

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

The City Council held the second session of its annual retreat at the Sanford Municipal Center in the West Conference Room in Sanford, North Carolina on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 at 8:30 A.M. The following people were present:

Mayor Cornelia P. Olive  
Mayor Pro Tem Sam Gaskins  
Council Member Jimmy Haire  
Council Member Rebecca Wyhof  
City Manager Hal Hegwer  
City Attorney Susan Patterson  
Deputy City Clerk Janice Cox

Council Member Charles Taylor  
Council Member Poly Cohen  
Council Member Walter McNeil, Jr.  
(Left at 10:20)  
Council Member James Williams  
(Arrived at 8:45)

Absent:  
City Clerk Bonnie White

Mayor Cornelia Olive called the meeting to order.

Greenway and Medical Village Plan – (Exhibit A)

Community Development Director Bob Bridwell stated that in 2005, the City began looking at ways to enhance our land use planning process and provide more detailed land-use plans. One way is to look at specific strategies that the City could use to enhance its development of existing facilities. Beginning that process, they looked at various areas of the City considered assets.

Downtown Sanford is one such asset. Mr. Bridwell stated that with minimum effort Downtown enhancements would make the City more valuable in presenting it in a certain way. However, that is not the only area of the City where that is true. Another such area is around the hospital. Development in that area has been haphazard, and there is a lot of vacant land. Mr. Bridwell discussed a proposed planned Medical Village Municipal Service District for this area, and a “Value Added Assessment Model” was developed.

The economic value added to the area as a consequence of this kind of development includes: enhancing marketability; creating efficiencies; expanding market demands; and creating wealth (market value, jobs, investments, sales).

The physical value or built environment would be improved as a consequence of this project by enhancing capacity (density, traffic volume, utilities, service area); accommodating growth (population, customers/patients, activities); and improving environmental quality (water, air, visual, etc.).

The social value added as a consequence of this project would involve improvements to the quality of life criteria including health and well being; cultural availability and accessibility; education quality; housing and neighborhood conditions; and creative and aesthetic opportunities.

Mr. Bridwell discussed the conceptual ideas included in Exhibit A together with before pictures and conceptual drawings to depict after improvements. Included were a current view and a planned future view of the Intersection of Carthage and KM Wicker Memorial/Fields Drive, together with a complete street profile and a schematic view of the intersection; a current view and a planned future view with pedestrian crossing to planned greenway extension across Carthage Street; and a view of the existing medical village and a depiction of the proposed medical village municipal service district, together with the proposed medical village discussed in November 2006.

Mr. Bridwell noted the danger in crossing the street at the intersection of Carthage and KM Wicker Memorial/Fields Drive and how the planned improvements would help that. Mr. Hegwer noted there is a village of medical facilities developed there. Mr. Bridwell stated that the same standards used for Downtown were planned for the medical village concept. He responded to Council's questions. Some grants may be available for the greenway. Mr. Hegwer thought there may be some CDBG funds available because the area connects the medical facilities and neighborhoods and public housing. Mr. Bridwell stated that it could be possible to treat the medical village the same as we do Downtown. That is, to have a municipal service district in our medical village area where they can raise taxes and do things for themselves. If the property owners chose to this and petitioned council, they could create a municipal service district with their own tax rate and own assessment. He stated that the City could do a lot of things on Carthage Street and Fields Drive, but the areas connecting the hospital are private facilities. If they want to make enhancements there, they will have to find ways to do that. One way is for them to tax and assess themselves and they can put in sidewalks, speed bumps, etc.

Mr. Bridwell stated that the hospital administration likes the idea, but in order for it to go further, Bob Heuts will need to be involved and we will have to go to the property owners and determine what they think. The City will have to inform them that this plan will enhance their property values; could make their property more developable and attractive; and thus more marketable. Existing property owners are listed in Exhibit A. Mr. Bridwell stated that the area has \$51 million in assessed value. He stated there were several ways to go about financing enhancements. One way is to put in a tax that would go away after the project (such as putting in sidewalks) was paid for. There could also be an assessment or a bond.

Mr. Bridwell stated the importance of support from the hospital. Mr. Hegwer stated that he believes the greenway will spur some interest in the project. Council Member McNeil expressed concern about rehab and housing values going down around the medical park pulling down the value. Mr. Bridwell responded that some homeowners there now have difficulty getting buyers interested in buying their homes. Mr. Bridwell explained that with the medical park adjacent to the homes, the value in the older homes

becomes the redevelopment value. He stated that a strategy would need to be in place to handle that situation. Circle Drive is included in the redevelopment area. Council Member McNeil stated when you get dilapidated neighborhoods like that, you find a lot of people drifting through the area, and you have a lot of vandalism and break-ins.

