

March 25, 2019

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in regular session at 4:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor David W. Combs presiding.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers to offer prayer.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, E. Lois Watkins*, Tom Rogers, W. B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

Staff Present: Natasha Hampton, Acting City Manager/Assistant City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager; Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer; Will Deaton, Director of Department of Development Services; Elton Daniels, Director of Parks and Recreation; Amy Staton, Finance Director; Brad Kerr, Director of Engineering; David Griffin, Community Services Superintendent; Carl Moore, Interim Division Chief of Life Safety & Training; Rich Worsinger, Director of Energy Resources; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Kelvin Yarrell, Superintendent of Parks and Cemeteries; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Security Officer: Police Sergeant L. S. Parker, Jr.

WELCOME

Mayor Combs welcomed citizens and directed them to copies of the agenda near the entrance of the City Council Chamber.

The Mayor expressed condolences for the City Manager's recent loss of her mother and stated she is out today to care for her father. He asked for prayers for Ms. Small-Toney's family.

He recognized Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton for acting as City Manager at today's meeting.

MINUTES/CITY COUNCIL RETREAT AND REGULAR MEETING

The City Council received the minutes from the City Council Retreat held February 20-22, 2019 at the Rizzo Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and the minutes from the regular meeting of the City Council held on March 11, 2019.

The retreat minutes are as follows:

**ROCKY MOUNT CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
February 20 - 22, 2019
Rizzo Center
150 DuBose Home Lane
University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Tom Rogers
Andre D. Knight

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager
Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk

Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager
 Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Manager
 Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications Officer
 Landis Faulcan, Director of Community &
 Business Development
 Tanika Cooper, Executive Assistant CMO
 Richard J. Rose, City Attorney

ALSO PRESENT:

James H. Johnson, Jr., Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill
 Julie Brenman, Fountainworks
 Lindell Kay, Staff Writer, Rocky Mount Telegram
 Bronson Williams

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20 – 8:30 A.M.

OPENING – February 20, 2019 – Retreat Day 1

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers opened the meeting at 8:50 a.m. and welcomed all present.

He introduced Dr. James (Jim) Johnson and Julie Brenman. The Mayor Pro Tem noted the City Council has a full agenda which includes some items previously discussed and noted that today there will be plenty of time to spend on housing discussion and the Council is fortunate to have two (2) great folks to assist in the discussion.

1. **A ROAD MAP FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROCKY MOUNT – Dr. James (Jim) Johnson**

Dr. Jim Johnson told the City Council since the last time he saw them he has done a lot of homework. He said he is a demographer and thinks the topic today needs to be demographically anchored and needs to reflect the reality of the area. He said the City has an opportunity to become a leader in the state in creating an inclusive community reflective of the demographics of the area.

Councilmember Miller requested that the Dr. Johnson's presentation be shared with the City Council.

Dr. Johnson presented an overview of today's presentation and noted it would include: Twin Counties Demographics; Basic Definitions; Key Drivers of Inclusive and Equitable Development; A Roadmap and Logic Model and Discussion.

Dr. Johnson advised the City Council that:

- North Carolina has added about 2.3M people since 2010 and is one of the top growing states in the nation; it is a retirement destination; a return migration destination; and a destination for large home-place migrants;
- North Carolina draws migrants from all over the world and has a world-class healthcare system; older adults are coming back to the area where they grew up; the state has great universities;
- Most of the growth in North Carolina is in Mecklenburg and Wake Counties, but the migration magnets (beaches and mountains) are seeing growth;
- Outlined per capita adjusted growth income of North Carolina from 2015-2016 is:
 - In-migrants: 138,804
 - Out-migrants: 113,688
 - Non-migrants: 3,332,669
- The Twin Counties population change by race and ethnicity from 2010-2017 reflects a total loss of -3.7% or a loss of -5,636 people; he outlined the population change by ethnicity noting that Rocky Mount is experiencing white flight with a loss of 29.3% and gain in Hispanic population of 109.4%; with the largest increase in population of two or more races at 158.3%;
- Twin Counties population change by age between 2010-2017 revealed age 65+ as the largest increase in population and age 25-44 the largest decrease; he noted an increase in

health problems for the 25-44 population (many dying early due to opioids and chronic disease is extremely high; aging is seen in the early 30's);

- The area also needs to be concerned with talent acquisition;
- The estimated change in population in Edgecombe and Nash Counties from 2010-2017 revealed that Edgecombe County suffered percentage change of -6.7% and Nash suffered percentage change of -1.9%; Rocky Mount suffered a percentage change of -0.9%;
- Estimated population change per county from 2010-2017 is: Edgecombe County – loss of -3,798 and Nash loss of -1,838; demographic shifts matter and must be factored in and considered;
- Net migration for the area from 2015-2016 reveals far more people are leaving than coming and much of the migration is localized from adjacent counties; also, those leaving are often going to adjoining counties;
- Per capital incomes of in-migrants reveal lower per capita than those currently living in the area with the exception of Prince George's County, MD (likely coming "home" retire after moving north to work); creates a burden for social services; different from the state as a whole that is seeing positive numbers; in-migration to Durham reveals an income average of \$55,000 (good but causes housing prices to go up);
- Race and Ethnicity: a great proportion of Rocky Mount residents identify as Black or African-American and other races as compared to other regions; Edgecombe County reveals the same, but Nash County has a higher percentage of those identifying as White;
- Rocky Mount is slightly younger than the two counties;
- Edgecombe County (excluding Rocky Mount) has a greater proportion of residents with a high school degree or less compared to the other regions;
- The Hispanic wave started in the late 80's/early 90's and most currently here were born here; when heads of household are deported it tears up a household; Mexican migration to the US has declined; the nation will need that talent because it is an aging nation;
- Edgecombe County and Rocky Mount have greater proportions of unemployed residents compared to other regions;
- Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County have a greater proportion of residents living below the poverty level compared to other regions (working poor = work every day but do not make enough money for an above-poverty existence);
- Largest percentage of working poor are women 19-34 years of age; 22% of people with college educations are working poor, which include teachers; they do not have stable housing (makes it hard to say to children "go to school, graduate, go to college and life will be good");
- 14% of married couples are among the working poor; single and those with family disruption also are included;
- Those employed to protect the public health and safety and provide goods and services don't make enough to live in the city they serve;
- When considering a housing strategy consideration must be given for the working poor and jobless poor because they are often in the same household;

Conversation was held relative to how to pursue an inclusive and equitable community and economic development that promotes shared prosperity and Dr. Johnson shared the following:

- THREE OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS:

1. Inclusive Development:

- Ensures that all marginalized and excluded groups are stakeholders in the development processes; inclusive growth not only creates new economic opportunities, but also ensures equal access to the opportunities created for all segments of society, particularly for the poor and focuses on increasing per capita income through economic growth and greater access to non-income aspects of wellbeing enhanced by proactive policymaking by the state and contributions from actors;

2. Equitable Development:

- Unlocks the full potential of the local economy by dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for low-income people and communities of color; through accountable public action and investment it grows quality jobs and increases entrepreneurship, ownership and wealth with a result of a stronger, more competitive city

3. Shared Prosperity:
 - Captures two key elements: economic growth and equity; seeks to foster income growth among the bottom 40% of a country's population; without sustained economic growth, poor people are unlikely to increase their living standards; growth by itself is not enough; improvement in the shared prosperity indicator requires growth to be inclusive of the less well-off
- PREREQUISITES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL:
 - Unlearning old ways of “thinking” and “doing” (requires innovation and creativity);
 - An entrepreneurial mindset (must think creatively about how to do the business of the city; takes multi-sector collaboration);
 - Unwavering commitment to innovation;
 - Multi-sector collaboration engagement;
 - Disciplined execution of strategy
- KEY DRIVERS OF INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT:
 - Driver No. 1*: The city leads as an engine of opportunity:
 - Serves as a model employer (pays a decent wage)
 - Dismantles barriers to economic participation;
 - Enacts policies, procedures and practices that promote equity, inclusion and shared prosperity;
 - Expands services to support workers and job seekers (i.e. providing tax services to help folks apply for earned income tax credit; oversees an enterprise that can make life better for people)

A conversation was held relative to how to expand services while continuing to provide services while seeing a decline in tax base (hiring those in the community to assist with needs in the community; liability; age law; etc.).

- INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT TOOL KIT (Policies, Procedures & Practices):
 - Economic Inclusion & Equitable Development Tools:
 - a. Leverage economic power of anchor institutions and infrastructure investments;
 - b. Grow “high opportunity” industry sectors;
 - c. Repair existing infrastructure;
 - d. Contract with historically underutilized businesses (if you want to create wealth you have to have the power to create and grow business);
 - e. Support worker cooperatives and employee-owned businesses

Dr. Johnson outlined Inclusive and Equitable Workforce Development Tools as:

- Community Workforce Agreements (a certain percentage of the workforce must be local);
- Inclusive Hiring Policies;
- Target Area Hiring Policies;
- Local Hire Ordinances;
- Community Benefit Agreements;
- Workforce Training Agreements (investing in training local talent);
- Project Labor Agreements;
- “Ban the Box” Ordinances (creates second chance opportunity); and
- YIMBY (yes in my back yard) zoning policies (zoning laws are often for single family homes only; may require change in laws and policies)

Conversation was held relative to requiring those the city contracts with to pay a living wage and not discriminate and core values as a city.

Dr. Johnson continued by presenting Community Stabilization Policies to include:

1. Just cause eviction policies;
2. Rent stabilization;
3. Relocation protections and financial assistance for renters displaced by development;

4. Affordable housing preservation strategies;
5. Right of return policies;
6. Proactive code enforcement

He told the City Council that two Commercial Stabilization Policies are:

- Public mitigation funding for small businesses impacted by infrastructure improvements (in Durham minority businesses are being forced out; businesses can be helped by rent stabilization or with ownership of property); and
- Technical assistance programs and access to low-cost capital for businesses in commercial district experiencing rapid change

He said it is positive that the City is moving towards having a new parking deck with commercial city-owned space and is talking about relocating businesses to the property with affordable rents.

-Driver No. 2: Create a more inclusive entrepreneurial/business ecosystem (businesses that hire locally):

- Understands deficiencies in the system that might suppress the potential success of historically under-represented businesses;
- Rectifies situation by establishing a Contracting Equity Program

Dr. Johnson said a disparity study is needed and is a requirement of federal law every three to five years. It was noted that the city has a requirement for a 5% hiring of minority and women owned businesses.

Further discussion was held relative to diversity goals and local hiring and Dr. Johnson encouraged a policy “with teeth” for a diversity goal in the hiring of contractors. He said the city can require those they do business with to be more equitable.

He listed the Characteristics of an Inclusive Entrepreneurial/Business Ecosystem as one that:

- Establishes quantifiable goals for utilization of historically underutilized businesses and holds *all* departments within city government accountable for demonstrating progress (he noted software exists to help);
- Transforms the existing procurement system into a fully automated supply chain management system;
- Offers education, training and technical assistance that is robust enough to serve a “pipeline” of potential vendors, ranging from start-ups to Boomer-owned businesses (assists home grown businesses; noted only about 20% of boomer businesses execute a successful sale);
- Creates makers’ spaces in traditionally under-represented communities that provide ease of access to education, training and technical assistance as well as networking opportunities (cost of parking in the Downtown is a consideration);
- Devises a multi-channel communication strategy to spread the word about:
 - a) Contracting opportunities;
 - b) Available education, training and technical assistance programs available to help DBEs/SBEs access those opportunities; and
 - c) Diversity spend across all units of government.

Dr. Johnson noted there are four, soon to be five generations, doing business. He said different generations are using different modes of communication and the city must have a multi-channel communication strategy and realize different people communicate in different ways. He said it is important to know who the city’s minority businesses are and to be a matchmaker for opportunities and prepare young people for opportunities coming down the road.

Councilmember Joyner said Council has been working to create a friendlier police force for people with difficulties (i.e., people driving cars to work that don’t pass inspection and receiving citations).

Dr. Johnson said that Contracting Equity Programs should:

- Embrace multi-jurisdictional certification;
- Create clarity and collaboration on goal setting;
- Commit to subcontractors at bid time;
- Monitor contracts to the end (requirements can be made of prime contractors relative to subcontractors and they must be monitored if the city is committed; there are software packages to assist);
- Institute extra prompt payment to subcontractors (ensures they get paid);
- Establish clearly defined repercussions for non-compliance (policies must have “teeth”);
- Engage in capacity building;
- Assist city departments with solicitation requirements and program participation;
- Redefine master contracts; and
- Proactively help with teaming of contractors and subcontractors process

The City Manager stated that absent a disparity study the city is limited relative to compliance. She said some components can be implemented but goals cannot be set without proving statistically that there is a disparity. She said current policy requires a good faith effort and the goal is 5%.

Dr. Johnson stated there has to be effort and it does not happen naturally.

Dr. Johnson told the Council that Diverse Supply Chain Management Systems:

- Embrace supplier diversity to ensure they are more competitive with financial returns above national industry medians;
- Ensure diverse suppliers create jobs and generate tax revenues that rebound to the benefit of the local community; and
- Ensure unemployed and underemployed residents benefit from such systems;

He said that cities that adopt diverse supply chain management systems are more attractive places to live and do business. He said it is important to be assertive and aggressive in making this happen in order to succeed.

RECESS

By consensus, the retreat was recessed at 10:38 a.m. for a break.

