

MINUTES OF RETREAT 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, February 18, 2014, at 4 P.M., in the West End Conference Room to hold a retreat workshop. The following people were present

Mayor Chet Mann  
Council Member Jimmy Haire  
Council Member Sam Gaskins  
City Manager Hal Hegwer  
City Attorney Susan Patterson

Council Member Rebecca Wyhof  
Mayor Pro Tem James Williams  
City Clerk Bonnie D. White  
City Staff

Absent:

Council Member Charles Taylor  
Council Member Walter H. McNeil, Jr.  
Council Member Norman Charles Post, III

Mayor Mann called the meeting to order.

Assistant Community Development Director Marshall Downey presented a presentation on Commercial Corridors: How Do We Improve The Appearance? (Exhibit A) Mr. Downey explained that we have the UDO that provides an excellent set of design standards for new construction along the commercial corridors and this has worked well since 2007 in terms of appearance. New construction guidelines or requirements do not apply to existing buildings unless a building permit is required for construction or a major change occurs when a tenant changes the intended land use. Some of the non-residential design standards include that the front façade and 50% of the side façade(s) be composed of brick, wood, stucco, sandstone, or other native stone. Use of concrete block, smooth-faced concrete panels or pre-fabricated steel panels is prohibited. Façade exterior colors are to be “low reflectance, subtle, neutral or Earth Tone.”

Mr. Downey explained that the UDO could be amended for a more aggressive approach pertaining to the corridors such as: require that all non-residential development meet the architectural design standards of Article 10 (not just those fronting along certain defined corridors); require sidewalks to be installed along adjoining streets; consider new design standards for large industrial sites/buildings; eliminate the requirement for a building permit for a change of use; and reduce the threshold for defining a change of use from the current broad categories to the specific land use. He said it could put a substantial burden on the landowner when they change the use of the building.

Mr. Downey explained that Council could consider implementing a Commercial Maintenance Code (CMC). The UDO does not address the maintenance and/or deterioration of existing non-residential structures. It would act in very much the same way as the City’s Minimum Housing Code. In 2007, the NC General Assembly adopted NCGS 160A-439 giving cities the specific authority to adopt ordinances establishing minimum standards for maintenance, sanitation and safety for nonresidential buildings and structures. Authority would be given to staff to address conditions that are

“dangerous and injurious to public health, safety, and welfare and identify circumstances under which a public necessity exists for the repair, closing, or demolition of such (nonresidential) buildings and structures.”

Mr. Mann said that he would like a combination of the Commercial Maintenance Code and corridors standards. Developers have gone outside of Sanford and they see what other cities are doing. There was a consensus of council members for staff to bring back some options to implement a CMC and more aggressive standards for the corridors. He said that it is important to give the business public a reason to invest and a reason for someone else to come and do business here.

Mr. Downey displayed pictures of some old, dilapidated buildings – the W. Koury Building and the former Central Carolina Nissan building. He explained the methods that could be taken to demolish structures that pose a danger to the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens. He said that it could cost \$300,000 to \$380,000 to demolish the W. Koury building and this does not include the removal of asbestos. The City would have to pay for the demolition of this building and then place a lien on the property. Recovery of the costs is not guaranteed or even likely. The City could condemn the property and then pay the owner for it.

Mr. Downey spoke regarding a situation in McCracken Heights where a house has been moved into a neighborhood and appears that nothing is being done to the home. He said planning staff has found some things they can use procedurally to motivate the owner to complete the home. Typically, staff relies on covenants from the single-family standpoint. Attorney Patterson added that the City cannot enforce covenants; it is up to the neighborhood. A lot of times the covenants expire and people are unaware of it. People that buy a home in the neighborhood assume they exist and are enforceable.

Mr. Hegwer stated that years ago, you could have a wholesale rental inspection program for residential homes. Then, the General Assembly amended the rental inspection program and limited that authority and said that you can now have a residential rental inspection program if the residential property is in the top 10 percent of crime and disorder in the City as defined by a local ordinance, and if you have three or more code violations within a year. We can charge a fee for it. You have landlords who have individuals who cause a lot of problems and it happens in good homeowner areas. Fayetteville’s program is still in the infancy stage. They have hired several people and it is an extensive program. You have to identify where your rental properties are and you can actually use it where you discriminate between single-family homes versus apartments.

Downtown Development Manager II David Montgomery spoke about developing a Theatre, Arts, and Culture District in Downtown Sanford. He spoke about the current strategies that are used for a quasi-cultural arts district and proposed strategies for short-term and long-term. The City does an annual allocation to the Temple Theatre, Railroad House, and Lee County Arts Council. They start an annual allocation for Discover Sanford.com in 2011 by former Mayor Cornelia Olive. It has a website listing places to see, places to play, plays to stay, places to dine, and a community calendar. On a quarterly basis, they hand out tourism brochures to over 300 establishments in Sanford and Lee County and at the welcome centers at the airport.

Mr. Montgomery said that there are several annual arts festivals: Arts & Vine Festival, Downtown Music Festival, Brush & Palette Show, Hearts & Hand Quilt Show, Art Walk, Jubilee,

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Broadway our Way, and FiberFest. He said as part of the Downtown Enhancement Plan, they identified several districts in the area which included the theatre district.

Mr. Montgomery spoke about proposed strategies such as acquisition of the San-Lee Parking Lot across from the Temple Theatre; implementation of the Wayfinding signage program, installation of more public art; make public art a requirement of all public projects; art exhibitions including Xi Xing Pottery at a Complimentary Venue; and establish an art collaborative inviting local arts stakeholders to participate. Some long-term strategies would include local property tax reduction for new or expanding business; one-time rent incentive grant; one-time purchase incentive grant; revolving loan fund in partnership with local banks for financing major renovations or new construction; establish a Visitors Bureau and subsequently a Visitors Center to promote the arts among other attraction; lobby the State Legislature to create Cultural Art District Statewide Program (Sales tax credits or exemptions of one of a kind items sold within the district and income tax credits or exemptions for goods made within the district); and establish an arts incubator in Downtown in conjunction with the community college.

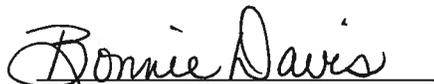
Shop Superintendent Randy Paschal explained the City's vehicle replacement program as shown on Exhibit C.

Council Member Council Member Sam Gaskins made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Rebecca Wyhof the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

  
T. Chet Mann, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Bonnie Davis, City Clerk