

LAW AND FINANCE MEETING  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015  
7:00 P.M. in Council Chambers  
225 East Weatherspoon St., Sanford, NC

The Law and Finance Committee met on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 7:00 P.M. The following people were present:

Mayor T. Chet Mann	Mayor Pro Tem James Williams
Council Member Byron Buckels	Council Member Sam Gaskins
Council Member Jimmy Haire	Council Member Norman Charles Post, III
Council Member Charles Taylor	Council Member Rebecca Wyhof
City Manager Hal Hegwer	City Attorney Susan Patterson
City Clerk Bonnie Davis	

Mayor Chet Mann called the meeting to order.

Consider Discussion Regarding Bipartisan Redistricting Reform – (Exhibit A)

Mayor Mann explained that he had been approached by individuals supporting an impartial redistricting process in North Carolina, similar to what has already been adopted in other states. The goal is to remove partisan politics by using an unaffiliated professional staff to create compact, competitive districts based on demographic data, not political affiliation, voting patterns, home purchase information or income. It would also allow more public hearings. The legislature would vote only whether to approve the plan or not. This plan already has the support of 225 municipal leaders. The Mayor asked Council to consider endorsing the plan or adopting a non-binding resolution of support.

Consider Petition for Street Name Change – (Exhibit B)

City Manager Hal Hegwer explained that a request has been received from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) about renaming a portion of Webb Street to “Veterans Way”. There is no specified procedure for renaming a street, it can be done with a resolution by Council.

Council Member Taylor stated that he met with VFW representative Craig Armstrong about this request. He noted that our local VFW chapter is very strong; Billy Ray Cameron even served as President of the national organization. Mr. Taylor explained that in order to avoid confusion to 911 providers, the portion of Webb Street proposed for renaming was isolated to include only the two blocks on the right side of Hawkins, not on the left side (in the McCracken Heights neighborhood). He reported that response to the petition was good: one tract is owned by a business which is no longer in operation, two owners opposed it and the other owners approved.

There was discussion as to whether a different street could be renamed in its entirety, rather than having Webb Street partially renamed. Answering questions on how the process had been handled in the past, City Attorney Susan Patterson explained that although public hearings are not required, it is prudent to have input from those directly affected by the renaming. She also

noted that they are typically held when the petition is not approved by all affected property owners.

By consensus, Council agreed to schedule a public hearing as soon as possible so that the matter can be resolved before Veterans Day.

#### Consider Google Small Business Promotion – (Exhibit C)

Due to computer problems, Mayor Mann suggested that Council adjourn to closed session and this item be presented after Council returns to regular session.

#### Closed Session

City Attorney Susan Patterson stated that a motion was needed for Council to go into closed session in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

The motion was made by Council Member Post, seconded by Council Member Buckels and unanimously approved.

#### Return to Regular Session

Council Member Taylor explained that Google is working with cities to promote small businesses through their “Let’s Put Sanford on the Map” campaign; more information can be found on their website, [www.gybo.com](http://www.gybo.com). Google provides materials, along with a twelve-week plan and a workshop, all free of charge. It was suggested that Public Information Officer Kelly Miller research the program to determine whether we should take advantage of this opportunity.

#### Other Business – (Exhibit D)

Mayor Mann informed Council that he recently attended a DSI meeting to address panhandling and develop a strategy that could be endorsed by everyone. Signs were reviewed suggesting that rather than giving to panhandlers, donations be made to local charities better equipped to deal with these needs. He stressed that aggressive panhandlers are not to be confused with those truly in need. We want to help those in need get the proper help but don’t want to encourage aggressive behavior. If we want a vibrant downtown, we must all agree on a strategy.

Council Member Taylor commented that is not for us to determine need and expressed concern that displaying signs may give the impression that the problem is larger than it really is. Mayor Mann responded that he had those same concerns, which were considered and discussed at the meeting. Small, tasteful signs will be displayed inside businesses or sent out via “tweet” messaging and there will be no large street signs erected. Another meeting will be held, perhaps at The Temple Theatre, and everyone was encouraged to attend.