RECONVENE

The retreat reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

A ROAD MAP FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROCKY MOUNT – Dr. James (Jim) Johnson – continued

- **KEY DRIVERS OF INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT:**
 - Driver No. 3:* Establishes an Equitable Development Venture Fund (many communities create their own equitable development venture fund):
 - Primary investment vehicle to support growth and expansion of “home grown” historically underutilized businesses;
 - Support ventures that align with the triple bottom line of sustainability and retain population and economic diversity; and
 - Opportunity to address both the “jobless poor” and “working poor” problems
 - Driver No. 4:* Builds Collective Ambition (probably the biggest challenge because it requires unlearning old ways of thinking):
 - Definition: a summary of how leaders and employees think about why they exist, what they hope to accomplish, how they will collaborate to achieve their ambition and how their brand promise aligns with their core values
 - Goal: mobilize and garner support from diverse stakeholders and constituencies to achieve inclusive/equitable development

Dr. Johnson said if the city is committed to equitable and inclusive development, this is how that is reflected. He said that the Foundations of Collective Ambition are:

1. Collaborative Engagement (glue); and
2. Disciplined Execution of Strategy (grease)

-Driver No. 5: A sustainability scorecard (should be created by the city):

- A set of performance metrics to ensure that community economic development policies, procedures and practices pass the triple bottom line of sustainability litmus test

He stated that a triple bottom line sustainability model is three-legged and consists of: Social Equity (business owners); Shareholder/Stakeholder Value (non-profit sector and citizens engaged in the community in a way that there is a return on investment); and Environmental Stewardship. He said equitable development funds should be limited to the principles (not just minority firms because anyone is subject to inclusion and exclusion).

Discussion was held relative to groups willing to invest who do not necessarily want a financial return, often called “angel investors.” Dr. Johnson said such investors will likely want to know the sustainability plan and exit strategy and often invest in a business for three to five years with a goal of seeing the business translate initial investments into sustainable entrepreneurship. He added that sometimes a social return such as the creation of jobs is the goal of “angel investors.”

Dr. Johnson said the first place to start is to consider what it means to be an employee of the City of Rocky Mount. He gave the example of FedEx vs. UPS and said that FedEx packages rarely go awry because the FedEx model is to pay high wages and benefits even for part-time employees in order to garner commitment. He said FedEx is customer-centered and the city will need to model what it wants in the community relative to workforce development and simulate what it wants to see in the marketplace.

*Mayor Combs arrived

- DOING INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROCKY MOUNT – THE ROAD MAP

Dr. Johnson presented an inclusive development logic model containing a list of situations and the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes/impacts. He said a lot of cities create a nonprofit foundation independent of the city noting that increasingly this requires a 501c3 to receive investments but also gives flexibility. He added that collection ambition will be required to engage stakeholders.

He stated that family supportive wages are better than a livable wage because a livable wage does not work for a family with four children and all policies should be family-based.

Dr. Johnson said an enterprise foundation becomes the hub for training, monitoring; and technical and managerial assistance. He told the Council that not everyone has to be engaged in every project, but an entity is needed to be the depository for reverse dollars and to monitor projects for equity, inclusion and shared prosperity. He added that the city would need to decide what inputs are needed and then train for collective ambition. He said that a Rocky Mount Enterprise Foundation would include: City and County Government; Education Institutions; the Philanthropic Community and the Private Sector. He outlined the core elements of an inclusive supplier diversity program.

The listed activities were reviewed, and Dr. Johnson invited all to think about a historically underutilized business in the community. He questioned if the city has an explicit policy for the LGBT community and said if it wants to attract people the LGBT community is huge today.

He added that there are challenges and barriers and the city cannot do everything. He said it is important to identify the challenges and then put a plan in place to address them. He questioned how the city makes sure there is equity opportunity access to information when bids are issued. He

said the desire is to create an environment that encourages entrepreneurial ideas for problem solving.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR “THE FUND”**
 - Affordable housing for sheltered homeless and other public sector workers (many public sector workers are homeless; accessory dwelling units are big housing opportunities for senior care workers);
 - Tandem housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs);
 - Latino New Urbanism (Latino community manifests focus on front yard friendly event);
 - Age-friendly affordable housing and senior fitness parks (equipment on playgrounds age and senior friendly)

Dr. Johnson provided the Council with information relative to the annual mean households in the Durham-Chapel Hill metro area which included municipal clerk, bus drivers, firefighters, teachers, postal service mail carrier and police all earning below \$60,000 and outlined the profiles of three working poor educators in Durham.

He told the Council that African-Americans have the greatest barriers to aging in place in North Carolina and:

- Spend 30% of their monthly income on housing (cost burdened) or rent;
- Approximately 89,569 households with 175,741 residents;
- Either independent, caretaker (head of household, median age with adult child with a child; usually 45-year-old male child); or caregiver (taking care of parents and have their own children)

Dr. Johnson stated that consideration must be given to design and redesign when the fastest growing population is 65+. He added that the more diverse populations are more likely to live in multi-generation households and the Black population is more likely to take care of family at home considering a nursing home as the last option.

He said the Hispanic/Latino culture desire to live close to their children and seek to buy enough property to build an accordion house that can be expanded.

- **STRATEGICS TO REDUCE VULNERABLITIES**
 - Create a federal guide for age-friendly building upgrades in the multi-family rental market (New York has issued federal guidelines to landlords to make rental units more friendly);
 - Encourage mutually beneficial strategic alliances between property and casualty insurance companies and property owners;
 - Expand USDA 504 Repair Program and develop an urban equivalent;
 - Advocate for Medicaid Expansion;
 - Re-purpose closed rural churches as senior centers (loneliness equates to smoking 14 cigarettes a day);
 - Create and Aging in Place Social Innovation Fund;
 - Leverage Tech Innovations for assistance with ADL and IADL

He said the Elements of Collective Ambition have:

- Purpose (a reason for being; a core mission; who we are and what we offer that is unique);
- Vision (aspiration to achieve within a reasonable time frame);
- Targets and Milestones (metrics used to assess progress);
- Strategies and Operational Priorities;
- Brand Promise (commitments to stakeholders concerning the experienced the organization will provide to include key actions and success metrics);
- Core Values (guiding principles that dictate what the organization stands for in good times and bad); and
- Leader Behaviors (how staff acts on a daily basis as they seek to implement the organization’s vision and strategic priorities, strive to fulfill the brand promises and live up to the values

Dr. Johnson encouraged the Council to Construct a Scenario in Rocky Mount's Future by:

- Imagining Rocky Mount in 2025 (design with a mission that has quantifiable goals and be prepared to measure and restructure if goals are not being met);
- Considering major outcomes contributing to the reimagined future;
- Thinking about new or improved competencies enabling Rocky Mount to realize these outcomes;
- Making investment to achieve outcomes (who needs to do what?; must have foresight planning);
- Setting goals (part of strategy must be to recruit human capital; must be purposeful and intentional);
- Benchmarking; and
- Identifying quantifiable measures of success

He told the Council that those who have left Rocky Mount are a very distinguished group of people who have gone off and done very well. He said when a community brings back its talent to the community it is refueling that community.

Dr. Johnson identified anticipated outcomes as:

- A more inclusive, equitable and sustainable city;
- Core values and performance metrics that demonstrate a commitment to inclusive and equitable development;
- An effective supply chain management system that supports the growth and development of traditionally under-represented business enterprises; and
- A major investment tool that promotes shared prosperity by investing in ventures that improve the living arrangements and overall quality of life of the working poor

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers and the City Council thanked Dr. Johnson for his attendance and presentation.

*Dr. Johnson left

RECESS

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney told the City Council she will be leaving the retreat for a 2 p.m. meeting in Raleigh. Announcements were made relative to dinner.

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers recessed the retreat at 12:18 for lunch.

RECONVENE

The Retreat reconvened at 1:43 p.m.

Councilmember Knight arrived*

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Tom Rogers
 Andre D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT:

Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk
 Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager
 Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Manager
 Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications Officer
 Landis Faulcan, Director of Community &
 Business Development
 Tanika Cooper, Executive Assistant CMO

ALSO PRESENT:

Julie Brenman, Fountainworks
 Lindell Kay, Staff Writer, Rocky Mount Telegram
 Bronson Williams
 Carl Stenburg, UNC/SOG

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers introduced Julie Brenman from Fountainworks to assist in guided Council discussion. Ms. Brenman introduced Landis Faulcon, Director of Community & Business Development

PRESENTATION OF STAFF’S RESEARCH AND PREPARATION OF HOUSING POLICY, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – JULIE BRENMAN/DR. LANDIS FAULCON

Ms. Brenman introduced Dr. Landis Faulcon to provide a PowerPoint presentation relative to Housing Policy Discussion.

PROPOSED HOUSING POLICY – DR. LANDIS FAULCON

Dr. Faulcon told the City Council that the proposed Housing Policy provides safe, affordable and sustainable housing for City residents.

She outlined the areas of focus to be:

1. Rental housing
2. Home ownership
3. Acquisition and preservation
4. Housing repair and rehabilitation
5. City investment

Discussion was held relative to the definition of “provides” in the housing policy with a consensus from Council to that the word “provides” be replaced with “promotes” or “facilitates.”

Dr. Faulcon provided housing policy background and analysis leading outlining key points from Dr. Jim Johnson’s presentation to the City Council in December 2018 as:

- Leveraging the power of collective ambition
- Inclusive and equitable development
- Shared prosperity
- Performance metrics

She stated Dr. Johnson had stated “what gets measured, gets done.”

Dr. Faulcon advised the City Council that the Community Academy is led by Sue Perry Cole with other City residents. She said many people are concerned about residents who live in and want to remain in Downtown neighborhoods.

She outlined guiding principles as:

- Inclusive development
- Code enforcement
- Safe, affordable and sustainable housing
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Fair housing
- Prevention of displacement
- Rights and responsibilities of property owners
- Tenant rights and responsibilities

Dr. Faulcon listed the following Affordable Housing Needs to include:

- Families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing; are considered cost burdened; and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care;
- Households that are severely cost-burdened if they pay more than 50% of their gross income in housing related expenses;
- According to a 2018 DFI presentation, 74% of low-income renter householders in the City are cost-burdened compared to 65% statewide; 44% of the City’s low-income renter households are severely cost-burdened compared to 35% statewide

- An estimated 12M renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50% of their annual incomes for housing; a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States

Carl Stenburg arrived*

Dr. Faulcon identified Housing Partners as:

- Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC)
- Joy CDC
- Rocky Mount Housing Authority
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Nash and Edgecombe Counties
- Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC)
- Southeastern NC CDC
- Third Wave Housing, LLC (Beal Street project)
- United Community Ministries
- The WODA Group

She said these are just a few and the most actively involved partners in housing activities.

Dr. Faulcon provided a chart of current city housing program investment. She outlined FY19 Budgeted funds as:

- Urgent Repair - \$250,000 budgeted / no match required
 - Income eligibility requirement; special need; owner occupied
 - Maximum award = \$12,500
 - Total available = \$303,997 / NC Housing Finance Agency & General Fund
- Housing Rebate - \$225,000 budgeted / match required
 - Targets property owners and investors with properties 50+ years
 - Maximum award = \$12,500
 - Total available = \$252,177 / General Fund
- Housing Repair - \$225,000 / no match required
 - Income eligibility requirement; property 50+ years; owner occupied
 - Maximum award = \$12,500
 - Total available = \$226,885 / General Fund & CDBG

Dr. Faulcon responded to questions from the Council and advised that there have been a number of applications. Councilmembers expressed a desire for a better understanding of what the money is for and a breakdown of the funding sources. Dr. Faulcon stated there could be an “open enrollment” until the funding is exhausted.

She noted the Housing Finance Agency awarded \$75,000 in 2018 and this year awarded an additional \$25,000.

She advised the Council of current City housing program activities and provided comparative housing program data. She responded to questions posed by Councilmembers noting that 11 urgent repair projects were funded in FY 2017-2018. She said they started with those who were not funded in the prior year and some who had applied for housing repair could be funded through urgent repair.

Concerns were voiced related to:

- the use of only one contractor for housing;
- the current selection process;
- the need for additional qualified contractors;
- a better understanding of the application process (by both applicants and Council, including limitations);

- a better understanding by Council of the programs;
- increased rents (no restriction on);
- maximum investment; not just reimbursement for work done;
- who in the City provides accounting oversight (compliance officer in Finance);
- promotion of programs (so the community knows about);
- efficient use of funding (schedule would be helpful);
- timeline for completion of “clean up” of past administration;
- expectation to fully spend allocations in allotted year;
- innovative approaches to have work performed safely and according to code;
- need for additional or replacement programs;
- better accounting and understanding of work performed (how many projects funded and overruns); and
- quality of work (contractors taking advantage);

Dr. Faulcon explained that denials are generally due to late or incomplete applications. She advised that the department is not yet fully staffed but they are moving in that direction.

Ms. Brenman led discussion relative to concerns of Council relative to:

- the contractor selection process and quality of work;
- the process for exceeding the \$12,500 cap (need more information);
- restrictions relative to applying for multiple programs;
- restriction on rent hikes (once repairs have been funded); and
- the application window (when it is open; should the window be different)

Challenges were identified as:

- staffing levels;
- Historic Administrative Compliance Concerns; and
- Funding (investors)

Dr. Faulcon outlined the strategic goals, priority populations and objectives for rental housing, home ownership and acquisition and preservation.

