

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

The City Council held its budget workshop at the Sanford Municipal Center, 225 E. Weatherspoon Street, on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, at 1:00 P.M. The following people were present:

Mayor Cornelia P. Olive	Council Member James G. Williams
Mayor Pro Tem Sam Gaskins	Council Member Walter H. McNeil, Jr.
Council Member Linwood Mann, Sr.	Council Member L.I. "Poly" Cohen
Council Member Bob Brown	Budget Analyst Cindy O'Quinn
City Manager Hal Hegwer	Financial Services Director Melissa Cardinali
City Clerk Bonnie D. White	City Attorney Susan C. Patterson

Absent:

Council Member Charles Taylor

Mayor Olive called the meeting to order. Mayor Olive said that she would talk about the four projects that were not included in the budget to prioritize so that staff will know how to fund these projects in the proposed budget, or not include them in this budget. The projects for discussion are the Skateboard Park; Endor Iron Furnace Trail Extension; Jonesboro Parking Lot; and the Downtown Streetscape Enhancement. Mayor Olive said she had one other item she wanted to bring up also.

Council Member Cohen said that he would like to know what our revenue projections are and the amount of the fund balance at the end of this fiscal year before discussion of the projects. Financial Services Director Melissa Cardinali advised that the anticipated available fund balance at the end of this year is \$9.7 million or 38.79 percent. Mr. Hegwer added that this is what you would expect for a city our size. Mrs. Cardinali advised that when the Local Government Commission looks at our fund balance, they compare it to cities our size; when it drops below that, you start getting letters. Mrs. Cardinali advised that the State says that they do not want it to fall below 8 percent, which is one month, but there is no State recommendation on what it should be. The Local Government Commission says that each unit needs to decide for itself what its needs are but they do compare you to similar cities. You would want to have enough cash to cover expenditures in the case of a disaster, in addition to your daily cash flow. For example, when the tornado hit Sanford a month ago, we had to have enough cash up front to clear the debris, etc., even though FEMA will reimburse us. If we would drop to 14 percent, we would have a notice from the State Treasurer's office, because 38 percent is going to be about as low in the neighborhood as we want to go compared to cities our size. Mr. Hegwer stated that we will know what our fund balance is at the end of this fiscal year, probably in November, with our end-of-year audit. Mr. Hegwer advised that staff expects an increase in revenues this coming year.

Skate Park

Mayor Olive asked to start the discussion about the skateboard park because we need to know what size we want it to be. General Services Manager Tim Shaw presented Council Members with renderings (Exhibit A) of what the landscape architect has prepared and a cost estimate of the probable

costs (Exhibit B) ranging from low, average, to high. Mayor Olive said she would like to know from the council members if they want restroom facilities at the park, or do we want to construct it in stages, etc.

Mr. Hegwer advised that it is possible that we could consider funding it out of our fund balance, but it depends on the other projects also. It depends on what type of favorable interest rates are available, timing, and the length of payback.

Mr. Shaw referred to the rendering drew by the architect with parking, bathroom facilities, lighting, the skate park area, etc. Staff has gone to the State and gotten some things straightened out such as we will not have to have a sedimentation pond based on the size of the park. Staff has talked with the Department of Transportation and we have an okay for where we are proposing the location of the driveway. He has had some discussion with the general public in the area, namely the church. He has received positive and negatives comments from everybody. The church would like to see that it is like an urban park area, not just a slab of concrete with skate park devices on it. They do like the proximity to the Police Department. They like the rendering he showed them with trees, benches, picnic tables, restrooms, etc. However, they are concerned with the noise particularly on Wednesday nights and who will be there. He has made it a point on multiple occasions to go by the site the skate boarders use now and talked with skaters who are local and some from Harnett County. He asked for their input and gave the skate park renderings to the skaters that Council Members have. Mr. Shaw did not give them a copy of the price estimate. Mr. Shaw asked for them to get back with him and provide him with information as to what they would like to see in this park. However, he has received no response to date. One of the kids emailed him and said they want to talk with other skaters and they will get back in touch with him. Mr. Shaw emailed him two weeks ago and still has not heard anything from him.

Mr. Shaw advised that he has pursued through other sources for participation in the funding but has not heard from those individuals either. He is not getting a lot of public input into it as to what they want in a park. Mr. Shaw stated that the way to build this park is to get the kids involved to help raise money. He told this to the kids in Harnett County.

Mr. Shaw stated that the rendering of the park is beautiful and it can be built in phases. You can build just the skate park but where are the kids going to use the bathroom. If you build the restrooms, shelter facility, walkways, parking lot, and leave off the skatepark, they will not come. He felt in the long run, it should be built as a complete unit at one time, because when you start the grading for the parking lot, the grading has a bearing on the grading for the skate park itself. The estimate Council has covers everything. The estimate used for the skate park apparatuses is between \$150,000 and \$300,000. There are contingencies on it because we do not know what the prices will be. Staff has talked with several suppliers of skate park equipment with American Ramp, Spohn Ranch and with a guy out of the Dare County area who builds concrete skate parks. When you start looking at which kind of skate park to build, most are built with concrete. Spohn Ranch will tell you to use prefabricated pieces that you bring and set on site. The literature he has received so far from other companies say that concrete is the way to go. Mr. Shaw said that the cost estimate sheet lists ranges from low, average, and high; somewhere in the range of \$800,000 to \$1 million. The range depends upon what council would like to have at the park. Mayor Olive said that she feels this is not something she ever intended to look at - figures like this - because we have so many needs in Sanford

now that need to be addressed. She said she felt like if we do not do it piecemeal, although there is a master plan, this is something that will never happen. She did not feel that people want to commit this kind of resources to a park that would not serve any more people than it does, although we want it to be nice.

