linwood S. Mann, Sr.
Council Member Dan Harrington
City Attorney Susan C. Patterson

Mayor Olive called the meeting to order and delivered the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Council Member Steve Brewer, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Walter McNeil, Jr., the agenda was approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

Consider a Request to Install Fire Hydrants in the Creekwood Subdivision – (Exhibit A)

Civil Engineer II Brent Johnson advised that the Creekwood Subdivision Homeowners' Association approached the Engineering Department about adding eleven fire hydrants to their waterline system in their neighborhood. The Engineering Department agreed to help them out with the project. The City bid the project, and the low bidder was Sandhills Contractors with a bid of \$49,500. The Homeowners' Association would like to transfer the money to the City following approval of the ordinance amending the annual operating budget in the amount of \$49,500. The City would administer the contract through construction inspection and pay requests. Council Member Mike Stone advised that he had spoken with City Manager Leonard Barefoot, and Mr. Barefoot assured him that if the contract exceeded \$49,500, the Creekwood Subdivision Homeowners' Association would pay the remaining costs.

- Consider Ordinance Amending the Annual Operating Budget of the City of Sanford FY 2006-2007 – (Exhibit B)

Mayor Pro Tem Walter McNeil made the motion to adopt the Ordinance Amending the Annual Operating Budget of the City of Sanford FY 2006-2007. Seconded by Council Member Steve Brewer, the motion carried unanimously.

Voluntary Contiguous Annexation Petition Received Under G.S. 160A-31 - of Approximately 2.31 Acres of Property Owned by Albert Adcock, and Located Approximately 750 Linear Feet South of the Intersection of Amos Bridges Road (SR 1420) and Brady Road (SR 1468)

Planner I Elizabeth Whitmore explained that the Certificate of Sufficiency has been

received by the clerk and the resolution sets the date of the public hearing for January 16, 2007, at 7:00 P.M.

- Receive Certificate of Sufficiency - (Exhibit C)
City Clerk Bonnie White verified the Certificate of Sufficiency.
- Consider Resolution Fixing Date of Public Hearing on Question of Annexation Pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 – (Exhibit D)
Council Member Joseph Martin made the motion to adopt the Resolution Fixing Date of Public Hearing on Question of Annexation Pursuant to G.S. 160A-31 for January 16, 2007. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Walter McNeil, Jr., the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT – (Exhibit E)

No individual signed up to speak.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Member Mike Stone commented that Waste Management did an excellent job picking up the trash in the neighborhoods over the holidays. He rode through West Sanford and his neighborhood to see if the trash was picked up properly and it was.

Council Member Williams clarified a comment that he made at Council's last meeting. He thanked Clint Pickard for the fine job he did auctioning the house on Bragg Street, and he forgot to mention Joe Johnson, who owns the auction company. He apologized for the error.

Depot Park Building

Mayor Olive stated that she received a letter from Kathy Woodell, who is almost the outgoing president of the Sanford Area Association of Realtors. She read the letter listed as (Exhibit F) which is as follows:

“Thank you for your call of December 1, 2006. I asked you to call at your convenience to see if we could negotiate the price of the Depot Park. We have been talking about these same two figures for years. The Sanford Area Association of Realtors is asking \$250,000 and the City of Sanford has offered \$172,000. You reiterated to me the city could not and would not go any higher. You also told me that the council had recently had a closed session and decided to move on to other things. We respect that. We are glad to keep the building. Thank you for your time and effort.”

Mayor Olive stated that when Council Member Steve Brewer and she met the Board of Directors of the Board of Realtors, they asked them at that time if they were interested in selling the Depot and if they were not, the city would move on to other things. Mayor Olive said that in her most recent discussions, she had not said that we would move on to other things. She said she thought it was essential that we move forward, hopefully with the city's purchase of the Depot because the building is in need of repairs that will best be addressed soon. Mayor Olive said that this is a tremendous disappointment, because we have devoted a lot of time, effort,

energy, and money to Depot Park, and we wanted to complete that by purchasing the Depot and hoping to restore it to its historical significance.