She identified Housing Repair and Rehabilitations strategic goals and priority populations as:

Strategic goals:

- Improve the quality of existing affordable rental and owner housing;
- Assist fixed-income homeowners in maintaining their properties; and
- Encourage routine and proactive property maintenance by tenant and homeowner

Priority populations:

- Increase energy efficiency rental and owner properties;
- Low-income homeowners and others;
- Owners of single and multi-family low-income rental properties (*by focusing on financial programs to assist property owners with repairs and rehabs, rents may be lowered to relieve burdens of renter and increase opportunities for homeownership*)

Objectives were identified as:

- Assist homeowners in remaining safely in their homes and communities, particularly seniors and other families at risk of displacement;
- Assist homeowners in making health and safety repairs, including repairs that will enable them to make upgrades that reduce costs for utilities and maintenance;
- Priorities repairs that are most urgent, including those that address immediate health and safety issues and other urgent repair needs that will result in increased repair costs and unhealthy living conditions if left unaddressed; and

- Assist owners of single and multi-family rental properties in making necessary improvements for maintaining safe, affordable and sustainable housing for residents

Ms. Brenman told the Council feedback from them relative to priority populations and objectives based on their values as policy leaders is needed. She led a polling process to help identify Council's priorities.

Ms. Brenman told the Council input regarding how rental housing will fit into a housing project is needed. Dr. Faulcon said the goal is to use private dollars to strengthen rental housing opportunities.

Discussion continued relative to the importance of identifying priority population and objectives considering the City's limited resources, home ownership and upkeep (acquisition and preservation). Workforce Housing was identified as a focus.

RECESS

By consensus, the retreat was recessed at 3:00 p.m. for a break.

RECONVENE

The retreat reconvened at 3:17 p.m.

PROPOSED HOUSING POLICY (continued) – DR. LANDIS FAULCON

Dr. Faulcon identified the following goals, populations and objectives for maximizing resources for home acquisition and preservation:

Strategic Goals:

- Increase investment in housing development throughout the City;
- Create incentives to support housing development, operations and services;
- Establish a Housing Opportunity Fund with dedicated resources and a sustainable model for success; and
- Develop a governing structure for administering housing and funding initiatives

She told the Council that site control is important when identifying property for redevelopment.

Priority Populations:

- Government agencies;
- Nonprofit community partners; and
- Private investors

Objectives:

- Establish a long-term investment strategy for financing affordable housing;
- Leverage existing resources to offer incentives that encourage housing construction, rehabilitation and repair; and
- Plan for infrastructure improvements and new amenities to support housing initiatives

Dr. Faulcon identified a "higher opportunity area" to exist when people are able to move into neighborhoods different from their own with higher incomes and a better standard of housing. She said a level of balance comes through program development.

Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton stated there is a focus on acquisition and whether the City Council desires a policy of acquiring property for development. Councilmember Joyner questioned if a land bank was a possibility.

Discussion of Council priorities continued. Mayor Combs stated that Metro Mayor's executives are reaching out to other cities for a discussion relative to housing.

Ms. Brenman noted that a project exists for planning for affordable housing by thirty (30) member cities and a number list affordable housing as a priority. She said there is a desire to convene housing staff across the state to create a toolbox. She added that Rocky Mount is unique in that it is not at a crisis level and is well positioned in that the Council is forward thinking.

The City Council voiced support for the following:

- Proactive movement (fitting with plan, promoting opportunity and investment)
- Tax Credits (to offset income for other projects)
- Quality repair skills
- Engaging youth
- Identifying a point person to address potential projects (to decide if an idea has value and should move forward)
- Engaging the community
- Creative thinking

The City Council was advised that staff will work to refine an Affordable Housing Policy for Council’s review and, if necessary, will schedule another review session.

Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton stated that no vote is needed today but staff will come by to the Council with strategies for implementation and to report on what other cities across the country are doing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The City Council was advised of dinner plans for 6 p.m. It was noted that the retreat will continue at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday and breakfast is available starting at 6:30 a.m.

The City Council recognized and thanked Dr. Stenburg for facilitating the retreat.

CLOSED SESSION

The Mayor Pro Tem requested a closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

The minutes of the closed session shall be placed on file as **ESM-519** at the end of Minute Book No. 35 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the City Council adjourn to closed session at 4:10 p.m.

All left the meeting with the exception of the City Council (noted: Councilmember Watkins was not in attendance).

REGULAR SESSION/RECESS

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers convened the meeting in open session at 5:55 p.m. and adjourned the first day of the 2019 City Council Retreat.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21 – 8:30 A.M.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Tom Rogers
 Andre D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager
 Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk
 Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager
 Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Manager
 Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications Officer
 Landis Faulcan, Director of Community &
 Business Development
 Tanika Cooper, Executive Assistant CMO
 Kevin Harris, Downtown Development Manager

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services
Richard J. Rose, City Attorney

ALSO PRESENT:

Carl Stenburg, UNC/SOG
Sarah P. Odio, UNC/SOG, Project Manager, Development Finance Initiative
Rory Dowling, UNC/SOG, Senior Project Manager, Development Finance Initiative
Bronson Williams

OPENING – February 21, 2019 – Retreat Day 2

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers called the meeting to order at 8:47 a.m. and surrendered the floor to Facilitator Carl Stenburg.

Dr. Stenburg explained his role as facilitator and called on City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney.

The City Manager introduced Sarah Odio and Roy Dowling, the team from DFI/SOG. She told the Council that when they last spoke to the Council they had advised that the project would be moving forward if State funds could be secured. She told the Council those funds have now been secured and that authorization from the Council will be needed in order to move forward. She called on Sara Odio to provide an update on the DFI project.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3s) FOR HOUSING (TARBORO STREET LOT) – SARAH ODIO, PROJECT MANAGER, DFI/SOG

Ms. Odio stated that the Development Finance Initiative (DFI) was engaged by the State to assist with attracting private investment for the development of affordable housing for low- and/or moderate-income households in hurricane-impacted communities. She outlined the scope of completed work as:

- Identification of two (2) development sites in Matthew-impacted communities; and
- The DFI pre-development process

She told the Council that the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resilience (NCORR) is committed to financing development of sixty (60) units affordable to households at 60% area median income (AMI) on the Tarboro Street site and provided a map of the development site.

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers requested that the difference between affordable and workforce housing be explained.

Ms. Odio stated that workforce can mean different things and can go as low at 60% AMI. She noted this project will be restricted to household at 60% AMI.

Council was advised that the NCORR provides priority assistance for households affected by floods and has very strict regulations. She noted that many households impacted by flooding in Edgecombe County were low-income renters.

Councilmember Miller questioned if participants must reside in Edgecombe County. Ms. Odio replied that she is unsure but all public interest concerns can be a part of the conversation with the development partner for first criteria concerns.

Dr. Stenburg encouraged other background questions.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned what is and is not negotiable.

Bronson Williams arrived*

Ms. Odio told the City Council that the housing will be prioritized for those impacted by Hurricane Matthew and maybe Hurricane Florence.

Mayor Pro Tem questioned the use of workforce and affordable being used interchangeably. Ms. Odio stated the housing will be for working people who have a source of income but earn about

60% AMI. She noted rents will be approximately \$500 per month. She added this is not public housing and will be privately owned. She said Council can be a part of selecting the developer and senior citizens may qualify for residency.

Councilmember Blackwell stated during the establishment of this first workforce housing initiative project would be a good time to make appointments to the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission established by the Council.

Ms. Odio advised the Council that in Rocky Mount the market rate for affordable housing is about 80% AMI. She said there will be public information sessions wherein the meaning of 60% AMI will be clearly established. Discussion was held relative to the type of jobs that may qualify. She added that students are not the purpose for the housing project and added the project is a recovery effort for households that have been displaced or have that potential relative to hurricanes (those impacted by or likely to be impacted by flooding).

Ms. Odio said that these type projects are for families and will have playgrounds; are privately funded with a lot of monitoring and compliance relative to maintenance of the property; a lot of pride is taken in the property; and employ tax credits. The Beal Street project was identified as affordable housing.

The Mayor Pro Tem stated that the project has been promoted as a workforce housing project and noted that those words are important because they tie to so many things. He said he is confused why the words “workforce housing” appear to be slipping away. Ms. Odio reported that the term affordable is blurry; however, the housing will be “affordable housing for the City’s workforce.” She showed a diagram of the site noting that sixty (60) units could be built using only the City-owned parcels.

Ms. Odio outlined the DFI feasibility analysis to include: site analysis; public interests; market analysis and financial analysis and added that all must be present for the project to be a feasible project. She noted the Rocky Mount project is a feasible project.

She added that there will need to be a development partner (nonprofit or for profit) and a solicitation will be put out to work to bring in a developer. She said Council will be made aware of interested developers and provided with qualifications. She said they will look for developers with extensive experience with tax credits.

Councilmember Joyner voiced a desire to keep as much wealth in the community as possible. Ms. Odio stated that local hiring can be identified as a priority, adding that a certain level of experience must be realized in order to qualify for tax credits. She said it is a very competitive process and there will be preferences and requirements. She told the Council the NCORR will have a say in choosing the developer.

She shared a project timeline and noted that public information sessions should be held in March. She said milestones are set and the developer will go into predevelopment at the same time as the development agreement is being finalized. She noted this will be the place where the City will be involved in formal and informal ways.

Ms. Odio said the next critical step in order to proceed is for DFI and the State to receive a commitment from the City for conveyance of the Tarboro site via sale or ground lease, contingent on selection of the development partner and execution of the development agreement. She stated there did not appear to be consensus at the last meeting wherein the project was discussed. She expressed a desire for the matter to come before Council for a formal vote at the next Council meeting.

Councilmember Blackwell stated he has supported the project from day one.

Councilmember Miller voiced a desire to know the identity of the developer and was advised that the developer partner decision can be a joint decision; however, the project cannot move forward without a consensus relative to the willingness to commit the property for the project.

Ms. Odio noted if there is concern with affordable housing at the Tarboro site it needs to be noted now. Councilmember Miller responded that some have voiced a concern from the beginning.

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers stated he likes the idea of defining the project as affordable workforce housing and questioned if the AMI can be higher than 60%. It was noted that can be a discussion. Councilmember Blackwell agreed that would blend a range of people from different backgrounds.

The City Manager advised that the City owns a sizeable portion of the Tarboro site, the college owns a portion, another portion is owned by Self-Help Credit Union and the remaining site is privately owned. Ms. Odio stated the sixty (60) units can be built on the city-owned property; however, if DFI had control of the other properties more family units could be built. She said only building sixty (60) units constrains the project to studio, and one- and two-bedroom units. She noted there will be a restriction to the number of occupants in the units and restrictions can be put in place with regard to occupancy by the elderly or families. Ms. Odio reported that the project could be an elderly project, but more requirements would be placed on the project. Councilmember Blackwell noted his preference is for a blended community. It was noted that Self-Help has parking concerns and that a conversation has not yet been held between DFI and the college since there was a question of whether the project would move forward. The City Manager stated there was a concern by the college of concentrated poverty at the location. Council voiced a desire for the college to be included in and kept abreast of information sessions. Ms. Odio told the Council that Self-Help's first priority is redevelopment of the old post office. She said they are concerned with parking and very concerned with this project. Councilmember Miller stated that conversations concerning "low income" development has hindered conversations.

A conversation was held relative to including the college and other stakeholders in developer conversations.

Councilmember Blackwell said that all people belong Downtown and all pay taxes and have as much value as anyone else. He voiced a desire for all partners to come to the table and work together. Ms. Odio said statistics show lower income individuals spend more money in the community and that businesses prosper everywhere poor people live and that charitable contributions are greater.

Parking was discussed, and Ms. Odio advised that structure parking would drive up the cost of the project. There was conversation relative to the potential for a land swap between the City and the college. Mayor Pro Tem Rogers noted there is difficulty associated with using land previously identified as prime parking for affordable workforce housing. It was noted the City currently has a parking agreement with the college.

Ms. Odio provided information to the Council relative to the Rocky Mount area median income for 2017. She added that, upon commitment of the land by the City, negotiations for developers will begin in April.

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers thanked Ms. Odio and Mr. Rowling for their work and the presentation.

ACTION: Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that consideration of commitment of the Tarboro Street property be added to the agenda for Monday's City Council meeting.

RECESS

By consensus, the retreat was recessed at 9:51 a.m. for a break.

Lindell Kay arrived*
Will Deaton arrived*

RECONVENE

The retreat reconvened at 10:13 a.m. for discussion relative to Downtown Development.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT – ROCHELLE SMALL-TONEY/WILL DEATON/KEVIN HARRIS

Mr. Stenburg called on City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney to lead a discussion relative to Downtown Development.

The City Manager told the Council she thought it would be helpful to share with them topics, interests and concerns coming to staff and to obtain input from the Councilmembers.

Code Enforcement

Ms. Small-Toney opened discussion relative to code enforcement incentives for physical properties and initiatives for support of Downtown businesses. She noted concerns relative to parking, policing and how to work with Downtown Businesses to create a synergy. She called on Will Deaton, Director of Development Services to continue discussion.