Council Member Linwood Mann asked if anyone has consulted with Lee County to see if they will help share in the expense, since it is recreation. Mr. Hegwer replied that they talked with the County about a year ago and the County was looking at a skate park facility in the future and that is when we made the decision to budget \$75,000 to look at it. Mr. Hegwer said we are not looking at this from a recreation perspective; we are looking at it in a park perspective. It would be an extension of this neighborhood park. Mr. Mann was concerned about how many people will use this park because it is going to cost a lot of money. Mr. Shaw did not know. They discussed applying for grants in the future from Tony Hawk, Playful City, and NFL.

Council Member Sam Gaskins said that it will cost \$100,000 for bathroom facilities; the drop-in skate park equipment is another \$150,000 before you do the ground preparation, which will be another \$120,000. Before any exterior improvements are made along with signage and other things, we are looking at about \$300,000 just to get the skate park and restroom facilities in there. This is just a starting point. If we do it in steps, our first step has to be a commitment of about \$300,000. Mr. Shaw stated that it could cost between \$400,000 to \$500,000 for those minimal things. Mr. Gaskins said he was using the minimum price on the cost estimate sheet. Mr. Gaskins asked what the alternatives are other than concrete. Mr. Shaw replied steel, wood, and polymers. Mr. Shaw stated that concrete would be the least maintenance. The material that is used the most now is poured-in-place concrete.

After discussing the project at length, it was the consensus of Council to budget \$350,000 for the skatepark. Mr. Hegwer said that when the project is bid, it could cost more or less.

#### Endor Iron Furnace Greenway Trail

Community Development Director Bob Bridwell informed Council that the next phase of the trail would be to extend it from Kiwanis Park on Wicker Street, cross near the Reeves' property, extend it to behind the UNC Dialysis Office, and will cross over to the hospital at Fields Drive. It will cost approximately \$50,000 to design this next phase. Mr. Bridwell felt we would not be charged for any easements. He said the real expense will come as we extend it down Carthage Street in front of the hospital. It will be asphalt or concrete and will be very wide. This is where the real design work and heavy costs will be. He is hoping to tie this into the City's proposal for the Medical Village as a therapeutic trail. It was the consensus of Council to include \$50,000 in next year's budget to design the next phase of the greenway.

#### Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

Mayor Olive said she did not want this plan to be placed on a shelf and it could be done in increments. She asked Mr. Bridwell if he had a recommendation as to what Council should look at first in the Downtown Streetscape Plan. Council Member McNeil asked Mayor Olive what is the status of the Wilrik Hotel being purchased by the Sanford Housing Authority. Mayor Olive replied that she spoke with Mr. Armstrong this past Saturday and they will be getting together to discuss the status; it is still in the works. Mr. McNeill said that would help with the development of Downtown.

If the Housing Authority purchases the building, they will probably put \$100,000 or more into upgrading the façade.

Mr. Bridwell said that in looking at the recommendations which were given to Council by DSI during the retreat, that the Depot building is their number one priority. He said that we seem to be always stuck at the Depot Building. He thinks once you move around it, you start looking at things that make other things happen in Downtown. The number one thing is parking. Parking is the one roadblock that is keeping people from investing or improving the things they need to do. With this particular issue, he focuses on the proposal Council has had before them of a municipal parking lot behind the Buggy Factory as being very critical. He looks at clearing the interior block that is where the Auction House is and creating that interior environment. This is one reason why Council will be visiting Concord to look at how you deal with interior block renovations. He is looking at the opportunity of acquiring a small piece of property next to Capital Bank. The other area he would focus on is the streetscape improvements that have a very high impact that are very visible: the bump outs, the street lighting, etc. He said he would start with the parking first and a quick plan to do the streetscape improvements behind it. The way-finding signage is also a high priority as well. One of the reasons it should be a high priority is that Downtown is no different than any other shopping center. If you want to attract businesses into a shopping center, you have to have all the things they look for which are: to park easily; to be able to find the things they want; and a pleasant environment.

Mayor Olive added that she did not know if the Auction House would be for sale or not. She said she has heard people say there is adequate parking Downtown, it is just that people do not want to walk anywhere; they want to park in front of the store they want to visit; however, they will go to a shopping center and walk the equivalent of two blocks.

Mayor Olive stated that Mr. Hegwer and she have talked about having some beautification efforts done on Horner Boulevard. If we do not look good on Horner Boulevard, there is not much of an incentive to turn into our Downtown area. We would also need the appropriate signage. Mr. Bridwell said that is why DSI has said that signage is a major priority.