Mr. Bridwell stated that he would really like to know if Council has enough interest in this project for them to continue to work on this project. Council Member Rebecca Wyhof stated that it would fit in well with the retirement community idea. Mr. Hegwer thought there might be some participation for the greenway from the medical facilities. Mayor Olive stated that the response on the state level had been very good. Mr. Bridwell has received positive responses from civic groups.

Mr. Bridwell stated that they had been approached by the Rotary Club a couple of years ago about their interest in a gazebo facility (Exhibit B) for people to stop to rest, for a gathering point, or for a staging area, etc. They have been provided a few designs. The Rotary Club has dedicated \$50,000 to a project on the greenway. Kirk Bradley has donated land for the facility. They are ready to go with the \$50,000 for the gazebo and a trail coming down to it. They are talking to the City about a waterline to the facility, putting a fountain in, and a parking lot. The waterline is estimated to cost \$29,000 and the parking lot is estimated to cost \$51,000. Mr. Hegwer stated they were looking for our help with those. It is to be named in the honor of Don Buie. Mr. Bridwell stated that as we move forward asking for funding from the state/federal, this private practice partnership will help. Mr. Hegwer stated that the City would make an effort to have police on the trail, but they could not be there twenty-four hours a day.

Mr. Hegwer stated that the Council has a choice. We can do nothing; tell them we won't fund it; try to fund it this year; or wait and budget it next year. Council Member Gaskins stated we should get the water to them, but was not sure about paying for the parking lot initially. Council Member McNeil agreed about getting the water to them. Council Member Williams stated that if we can afford it, it should be done. Council Member Cohen agreed to fund it. Council Member Taylor stated there was a problem with hearing about this now and having to make a quick decision.

Mr. Hegwer stated that the money could be taken from the Utility Fund, or if Council prefers, the General Fund. Financial Services Director Melissa Cardinali stated that it would be easier to put it in the budget and be able to account for it later. Mr. Hegwer agreed it could be put in the budget and Council can evaluate it along with all the other requests they have. Mr. McNeil stated that providing this would be an amenity for the City of Sanford. Mayor Olive stated that Mr. Bridwell could let the Rotary Club know that the project is being viewed favorably.

#### Economic Development Council (EDC) – (Exhibit C)

EDC Director Bob Heuts stated that what Mr. Bridwell had gone into with the Greenway project is a clear quality-of-life issue. It is important to people as they come here to look at this community. Add to that the idea of a medical village with a projected tax base of about \$50 million. Future growth in jobs will be in health. This project will

make an impression on doctors who are considering coming here and on developers, too. Mr. Heuts stated he would concentrate today on some of the real opportunities available.

Legal Basis—Mr. Heuts explained that there is a statute (GS 158-7.1) that drives what cities and counties can do relative to economic development such as acquire land; develop land; hold land for future development purposes; acquire options; construct buildings; extend utilities; engage in preparation of industrial properties or facilities. Any appropriations relative to economic development require public hearings.

Structure--About \$260,000 is now being paid to EDC through the City of Sanford, Lee County, and the Town of Broadway.

Mission – The mission is to create wealth for Lee County and its citizens through jobs and investment. Mr. Heuts stated that with the economy as it is today, he is looking for jobs—putting people to work, even if salaries are not as high as would be preferred.

Process – EDC works with existing businesses that are looking for opportunities to expand to determine how we can help them either with finances, education, training, or infrastructure. The EDC works with others to market what they do.

Economic Drivers—There is an urban progress zone which, if an industry locates there, gets an additional tax cut for jobs created and an additional tax credit for machinery investments. There are also tax benefits for developers who invest in those areas.

Site Selection Process – Regarding the site selection process, Mr. Heuts explained that there is a filter that gets started when a company starts looking for a site. They look at all kinds of data bases such as where the markets are and where the skills are that they need long term. They start out looking at hundreds of communities and it filters down. It is all about making that final cut. The field work involves verifying that the infrastructure is correct; making sure there is a pro business environment; making sure the labor market is available to them today and in the future; and exploring operating costs. It is important to have a good relationship with the existing businesses here because they are often the sales' people for us as we try to site new businesses here.