Mr. Deaton told the Council there are some tools in place. He led discussion relative to:

- demolition by neglect (buildings in the Central City Historic District)
 - current vacancy for chief building inspector
 - desire to leverage inspectors and traditional code enforcement
 - questioned if an assessment is desired of only the Central City Historic District or if the desire is to expand the area of assessment
- residential housing code
 - currently have 5 full-time building/multi-trade inspectors
 - Justin Floyd doing a tremendous job
 - may be a need to review historic guidelines (want to make sure do not have a heavy hand but need to look at what services other departments can offer, i.e., facade grants, etc.
- housing code
 - intervention for health, safety and nuisance
- new development
 - renovation improvements; focus city-wide
 - significant increase in activity level in last few years
 - may want to utilize community code to assist with vacant store fronts and encourage more people to come Downtown

Mayor Combs voiced a need to get people to make improvements to store fronts to make the Downtown more attractive. Mr. Deaton noted there are some facade improvement grants, but it may take a little more pressure for a vacant commercial storefront ordinance. He said efforts could be made to leverage arts for display in vacant storefronts so there is a sense that something is going on. Inspectors would have to inspect buildings to ensure they qualify for facade grants or other available grants from other departments. He said appearance is important in the Downtown and that there are anchor spots. He voiced a need to keep anchor businesses in the Downtown and urging repair and forward movement while not being too heavy handed.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned if more tools are needed in the toolbox for both enforcement and incentives.

Kevin Harris told the Council the City currently has two (2) primary incentive projects:

- Downtown building assistance – provides reimbursement of 50% of spend to improve properties up to a maximum of \$20,000; requires a certificate of occupancy
- Downtown investment grant – rebate over five (5) years after receiving certificate of occupancy

Mayor Combs questioned if there are Downtown grants that do not require a match. Mr. Harris reported staff will be proposing a \$5,000 facade grant that will not require a match or a

certificate of occupancy. Discussion was held, and Council requested that plans for the proposed grant be expedited. Conversation continued relative to dealing with the issues of roofs, doors and windows and the deterioration caused by weather issues and low interest loan (pros/cons); annual inspections of unoccupied buildings (fee charged); requirement for lights to be on at certain times; painting/decals on windows to make them interesting and attractive (partnerships with other organizations); and programs to help current owners get buildings up to speed; and code enforcement.

Mr. Deaton told the Council that conversations have been held with the CCRP and the Development Review Committee (DRC) meets weekly. He noted that developers are invited, but only a few attend. He stated developers are invited to attend staff meeting in some cities and he is not opposed to that. The Mayor suggested that getting all involved with development in the same room would help remedy delays.

Councilmember Blackwell noted there needs to be a comprehensive program for enforcement to also include assistance because a number of Downtown building owners are low-wealth. Mayor Combs stated the facade grant needs to be put in place immediately (no match).

A discussion was held with regard to legal restrictions; the need for planning board approvals; and suggestions for easier processes for plan approvals (ordinance amendment) and adjusting DRC rules/deadlines for submittal and digital acceptance of plans.

Councilmember Miller questioned if current issues would be eliminated if a one-stop-shop were in place. The City Manager responded that would not necessarily solve all issues. She stated an up-date relative to the one-stop-shop was planned for March but called on Assistant City Manager Chris Beschler to provide an update at this time.

Discussion was held relative to looking at ways to expedite items requiring Planning Board approval.

Mayor Combs inquired if the City is coordinating teams to work with Downtown stakeholders. The City Manager said Kevin Harris has been assigned as Downtown Manager and his role is to identify key stakeholders and remain in contact with them on a daily basis. She said there are plans to locate him in the Downtown area. Ms. Small-Toney added that within City Hall a team exists (the Assistant Managers, Will Deaton, Landis Faulcon, JoSeth Bocoock, Police and Fire) that interacts with Downtown stakeholders and hold bi-weekly meetings to discuss upcoming issues and communicate with stakeholders. She added that communication is key.

Mayor Combs inquired if building codes can be adjusted to make renovations of older buildings easier and less expensive without compromising safety. The City Manager noted a real challenge occurs when business owners want to put housing above businesses (requires extra levels of fire code protection; must meet state codes) but there are opportunities for flexibility.

The Mayor Pro Tem questioned if there are statutory requirements relative to who is able to carry out inspections and was told the Chief Building Inspector is the official identified. Mr. Deaton added the inspectors are required by the State to have licenses and certificates and although they are employed by the City inspections must meet State requirements of the Department of Insurance and be in compliance with their codes. He noted a need to amend the City's ordinance to identify inspections in keeping with the current state code. He noted a need for further investigation into the rehab code for historic properties. He voiced a concern for limitations on good projects in the Downtown area due to the building code.

Councilmember Knight arrived*

Conversation continued relative to building codes requirements (sprinklers, occupancy; use). The Mayor Pro Tem questioned if there has been an overall inspection of the Downtown and discussion revealed an inspection is needed and the difficulties involved including property rights issues and adjoining walls. The City Manager noted that staff has a general idea of the condition of Downtown buildings from the outside.

Councilmember Blackwell said it is important to balance incentive with enforcement and noted owners may be more receptive if provided assistance with creating a development plan and if they understand the goal is to assist them not hurt them.

ACTION: *By consensus, the City Council agreed to move forward with development of a no match facade grant.*

CLOSED SESSION

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney requested a closed session to discuss matters concerning personnel and economic development.

The minutes of the closed session shall be placed on file as **ESM-520** at the end of Minute Book No. 35 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the City Council adjourn to closed session at 11:05 a.m.

All left the meeting with the exception of the City Council (noted: Councilmember Watkins was not in attendance); the City Manager and City Clerk.

REGULAR SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers convened the meeting in open session at 11:44 a.m.

DISCUSSION/DINNER PLANS

A discussion was held relative to dinner plans.

RECESS/LUNCH

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers recessed the retreat for lunch at 11:45 a.m.

RECONVENE

The Retreat reconvened at 1:01 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Tom Rogers
 Andre D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager
 Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk
 Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager
 Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Manager
 Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications Officer
 Amy Staton, Finance Director
 Ken Hunter, Budget & Evaluation Manager
 Tanika Cooper, Executive Assistant CMO
 Will Deaton, Director of Development Services
 Richard J. Rose

ALSO PRESENT:

Carl Stenburg, UNC/SOG
 Bronson Williams
 Lindell Kay, Staff Writer, Rocky Mount Telegram

ENCROACHMENT AGREEMENT/M.S. HAYWORTH (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING) – RICHARD J. ROSE

City Attorney Richard J. Rose provided the City Council with an Encroachment Agreement with South Eastern North Carolina Community Development Corporation (SENCCDC) relative to the M.S. Hayworth project (property near Tessie and Nugent Streets) He said the waiver benefits

SENCCDC, their heirs and assigns and waives the City's enforced removal of SENCCDC's encroachment from the easement to the extent of the current encroachment.

ACTION: Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the Encroachment Agreement be approved and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City.

ONE-STOP-SHOP UPDATE (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING) – CHRIS BESCHLER

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney called on Assistant City Manager Chris Beschler to provide an update relative to the one-stop-shop. She noted technology will be a very key component to implementation of the one-stop-shop.

Assistant City Manager Chris Beschler advised the City Council that the one-stop-shop will:

- allow plans to be submitted electronically;
- have a conference room available for explanation, discussion and conversation of more complicated plans/needs to work through resolution of existing issues prior to submittal of plans

Councilmember Knight voiced concern for delays as the City grows and large projects come onboard. He noted it was stated that the Monk Hotel was stalled through the inspection process. He voiced a concern to have staff capacity to deal with both small and large development projects. Assistant Manager Beschler said staff would look at the number of permits and manpower; however, it is anticipated that increased technology will help speed up the process to provide for a higher-level in-house capacity. He said there is a possibility additional staff will be needed. Councilmember Knight questioned the status of the Monk Hotel project. Will Deaton, Director of Development Services responded that he will obtain an update and report if there are active permits. Councilmember Knight added that if concerns about the project are being written about in the paper, it would seem someone on staff would have already looked into the status of the project and be able to provide a report. He said reports in the newspaper imply the fault in delays lies with the City and it would seem that a delay in receiving a \$55,000 grant would not stall a \$4M project. He questioned what is delaying the project – the City or the developer?

Councilmember Blackwell said Council needs to know what, if anything, is holding up the project. Councilmember Miller agreed that it would seem the project is significant enough that the Department of Development Services would know the status. Mayor Pro Tem Rogers asked if a report could be presented tomorrow. He added that the Monk Hotel is a significant project and there may be other requirements and it would seem that the City would be welcoming and assisting the developer with a project such as this to ensure it gets developed as quickly and efficiently as possible. He stated he hopes that is the philosophy of staff.

Councilmembers agreed there must be a concern for both enforcement and development. Councilmember Blackwell said deterioration has occurred for the past fifty (50) years, but this City Council is working to bring life back and save the Downtown and is doing more than any City Council has ever done.

FINANCIAL UPDATE – AMY STATON

The Director of Finance, Amy Staton, provided a financial update starting with the General Fund. She noted the General Fund is:

- trending ahead of the \$25.7M budget mostly due to changes made by the State concerning vehicle tax;
- Collection of taxes is on track; 97.17 last year and appears to be the same this year; the City is slightly behind compared to other cities noting most are at 98%;
- Sales tax continues to grow (above budget); online sales and tax revenues are helpful

She provided a PowerPoint and explained that sales and service numbers in green are good and in red show a shortfall. The PowerPoint outlined total revenues/expenditures for FY2019 as:

- Budget = \$71,099,527
- Projected Revenues - \$66,437,927 / Projected Expenditures - \$67,001,088
- Net excess (shortfall) revenues vs. expenditures - \$563,159 (not bad; had unexpected expenditures for repairs and claims)
- Sales/Services and transfer station – doing well
- Investment earnings – running ahead and doing well

Mayor Combs noted that \$5,335,110 had been transferred from the Fund Balance and questioned if that is typical. Budget and Evaluation Manager, Ken Hunter, responded indicating there were significant items financed that were transferred over and some additional equipment in the General Fund that has been delivered and paid for resulting in a decrease in the transfer of approximately \$1.25M for a total transfer of just over \$4.1M. He noted the budget has been affected by changes in the last ten (10) years and identified some as: implementation of the 2010 pay plan; Event Center plan adjustment; increase in housing grant; significant change in retirement contributions (increased); increase in healthcare cost; increase in gas prices; inflation. The Finance Director explained that the Event Center is probably the largest part of the increase.

The Finance Director continued by providing a detailed written report and highlighting the following:

- EVENT CENTER
 - 3 months in operation;
 - Shortfall of approximately \$870,000 (expected); prior to large youth event
 - Bottom line shortfall = \$251,000 (trending as expected);
 - Overages = contract labor (more than anticipated)
 - Revenues – on track;
 - Family Center – ahead of where expected

Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton reported that staff has had conversations with SFM about how to increase revenues from food and beverage and expects to see a turn around. Councilmember Miller asked if lunch is available for people who work in the Downtown area and Ms. Hampton responded that is a recommendation for increasing revenues. She added a new full-time executive chef is in place. She explained there is a contractual issue with the chef (not an SFM employee) giving direction to SFM staff and a contract amendment is expected to occur which would need to be approved by the Council. Discussion continued relative to Event Center operations and recommendations for dealing with a multi-faceted set of challenges. Councilmember Blackwell suggested the proforma be reviewed. He said the Council was sold on SFM for their sports network. It was reported that finance staff and the internal auditor are following the financials.

- ELECTRIC
 - Almost breaking even (warmer winter affects sales and operating expenses)
 - Meeting and exceeding margin
 - Mutual aid will be reimbursed
 - Over hire of one lineman
 - Net excess = \$29,130
- GAS
 - Doing fine; running ahead on sales
 - Budgeted margin and seeing that margin
 - Net shortfall = \$142,405 (related to fund balance appropriation for Pfizer project; requires expansion of gas lines; project may be financed; Pfizer responsible for part of project and the City responsible for a portion of developing network; looking at options)
- WATER
 - Struggled but doing fine; making sales numbers;
 - Expenses related to mutual aid
 - Net excess = \$69,345

- SEWER
 - Net excess = \$40,580 (even with fund balance appropriation)
- STORMWATER
 - Doing fine; little less revenues than budgeted but no concern;
 - Expenditures on pace; expect to break even
 - Net excess = \$36,301

Ms. Staton provided a current year summary noting that sales growth continues, and the General Fund remains stable.

She outlined challenges in tax base and infrastructure projects (utilities). The Finance Director stated there is some capacity in the Fund Balance and revenue bonds are a possible funding source for infrastructure projects. She said there is a need to begin considering how to fund those projects.

Ms. Staton provided the following property tax data:

- Valuation decreased from \$3.722 in 2018 to \$3.479 in 2019 (as of January 31); decrease mostly due to closing of Edgecombe Genco
- Net levy - \$2.5 increase to from \$22.5 in 2018 to \$24.1 in 2019
- Tax Revenue (impact per capita) = decrease from \$450 in 2018 to \$438 in 2019; decline in tax base increases burden per person

The City Council was provided with an ad valorem valuation. It was explained there has been a loss since the last valuation.

The Finance Director provided information relative to the Fund Balance Policy:

- Available fund balance of 10% minimum met for all funds
- Target set for each fund between 10-16%
- Reserves established in utility funds for rate stabilization and working capital
- Contingency reserve established (unexpected costs) - .25% for all funds

Graphs reflecting the General Fund Balance were provided and explained for each fund. It was noted that following the recession revenues declined and additional expenses increased due to a pay and compensation study. The Finance Director told Council it took a while to build back the General Fund, but staff was very strategic. She noted that the General Fund balance was highest in 2016 and went down in 2017 due to the Event Center but has now leveled off at \$13M. She noted this is just shy of the target of \$11M and there is about \$2M to work with. The Mayor Pro Tem stated Fund Balance should not be used if it cannot be rebuilt. Ms. Staton said there needs to be a plan for rebuilding, but the hard years are reflected on the first part of the chart. Councilmember Blackwell added those times were not just hard for the City but for all of America.