Council Member Buckels stated that several Council members, along with the City Manager and City Attorney, had just returned from the League of Municipalities conference, which was quite informative. He commended City Manager Hegwer, who did an outstanding job as a speaker on the Cooperative Government panel. Mr. Buckels hope to share information from the conference with Council soon.

Council Member Wyhof reminded everyone that some Council members are headed to China this week, in connection with our Sister City project. The ambitious agenda includes inter-governmental meetings, cultural exchanges and economic development opportunities. *The Sanford Herald* will be sharing information provided by the delegates on the trip.

Council Member Haire spent last weekend with alumna from the W.B. Wicker School at the Civic Center. It was a festive gathering with graduates from as far back as 1949 attending.

City Manager Hegwer reminded everyone that the Council meeting scheduled for October 20 will be cancelled and a Special meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27. The meeting scheduled for November 3 will also be cancelled since municipal elections will be held that day.

Council Member Taylor added that an inquiry had been received from the homeowners' association in Hawkins Run about the influx of trucks and tractor trailers coming through their neighborhood. They would like a "No Thru Trucks" sign, which requires a resolution from Council.

Mayor Mann commented on the recent endorsement by Lee County for the School System's selection of the W.B. Wicker property as the site of the next elementary school, possibly a magnet school, which would be ground-breaking for a city of our size. He noted that schools are typically good for a neighborhood and stressed the need to work with the county and school system on planning, zoning, and traffic flow issues. Council Member Post added that the choice of the Wicker site will benefit the neighborhood since it will increase the police presence in and around the school. He also noted that certain drug offenses carry a harsher punishment if committed within 1,000 feet of a school.

Mayor Mann shared an article in the October issue of *Governing* magazine, "Roads for All". It cited West Jefferson (population 1,300), whose leaders approached Dean Ledbetter, a DOT traffic engineer, about improving their main downtown street. He suggested repainting the road, removing two stoplights and replacing them with four-way stops to save money and make downtown an easier place to walk. Street design and a wealth of local artistic talent helped promote foot traffic, which was a catalyst for bigger changes. The number of vacant storefronts dropped from 33 to three and tourism increased dramatically. This approach reflects a movement gaining strength nationally: roads should not be built just for cars and trucks. Even in New York City, much of the area around Times Square has been closed to vehicular traffic; Indianapolis has closed many roads downtown to adopt a master pedestrian plan and Los Angeles recently invested hundreds of millions of dollars to create a more pedestrian friendly area. Protected bike lanes are also cropping up in many places. He noted that there has been discussion of reducing Carthage Street from four lanes to three lanes. A recent report predicted that by 2050, approximately 70 percent of the country will live in areas now considered rural, and they will go to places with this type environment. Redesigned streets will allow city planners to build a new type of urban community where transportation is minimized and residents could walk to handle many day-to-day tasks, including going to work, buying groceries, visiting the doctor and other places that could be reached within five minutes. If a walkable town is created, businesses will follow.

Mayor Mann also stated that he just attended an economic summit sponsored by The Triangle Business Journal. Among the attendees was an international business consultant with an office in RTP. He has customers from Singapore interested in our area but did not know how to connect with representatives from areas outside the large urban centers. Mayor Mann also stated that the presentation pointed out that Lee County is better positioned than many other counties, including Chatham County where 91% of their tax base is composed of residential property. It was noted at the meeting that successful communities will have diversification, communication and collaboration. Lee County still must overcome the perception that we are further from Raleigh than we are (only 35 minutes from the downtown/Fayetteville Street area) and we should also continue to develop our infrastructure. The Mayor also stated that an announcement is expected soon from Lee County officials regarding broadband service, a utility which has become as important as electricity, water and sewer.

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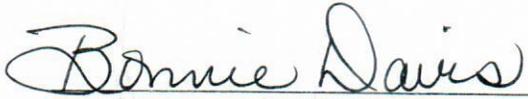
Adjournment

Council Member Gaskins made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Council Member Post, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
T. Chet Mann, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Bonnie Davis, City Clerk