Mr. Heuts reported that though Research Triangle Park has been an economic engine for this area for many years, there are very few tracts left in Research Triangle Park today. It has given us a sort of world-wide face. The surrounding area is developed, so the park is not going to grow beyond what is available today. Council Member McNeil stressed the importance of having open-minded board members who wanted to see Sanford grow by bringing in businesses instead of striving to keep Sanford a small community by maintaining the status quo. Mr. Heuts noted that things will change regardless of what you do. He stated it is important to try to look down the road and consider how to manage the change and take care of assets and continue to grow. Mega industrial parks are being developed across the country. There are not that many huge land areas available still in North Carolina. Montgomery County is working on developing such a park at this time. There was discussion about sites and development in

North Carolina and about some projects Lee County has lost and possible reasons for such. One project involves Lee, Randolph, and Guilford counties that would improve the corridor that connects Siler City to Sanford and the Greensboro area. Counties that join together on such a project have a better chance going before the General Assembly than individual counties would. Lee County does not have the space to develop a mega site on its own.

For a long-term action plan, Mr. Heuts stated that we need to make infrastructure improvements and hopefully get a marketing plan for the 421 Corridor. Council Member Charles Taylor noted that Sanford was the common thread in the middle of the designated area. Mr. Heuts showed a video of the ideas for a Heart of Carolina Mega Park within twenty-five miles of Sanford. It is an area of 7,000 acres with some frontage on I-73/74. It would be an hour or so from Charlotte. There has never been a project this big in the area. The corporations looking for large campuses want to be close to universities, services, etc. This project meets all of those standards. We have great medical facilities in this immediate area. The topography is developer friendly; there are creeks on the property, but the property has less than fifty acres of wetlands in the entire 7,000 acres. It is supported by Jordan Lake consisting of over 12,000 acres of water and 40,000 acres of land and water combined. It is close to Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill. Pinehurst with world-renowned golf areas is less than a forty-five minute ride and the East Coast beaches are within an hour and a half drive and the mountains are close.

The development is planned such that you could ride your bicycle to work and have your office, home, school, and daycare—everything within a couple of blocks of your house. Everything has been done so that this property is ready to be developed. Mr. Hegwer pointed out how close this area is to Sanford and stated that we need to be a part of it whether it is to provide water and sewer or the use of our airport. Mr. Heuts stated that we have the Lee County Industrial Park that we have been sitting on for over ten years now. A sewer system was put in and roads, but the roads were never paved. Mr. Heuts stated that we lost out on some businesses that looked at us because other communities had more things in place. It is planned to be paved this summer with a grant.

Mr. Hegwer expressed concern about competition with a mega park planned above us and another south of us. The county has invested some money in our park, but it is not where it should be. Mr. Hegwer suggested looking at what we can do to get the park where it needs to go in terms of water lines and perhaps some of the sewer lines installed by the county. Mayor Olive asked how much it would cost to purchase the sewer lines from the county. The county has about \$1.5 million invested in that. With our investment, the city and county would be co-owners and the city would get tax credits. County Manager John Crumpton stated that if they know up front they will be in the City, it should not be an issue. He stated we need control of the property. He explained that the improvements would create wealth for the park, but it would come back to the city and county. To be successful, Mr. Hegwer explained that you would have to be aggressive enough to put money into it. Mr. Heuts stated it was an opportunity, being the only large site available today that could accommodate a large

company. Mr. Hegwer requested the City and County to work together to get this park where it needs to be and reach out to Mr. Stroud and find out how we can make this park work and then how to make the Chatham County site work for us. Mr. Heuts reminded council that we do have assets such as the community college, the airport, connectivity. Adding water and sewer, we have a great location. Of the nearby available sites, Mr. Heuts stated that we were the most ahead. Having all that land in Chatham County is a big deal. Heart of Carolina has the land put together, but they are a long way away from being ready.

Referencing Council Member McNeil's earlier comment that some people wanted to keep Sanford small, Mayor Olive asked for feedback from the Council. Council Member Cohen said to go and look at it. Mayor Pro Tem Gaskins stated you would get a commercial tax base, but property values will become expensive. Council Member Wyhof stated that some attention put at the Industrial Park could help create and stimulate other investment that would be a benefit to everyone. Council Member Williams stated that he has always been in favor of moving forward, having his area to be the best it can be for the most citizens.

Mr. Hegwer stated that we do have some assets in that our water and sewer are in good shape, but we have to remember that we are not the only one with these capabilities. Holly Springs and Wilson have those capabilities. We have to think of things that will be most beneficial for us.

Following Mr. Heuts's remarks, Council recessed for short break and reconvened ten minutes later.

### DSI Priorities

Community Development Director Bob Bridwell shared news that there is an investment company for our central city with the potential of erecting a 74,000 square foot building on the Whitin Roberts property employing 14-22 line workers. He will be working with them trying to put together a package that will be as attractive as possible.