Council Member Steve Brewer asked if we ever received a letter from them, after we made an offer to them, saying how much they wanted for it. Mayor Olive replied no. Mr. Brewer said this is the first time he had heard of \$250,000 that they say they have come to us with. Mr. Brewer stated that we have received no correspondence at all that he is aware of. Mayor Olive stated that as far as she understood it, when she was first elected, there had been an offer from the city of one amount and a figure from the Board of Realtors for another amount. This \$172,000 the city offered was essentially a midpoint because the city had it appraised and they had it appraised. Council Member Martin said he had not heard of a firm price of what they wanted for the building. Mayor Olive said this is the first time there has been anything in writing, and we had asked for a letter after that meeting because she wanted to be certain what we provided, we provided our offer in writing. Mayor Olive explained that at that time, based on the decision by the Council, Council agreed that they could remain there for one year rent free. She said that we provided them with a list of every property the City owns, discussing the possibility of a trade or the value of the land deducted from the selling price, and that we were willing to be flexible in anything that we could do. She had contact with certain members of the board, including Mrs. Woodell. During their initial conversation, she was told that they were looking at the Wright Building located at the intersection of Third Street close to Horner Boulevard and was told that it was over \$300,000, and they needed us to raise our offer. They were also looking at the Blue House in Jonesboro and Helen's Florist on Hawkins Avenue. One reason they had seemed interested in our purchase was that they said they did not need as much room as they had, and they knew the city was going to restore the building. Mayor Olive thought we had given them so many options and stayed as flexible as we could to be fair. She said when they met at one point, one of the members of the board told her that they needed more money to be able to buy another building. Mayor Olive pointed out to them that this is not the way realtors normally do business to say, "This is the big building I want, so you have to give me more for mine." She said you have to sell it for what it is worth. Mayor Olive said that their research on the sale prices in that area in the months before showed that one of the completely remodeled buildings had sold for \$70 per square foot. At \$172,000, we were offering \$70 per square foot, which is more than generous in her estimation; she noted that we also restored it with tax money.

Council Member Stone commented that his biggest thought of going through this process, which has no bearing on this situation, is the fact the building was originally purchased for around \$40,000 plus. Our appraisal came in at \$165,000 and dealing with the taxpayers' monies, we have been more than fair and generous in trying to obtain this property. The \$250,000 is too much for the property being it is taxpayers' monies. He would like to revisit it, but sooner or later someone is going to have to come back down to earth. Until then, he thinks it is an unobtainable piece of property. Council Member Martin said he agreed with Mr. Stone. Hopefully, with new leadership coming in and when everything settles down, negotiations can be reopened.

Mayor Pro Tem McNeil said the longer they wait to do something with the building, the more the building will deteriorate and the more it will cost the buyer to fix it up.

Council Member Martin said that when he gets around a lot of the realtors they feel it would be great for the city to have that building; however, when it comes time for something to happen, there are a few people who are maybe trying to bind this up. Mr. Martin asked if Council can go to a meeting with the realtors. City Manager Barefoot replied that Council can direct a letter be written to the president of the Board of Realtors and ask if it is possible that Council meet with the full membership. It will be up to them. Council Member Brewer stated that he was told that it went before the full board and after the mayor and he met with them, they voted to get another appraiser to come in and get another appraisal and send the city a new offer. That was the last he heard second hand from a realtor.

City Manager Barefoot said he felt it was important from the city's perspective; Depot Park is essentially the birth place of our community and we developed this park around the Depot. The Depot can exist in private hands; however, one hundred years from now it would be better for that building to be in the hands of the public. There are grant funds available to restore buildings, and Mayor Olive has photographs around the state showing Depots that have been restored. It is an important issue. Mayor Olive said that Sanford appears to be on the precipice of a tremendous growth spurt like no other time in history. We are doing everything we can as a city to prepare our infrastructure to be ready for that spurt to hit. We want harmony with everybody who plays a serious role in this growth, and it would be good to have that harmony with the Board of Realtors.

Mayor Pro Tem McNeil made the motion to direct the city manager to forward a letter to the Board of Realtors requesting a meeting between the full membership of the Board of Realtors and the full City Council to talk further about the purchase of the building. Seconded by Council Member Joseph Martin, the motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Manager Leonard Barefoot advised Council that, on the city's behalf, Attorney Patterson went to the swearing-in ceremony and reception for the new district attorney in Smithfield, North Carolina.

Mayor Olive asked if Attorney Patterson can send a letter to our legislators asking that our request that the judicial district be divided with Johnston County in one district and Harnett County and Lee County in a separate district. The legislators will be sworn in soon and ready to go.

City Manager Barefoot reminded Council that its next meeting will be held two weeks from today on January 16, at 7 P.M. We have scheduled a Council work session on January 31, at 1 P.M., in the West End Conference Room. In response to a couple of initiatives regarding property the City owns, staff will be prepared to go over this list and whether it is disposable or not. If Council has other items to be considered, please let him know.

ALL EXHIBITS CONTAINED HEREIN ARE HEREBY INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND MADE A PART OF THESE MINUTES.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned on motion of Council Member Steve Brewer; seconded by Council Member James Williams, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

CORNELIA P. OLIVE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BONNIE D. WHITE, CITY CLERK