Councilmember Miller noted that at recent tours of the wastewater and water plants concerns for aging infrastructure was noted. Ms. Staton reported that an asset management plan is being considered. Assistant Manager Chris Beschler stated he would check into the expected date for completion of the plan.

The Mayor voiced a concern previously expressed relative to critical infrastructure needs such as Beechbranch and, particularly, Pfizer. The City Manager reported there are also culvert issues which will be discussed during the budget preparation.

Discussion continued relative to challenges in recruiting and compensation, especially of electric employees (lineman), fire and police. It was noted that the City works closely with Nash Community College, but a challenge exists for replacing retiring managerial staff.

The Finance Director outlined the follow debt obligations as of June 30, 2018 (in millions):

	GENERAL	UTILITIES
Installment Financing	\$12.7	\$10.9
HUD 108	1.6	-
NCDOT/Other	3.2	-
Revolving Loan	-	5.2
Special Obligation Bond	39.7	-
CURRENT YEAR TOTAL	\$57.2	\$16.1
PRIOR YEAR TOTAL	\$58.2	\$16.5

She told the Council at this level the City is very close to the top end of what it can afford unless it finds another source of revenue. She added that new markets are not included in the report because that is not the City's debt. She reported that utilities have not changed much, and the strategy is to replace debt coming off with equivalent debt.

She provided the following additional information:

General Fund Payments as % of Expenditures	
2018	8.8%
2017	7.4%
2016	7.2%
2015	7.4%
2014	7.8%
2013	6.9%

*Target ratio – no more than 15%

Total Debt per Capita	
2018	\$1,347
2017	1,335
2016	618
2015	669
2014	739
2013	826

General Fund % of Assessed Valuation	
2018	1.42%
2017	1.38%
2016	.48%
2015	.52%
2014	.53%
2013	.60%
2012	.37%

*Target ratio – no more than 2.5%

Debt Payments – General Fund 2018-2021				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Installment Financing	\$3,640,575	\$3,747,688	\$3,747,688	\$3,747,688
HUD 108	210,460	206,089	201,434	196,554
NMTC	88,500	435,500	435,500	435,500
Special Obligation Bonds	1,624,000	1,924,400	3,067,400	3,064,200
Current Year Total	\$5,563,535	\$6,313,677	\$7,452,022	\$7,443,942

The Finance Director told the Council payments for special obligation bonds now have principal and interest. She noted 2020 will be a difficult year and debt payments should decrease after that.

Ten Year Payout Ratio	
2018	59.1%
2017	53.3%
2016	88.7%
2015	84.2%
2014	82.2%
2013	79.7%

*Target ratio – floor of 50%

Ms. Staton noted the importance of not going below 50% of the ten-year payout ratio. Mayor Combs asked how the new project would affect the debt ratio and was advised it would get close to but not below 50% but would not leave much capacity.

She told the City Council that:

- Current debt ratios are within policy targets
- There is very little debt capacity until 2020
- The Event Center bond payments began May of 2017 (interest only for 2 years; principal payments begin May 2019)

It was noted that the Sports Complex debt will be paid in 2020 and the Imperial Centre was refinanced and will not be paid off for twelve (12) years.

RECESS

By consensus, the retreat was recessed at 2:34 p.m. for a break.

RECONVENE

The retreat reconvened at 2:49 p.m.

BUDGET UPDATE – KEN HUNTER

Budget and Evaluation Manager, Ken Hunter told the City Council that in some ways his report mirrors the report of the Finance Director.

He provided an overview of the:

- FY 2019 2nd Quarter Budget Update
 - General Fund:
 - Improving Ad Valorem collection rate overcoming adjustment challenges (timing impacts 12/31/2018 numbers; challenge but on par with other municipalities)
 - Strong sales tax growth continues
 - Investment returns bolstered by more “normal” interest rates
 - Departments are being conservative on expenditures
 - Increased capital activity
 - Should finish FY 2019 without using \$1.25 of adopted, appropriated fund balance
 - Utilities (Enterprise Funds):
 - Growing electric, water and sewer sales
 - Early gas sales down, awaiting impact of winter heating demand
 - Operating expenditures remain constrained across funds
 - Capital activity increasing
 - Most utilities should end FY 2019 with contributions back to fund balance, facilitating some necessary capital projects

- FY 2019 Select Revised Revenue Forecast
 - Sales tax collections are co-mingled as a result of different aspects of state law
 - Statewide point of sale is up a bit
 - Seeing continued growth in sales activity both local and statewide
 - Anticipate \$12.44M in sales tax by the end of the year; projected just under \$11M (increase)
 - Year-to-Date: \$ 6.17M (+7.0%)
 - End of Year Projection: \$12.44M (+6.0%)
 - Adopted Projection: \$10.96M
 - Surplus/(Shortfall): \$ 1.48M
 - Seeing recovery of what was lost during the economic downturn; almost 67% ahead of year to date interest earnings
 - Year-to-Date: \$303,422 (+66.7%)
 - Projection: \$575,000 (+38.4%)
 - Adopted Projection: \$450,000
 - Surplus/(Shortfall): \$125,000

Mr. Hunter provided the following information relative to the current year budget, noting the different of \$4.66M below what was anticipated and the expectation of being in a good place by 2020:

CATEGORY	FY 2019 BUDGET	FY 2019 END OF YEAR PROJECTION	DIFFERENCE
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$25,705,000	\$25,792,000	\$ 87,000
Sale Tax	11,960,000	12,440,000	480,000
Intergovernmental	8,214,297	8,348,000	133,703
Licenses & Permits	1,619,200	1,570,500	(48,700)
Sales & Services	7,423,000	7,936,500	513,500
Investment Earnings	450,000	575,000	125,000
Miscellaneous	3,430,920	3,147,500	(283,420)
Other (Transfers, Financing)	6,962,000	6,629,000	(333,000)
Fund Balance Appropriated (Adopted)	1,250,000	-	(1,250,000)
Fund Balance Appropriated (Amendments)	4,085,110	-	(4,085,110)
TOTAL	\$71,099,527	\$66,438,500	(4,661,027)

The Budget and Evaluation Manager provided 12-month comparisons relative to jobs and information relative to the gross domestic product annually. He said overall the area has seen a reduction in employment. He added that hospitality, trade and transportation has grown, and manufacturing has lost about 400 jobs in the past five (5) years. He stated with the arrival of Triangle Tire in 2020 an increase in jobs is expected. He shared city statistics from the American Community Survey (prepared by the Census Bureau).

- FY 2020 Budget Development
 - No tax increase of utility rate increases is planned
 - Will continue to address Council priorities (housing)
 - Focus capital on facility improvements, utility system rehabilitation
 - Plan for implementing pay and classification plan recommendations
 - Absorb retirement contribution increases
 - Maintain benefits at current levels
 - Ensure quality of operations and performance in daily services
 - Protect healthy fiscal condition

Mr. Hunter led discussion relative to the City Council's FY 2020 Budget priorities. The following were identified by Council as priorities:

- City Hall elevators (was in 2018-2019 budget but removed)
- Security @ City Hall, water plant and other City facilities
- Beech Branch Outfall
- Grants for Neighborhood Associations (desires signage to identify neighborhoods; currently receive \$500 which is used for fellowship, cookouts, etc.; 27 neighborhood associations)
- Façade Grant (no match; used for signage, windows, doors, etc.)
- Development Toolkit support (tied to principles; support private initiatives; evaluate grant ideas)
- Pay & Classification Plan implementation
- Strengthen public relations (video, strategic marketing, targeted, distance ads, televise meetings; advertise in other markets; boost television station)
- MUNIS enhancements & improvements (better utilization)
- Additional one-stop shop (redesign City Hall first and second floors)
- Reformat budget (program-based; citizen friendly)
- Improved neighborhood appearance (staffing; awareness; City staff report issues they may see)
- Matching county funding LVC for UCM

Council requested additional information with regard to the following:

- Neighborhood Associations (recognized by City)
- Directory of current, proposed city-funded grant programs
- Costs of greater building security
- City Hall usage assessment
- Track budget – community investment (equity budgeting); human development (sustainable) (community wealth and sustainability vs individual wealth)
- Annexation Analysis (revenue/cost); broader application
- Geo mapping (where investment is going)
- Animal control update
- Program-based budget examples

Goals were identified as:

- Evaluate efficiency and effectiveness (scorecard to develop an approach to address issues as they are identified; metrics; cost, time, qualify, etc.)
- Better system utilization (sister city evaluation/benchmarking)
- City Hall building security/other city buildings
- Workforce housing increase
- Adopt best practices from peers
- Greater community engagement/accountability
- Neighborhood pride/beautification
- Downtown beautification
- Accelerate Downtown Development (Downtown Team to make things move quicker; Downtown Developer already created and budgetized; grant fund for underutilized businesses; program that rewards investor businesses for adhering to principals of economic development, like the Monk Hotel to ensure developers are working with staff and other entities to help spur development)
- Equitable development
- City Workforce Retention/Recruitment

Councilmember Knight stated he would like a report relative to security during a Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mayor Combs stated nothing was mentioned about the Workforce Housing Project as it relates to the budget. City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney reported the only cost to the City for the project is conveyance of the land.

Councilmember Blackwell requested an update at a Committee of the Whole meeting relative to animal control. The City Manager noted when she visited the animal shelter it was well-maintained. She said there are no animals at the shelter on the weekends since the rescue group picks up animals on Thursdays so there are no animals at the shelter on the weekend so no need for it to be open. The Mayor suggested longer hours are needed during the week.

ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers adjourned the second day of the 2019 City Council Retreat at 4:50 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22 – 8:30 A.M.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Tom Rogers
Andre D. Knight
Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
W. B. Bullock
Chris Miller
David W. Combs, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager*
Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk
Chris Beschler, Assistant City Manager
Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Manager
Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications Officer
Tanika Cooper, Executive Assistance CMO
Richard J. Rose, City Attorney

ALSO PRESENT:

Lindell Kay, Staff Writer, Rocky Mount Telegram
Bronson Williams

OPENING – February 22, 2019 – Retreat Day 3

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and called on City Clerk Pam Casey for a presentation relative to Boards and Commissions.

BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES – PAM CASEY

City Clerk Pam Casey told the Council that pursuant to Council's instructions, the City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney, Assistant City Managers, Chris Beschler and Natasha Hampton-Clayton, and she met to consider ways to ensure actions taken by the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees:

- are in alignment with the Mayor/Council's goals; and
- that the City Council is aware of and in support of initiatives planned and carried out by the Board(s).

She said they recommend the following as possible solutions and seeks Council's input and direction:

- Boards will provide meeting agendas to the Clerk and the Clerk will furnish the same to the City Council via email;
- Boards will provide meeting minutes to the City Clerk and said minutes will be furnished to Council. It is recommended that a One Drive folder be created for Boards, Commissions and Committees so that agendas and minutes can be available for Council review.
- Amend the PHF to remove "NOMINATED BY" and allow for first, second and third choices for service on Boards.
- Department heads, facilitators or appointed staff will provide information each year setting out current/upcoming Board initiatives to include information as to how each initiative aligns with and supports Council initiatives.
- That a staff member be appointed to serve in an ex-officio capacity on the Housing Authority and the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport Authority; and that
- Boards make presentations to the City Council at COW meetings, as requested.

She noted that she has had conversations with some of “the people who do the work” in City Departments and they are receptive.

The City Clerk advised the Council that she is required by law to furnish information relative to Boards and Commissions appointments to the Secretary of State in September of each year.

Rochelle Small-Toney arrived*

She provided a summary of each Board identifying the department that currently works with the Board. She noted there was conversation in a recent Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting relative to establishment of a Workforce Housing Commission, however this commission is not included in the summary as it has not yet been formally established. Council reviewed and discussed the structure of the Commission and establishment the structure for the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission.

Bronson Williams arrived*

The City Clerk outlined the current procedures for Boards/Commissions appointments. She stated it is unclear whether the City Council wishes to amend the appointment process, but provided the following as possible choices for amending the process:

- a. Council to appoint a subcommittee yearly consisting of three (3) Councilmembers to make recommendations for appointment to the full Council;
- b. Personal history forms to be provided to the Boards for review and for the chair and co-chair or the full Boards to make recommendations to Council for appointments/reappointments; or
- c. a new process identified by Council.

She added that investigation reveals the appointment process for Greenville, Wilson and Raleigh to be the same or very similar as currently in Rocky Mount and requested guidance from Council. The City Council, by consensus, chose to make appointments using the current process.

The City Council suggested personal history forms and press releases include information encouraging interested citizens to attend a meeting of the board/commission on which they wish to serve; a council meeting, a Committee of the Whole meeting (COW) and the Citizen’s Academy.

ACTION: By consensus, the City Council recommended amendments to the proposed Resolution to Establish the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission (revised Resolution to be added to Monday, February 25, 2019, agenda).