Down Sanford, Inc. Board Member Dana Atkins explained that surveys had been completed for downtown businesses—(Exhibit D). Merchants rated Downtown Sanford in comparison to other downtowns. Sanford rated below average except for being pedestrian friendly. Parking issues received the most concerns; some additional parking spaces need to be obtained. Safety lighting, landscaping, and signage were the other top concerns. Their main request for next year is streetscape for Steele Street because most business and restaurants are located there; people live there; and the most pedestrian traffic is on Steele Street. They would like to have curb extensions at Steele and Carthage Intersection to make it safer for pedestrian traffic.

Merchants also rated what they would like to see happen about parking. The item receiving the most votes was to create more off-street parking. Second was increase awareness of off-street parking. Third was dealing with employee parking. There was also a suggestion to increase the parking from two hours. Mrs. Atkins stated that DSI

would like to acquire the First Citizens' parking lot beside Kelly's Dance Studio on Steele Street. She believes First Citizens would be willing to sell it at a very reasonable price. She reported that Ruth Gurtis, owner of the parking lot across from the Temple Theater on Carthage Street, was interested in selling the parking lot. There are about twenty spaces there, but the City would be able to get ten spaces there. Though the asking price may seem high, Mrs. Atkins described its close proximity to shops, restaurants, and the Temple Theater. She felt it was important to get it now, as did Council Member Jimmy Haire.

There was discussion of doing streetscape a block at a time and the extensive work involved for underground utilities and the amount of time it would take. Mayor Olive suggested talking to other areas that have done this and find out how long it took them.

Mrs. Atkins stated that with improved street lighting, safety has improved in the downtown areas. There had been concern that the alley ways need more lights. (Council Member Haire passed out copies of old Sanford photographs depicting how parts of downtown had looked at different earlier times.—Exhibit E) Mrs. Atkins stated that, though being ranked as average was not terrible, Downtown wanted to be better than that. They wanted it to be a place where people would be eager to go. She said that "Downtown" is in with the current generation who love history and a feeling of togetherness. By having Depot Park and pedestrian friendliness, people want to come down and be a part of it. Mrs. Atkins stated that this generation and the one coming behind it like coffee houses, being plugged in, places to sit on the bench, etc. A feeling of community and togetherness is important now and could be very useful in luring businesses to Sanford.

Mayor Olive stated that it would make the Downtown look so much prettier today if the empty store fronts had displays in them such as a backdrop with pottery or products and the windows were kept clean. Some interior designers could help with that. Mrs. Atkins thought they could help with that and that most of the property owners would be receptive to the idea.

Council Member Taylor stated that if you go to a referendum, all the part of the project can be done instead of completing it piecemeal. He did not feel the public would want to have it if it increased taxes. Mr. Hegwer stated that he had contacted Nancy Kimble at the Board of Elections to see what would be the latest time to get a referendum on the ballot. It is an option, but there are pros and cons to that, too. If it passed, it would give you the blessings of the public. There are also other ways to borrow the money. It would cost more for DSI to borrow the money directly than for the City to do it. Mr. Taylor asked for the options to be presented to Council. Mr. Hegwer stated he would get the options out to Council today so they will be able to see the impact of the debt service. The public will be interested in knowing if there will be a tax increase if a referendum is called for. The referendum would give Council the ability to issue debt and span it over a ten-year time frame. An extension can be requested from the General Assembly.

Mayor Olive stated that one of her concerns was that if a referendum were defeated soundly, what the message would be to Council about how to proceed at that point. The public would be saying they did not want that money to go to this project. Council Member Jimmy Haire stated that it could be a non-binding referendum whereby City would not have to abide by the vote. Mayor Olive stated that if the referendum failed, she would be uncomfortable about going ahead with the project in this economy. Mr. Taylor stated that if the project were extended over a period of ten years, the cost of completing the project would ultimately be 20-30 percent higher.

Mayor Pro Tem Gaskins stated that he agreed with Mr. Taylor that it should be put before the public as something we need to do and plan to do and see how they feel about funding it. He believes issuing a bond is the most logical so we can go in and get the job done and do it right. Hopefully, the public will see that. If not, we may be back to going piecemeal, completing things that have to be done first to make Downtown more viable. Mr. Gaskins did not think this year would be the one for the ballot because of the presidential election and gubernatorial election and so much going on. Council Member Taylor and Mayor Olive thought it might be a good time because more voters would be voting in November. Mr. Haire stated that when you look at other communities, you want it for Sanford, but it is a selling job and the public must be aware of how much it will cost.