Mayor Olive said that she talked with somebody from Benson yesterday regarding how clean their town is. She asked him what the secret is to getting people committed to having clean yards, etc. He mentioned to her about what they have done in their Downtown. She said the Town of Benson started a very small program of incentives. If someone was going to spend as much as \$3,000 on an upgrade on their property downtown, the City would give them a \$500 incentive (they would pay them back the \$500). If they do as much as \$10,000, they get tax credits. He said that right now they have a 90 percent occupancy rate in their stores downtown. They invested less than \$50,000 overall and the upgrades in the properties downtown has increased by \$250,000 during that time; they started with \$7,500 in an incentive program. She said this would be a positive thing to work with our downtown property owners to get them to do things. Mr. Hegwer said we can look at this issue and come back with something later. He would like to give Council Members a copy of the Downtown Streetscape Program to talk about it at the next budget workshop. Council Member Gaskins said he would like to see a copy of Benson's incentive package.

### Jonesboro Parking Lot

General Services Director Tim Shaw advised that the old house on the property the City has purchased for a parking lot in Jonesboro has not yet been removed. There is about 20,000 square feet for the parking lot which is about 50 parking spaces. No design work has been done. Each parking space will cost approximately \$2,500 to \$3,000; it will cost between \$150,000 to \$200,000 to construct the parking lot. It would be great that when it is built, to go to the old railroad track location close to the Foundry and start a sidewalk at that end of the parking lot, take it to Lee Avenue, and tie it in to the Lee Avenue sidewalk with street lighting.

### Webpage and Rack Cards

Mayor Olive said that we had \$15,000 in the budget this year for promotional items for Sanford. She informed Council that we have engaged Chip Pate to work with us and he has done a mock up for the first one. This is for rack cards to go to the airport and the welcome centers coming into North Carolina. A rack card has to be a certain size and texture so that they will stand up in the racks. On one side it has pictures of different things we have going on in Sanford and on the other side, it lists several months of activities that are available. We have a lot to put on the card and this will be encouragement for people that visit Sanford to know what there is here to do. One of the things that Bob Bridwell brought up at their last meeting was if we are going to look at having some type of promotion for Sanford, we need to have it be uniform. They discussed the possibility of having a web page that is designed and maintained by our IT staff. It would be designed by someone who does these professionally. We need to examine what we want to do; be in control of it; and promote ourselves. If we have a rack card with certain pictures on it, certain colors and a certain look, then we want that on our webpage so that when someone looks at it, they will identify all of it with the same thing. We will have enough in the budget to do the rack cards. Mr. Hegwer advised there is \$8,000 included in this year's budget to continue this effort. When people go to the Chamber of Commerce, it will be something for them to hand out to show what activities are available in Sanford for them to do for entertainment.

Council Member Sam Gaskins added that this is one of those things he would like to see; however, he is bothered by the possibility of leaving someone out. He was wondering, along those lines, if we had some nominal charge because we have so many things that Sanford does offer and leaving someone out would be our problem, unless you charge them a fee to make sure they are included, such as the Temple Theatre, Pottery Festival, etc. At least if someone is left out, we can say for \$100 you could be included so that we have some type of commitment on the part of those people and help defray some part of the cost; it also means we do not wind up saying who gets included and who does not. Mayor Olive said that we would have to set a standard as to who would get listed because people may want to put a bake sale or whatever on the schedule and we have to have it to appeal to a lot of people.

Council Member Linwood Mann asked if we have discussed the Welcome Sign on the 421 Bypass recently. Mayor Olive replied no. She commented that the improvements to the sign across from Lee Builder Mart look great. Mr. Shaw stated that they replaced the fence from a five-foot high fence with a four-foot high fence. They are looking at trying to put a solar light on that sign. The Sanford Well-Centered Sign at Highway 87 has been redone. It has not been landscaped yet. With reference to Mr. Mann's question, Mr. Hegwer said Mr. Mann has been driving to other places and he

felt some of our signs are not quite what they need to be. Mr. Hegwer added that this will be on Law and Finance for next week.

Other Business

Mayor Olive said that the cleanup on Charlotte Avenue between Third and Seventh Streets on Saturday went great. Over 200 people came to help including Mr. Hegwer, Karen Kennedy and Bob Bridwell. With the help of New Hope Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, and St. Stephen's Catholic Church and some of the residents in the area, they cleaned up that neighborhood. There were 27 houses that were affected in some way whether it was painting, replacing some boards, landscaping, etc. She has received a lot of calls complimenting the work that was done. She wants to establish another cleanup in the fall. The Historic District also cleaned up in their neighborhood on the same day. She plans to contact Kate Rumely to see if she can recommend another neighborhood that we can look at so we can have two neighborhoods going at the same time. Mayor Olive said that the materials were donated and she plans to invite the sponsors to a Council meeting so they can be publicly recognized for their donation.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member James Williams made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Linwood Mann, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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CORNELIA P. OLIVE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BONNIE D. WHITE, CITY CLERK