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Miller, and unanimously carried that: 1) the Director of Development Services be added as an ex-officio member of the Central City Revitalization Panel; the Director of Community and Business Development be added as an ex-officio member to the Housing Authority; and 3) that the appropriate staff member be added as an ex-officio member of the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport Authority.

A motion made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell that the Resolution of the City Council of the City of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Allowing the Mayor and City Manager to Sign the Audit Committee Charter Setting Forth the Purpose, Responsibilities and Membership of the Internal Audit Committee adopted by Council on June 11, 2018 be repealed passed by a vote of 4-1 (Councilmember Miller opposed).

Council discussed and will have further discussion with regard to establishment of a new Audit Committee.

RECESS

By consensus, the retreat was recessed at 10:33 a.m. for a break.

Councilmember Bullock left the retreat*

RECONVENE

The retreat reconvened at 10:40 a.m.

ACTION: *By consensus, the City Council agreed to continue with the current procedure for Boards/Commissions appointments and, by consensus, the following appointments/reappointments were made:*

NOTE: *APPOINTMENTS MADE WERE THOSE DUE IN JUNE 2018*

- ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD (three-year terms expire June 30, 2021):
 - ***Appoint:***
 - Veterinarian: Dr. Michael Hicks
 - Ward 5: Catherine Combs (contingent upon receipt of PHF)
 - Ward 7: Stacey Graham
- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (three-year terms expire June 30, 2021):
 - ***Remove:***
 - George Deryckere (desires appointment another board)
 - ***Reappoint:***
 - Herman T Jones
 - ***Appoint:***
 - C. Saunders (Sandy) Roberson, Jr.
- CENTRAL CITY REVITALIZATION PANEL (three-year terms expire June 30, 2021):
 - ***Appoint:***
 - Commercial Builder/Developer: Jesse Gerstl
 - Member-at-Large: Dr. Antwan Lofton

*NOTE: Charles Roberson was appointed, but the designation was not identified
- HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (four-year terms expire June 30, 2019):
 - ***Reappoint:***
 - Sue D. Hanshaw
- MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMISSION (three-year terms expire June 30, 2021):
 - ***Reappoint:***
 - Katrice Johnson Brown
 - Thomas L. Everett
 - Vanessa Whitaker
- MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (two-year terms expire June 30, 2020):
 - ***Reappoint:***
 - Mary Mann
 - Priscilla Whitaker
 - Ardelia Burrison
 - Ruth A. Bowens
 - Robert E. Cordell, Sr.

- *Appoint:*
 - Debbie Rollins
 - Cynthia Steele
- PLANNING BOARD (three-year terms expire June 30, 2021):
 - *Reappoint:*
 - Ward 1: Clara Knight
 - Ward 5: Lige Daughtridge
- REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (five-year terms expire June 30, 2023):
 - *Appoint:*
 - Luther Ezzell
 - George Deryckere
- TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD (two-year terms expire June 30, 2019):
 - *Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers resigned from the Transportation Advisory Board
 - *Appoint:*
 - Richard Joyner (unexpired term expires June 30, 2019)
- TREE ADVISORY BOARD (four-year term expires June 30, 2022):
 - *Reappoint:*
 - Ward 5: Linda Tippetette
 - Ward 6: Peter H. Gilliland
 - Ward 7: James (Jim) Curtis
- UTILITY SERVICE REVIEW BOARD (four-year term expires June 30, 2022):
 - *Reappoint:*
 - Ward 2: Jackie King
 - Ward 7: Jackson B. Harris

EXTERNAL BOARDS – City Appointments

- CAROLINAS GATEWAY PARTNERSHIP (three-year term expires June 30, 2021):
 - *Reappoint:*
 - W. B. Bullock
 - *Appoint:*
 - Andre Knight (unexpired term expires June 30, 2019)

MONK HOTEL/UPDATE – CHRIS BESCHLER

Assistant City Manager Chris Beschler told the City Council that the delay in the Monk Hotel redevelopment moving forward is due to the plan not being in compliance with the Code. He said there has to be room for fire apparatus within 150 feet of the building. He added that more detail is required with regard to a firewall, pool and more pool equipment and whether questions as to sprinklers and automated fire detection equipment. Also, there is a question relative to electric equipment as to whether they plan to use the current or new equipment and lighting in stairwells. He said the initial submission was November 27, 2018 and the plan was reported as insufficient on December 17, 2018. Council was advised the plan was resubmitted on January 31, 2019 which addressed all issues with the exception of electrical and a letter advising same was sent by the City on February 15, 2019. Mr. Beschler reported the plan was resubmitted on February 19, 2019 and it is expected that the permit will be issued today.

Council inquired as to how long it takes to approve a project of this magnitude typically and was advised it depends on the complexity of the project. Councilmember Blackwell noted the one-

stop shop should allow for there to be a sit-down conversation on the front end in order to discuss all issues, explain all requirements and obtain a complete set of drawings and should allow the process to be smoother and quicker.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney added that if the budget allows an ideal situation would be to have someone on staff assigned for follow-up to act much as an ombudsman to follow up with staff and the developer. She stated she expects oncoming technology will speed up the process and short response time considerably.

Discussion was held relative to the status of the grant agreement and the delay in approval. Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampson reported that the City was first notified that the grant agreement was being mailed in November, but never received it by mail and only via email in January. She noted it would be available for the Mayor's signature on Monday.

CONCLUSION/ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers thanked all involved in putting the retreat together and called on the City Manager for closing remarks.

Ms. Small-Toney asked the Mayor and Council to let her know if they have preferences for the location of the 2020 retreat and noted it is usually held in February or March.

The Mayor Pro Tem stated the 2019 retreat was intended to focus on housing and Downtown Development and stated he hopes the desired result was achieved.

He stated Councilmember Watkins' contribution and wise counsel had been missed at this retreat due to her illness.

There being no other items on the retreat agenda, the City Council retreat adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Presenters' PowerPoint Presentations are on file in the City Clerk's Office.

The minutes of the retreat and the regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held March 11, 2019 were approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mayor Combs outlined the guidelines for public petitions and opened the meeting for petitions from the public. He recognized the following individuals. A summary of the statements are as follows:

- ***Joyce Dickens, President/CEO of Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC):***
 - Provided the Council with a letter and comments;
 - Said she stands to bring clarity concerning an article printed in the *Telegram* yesterday concerning the new housing complex slated to be built on Tarboro Street on property currently owned by the City;
 - Said the Rocky Mount-Edgecombe CDC has partnered with the City to build affordable housing and commercial development and to help advance economic interest in this community for more than 30 years;
 - Said they have done so with integrity and goodwill and working together with every previous City Manager since 1988;
 - Said the article appeared to discredit the history of the CDC through cleverly placed omissions and mischaracterizations and the article's arrangement of partial and selected details could lead one to believe that the CDC and the University of North Carolina Development Finance Initiative, the even the State Department of Emergency Management, previously or might in the future be involved in improprieties in relation to the forthcoming bid process and selection of a developer for the Tarboro Street project;

- Said specifically the article used half-truths to imply that she in her capacity as president of CDC has been involved in the selection process of the developer prior to any public announcements of the project and attempted to link partial details taken from communications related to the CDC's participation in the earlier competitive process for site selection with the upcoming competitive process for the developer;
- Said there is no mention of the fact that the CDC's earlier involvement was specifically related to the site selection process, a competitive process in which the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Development Finance Initiative proposed the Rocky Mount Edgecombe CDC's Crossing at 64 site as a development site;
- Said all is aware that the Tarboro site project won and RMECDC lost;
- Said it is very interesting that even with the attempt to paint the CDC as somehow unworthy to compete to be the development partner the article did acknowledge that the organization has the required eligibility to receive low-income housing tax credits and has previously constructed multiple projects with funds awarded under the same federal programs;
- Said the CDC paid over \$117,000 in taxes to the City in 2018 and these insinuations of improprieties on the part of the CDC is totally inaccurate;
- Stated the RMECDC supports the project

*Councilmember Watkins arrived

- ***Warren Daughtridge:***

- Said he is honored and blessed to have the opportunity to address Council again;
- Said he wanted to offer a few words of encouragement and provide an update on the group announced at the last meeting and offer a challenge to the current seated Council and those to be seated in the near future and to the citizens from the City and surrounding areas who are willing to commit to making a difference and a positive contribution to the City;
- Said some may have heard the speeches English Prime Minister Harold Macmillan delivered in Uganda in South Africa in the early 60's, the theme of both of them being "the winds of change are blowing";
- Said these speeches ushered in a new policy for the English colonies in Africa and would eventually lead to the independence of the countries and ultimately in the apartheid;
- Said over the last five weeks he has begun to feel the winds of change blowing in Rocky Mount and since starting this series of speeches and creating the Love Rocky Mount Facebook group he has had the amazing opportunity to meet many wonderful people from diverse backgrounds, races and ages and has gotten to know many people (named a few);
- Said he has been getting to know people committed to helping create a positive change in their own unique way;
- Said he has had multiple phone calls and is looking forward to future chats with others;
- Said several people have asked what his group is all about and what the political end-game is and said there is no political end-game, but the goal is to connect the community in a way that provides meaningful dialogue by following what Christ said was the second greatest commandment - to love each other as we love ourselves;
- Said along the way the group will hold themselves, our elected officials and political candidates accountable for the traits that are the most basic but meaningful traits - personal accountability, complete transparency, professional accountability and stand up for Rocky Mount as a whole treating each other with respect and following the rule of law of unquestionable morals and ethics;
- Said many have said he is wasting his time and there are too many hurdles;
- Said he can't help but fall back on the scripture that was ingrained and taught to him by his parents and grandparents which is Romans 8:31 "if God is for us who can be against us";
- Said we must come together and show the naysayers we are an unstoppable force of good and show this great state and this great nation that "the winds of change are blowing" here in Rocky Mount;

- Encouraged all to be the example we are commanded to be and to love Rocky Mount
- **Samuel Battle:**
 - Said he came today to talk about crime in the City and warned that crime will pick up in the summer;
 - Stated a summer feeding program is needed;
 - Said there is a gang problem and crime is coming into the City from across the state;
 - Questioned how the City can be built with so much crime.;
 - Said kids are being bullied and are committing suicide and the crime problem needs to be resolved before the City can be built up
- **Reverend Thomas L. Walker:**
 - Said he attended the services for the City Manager's mother and that he wished all could have had the experience;
 - Said her convictions go way deep;
 - Recognized Joyce Dickens for her tremendous work in the area;
 - Introduced a project he is working on with internationally known Luther Barnes called "God, Make Us One" and provided a copy of a song on CD to the Council;
 - Said music brings us together and they are proposing there be a series of services involving the churches in the area and that this could be something wonderful;
 - Said we can take lemons and make lemonade;
 - Said if you keep doing the same thing over again the same way you get the same results, but many wonderful things are happening, and the Council has led some beautiful projects;
 - Said he thinks this is the best of times for Rocky Mount and asked for support of the "God, Make Us One" campaign
- **A. B. Whitley:**
 - Said his major concern for speaking is to inquire about the investigation that was supposed to be done by an independent firm and stated he had heard a report was to have been given two weeks ago and nothing has yet been heard;
 - Said a majority of those present would like to hear the results since taxpayers paid for the investigation;
 - Said he hopes input from the Police Department is being sought during the planning of the Tarboro Street housing project because he sees on the news that quite often there is crime in similar housing projects

Mayor Combs reported that he spoke with the firm this afternoon and they would have finished their investigation last week, but the final interview was to be with the City Manager and she has been out. He said she is still out because her father is having some health issues. He stated the firm has done all of their work with the exception of the final conversation with the City Manager and should be providing a report very shortly.

The Mayor announced there will be a public input meeting relative to the Tarboro Street housing project on April 2 at Edgecombe Community College.

- **Anna Lamb:**
 - Implored the Council not to put people in cages and said the comment made by the gentleman who spoke before her regarding what he is seeing in the media is why she is here today;
 - Said while she is all for holding elected officials accountable she is concerned about the editorializing going on in the *Rocky Mount Telegram* and said when opinion is

- passed off as fact it becomes dangerous and that is why there is the fake news phenomenon today;
- Said when you start targeting what appears to be people of color it further divides this City that is historically divided by the train tracks;
 - Said it appears certain people are being intimidated because the newspaper is going after certain people for making statements when others are making similar statements and not being targeted;
 - Said there was a unity demonstration at City Hall today and the City needs to come together and not let media and others cause division;
 - Said the racial justice group and some other groups are working to unite people
- ***Lige Daughtridge:***
 - Said nothing has been done with the Ratio study which has been paid for and approved and asked that Council vote it up or down this evening, so citizens will know what their \$100,000 plus went towards;
 - Said yesterday's *Rocky Mount Telegram* article raised a lot of questions and, based upon the emails received as a result of a public records request, it was eluded to that RMECDC had insider knowledge relative to the housing project at Tarboro Street and it appears the project has been in play for at least nine months;
 - Said twice in 2018 he asked a question and never received a response as to why RMECDC is receiving \$150,000 when they no longer manage the Douglas Block and also why there was a \$75,000 allocation for a housing developer for RMECDC and none of his questions were answered and no one ever responded;
 - Said now there is a possibility that RMECDC may be awarded a contract for managing development of the housing project on Tarboro Street;
 - Said Tarboro Street is not the place for the housing project; and
 - Said there may be legal documents between the City and RMECDC or its entities and is making this request for those documents; he noted he is making an official public records request tonight for these documents and would also like his prior questions answered
 - ***Bronson Williams:***
 - Said the Planning Department has changed its name to Development Services, but the concerns remain the same;
 - Said the City should be cutting the red tape in the department to be able to cut more blue ribbons with new businesses opening and just because the ordinance allows 10 days to do something does not mean that department should exercise the full 10 days;
 - Said he has talked to a number of people who have experienced issues with that department and is seeing more and more of the same and the sentiments run deep throughout the community;
 - Questioned fees for signs - different fees for different sizes of signs;
 - Said the creation of a strong tax base restores property values and development; said he does not know if the problem is the lack of training, lack of technology or not hiring customer-service driven individuals to ensure we are moving our City forward;
 - Said studies are action items and action to vote them up or down is not always necessary;
 - Said he has seen Council utilize studies regarding what to do and not to do and particularly as to the Event Center
 - ***Robert Carr:***
 - Said he is a resident of Rocky Mount and was born here and has lived here all his life except for time in college and the military;
 - Said he has noticed that a lot of questions get asked in Council meetings and feels like if someone stands up and asks a question an answer should be forthcoming;
 - Said this is the seventh Council meeting he has attended, and he plans to attend more;
 - Said it is interesting to see what does and does not go on he would like to see more answers coming forth;

- o Said he previously asked a question regarding whether a Councilmember had insider information as to real estate purchases and that if it were true there should be repercussions or at least an apology;
- o Thanked Council for the job they do

Councilmember Miller expressed regret to former Fire Chief Mike Varnell and the Fire Department for not attending the Fire Chief's recent retirement reception. She said no information came to Council from the Manager's Office and they did not know about it. She apologized for her absence and on behalf of the full Council.