Mr. Bridwell stated that, in some ways, the work in Jonesboro is further along than in Sanford. Council Member Wyhof stated that in Jonesboro there is enthusiasm to get some representation like DSI to talk about the future. Some people had not seen the plans, but wanted to keep the historic feel of Jonesboro while incorporating the same look in the master plan. She stated that people are angry, feeling forgotten and overlooked, and not represented in the community dialogue. Council Member Cohen stated that Lee Avenue is a problem in that it is so narrow. Mr. Bridwell stated that DOT is aware of their plans from Horner Boulevard to Woodland. Council Member Williams stated that Jonesboro needed to know what the plans are for the parking lot. Council Member Wyhof stated that their next meeting would be a smaller “steering committee-type” meeting, but at that meeting she hoped to make plans for a large meeting where everyone from the area of the foundry can come and have a conversation about the changes.

Mayor Olive asked what the status was of the Kendale Shopping Center in this scenario. Mr. Bridwell stated that he would like to see it redone, but there are no prospects for that at this time. Council Member Taylor stated that he hoped to finish the parking lot project there.

#### Mobile Investigation Unit – (Exhibit F)

Police Chief Ronnie Yarborough, Detective Captain David Smith, and Detective Sergeant Harold Layton presented the Police Department request for a mobile crime investigation scene unit to be included in the 2012-2013 Budget. Chief Yarborough explained that this vehicle is really needed. It is a self-contained, mobile lab. It contains everything needed in investigating a crime scene. The collection of, preservation of, and

analysis of evidence are the most important things in presenting court cases. Instead of officers operating out of several vehicles, this vehicle offers the ability to gather, save, and analyze evidence such as DNA, hair, fibers, etc. in one vehicle with locked boxes to limit the chance of contamination because fewer people are involved with the evidence. If evidence is not handled properly with the proper equipment, it can be lost or rendered ineffective. DNA can make a case. Chief Yarborough stated that we have twelve investigators exposed to the highest training and we need to use the most professional tactics while investigating serious crime. Chief Yarborough stated that serious criminals in Sanford must go to prison. This vehicle is needed for a first class operation.

This vehicle not only has side lights, but it can light an area with two 4,000 watt lights on top that can be telescoped up in the air for 360 degrees-- invaluable at night instead of trying to light a night scene with flashlights while investigators look for evidence such as shell casings, etc. Chief Yarborough explained that evidence is more important today than ever before.

Detective Smith explained that this vehicle will enable them to have the mobile crime scene lab make camp at the scene as many days as needed to process the crime scene instead of having to travel back and forth for supplies. Everything they need is contained inside the vehicle.

To illustrate the features of the vehicle, Detective Sergeant Harold Layton showed some slides of the vehicle being used by Rocky Mount and Greenville, North Carolina. Chief Yarborough stated that the cost of the vehicle is about \$138,000 to \$139,000 but it would probably last our police department twenty to twenty-five years as they do not get a lot of miles on them. The cab and front end are purchased separately from the Ford Motor Company and the rest of the vehicle is built in house by the Sirchie Company plant in New Jersey. When it is completed, not only is the vehicle there, but it contains every investigative thing PD would need, supplied by Sirchie, to process everything from DNA to fiber to hair, etc. When the vehicle is purchased, two people would be sent to the plant in New Jersey to be trained in-house by Sirchie. The training is included in the purchase price. Council Member Gaskins observed that juries have come to expect this kind of evidence from watching television. Though the company makes different sized vehicles, Chief Yarborough thought the 14-foot vehicle would be right for Sanford. The top is built as an observation deck where film can be shot, as photos of crime scenes are always required.

Considering that the vehicle would need to have restricted access to prevent cross contamination, Council Member Charles Taylor asked where the vehicle would be housed. Chief Yarborough stated it would be housed here (City Hall). One vehicle is now kept in one of the bays at the service center. Detective Sergeant Layton continued to describe the features of the vehicle for storage, work space, 7,000 watt generator which runs off vehicle gas line, evidence kits, etc. There are no known grant options available at this time.

City Manager Hegwer pointed out that this is the year to replace police cruisers. Chief Yarborough stated they have looked at state contracts. They will probably purchase Chargers or Chevrolets. The Chargers are similar to what the county has. They researched them with the Highway Patrol and believe they will save on gas.

Council agreed to hold the next session of the retreat on February 29 before the regularly scheduled Law & Finance meeting.

Respectfully Submitted

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CORNELIA P. OLIVE, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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JANICE COX, DEPUTY CITY CLERK