Councilmember Knight said there are pros and cons to studies and not all studies need to be adopted. He said he has heard unity mentioned this evening by a number of people but continues to hear citizens try to tear down a couple of organizations and RMECDC is one of them. He said Joyce Dickens, President of RMECDC, took on a big challenge before the City had a housing study and there are efforts to assassinate her character. He said she has helped poor people and the working class and those facing foreclosure for 30 years providing hard labor and working with crumbs.

He said OIC is the second organization and it has been in business for 50 years helping people to help themselves and providing healthcare to people who other healthcare providers refuse and helping women of color get mammograms. He said it is sad when citizens don't want to see people live a decent quality of life. He said if we want unity - show unity; light drives out darkness; love conquers hate; and said we should walk the talk.

He responded to Mr. Carr by saying if he is the Councilmember to whom he refers; he has no insider information. He said if he had information then all who invest in Rocky Mount also have that information. He said he wanted to make it clear that an answer was provided tonight and that he has no insider information.

Mayor Combs thanked the speakers for their comments. He noted that some have mentioned the State Auditor and reported that he heard from them last week and they are doing an investigation.

Councilmember Blackwell said it has been the practice of Council and the Mayor to reserve the public comment time for the public to be able to talk about whatever they want to talk about and in whatever manner they want to discuss it and most of the time dialogue has been very respectful and broad in nature. He added there have been times when there have been community issues to deliberate that have high emotion associated and said he believes when people participate in democracy only good things can occur. He said it has also been the policy of the Council not to respond to comments because they are trying to be respectful. He said it is difficult to sit and hear accusations over and over again without response and perhaps the lack of response leaves some with the feeling that because it is said, then it is true. He said he is not going to sit silent any longer and hear things that

are not accurate and allegations that have not been proven. He said he is a fair-minded person but some attempt to say there is recent division in Rocky Mount when we all know that it's not the truth and Rocky Mount has had division for a long time because we are part of America and America has been divided for a long time. He said he cannot understand how anyone can believe that an individual can destroy a community because they are working for poor people and supporting agendas for equity, inclusion and shared prosperity for all. He said that work is really the antithesis of division and is unity. He asked that those who want to be together decide to be together by deciding not to be the city in the state with the highest unemployment rate; and deciding not to be the city that has the worst health statistics of any major metropolitan community in North Carolina.

He suggested we join hands and decide to feed the hungry children across the city that don't just need food in the summer. He said Rocky Mount has one of the highest food insecurity rates in North Carolina. He asked citizens not to feel there is division when they see progress for those who have never had anyone at the institutional level represent and work to help them. He added that when all get lifted up those on top only rise higher. Councilmember Blackwell asked that citizens stop focusing on things that are going to widen the gap of disparity that we are all trying very hard to narrow and said he is excited to see so many present at the meeting and noted that is how utility rates got lowered. He said he has not seen anyone attend a Council meeting to celebrate the lowering of utility rates and no one has come up to say they are so thankful that the DMV has moved to Rocky Mount. He questioned who is celebrating the fact that for the first time in history a major state division has a headquarters planned to locate in Rocky Mount. He stated this is just the beginning and we have a long way to grow but we can get there if we focus on what is important.

Mayor Combs welcomed Councilmember Watkins back. Councilmember Watkins thanked all who prayed, made phone calls, visited and sent text messages to her and said she is glad to be back. She responded to Mr. Daughtridge's comment relative to the Ratio study by saying the study was incomplete when received and that Council requested staff to look at the study again. She added that has been done and community input was received and now Council is waiting for staff to compile and present some additional information.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

The City Council received the minutes from a regular scheduled Committee of the Whole Meeting held Monday, March 11, 2019 as follows:

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF A REGULAR SCHEDULED COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2019, AT 5:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Rogers, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight*
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

OTHERS PRESENT:

Security Officer L. S. Parker

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Chris Beschler
 Tameka Kenan-Norman
 Ken Hunter
 Kelly Cook
 Archie Jones
 Jessie Nunery
 Steve Yetman
 Robin Cox
 Landis Faulcan
 Kevin Harris
 Will Deaton
 Brad Kerr
 Amy Staton
 Cornelia McGee
 Kim Batts
 Tanika Cooper
 Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and welcomed all present. He explained the guidelines for Committee of the Whole work sessions adding that while there is no place for public petitions at this meeting the public is invited to speak at the 7 p.m. meeting. He called on City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney to introduce the agenda items.

ONE-STOP-SHOP REPORT - Will Deaton

The City Manager advised that the One-Stop-Shop is an initiative by the City Council to help with the approval processes relative to development by shortening the permitting process and making it more efficient for developers. She introduced Will Deaton, Director of Development Services to give an update.

Mr. Deaton outlined the mission of the project to include: improvement the coordination of efforts through multiple departments; increase timeliness in order to be competitive; increase quality of customer service and streamline the permitting process. He said an emphasis will be to reduce paperwork and centralize data and information services to make it easier to look up past projects/development and make the process more user-friendly. He said communicating internally and externally and using technology to improve the customer service experience is the goal.

He stated the intent is to maximize the use of existing technology noting that some improvements will consist of staff training and have no implementation cost. He added that centralizing and creating a single point of contact, creating online permitting and inspections, increasing online access and making the website easier to navigate will improve the process, as well as changes to the website to make navigation easier.

He outlined technology improvements to include:

- Using the online portal integrated with existing City services to use software (MUNIS) to make appointment requests;
- Having options for online payments;
- Providing for submittal of plans electronically;
- Providing more mobile capabilities for inspection;
- Looking at other ways to utilize mobile devices (including photos);

- Integrating GIS to allow for quick search and retrieval of information; and
- Improving accessibility (quick search/retrieval by all)

He said the automated process will allow plans to be attached to the application electronically.

Mr. Deaton added that functional improvements to improve and evaluate workspace is underway to improve efficiency, application and formatting; streamline the permitting process digitally; allow for work to be done concurrently (allows for multiple users simultaneously) and greater use of technology to reduce paperwork.

He explained the department is working towards efficiency and is training staff with the mapping process. He stated that each application has been mapped and new fillable forms added. Mr. Deaton added that staff will continue to look at ways to build in performance standards, including updates to the Land Development Code, as needed. He advised that succession planning is also a focus.

The Director of Development Services stated that a sit-down review is an option already but needs to be promoted.

The City Manager recognized the cross-departmental team involved in this process as: Chris Beschler, Amy Staton, Brad Kerr, Will Deaton, JoSeth Bocook, Erin Hicks, Latasha Hall, Andrew Jakubiak and Chase Norwood. She told the Council that consideration of bids for first and second floor renovations (City Hall) will be on today's agenda. Ms. Small-Toney noted that the cost for design is in the 2018-2019 budget, but relocation/construction cost will be in the upcoming budget.

Mr. Deaton responded to questions from Councilmembers and noted the relocation will be beneficial for the entire inspections department and allow for other development functions to be located on the first floor for easier access and provide more space for customers as well as field employees.

He advised the process is off to a good start adding that significant changes to the forms and applications process has been implemented and changes are live on the website. He said integration of software is the next focus for implementation and plans are underway to have this change in place prior to the space modifications to ensure proper space planning.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; no formal action.

ACCELERATED FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT - Kevin Harris

The City Manager introduced Downtown Development Manager, Kevin Harris. She noted the Mr. Harris' presentation is a carry-over from the City Council retreat.

Mr. Harris told the Council that since the discussion at the retreat in Chapel Hill discussion relative to the façade grant has been on the fast track. He noted he has met with some Downtown stakeholders who affirmed the Façade Improvement Grant will be well-received in the community.

Mr. Harris told the City Council that the Accelerated Façade Improvement Grant (AFIG) is a \$5,000 non-matching grant designed for expedited access and delivery.

He outlined the purpose for the grant to include:

- Accelerating Downtown revitalization;
- Financially assisting and incentivizing Downtown property owners to improve properties;
- Jump-starting overall building renovations;
- Improving the face of Downtown to attract new businesses, investors and patrons;

- Encouraging development of lease space for small business

Councilmember Knight arrived*

He added that the overall desire is to continue the City's objective to establish Downtown as a primary area to live, work and play and realize economic opportunity.

Mr. Harris outlined the grant process to include:

- Administration by the Community & Business Development Department;
- Applications will enter through the Downtown Development Manager;
- Development Services will ensure appropriate inspections, code compliance and adherence to Historic Preservation guidelines (area included is primarily in a historic district);
- Grant will be reviewed and approved by a team consisting of Development Services and Community & Business Development with final approval by the City Manager; and
- The Central City Revitalization Panel (CCRP) will be informed of application activity.

The eligible location was identified as the established Downtown Core (within the boundary of Franklin Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue and Raleigh Boulevard).

Mr. Harris identified allowed uses to include, but not be limited to:

- Brick or wall surface cleaning
- Patching and painting of façade walls
- Signage or lighting replacement/repair
- Canopy, porch, awning installation/repair
- Window and/or door replacement/repair
- Mortar joint repair
- Railings and ironwork repair/addition
- Cornice repair and/or replacement
- Replacement/repair to exterior steps

He noted the one-page application will provide for:

- Historic building images, if available
- A detailed schedule of proposed work
- Copies of required permit(s)
- Written permission of owner(s), if applicable, (ownership not a requirement of the grant as long as permission obtained)
- Proof of property insurance
- Organization documents, if corporate (by-laws)

Mr. Harris told the City Council that funding options will include reimbursement directly to the applicant upon completion and approval of the work or the applicant and contractor can agree prior to the work beginning that the City will make payment directly to the contractor.

He stated that the CCRP will serve as an appeal board for applicants who wish to appeal denial of an application.

Council was advised that \$50,000 has been allocated for completed grants through the end of the current fiscal year (June 30) and additional funds will be budgeted for the upcoming year.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney reported that since the grant was nonbudgeted it will start with \$50,000 and additional funds are be identified within the existing budget. She added that any funds

remaining from the current fiscal year will be rolled over to next year's budget.

Mr. Harris advised the City Council that the grant is scheduled for roll out on April 1 and is on the fast track. He noted it will be marketed through the City and the Downtown websites; Facebook; Instagram; the newspaper; a direct letter to property owners; and proactive site visits.

Discussion was held relative to:

- Ensuring structural soundness of properties;
- Uplift of properties not ready for full renovation (not requiring a certificate of occupancy)
- The funding source (general fund/Community Development)
- Eligibility/conflict of interest for the grant (Councilmembers/some City employees who own Downtown property - prohibited by G.S. 14-234)

The City Manager noted more information will be provided, funds are in place and the City just needs to get the word out and begin taking applications.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; no formal action.

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT AND ADDITIONS TO THE ROCKY MOUNT LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE - Will Deaton

The City Manager invited Development Services Director Will Deaton to provide information to the City Council relative to proposed text amendments and additions to the Rocky Mount Land Development Code (LDC). She said this was discussed at the retreat to assist in enforcement. She provided a letter of support for Code Enforcement and Downtown grants. She said this petition was signed by more than 200 individuals who are very supportive of Council's direction for more enforcement and the incentive grant to help people improve their properties.

Council was provided with a detailed draft of proposed substantial changes to the LDC to include demolition by neglect and regulation of nonresidential buildings and structures. Mr. Deaton stated these proposals will make the code more consistent with what he has seen around the state.

Discussion was held relative to demolition by neglect (allowing for the hardship test led by Historic Preservation). Mr. Deaton advised the provision is only for historic districts pursuant to state statute, if an ordinance is provided. Councilmember Blackwell voiced a concern for neglect of industrial properties that are unsafe and adjacent to community neighborhoods. He requested staff investigate how clean-up of all Rocky Mount can be addressed.

The Director of Develop Services advised that it is typical to modify an existing housing code to include slight additions for the building code. He recommended changes to the LDC to make enforcement City-wide. He added that if the proposed changes pass the legal test they will provide another enforcement tool.

Discussion was held relative to utilizing display windows to make vacant commercial establishments more attractive and how that could be accomplished. He noted during enforcement action staff can also provide information about available incentives.

He added a suggestion to add a temporary process for pop-up vendors (small entry fee and reduce regulations; 45 days initial and the ability to extend; limited uses).

Councilmembers expressed concern for neglected nonresidential properties and was advised the nonresidential element added to the LDC would provide the framework and tools for enforcement throughout the City.

Councilmember Knight stated that in the past Council has been advised that funding did not exist to demolish commercial buildings. Mr. Deaton advised the commercial demolition in the current budget is limited to \$50,000 and this amount could be exhausted with demolition of only one building. He added that the funding could also be used to secure locations.

Councilmember Blackwell noted that should be demolition the last option and expressed his hope is that the amendment will force the owner(s) to have ongoing substantive conversations with City staff responsible for safety and include a process for impose civil penalties for noncompliance. He noted he does not see a process for demolition in the amendment. Mr. Deaton stated the idea is not to have the first step be demolition.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney added this brings up the question of foreclosure and noted without a solid program to move forward similar problems remain. Mayor Pro Tem Rogers noted this could create an opportunity for citizens to acquire and renovate buildings. The Manager noted the City would need to enforce any existing liens to help build the pool of available funds.

The City Manager stated this is an opportunity for Council review and there will be further conversation prior to action being taken. The Mayor Pro Tem expressed appreciation for being able to hear about the process and allow the public to hear about it before Council is requested to take formal action. Mr. Deaton stated the matter will go to the Planning Board for recommendation and then come back to Council for approval/adoption.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; no formal action.

ROCKY MOUNT BIKE PLAN - Brad Kerr

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney introduced Brad Kerr, Director of Engineering, to provide information regarding the draft bike plan.

Mr. Kerr told the Council that the City was awarded a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in March 2017 to develop a bike plan. He reported that the plan included extensive public outreach and was developed by staff, NCDOT and Alta Planning and Design. The Council was provided with an executive summary of the draft plan and advised that the plan is on the City's MPO website.

Council was advised that Alta Planning and Design presented the draft bike plan to the City Council at the June 11, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting and there have been no changes to the priorities. He further advised that extensive public outreach was done in preparation of the plan and that excellent feedback was obtained.

Mr. Kerr noted the draft plan includes the vision and goals as follows:

Vision:

- to offer a low-stress biking experience on a network of greenway trails and bike-friendly streets

Goals:

- to increase safety, improve access and create a positive economic impact, enhance health, promote equity and protect the environment

The Director of Engineering added that the phasing plan categorizes the bike improvement plan into short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years) and long-term (10 plus years) improvements. He said 95 projects are identified in the full bike plan which is estimated at \$18.5M. He said some potential sources of funding are the congestion mitigation and air quality (CMAQ) program, PartF grants, Powell bill funding and the State Transportation Improvement (STI). He noted these programs typically require a local match. He told the Council that one short-term priority project scheduled for implementation in the summer of 2019 in conjunction with road resurfacing by the North Carolina Department of Transportation is a separated bike lane on Peachtree Street and Falls Road. He said not every street will be a bike street. He identified the following five top greenway priorities: Monk to Mill Trail (2025); Cowlick Park, Parker's Canal and pieces of Cowlick Trail; Barbecue Trailer and another project from the north side of Wesleyan Boulevard. He said the Church Street project is funded in the current TIP and expected to be completed in 2023. He reported that Eastern Avenue and Avondale are bike boulevards (low volume streets). He added that the plan includes 95 miles of bike improvements all over the City and Virginia, Church and Franklin Streets are bike boulevards. He advised that the plan is for all bike trails to connect, although that will not happen right away.

It was noted that greenway projects are TIP projects, but sidewalk and the bike trails could compete for CMAQ funding. Mr. Kerr responded to questions from the Councilmembers.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the Proposed Bike Plan be recommended for approval and adoption.

HOUSING UPDATE - Landis Faulcon

The City Manager advised the Council that part of the information included in the agenda packet is an update from the City Council retreat and that Dr. Landis Faulcon will present an outline of a proposed housing policy. She stated it is expected discussions will begin at the April Committee of the Whole meeting.

Dr. Faulcon told the Council that retreat discussion included strategies, goals and objectives and staff has been looking at how other localities have approached housing policies. She said this is a work in progress and there are some areas that will need additional work, but the goal at this meeting is to let Council know where staff is headed. Council received a draft of the proposed plan which included a table of contents, a historical perspective that ties back to previous housing studies and reports along with the current plan. She stated the goal is to bring to Council an inclusive, collaborative document and one that includes a process for public information and input. She said the intent today is to provide information to allow Council to share thoughts about what may need to be included in preparing a housing policy for the City.

Councilmember Blackwell questioned if the document will outline the work of the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission. The City Manager responded that will be a part along with Dr. Johnson's work and the work of the Redevelopment Commission and the plan is bring all the different plans and activities into one document and keep it active and updated regularly to provide one source with substantial information. Councilmember Blackwell requested a mini orientation session for all boards/commissions that interface with housing so once the approach is defined all can be on the same page and can participate in how to make the approach better and more engaging throughout the community.

Council was advised that the goal is to have the Housing Plan refined for Council consideration in April and a workshop for those involved in housing can be planned as recommended.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received information; no formal action.

CLOSED SESSION. The City Manager requested a Closed Session for a matter concerning personnel and the Mayor Pro Tem requested that an economic development matter be added to the closed session.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the City Council go into Closed Session at 6:31 p.m.

The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-521** at the end of **Minute Book 35** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURN. The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 7:02 p.m. and there being no further business for the Committee of the Whole, the meeting was adjourned.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the minutes and recommendations from the March 11, 2019 regular scheduled Committee of the Whole meeting be approved, including approval and adoption of the bike plan.

AD VALOREM TAX RELEASES

The City Council received the following schedules of ad valorem taxes recommended for release and/or refund:

SCHEDULE A – taxes under \$100 approved for release and/or refund by the City Manager:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>NASH COUNTY</u>				
2016	1522	ROCKY MOUNT OPTICIANS INC PO BOX 8496 ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	27.13 2.71 6.41	CITY PEN INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	36.25	
2018	1264	SEARS HOMETOWN STORE 07814 1214 N WESLEYAN BLVD ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	44.53 1.56	CITY INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	46.09	

SCHEDULE B – taxes over \$100 recommended for release and/or refund by the City Council:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>NAME/ADDRESS</u>	<u>TAX</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
<u>EDGEcombe COUNTY</u>				
2015	8410	POWELL, C STEVEN 1700-1702 FLETCHER DR LT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	616.59 12.33	CITY INT
		TOTAL RELEASE:	628.92	
2016	8406	POWELL, C STEVEN 1700-1702 FLETCHER DR LT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	616.59	CITY
		TOTAL RELEASE:	616.59	OWNER CORRECTION

2017	8401	POWELL, C STEVEN 1700-1702 FLETCHER DR LT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	566.68	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
		TOTAL RELEASE:	566.68		
2018	8394	POWELL, C STEVEN 1700-1702 FLETCHER DR LT ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27801	588.14	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
			0.75	INT	
		TOTAL RELEASE:	588.89		

NASH COUNTY

2018	859	AVUTOX, LLC PO BOX 99007 RALEIGH, NC 27624	9,914.90	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
			347.02	INT	
		TOTAL RELEASE:	10,261.92		
2017	1324	FIRST SOUTH LEASING LLC PO BOX 2047 WASHINGTON, NC 27889	1,199.52	CITY	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS
		TOTAL RELEASE:	1,199.52		
2018	21293	MCCANN, THOMAS J ET AL 2557 BELMONT LAKE DR ROCKY MOUNT, NC 27804	137.00	CITY	OWNER CORRECTION
			4.80	INT	
		TOTAL RELEASE:	141.80		

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the report from the City Manager of taxes under \$100 listed on Schedule A approved for release and/or refund be acknowledged; and that the taxes over \$100 listed on Schedule B be approved for release and/or refund.

TEMPORARY STREET CLOSINGS

The City Council received a request from Steve Yetman, City Engineer, for a temporary street closing for the Twin Counties Sugar Run on April 13, 2019.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2019-16** entitled **ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT DECLARING A TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE TWIN COUNTIES SUGAR RUN** (closure of Hammond Street from S. Church Street to Lafayette Avenue, Lafayette Avenue from Hammond Street to Piedmont Avenue, Piedmont Avenue from Lafayette Avenue to Western Avenue, Western Avenue from Piedmont Avenue to S. Church Street and S. Church Street from Western Avenue to Hammond Street from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 14, 2018). It was noted that adoption of the ordinance is a requirement of the North Carolina Department of Transportation standards.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT/MLK COMMISSION CANTEEN ACCOUNT ADJUSTMENTS

The City Council received an ordinance amending the FY 2018-2019 budget to increase the Canteen Fund appropriations to reflect revenues received by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission (\$5,120).

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2019-17** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 FOR MLK COMMISSION CANTEEN ACCOUNT ADJUSTMENTS** be adopted.

BATTLE PARK MASTER PLAN GRANT APPLICATION/ROCKY MOUNT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (RMCF)

By consensus, Item 10 on the agenda, Battle Park Master Plan Grant Application was removed from the agenda.

HOLLY STREET PARK ENHANCEMENTS

The City Council was advised that conversations with the Holly Street community relative to park renovations began in September 2012 and with assistance from the Engineering and Finance Departments the construction design process began in October 2018 and a 95% drawing was completed in February 2019. It was reported this will reduce the costs of the project and should keep it within the available budget of \$588,580 which includes a \$250,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant and a City match of \$338,580.

The City Council was further advised that the project deadline, including grant close out, is July 2020 and the next step is Council approval of the 95% design drawings that will allow Engineering to complete the bid manual to advertise for bids.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the design drawing be approved.

Councilmember Knight stated that the vice president of the Hillsdale Community, Sharon Evans, along with the citizens in the area had put together information relative to Hillsdale Park and provided those suggestions for park improvements they want to see in the upcoming fiscal year to Human Relations Director Archie Jones. He requested that information be provided to the Parks and Recreation Director and the Assistant City Manager.

RE-BIDS/TWO (2) DUMP TRUCKS WITH SNOW PLOWS (STREET DIVISION)

The City Council received the tabulation of re-bids received for two (2) dump trucks with snow plows for the Street Division. Bids were received and opened on March 4, 2016 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-7**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the bid for two (2) dumps trucks with snow plows be awarded to Lilley International, Incorporated at their per unit cost of \$99,550.32 for a total cost of \$199,100.64 and

that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award.

VEHICLE #2150 SURPLUS REQUEST

The City Council received a request to declare vehicle #2150 which was involved in a fatal accident surplus property and to direct that said vehicle be crushed by Rocky Mount Recyclers in accordance with the provisions of N.C.G.S. 160A-266(d).

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the request to declare said property as surplus and dispose of same as recommended be approved.

EMPLOYMENT (SUMMER AND YOUTH)

Councilmember Knight said he has been getting a lot of requests from youth about summer employment and asked Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton what the distinction is between youth and summer employment and if there is enough funding for summer youth jobs.

Ms. Hampton said she is working with the Director of Parks and Recreation specifically at the South Rocky Mount Community Center on the summer youth program which is usually distinguished from the youth program because summer youth is seasonal and just for summer months. She said they will be working to determine if that is a program that can be implemented in terms of funding availability and will be providing information to the City Manager for consideration.

Councilmember Watkins asked if the program includes summer feeding. Ms. Hampton said that would be separate and apart from the summer youth employment program, but staff is looking at a feeding program for breakfast, lunch and snack at South Rocky Mount and the Booker T. Washington Youth Center.

Councilmember Knight requested that Council receive an update relative to summer youth jobs and/or the youth employment as well.

FACADE GRANT

Councilmember Knight said he has heard there has been overwhelming success with the facade grant and believes Council will need to allocate more funding to that program. He requested an update.

Assistant City Manager Hampton said as of Friday about eleven applications had been received and should all eleven receive funding the program is already beyond the \$50,000 previously appropriated. She said staff is currently looking at budgets to determine additional funding availability which will be brought back to Council. She said information will be provided to the Manager by the end of the week for her to consider and determine when it will be brought back to the Council.

COMMENTS - COUNCILMEMBER JOYNER

Councilmember Joyner stated it has been his observation since being appointed to the Council that this Council, Manager, Mayor and staff are hard-working, and he deeply appreciates how all work together on projects such as the facade grant and others. He said if anyone wishes

to personally talk to their Councilmember or the Mayor they do not have to wait until a Council meeting to come attack someone but can contact the Mayor or Council by telephone. He said to listen to personal comments and be unable to respond is unfair to all. He asked that all move forward with integrity, dignity and character and thanked Council and staff for the hard work they put in to move the City forward.

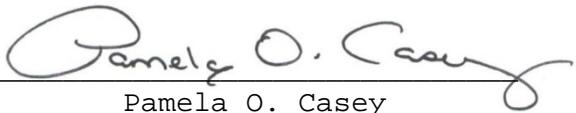
CLOSED SESSION (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

The Mayor requested a Closed Session to discuss a personnel matter.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that the City Council go into Closed Session at 4:54 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-523** at the end of **Minute Book 35** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor convened the City in regular session at 5:04 p.m. and there being no further business for regular session, adjourned the meeting.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk