

July 8, 2019

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regularly session scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor David W. Combs presiding.

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: Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Chris Beschler and Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Managers; Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer; Amy Staton, Director of Finance; Nicki Gurganus, Accounting Manager; Ken Hunter, Budget and Evaluation Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Elton Daniels, Director of Parks and Recreation; Kevin Harris; Business Development Manager; George Robinson, Police Chief; Will Deaton, Director of Development Services; Mark Rogerson, Fire Marshal; Brenton Bent, Director of Water Resources; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; Alan Matthews, Director of Business Recruitment - Economic Development (Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce) and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Also in attendance were the following Parks and Recreation staff members: Joel Dunn, Kelvin Yarrell, Rebecka Morgan, Donald Williams, Matt Sledge and Chris Koufopoulos.

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

The Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Councilmember E. Lois Watkins to offer prayer.

WELCOME

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

STORMWATER AWARENESS WEEK

The Mayor read a proclamation designating the week of July 7-13, 2019 as "Stormwater Awareness Week" in the City of Rocky Mount and presented the proclamation to Public Works Director Brad Kerr. The Mayor said stormwater work is often taken for granted. He commended Mr. Kerr and the Public Works Department for their excellent work. The Mayor and City Manager joined Mr. Kerr for a photograph.

PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH

Mayor Combs read a proclamation designating July 2019 as Parks and Recreation month in the City of Rocky Mount and presented the proclamation to Parks and Recreation Director Elton Daniels and Parks and Recreation employees in attendance. Mayor Combs stated the City has fifty (50) parks which is remarkable for a city the size of Rocky Mount. He commended the Department for the work they do. The Mayor and City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney joined Mr. Daniels and Parks and Recreation staff for a photograph.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor outlined the guidelines for petitions from the public and opened the meeting for public petitions.

Mayor Combs noted there is a Public Hearing relative to a Proposed Development Agreement between the City and Hunt Services, Inc. on tonight's agenda as Item 7 and encouraged those wishing to speak on that item to wait until the public hearing is opened for public comment.

Mayor Combs recognized the following individuals and a summary of comments is outlined below:

- ***Elizabeth Scott:***
 - Said she supports the revitalization of her hometown and the Downtown Central City Historic District;
 - Said she grew up just a few blocks away and works across the street at Station Square;
 - Said she was an early supporter of the Event Center and considers herself to be a true advocate for Downtown;
 - Said she also owns a commercial property on Main Street near the Event Center that was completely restored in 2004;
 - Said she welcomes hotels in Downtown Rocky Mount and understands the need for them;
 - Said as a Downtown Property Owner she stands to benefit from continued growth and smart redevelopment in the Downtown;
 - Said she does not at this time support the City proceeding with its financial involvement in the hotel parking deck as it is currently being presented;
 - Said she finds it a very convoluted business proposal which has changed several times since she first heard about the project;
 - Said she cannot stand behind something where the City's financial obligation is so unclear and overall it sounds messy;
 - Said, as public stewards of the City, the City Council has not done a very good job at explaining the plans surrounding the huge investment being an asked of citizens;
 - Said as a Downtown Property Owner and as a citizen she is requesting more time to be fully informed of the exact details of the City's financial obligation before she can give support for the project

Mayor Combs reminded those in attendance that a public hearing relative to the Downtown Development project is on the agenda for later in the meeting and said those speaking on that subject at this time will not be expected to come up at the time of the public hearing to speak again.

He continued the public petitions portion of the meeting and recognized the following individuals. A continued summary of comments is outlined below:

- ***Robert Davis:***
 - Said he came to Rocky Mount in August 1979 and has not seen such potential [for development] since he has been here;
 - Said everyone does not need to be an expert in the details of the Downtown Development Project;
 - Said if Council takes time to explain to everyone in the City at a detailed level and look for them to understand the Project, we will never get anything done;
 - Said citizens put their trust in the City Council and citizens will hold them to that trust;
 - Said please let's quit wasting time and move forward;

- Said this is a great opportunity for Downtown;
 - Said we have the Event Center and Sports Complex and now people can stay Downtown which means business Downtown will grow;
 - Said sometimes you just have to trust that you have picked the right leaders and move forward;
 - Said he thinks too much time is being wasted – this [project] is great for the City and the City should move forward
- ***Richard Worsinger:***
 - Said he is here tonight to talk about the City's water, waste water and stormwater utilities;
 - Said he is concerned that much of the infrastructure of these three critical utilities are at or beyond its expected life;
 - Said the City has had continued incidents of overflow of raw sewage into the Tar River ;
 - Said about a year ago there was a collapse of a 54-inch reinforced concrete sewer pipe near the fire training grounds that cost the City \$2M to repair;
 - Pointed out that 70% of the City's sewer flows through that pipe which is adjacent to the Tar River;
 - Said City staff arranged for a tour by the City Council of the water and wastewater facilities in November 2018 and afterwards authorized a study by a firm named Jacobs which showed there is \$33M of waste water, \$17M of water and \$12M of stormwater needs for a total of \$62M of unmet capital needs;
 - Said his question to Council is have they seen that detailed report which is about 200 pages and if the answer is yes why has that report not been made public and why is Council not acting on it yet; and if the Council has not seen the report he would like to know why not since they authorized the expenditure of public funds for the study; and added the public needs to see the report;
 - Said Jacobs also included a cost of service study to establish the appropriate rates to pay for these improvements and he questioned where that cost of service study is;
 - Said he understands Council is excited that there will not be a rate increase in this year's budget, but unfortunately that just kicks that can down the road further and further;
 - Said sooner or later this City is going to have to pay for those expenditures;
 - Said if there is a collapse of the water or wastewater industry utilities it will jeopardize the City's ability to attract and retain industries that are large users of water and wastewater;
 - Said citizens do not need to be burdened with \$62M of costs and also pay for a hotel and parking garage;
 - Urged the City Council to act on this before the City has an incident similar to Flint, Michigan
- ***Annette Tyson Xavier:***
 - Said she has lived at her current address in Rocky Mount for 70+ years;
 - Asked where the hotel is supposed to be built and who will own and operate it;
 - Asked how long Council is going to talk about the hotel;
 - Said the Event Center was talked about for years;
 - Questioned what is happening with the land where St. John AME Zion sits and when Council is going to do something about that;
 - Said the City received the money to finish Holly Street Park over a year ago and questioned when the work will start and finish
- ***Dr. Kim Koo:***
 - Asked Council to consider the impact of the Downtown Development Project on surrounding communities;
 - Said the phrase economic development has been used quite a bit to justify support for the project;

- Said while she personally does not oppose the project, she cannot see progress unless the underserved neighborhoods are benefiting;
 - Said the biggest benefit to them should be stable jobs, livable wages and other benefits that come with a paycheck;
 - Asked the City Council to make sure a significant number of jobs are guaranteed to the currently unemployed in Rocky Mount especially in the communities surrounding the project;
 - Said Council must actively recruit, train and enable the community unemployed to be among the first to be considered for the better paying jobs that will come with new investment and proposed construction;
 - Said job fairs and such are passive modes of recruitment and must be accompanied by actually visiting each of the underserved areas, active recruitment, provision of training and commitment;
 - Said the City Council needs to consider some formal vehicle to do exactly that;
 - Said the currently unemployed and underemployed will be better positioned to be hired as the City will now have a robust and qualified workforce;
 - Said it seems that having a stable job and living wages will be the basis for the revitalization of neighborhoods that is both sustainable and progressive;
 - Said livable wages will allow people to buy homes, services and consumer goods that will change the face of our community and increase the tax base of the City;
 - Said it would be a tragedy of utmost proportions if the City does not use this opportunity to uplift its unemployed and underemployed and it cannot and must not allow economic development to push out the poor and underserved once again and marginalize them while the privileged few reap all the profits
- ***Susan Perry Cole:***
 - Said she is a 30-year resident of a neighborhood which is immediately adjacent to the Downtown Central City District;
 - Said she speaks tonight in support of moving forward with approval of the proposed public-private partnership and development agreement to build a parking deck and hotel complex to include retail space and condo units;
 - Said just a little while ago the City was experiencing double-digit unemployment and to adjust the City's steep economic downturn the Mayor and City Council proposed a large-scale project to create an environment for sustained investment in Downtown Rocky Mount;
 - Said amid some controversy and opposition that large-scale project called the Event Center was approved and opened in October 2018;
 - Said the Event Center was intended to encourage the private sector to invest in Downtown Rocky Mount;
 - Said the viability of Downtown Revitalization is exemplified by nearby thriving cities such as Raleigh and Durham which include vibrant downtowns anchored by a large public facility;
 - Said a strong central city is important and essential to the vitality of Nash and Edgecombe Counties;
 - Said what is important to her as a resident of a Downtown adjacent neighborhood is that this proposed hotel has the potential to attract much-needed investment in the surrounding Downtown;
 - Said she is glad this City Council is aware of the poor investment quality of neighborhoods like hers that surround the Downtown center;
 - Said for many years those residents have been paying taxes and have been waiting for the City to take some type of economic development leadership that could reverse the decades of disinvestment that has created blight, vacancy and abandoned property conditions that exist in underserved and under-resourced communities ;
 - Said Council's favorable action tonight will demonstrate that it has heard residents' cries for action to promote new investment in those communities and attention to the City's affordable housing crisis;
 - Encouraged Council to stay the course and approve the proposed Downtown development agreement

- ***Nathlyn Ohree:***
 - Said she is the third vice-president of the NAACP;
 - Said she has lived in Rocky Mount for over 30 years and is not going anywhere;
 - Recited the mission of the NAACP;
 - Said she is encouraged by the unity of the current City Council and the prospects for a bright future for Rocky Mount because when her uncle, Private First-Class William Hoover Jones, was brought back in a coffin he has come back to a City on the rise and if he were living she thinks he would be impressed by some of the development that has already occurred and what is on the table;
 - Said she does not have another 87 years to wait and would love to see some of the positive things that we already have in place come to fruition;
 - Said she is so thankful that the environment of this Council Chamber seems to be better and people are more respectful and that gives her heart a lot of encouragement since she lives in Rocky Mount

- ***Gwen Wilkins:***
 - Said she would like to take a point of privilege and take 10 seconds of her three minutes to give a moment of silence for the Pierce family, the family of the young man who was gunned down yesterday in Ward 3;
 - Said it is nice that the Council has seen the need for housing in South Rocky Mount and particularly for the neglected parks;
 - Said she has been in the community since 1999 and has not seen a picnic table, a bench or a shed;
 - Said she went to Buck Leonard Park the other day for a community event and it is a very nice park but said she kept thinking what happened to Branch Street, what happened to Southside Park;
 - Said she is very happy to see that Council has allocated money in the budget for these things and for the boarded houses and even has grant for which homeowners can apply to get funding to fix up their houses but said she cannot help but wonder if this was done because it is an election year;
 - Said she has been in the City almost 20 years and those parks have had nothing but grass although one has a basketball court and there is a monkey gym at Branch Street and Southside;
 - Said there is no reason there should not be benches, picnic tables and things to make those neighborhoods more family-oriented;
 - Said those who know her know that she knows politics and said this is political;
 - Said she is happy for all the money coming into the community now but questioned where it was 10 years ago, where was it 15 years ago;
 - Said she knows Council is going to approve the \$18M for the hotel parking deck and although it is probably fruitless at this point asked that Council reconsider their vote adding that \$18M is nothing to sneeze at;
 - Said Council gave Hunt Services the contract for \$117,500 for a feasibility study and then he turns out to be the one who is the developer;
 - Asked that city leaders stop giving the perception that it is us against them or them against us;
 - Said we are all one City and we need to start acting like it

- ***Johnny Cunningham:***
 - Spoke about civic duty and unity;
 - Said it is his civic duty to call out those taking advantage of and exploiting the poor;
 - Commended Councilmembers Knight, Blackwell and Joyner for uniting;
 - Said he admires Councilmembers Knight and Blackwell especially considering the attacks they have been under and said they do not fight back and curse, but do their civic duty and serve the City

- ***Matt Gilliland:***
 - Spoke about the hotel project

- Said he could talk about numerous things and could talk about his academic background or about projects in comparable cities and why they are a bad idea or why it is a bad idea to base decisions like this purely off projections that are made with very loose assumptions but instead will talk about good stewardship;
 - Said he is a partner in a management consulting firm, and you can find a consultant, particularly a municipal consultant, to say just about anything is feasible;
 - Said getting the opinion of a consultant is part of due diligence assuming the consultant does not have a conflict of interest;
 - Said due diligence is so you do not get sued, prosecuted or thrown out of office but good stewardship is about taking care of something as good as you would if it were truly yours;
 - Said politicians have a problem in doing that because most of our lives we make choices and then have the consequences and people tend to be more responsible when they get all the consequences of the choices they make, but politicians make choices for which others bear the consequences and that has a lot to do with why good stewardship is so uncommon in the political world;
 - Said the fact that the City hired a developer to tell them whether it was a good idea for them to pay him to do something and how much to pay him was not good stewardship;
 - Said the fact that the City is willing to compete with and undermine all the investors building the seven hotels in Rocky Mount that are under construction or in the planning stages is not good stewardship;
 - Said he is asking Council while there is still time to be better stewards because the best way to attract private investment is not to subsidize and said the private sector is effective because it bears its own consequences;
 - Said this project gives the Council and the developer the choice and residents the consequences
- ***Peter Gilliland:***
 - Said he has spent the largest part of his life in Rocky Mount, almost 40 years, and is saddened at the things he is seeing here;
 - Said most know he is minister and will not be surprised when he makes reference to the scripture that says among other things “to avoid the very appearance of evil”;
 - Said given that the matters that have been brought into the public about the hotel and that what hasn't been brought to the public is what it is really going to cost the citizens of the City, especially the poor citizens because when property taxes go up they get passed downhill and the people at the bottom are the ones who really wind up paying the property tax;
 - Said there is also the pretense of public hearings and said he says pretense because he has been to some of those public hearings and the firms who have been called to hold the public hearings have an amazing way of passing out surveys that guarantee they will get the answers that they want;
 - Said there is the matter of the obvious conflicts of interest that are involved in this deal that has been and is being pushed through so fast;
 - Said nothing about it has the appearance of righteousness and does have the appearance of evil and said it might not be evil, but it sure does look like it;
 - Said there is the matter of voodoo economics that goes with building this kind of monstrosity at partially the public's expense based on comparable cities is not a good idea;
 - Urged the City Council to look at themselves in the mirror and said this does not bear up to avoiding the appearance of evil
 - ***Gerald Cox:***
 - Said he is a City resident;
 - Said he is directing his comments to the City Council, Mayor, Manager and upper leadership and said they are not being good stewards of taxpayer dollars

- **Benjamin Moore:**
 - Said as a former corporate executive and entrepreneur he can assure Council that when one looks at projections that were posted online (and thanked them for the information being online) they can see some of the numbers are very unrealistic and totally absurd relative to retail sales which are very high;
 - Said the hotel occupancy rate at an average of over 70% is high although he would like to believe that would happen, but his experience tells him it will not;
 - Said a 40% occupancy rate listed for the parking garage is high and he does not think anyone can believe those numbers are real because they are high compared to other places and he suspects that information is spurious and not real;
 - Said the whole process in terms of how it has involved is convoluted to say the least and the information only came out since the presentation on June 25 (although he is glad the information is posted on the City's website and believes other citizens are as well);
 - Said no other developers were able to bid on the project;
 - Said his real concern is whether the City will be able to pay back the \$17M and thinks the revenue streams are suspect;
 - Asked the City Council to reconsider and look at the project as if it were their own money

- **A. B. Whitley:**
 - Said when he addressed the Council earlier in the year, he made a statement that he is going to make again tonight and that is that perception is reality;
 - Said he had hoped the Council would have taken that seriously and as time went along things would get better but the perception now, based upon conversations he has had and articles in the paper, is that things are no better;
 - Said the perception is what the City Council has created;
 - Said because of that perception more people have been attending Council meetings although the crowd has now dwindled some but now citizens have to go through a metal detector;
 - Said it is embarrassing at times to say he is from Rocky Mount;
 - Said he has been to Council meetings in seven or eight different counties of similar size and has never had to go through a metal detector and there is now a dozen or more police officers here in order for there to be a Council meeting;
 - Said with the crime in the City and the drug problem police officers should be out in the community;
 - Asked Council to take their stewardship responsibility seriously and change the perception of where the City is currently and where it is headed and that is the only way the City will ever get better and be united and headed in the right direction;
 - Said it seems like every time we turn around something else comes up that appears not to be above board;
 - Asked the Council to be more open with the public about what is going on and said citizens should not have to find out from the newspaper or never find out at all until after something happens that City funds are being used because those funds are public funds and belong to the citizens as much as they do to the Council, if not more;
 - Asked the Council to make changes for the better

- **Samuel Battle:**
 - Said today is a sad day because of the shooting that happened in Ward 3 yesterday;
 - Said the police did a great job at the scene and some citizens are going to reach out to the family later tonight or tomorrow;
 - Said there needs to be police substations in high crime neighborhoods;
 - Said young people are getting upset because they cannot go to events at the Event Center and said the Event Center is taking more of the profit than is being made by the events;
 - Said the City needs to take over running the Event Center;

- Said he went to a rally in Little Raleigh this weekend and a young lady made a statement he liked that the old people need to get out of the way and let the young people step up;
 - Spoke in support of T.J .Walker;
 - Said pastors should not be supporting candidates because it is against federal law for a 501(c)(3) corporation to endorse candidates and they should keep that out of the church;
 - Said people should vote for whomever they want;
 - Encouraged those running for election: Nellie, Gwen and T.J.
- ***Anntionett Cutler:***
 - Said she is a pastor here in the City and is grateful, happy and ecstatic for all that is going on and is not here to influence anyone's voting rights but knows what is right and working for her and her City;
 - Said she is not only a pastor but a Downtown property owner and is looking forward to the City flourishing and stands in support of the hotel and parking deck and anything else that will enhance the City's growth;
 - Said she has been here for 30 years and has seen City Managers go and come;
 - Said for the past 16 years she has watched the City grow and it is the City on the rise;
 - Congratulated the Parks and Recreation Director and his staff on receiving recognition tonight and thanked him and his team on behalf of the Hillsdale Community for the work at Lancaster Park and said they are looking forward to other enhancements at the park;
 - Said as a pastor and a citizen she thinks the Council is doing a great job;
 - Encouraged Council to keep moving forward and said backwards is not our direction
- ***Nehemiah Smith:***
 - Said the City is moving forward under the progressive and insightful leadership of the Mayor, City Council and Manager;
 - Said the new Event Center isn't perfect but is improving every day and he believes it will be a financial boon in the coming years;
 - Said new developers are looking to enhance the area with hotels, a parking deck and other amenities;
 - Said it is a great time in Rocky Mount;
 - Said the City has an outstanding Police Chief and the City Manager has announced the hiring of a Fire Chief, Corey Mercer, who we were fortunate enough to wrangle away from Elizabeth City and he welcomed Chief Mercer home to Rocky Mount;
 - Said he will continue to advocate for parity and equality in the Fire Department because the future is watching and destroying the current culture in the Fire Department may mean that some will not be able to stand the heat;
 - Said he has every confidence in Chief Mercer and knows that not everyone is happy and not everyone likes the direction in which the City is headed but in life we are not going to like everything;
 - Said the other day he was in a restaurant in Raleigh enjoying a bowl of soup and the waitress brought over two or three packs of saltine crackers and said he hates salt on his crackers; he said we are not going to like everything but perhaps we will learn that something positive can come out of even of what we consider a bad situation like the old adage "when you are given lemons, make lemonade";
 - Said who knows one day maybe he will even be able to stomach salty crackers
- ***Lewis Turner:***
 - Said he can remember 20 years ago coming to Council meetings and there being only 3 or 4 people present on a regular basis;
 - Said for a few months now when he comes to a Council meeting, he can hardly get a seat and he doesn't know what the Council is doing but they have got the

community involved and he is impressed that citizens want to know what is going on;

- Said the Council works hard, and he has seen it;
- Said whatever they are doing they should keep doing it because sooner or later they are going to get something positive done;
- Commended the Council for their hard work

- ***Lige Daughtridge:***

- Said he agrees with Mr. Turner that it is nice to see so many people showing up for City Council meetings;
- Said several weeks ago he attended a Committee of the Whole meeting where there was conversation about the City being in the position of needing parking now;
- Said it was stated that the naysayers against the Event Center are the reason there is now a need for parking because the naysayers were against parking, which he said was incorrect because he went back to records from 2014 where people questioned if there was adequate parking;
- Said he is the member of the Planning Board and has been for many years and when it came up December 12, 2016, he questioned parking among many things and in fact the *Rocky Mount Telegram* mentioned and quoted his comments relative to his concern that handicapped parking being in the rear of the building was an impediment; he read those comments;
- Said he was promised at that meeting there would be a rear entrance into the Event Center for handicapped people and said to his knowledge there is not;
- Said Council was aware of his concerns because on December 13 the City Council had those Planning Board meeting minutes when he came to a Council Meeting and stated his concerns with regard to parking;
- Said apparently that was not a concern when Council voted to pass a \$15M Event Center but now the narrative is that they need to spend \$18M more dollars and that is just not right;
- Said he wanted to do dispel the narrative that was at the Committee of the Whole meeting a few weeks ago

- ***Michael Mosley:***

- Said he spoke to Council last month about the Event Center and allowing it to be used by the community;
- Said he had a question about the salary of the Event Center Manager and has learned it is \$100,000;
- Said he had another question was about the salary of the Event Center workers and was told that the company hired to run the Event Center pays the salary of the workers, but the City reimburses them;
- Said that does not make very much sense to him;
- Said he asked if the City has to pay to use the Event Center and was told that answer was yes;
- Said he got a copy of the lease agreement and it says the City has to pay but OIC does not have to pay during the time that an athletic event is not going on and they can use it for free;
- Questioned why the Parks and Recreation Department cannot use the Event Center for free for the citizens of this community;
- Said he asked where the money generated by the Event Center went and was told it went back into the Event Center for reimbursement for salaries and expenses;
- Said this is Parks and Recreation month so he is coming to Council at the right time;
- Said the Parks and Recreation Department should be able to use the Event Center for free for the citizens of this community;
- Said it does not make sense that the City has to pay to use a building that it owns;
- Said he asked why an outside firm is running the Event Center when the City has a Parks and Recreation Director who could likely run the Event Center;

- Said young men are coming back to the City trying to make the City better for youth and they should be able to use the facility
- **Robert Carr:**
 - Said just about everything he wanted to say has been said already;
 - Said he will briefly go through a lot of the articles written by Lindell Kay who is no longer with the *Telegram* and read the following headlines: Embattled City Official Put on Leave; Developer Touts City's Hotel Plan (he said the City is putting a lot of money into the: Event Center, hotel, parking lot, parking garage and all that stuff and taxpayers are going to be paying for it); Hotel Fiscal Projections Ambiguous; Critics Pan Downtown Hotel Plans (as City pushes the project); Hearing is Set to Discuss Hotel Plans;
 - Said the hotel is sure en vogue these days and he hopes there has been enough discussion about the hotel and Event Center to take care of the next couple of meetings
- **Arnold Gordon Bray:**
 - Thanked the City for supporting the burial of William Hoover Jones;
 - Said there were some comments made thanking the civic leaders, those in the Legislature and elected leaders, for attending and that is a true statement, but it appears that people focused on those just present at the memorial; he said there were also folks out in the heat for the other events and he thanked them as well;
 - Said the paper (*Telegram*) has a bad problem in that it has a tendency to stir and you have to be careful stirring;
 - Thanked the community for support “Hoover” and said it brought a lot of attention to the goodness of the City except internally;
 - Said an investigation was done on the City and how it operates; Nexsen Pruet (an outside group that Council hired) and the City got an A+ and A rating for what it is doing but the paper hammered the City; said an outside source said the City is more balanced than most cities;
 - Said you cannot stop perception and if a person is working and feels a certain way is true that is a legitimate concern and it was borne out;
 - Asked all present to read the report – don’t read the newspaper;
 - Said there is a consensus about the hotel and a lot of concern and said what the Council owes the citizens are their measures of merit, those things that they based their decisions on and asked that they provide them to the public and not give them to the newspaper unless the newspaper is going to quote them directly because the City has to be careful;
 - Said Rocky Mount is a great city, but the challenge is that citizens quit listening to somebody who told somebody who said something to somebody and if we do that, we can be the great city that we are supposed to be
- **Brenda Cooper:**
 - Said she is from South Rocky Mount;
 - Said South Rocky Mount wants Home Street back on the map;
 - Voiced concern that the handicapped parking at the Event Center is too far from the entrance (front door) and it is difficult for the elderly; she questioned where the shuttle parking previously discussed is;
 - Said the Senior Center used to take senior citizens to different senior events but no longer do; said she has been active at the Senior Center and Rocky Mount senior citizens need to have the opportunities that other cities provide

The Mayor closed the public petitions portion of the meeting.

Councilmember Watkins said a number of citizens here are concerned about the loss of drug stores and a bank in South Rocky Mount, on Raleigh Road and Nashville Road, that served primarily the Little Raleigh Community, and that she invited Alan Matthews, the small business representative at the Chamber, who is working with the

community in trying to address those issues to speak tonight. She invited Mr. Matthews to speak on the progress in that regard and invited anyone with concerns to work them.

Mr. Matthews thanked Ms. Watkins and the Council for the opportunity to provide an update. He said he does business recruitment across the City in all areas of the City and likes to focus on those areas where things need to happen and where a lot of work is needed and most enjoys working on things that are difficult. He provided a brief summary of some of the reasons the drug stores closed and said that what is happening with electronic devices and e-commerce is having an impact on a lot of brick and mortar businesses adding that when mergers happen it causes harm in communities. He said the Walgreens' purchase of Rite Aid affected other Wards as well as Ward 4, but businesses now grow by buying other companies instead of just expanding more buildings. He said Councilmember Watkins wanted him to let the citizens know that work is going on to bring needed services back to that community and one of those services is a bank along with a drug store. He said, in spite of some of the hurdles, he has a meeting set with a drug store and has spoken to both local independent stores and gone outside the area and is working on a project that might put two businesses in the building vacated by the former drug store that might have some sort of a medical application.

He said he has brought in Norris Tolson from the Gateway Partnership to work with him on getting a bank in the area. He said Councilmember Watkins has kept him informed of what is going on from the community side and he appreciates all Councilmembers calling on him whenever they can to work on the difficulty.

Councilmember Knight said that the Crossing @ 64 has been a very hot topic to those that think that the City's investment in that area has been a waste of money and said he is aware Mr. Matthews has been active, along with Councilmember Blackwell, himself and other Councilmembers in recruiting for that area and East of Rocky Mount as well and asked him to dispel any myths.

Mr. Matthews stated that there has been a tremendous amount of effort by him and others in trying to do the right thing particularly in what is happening to the east [side of the City]. He said that now is the time to re-emphasis bringing business to the east side of Rocky Mount. He said with Triangle and Corning locating in the area, other businesses being there, and it being the first exit heading west, he thinks there is an opportunity to bring more housing and is talking to several businesses who are coming in to take a look at considering locating in that area. Mr. Matthews said it is important to note that the Crossing @ 64 is being looked at, but also, he has been able to recruit a business across the street from where the old Tower Drive-in was located. He said it is important to note that Edgemont Shopping Center located down the road from Oakwood Shopping Center now has

about 94% occupancy so there is a lot of work going on with trying to bring businesses to that area.

Pastor Thomas Walker reported that he has a meeting on Wednesday with the senior vice-president of a bank about the issue of the bank being moved from the Little Raleigh area. He commended Mr. Matthews and Councilmember Watkins for their work and said he hopes the Council will give its full attention to this matter because it is a real crisis in the community.

Councilmember Knight stated that OIC has been a very important organization in the community and has provided training, healthcare and tons of resources and skills to people and underserved people here in Rocky Mount. He said OIC was recruited by the New Market Tax people to help bring \$5M to the table to help fill the gap for the Event Center and had it not been for OIC the City would have had to find that \$5M somewhere else. He said OIC is in the Event Center for a reason and does pay rent and is there to make sure the underserved people located around the Event Center have access to the facility.

He said young people are welcome in Rocky Mount and said the Moe Deloatch event was sponsored by the City. He said the City saw the need where he grew up in South Rocky Mount to put over \$3M in the South Rocky Mount Community Center. He encouraged all citizens to use the Event Center and said that is the reason it was built. He said he does not want the newspaper reporter or anyone in the room to leave with a cloud over OIC and said it is celebrating 50 years in this community and was birthed out of the advocacy of Reverend Dr. Leon Sullivan because African-American people were not given a chance at the table for job opportunities. He said to Councilmember Blackwell that he wears many hats as a Reverend and Councilmember and that he personally thanks God for OIC and added without OIC some of our young people who cannot go back to school would not have a GE and those who cannot read would not be able to get jobs. He stated that OIC trains people and gives them skills and OIC has just had an awesome graduation. He said he gets emotional about OIC because it helped him to find financial aid to go to college and gave him his first summer job to buy books and school clothes. He said more OIC's are needed.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from a Planning Board meeting held June 11, 2019. The minutes are on file in the office of the City Clerk. The following action was taken upon the recommendations of the Planning Board.

A. LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following Land Development Code amendments recommended for approval and found in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Amendments to Chapter 1. DEFINITIONS AND CONSTRUCTION, Sec. 102. Terms and uses defined. - Purpose: to add, amend and delete terms and uses defined in the City's Ordinance to

reflect updates made in the 2017 NC Model Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for Non-coastal Areas; and

- Amendments to Chapter 9. "FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT" - Purpose: to reflect updates made in the 2017 NC Model Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for Non-coastal Areas to make certain public and private losses due to flood conditions are minimal.

Mayor Combs requested that the Director of Development Services, Will Deaton, provide an overview of the request.

Mr. Deaton explained that the proposed Ordinance adds, amends or deletes terms and uses defined in the City's Ordinance to reflect updates made in the 2017 NC Model Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for non-coastal areas and reflects updates to make certain public and private losses due to flood conditions are minimal.

He reported that the amendments meet or exceed State requirements.

Mayor Combs recognized the following individual and a summary of his comments is outlined below:

- ***Lige Daughtridge:***

- o Stated that he serves on the Planning Board and wants to clarify that part of the recommendations was derived from the Ratio Study which the citizens paid over \$100,000 for and the Council has not yet approved; he urged the City Council to vote in favor of the recommended amendments

No one else from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that receipt of the Planning Board minutes be acknowledged and that the amendments to Chapter 1. DEFINITIONS AND CONSTRUCTION, Sec. 102. Terms and uses defined. and Chapter 9. "FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION ZONING OVERLAY DISTRICT" be approved and that **Ordinance No. O-2019-57** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

B. LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following Land Development Code amendments recommended for approval and found in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Amendments to Chapter 5. ZONING USE REGULATIONS, Section 503. Zoning Use Tables, Table 5-2: General Use Table/Transitional, Business and Industrial Districts; "Automobile off-street parking" by amending the Business District B-4 zone to designate said use as a special use requiring approval by the City Council; and
- Amendments to Chapter 7. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, Section 708. Off-street parking and loading. Purpose: to expand area exempt from minimum parking requirements within the Central City Area, expand the shared parking radius and strengthen the standards for parking decks

The Director of Development Services, Will Deaton, provided an overview of the request and explained that the amendments to Table 5-2 designate Business District B-4 as a special use zone which will

require Council approval and will expand the areas exempt from minimum parking requirements within the Central City Area (the core area) by expanding the shared parking radius and strengthening the standards for parking decks.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the amendments to Chapter 5. ZONING USE REGULATIONS, Section 503. *Zoning Use Tables, Table 5-2: General Use Table/Transitional, Business and Industrial Districts* and Amendments to Chapter 7. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, Section 708. Off-street parking and loading be approved and that **Ordinance No. O-2019-58** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT – HUNT SERVICES/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the proposed development agreement between the City and Hunt Services, Inc. (Hunt Services) by which Hunt Services will develop and construct mixed-use development, including a 107-key dual branded hotel (which will be either Hilton brands or Marriott brands), retail and residential apartments/condos in Downtown Rocky Mount and construct one or more structured parking facilities (currently expected to be two facilities providing 800 spaces) to be used primarily in conjunction with the Development and the Rocky Mount Event Center.

Notice was provided to the public that:

- the hotel and a portion of the parking facility will be constructed on land owned by the City bounded by Albemarle Avenue, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue and Ivy Street that is currently used as a parking lot for the Rocky Mount Event Center; and
- Hunt Services, as the developer, will be responsible for the design and construction of the Downtown Development Project, including the parking facility;
- The City will lease the parking facility from Hunt Services for a term that is expected to be twenty (20) years and, at the end of said lease, the City will take title to the Parking Facility;
- The amount and timing of the lease payments will be agreed upon between the City and Hunt Services, subject to approval by the Local Government Commission (LGC)

The Mayor opened the public hearing and recognized the following:

- **Richard Worsinger:**
 - Said when this Council started evaluating the concept of an Event Center it took much time and diligence and that slow deliberate evaluation allowed the public to provide input throughout the process and also allowed the public to be informed;
 - Said there were many presentations and PowerPoints and a lot of give-and-take which allowed the concept to evolve from that original concept of just an Event Center to the concept the City now has of a center focused on youth and amateur sports;
 - Said it was touted to the public that it was the public's investment in the Downtown;
 - Questioned why this hotel/parking-deck-project is not being fully funded by private dollars;
 - Questioned why the project is being fast-tracked;
 - Said there were two other developers who were interested and requested more time and they were told no – and he questioned why that was; he questioned to whose benefit they were told no and said surely it was not for the public's benefit;

- Said to reiterate comments made by Pastor Gilliland, voodoo economics and the appearance of evil;
 - Urged Council to stop and allow private funds to finance hotels like those being constructed out on Highway 64 and Winstead Avenue;
 - Said he understands there were two hoteliers that were working on a project for Downtown and they stopped when the City initiated this project because they said they don't know what the City is doing so they don't want to be building a hotel down there;
 - Said the public has made their contribution and now it is time to let the private dollars of the people who can run these operations take over;
 - Said cities should not be choosing winners and losers
- **Johnny Cunningham:**
 - Said again – civic duty and unity and gentrification; said gentrification was talked about five years ago;
 - Said when the federal government tells you it is their money, pay your taxes and receive a service – the government says it is their money and that they are giving it to this project, there is nothing you can do;
 - Said he did not take good advice then to set his organization in a position to profit and benefit from it, but said the government says under Section 3 of the Federal Government Guidelines when federal dollars of this magnitude are utilized in impoverished neighborhoods that statute and law enacted in 1968 is understood and recognized;
 - Said the government is paying for it, it has been approved, it is going to happen just like the Event Center, but his concern is job opportunity under that type of development and said Section 3 guarantees that the surrounding impoverished neighborhood's residents have first pick at employment;
 - Said if you don't understand the concept of the parking garage - he doesn't look at it as a parking garage in Downtown and all the controversy that surrounds it;
 - Said Section 3 guarantees that our community which he knows for a fact for the last thirty (30) years has been living in poverty;
 - Said when private dollars can go down to the Brew Mill and spend millions then private dollars could have done it thirty (30) years ago where he lives; he said you don't come into his neighborhood for a couple of hours where he lives 365 days a year/24-7; said if someone comes into his community for a couple hours and tries to tell them what they need - no they don't need that;
 - Said he made the mistake and did not position himself to profit from the construction and development of whatever is built down there; said it was a poll that we could get employment and opportunity for the surrounding community and Section 3 guarantees us that
 - **Lige Daughtridge:**
 - Said he is opposed to the \$17.6M in taxpayer expense on top of the \$50M Event Center;
 - Said as the *Telegram* reported which was derived from what the City provided there has only been 7 days provided to any interested developers to respond to this huge project and even those interested asked for more time and were denied;
 - Said there were charades of studies and requests for qualifications for the project and developer that had already been decided previously;
 - Said the elephant in the room is the conflict of interest of a Councilmembers' family-owned property on the proposed site;
 - Said the public is yet to have the results from the 2018 Kimley Horn parking study that the public paid for;
 - Said [the estimate for the parking deck is a] 46% increase over the WGI Engineering estimate for 700 spaces and if you take the average space for the \$17.6M what they are really showing costs \$12M and the public does not have a third party (that has been announced) that has looked over the project cost;
 - Said the project would essentially be creating only 232 new spots and the 140 spots allocated to the hotel which will bring the new spots;
 - Said he agrees with the *Telegram* relative to the cost of \$79,000 or 361% more than the average spot is supposed to cost;
 - Said it is hard to believe that the City is proceeding with the project while knowingly being under investigation by the State Auditor, Beth Wood, and her investigators and said the Mayor has mentioned this publicly in multiple meetings and while no one knows the scope or results of the investigation, it seems prudent to wait until the outcome;
 - Said this project will have to ultimately be approved by the North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC) ;

- Said there has been no transparency with the project and the City Council has voted on this twice without previously announcing these items were on the agenda;
 - Said it is equally as bad that the \$56M project Resolution was made and voted on at the end of the meeting in February without any public notice;
 - Said he opposes this project
- ***Nehemiah Smith:***
 - Said he chooses to disagree with his fellow citizen, Mr. Daughtridge;
 - Said investigations do not stop progress, but agendas do;
 - Said it is high time that there was more development in Edgecombe County;
 - Questioned what the problem is;
 - Questioned who was up here when that mess happened with ElectriCities and said those projections went forth too that the City was supposed to make money but questioned what happened; he said nobody said anything about that and this Council had to fix that;
 - Said the Council that was before this Council was the ones that signed it and said they were going to make a whole bunch of money and questioned who was here to say anything about that when it happened;
 - Said nobody was here to say anything about that debacle and it was a hot mess;
 - Said now all of a sudden because we want to take \$18M and put up a parking deck and partner with private industry or have a private developer to come in who is putting up \$49M people are complaining about the \$17M;
 - Said all he would complain about is if Council are not good stewards and making sure that the project happens and is done the right way;
 - Said he is not mad that Council wants to bring it here and said we need it;
 - Questioned what the issue is;
 - Said for too long Edgecombe County has had a symbiotic relationship with Nash County and that everything that Edgecombe County residents have wanted they have had to go across the tracks in order to get it done;
 - Said people all want to talk about South Rocky Mount and these places and talk about grocery stores and banks, well, and said he would tell them something about Edgecombe County – one grocery store and one bank and one-time Food Lion that closed at 9:30 – he added that power concedes nothing without demand, it never has, and it never will;
 - Said he and Bronson Williams called Food Lion’s corporate office and asked why their store was closing at 9:30 and all other Food Lion stores in Rocky Mount were closing at 10:00 and they said it was because of the crime – he said he asked them to show him the study;
 - Said they could not show the study and then they said it was going to take 2 months in order for them to put it together in order for Food Lion to close at 10:00 and it took them 2 days after they told them we were boycotting them;
 - Said he has an issue with this and said it is agenda-driven that some don’t want the project and said all of a sudden some want to be good stewards;
 - Questioned the comment “the appearance of evil”;
 - Said he guaranteed that a whole bunch of folks present would have a conniption – meaning that their face would melt away – if they found out who held those bonds to ElectriCities and if found out that it was some of the people in this City who were making money off their back, off their utilities and said now all of a sudden people have a problem
 - ***Robbie Davis:***
 - Said he has a little bit of a concern about procedure this evening;
 - Said it appears that most of the comments about Item 7, the public hearing item, were done under the public comment portion of the meeting;
 - Asked if those comments made for and/or against the parking deck will be included in the minutes in a fashion so that if someone reads the public comments all comments will be included under that item so it can be understood that many comments were made that were not made under the public hearing portion of the meeting

Mayor Combs responded in the affirmative. Mayor Combs reminded the audience that if they spoke at the public petitions portion of the meeting about the parking deck they are not expected to speak again. He invited anyone who had not yet spoken about the parking deck and who wished to do so to come forward and no one else came forth. He

advised that the only action relative to the Downtown Development Project on tonight's agenda is to receive public comment.

The following comments made during the public petitions portion of the meeting relative to the Downtown Development Project are duplicated below:

- ***Elizabeth Scott:***
 - Said she supports the revitalization of her hometown and the Downtown Central City Historic District;
 - Said she grew up just a few blocks away and works across the street at Station Square;
 - Said she was an early supporter of the Event Center and considers herself to be a true advocate for Downtown;
 - Said she also owns a commercial property on Main Street near the Event Center that was completely restored in 2004;
 - Said she welcomes hotels in Downtown Rocky Mount and understands the need for them;
 - Said as a Downtown Property Owner she stands to benefit from continued growth and smart redevelopment in the Downtown;
 - Said she does not at this time support the City proceeding with its financial involvement in the hotel parking deck as it is currently being presented;
 - Said she finds it a very convoluted business proposal which has changed several times since she first heard about the project;
 - Said she cannot stand behind something where the City's financial obligation is so unclear and overall it sounds messy;
 - Said, as public stewards of the City, the City Council has not done a very good job at explaining the plans surrounding the huge investment being asked of citizens;
 - Said as a Downtown Property Owner and as a citizen she is requesting more time to be fully informed of the exact details of the City's financial obligation before she can give support for the project

- ***Robert Davis:***
 - Said he came to Rocky Mount in August 1979 and has not seen such potential [for development] since he has been here;
 - Said everyone does not need to be an expert in the details of the Downtown Development Project;
 - Said if Council takes time to explain to everyone in the City at a detailed level and look for them to understand the Project, we will never get anything done;
 - Said citizens put their trust in the City Council and citizens will hold them to that trust;
 - Said please let's quit wasting time and move forward;
 - Said this is a great opportunity for Downtown;
 - Said we have the Event Center and Sports Complex and now people can stay Downtown which means business Downtown will grow;
 - Said sometimes you just have to trust that you have picked the right leaders and move forward;
 - Said he thinks too much time is being wasted – this [project] is great for the City and the City should move forward

- ***Annette Tyson Xavier:***
 - Said she has lived at her current address in Rocky Mount for 70+ years;
 - Asked where the hotel is supposed to be built and who will own and operate it;
 - Asked how long Council is going to talk about the hotel;
 - Said the Event Center was talked about for years;
 - Questioned what is happening with the land where St. John AME Zion sits and when Council is going to do something about that;
 - Said the City received the money to finish Holly Street Park over a year ago and questioned when the work will start and finish

- ***Dr. Kim Koo:***

- Asked Council to consider the impact of the Downtown Development Project on surrounding communities;
- Said the phrase economic development has been used quite a bit to justify support for the project;
- Said while she personally does not oppose the project, she cannot see progress unless the underserved neighborhoods are benefiting;
- Said the biggest benefit to them should be stable jobs, livable wages and other benefits that come with a paycheck;
- Asked the City Council to make sure a significant number of jobs are guaranteed to the currently unemployed in Rocky Mount especially in the communities surrounding the project;
- Said Council must actively recruit, train and enable the community unemployed to be among the first to be considered for the better paying jobs that will come with new investment and proposed construction;
- Said job fairs and such are passive modes of recruitment and must be accompanied by actually visiting each of the underserved areas, active recruitment, provision of training and commitment;
- Said the City Council needs to consider some formal vehicle to do exactly that;
- Said the currently unemployed and underemployed will be better positioned to be hired as the City will now have a robust and qualified workforce;
- Said it seems that having a stable job and living wages will be the basis for the revitalization of neighborhoods that is both sustainable and progressive;
- Said livable wages will allow people to buy homes, services and consumer goods that will change the face of our community and increase the tax base of the City;
- Said it would be a tragedy of utmost proportions if the City does not use this opportunity to uplift its unemployed and underemployed and it cannot and must not allow economic development to push out the poor and underserved once again and marginalize them while the privileged few reap all the profits

- ***Susan Perry Cole:***

- Said she is a 30-year resident of a neighborhood which is immediately adjacent to the Downtown Central City District;
- Said she speaks tonight in support of moving forward with approval of the proposed public-private partnership and development agreement to build a parking deck and hotel complex to include retail space and condo units;
- Said just a little while ago the City was experiencing double-digit unemployment and to adjust the City's steep economic downturn the Mayor and City Council proposed a large-scale project to create an environment for sustained investment in Downtown Rocky Mount;
- Said amid some controversy and opposition that large-scale project called the Event Center was approved and opened in October 2018;
- Said the Event Center was intended to encourage the private sector to invest in Downtown Rocky Mount;
- Said the viability of Downtown Revitalization is exemplified by nearby thriving cities such as Raleigh and Durham which include vibrant downtowns anchored by a large public facility;
- Said a strong central city is important and essential to the vitality of Nash and Edgecombe Counties;
- Said what is important to her as a resident of a Downtown adjacent neighborhood is that this proposed hotel has the potential to attract much-needed investment in the surrounding Downtown;
- Said she is glad this City Council is aware of the poor investment quality of neighborhoods like hers that surround the Downtown center;
- Said for many years those residents have been paying taxes and have been waiting for the City to take some type of economic development leadership that could reverse the decades of disinvestment that has created blight, vacancy and

abandoned property conditions that exist in underserved and under-resourced communities ;

- Said Council's favorable action tonight will demonstrate that it has heard residents' cries for action to promote new investment in those communities and attention to the City's affordable housing crisis;
- Encouraged Council to stay the course and approve the proposed Downtown development agreement

- ***Nathlyn Ohree:***

- Said she is the third vice-president of the NAACP;
- Said she has lived in Rocky Mount for over 30 years and is not going anywhere;
- Recited the mission of the NAACP;
- Said she is encouraged by the unity of the current City Council and the prospects for a bright future for Rocky Mount because when her uncle, Private First-Class William Hoover Jones, was brought back in a coffin he has come back to a City on the rise and if he were living she thinks he would be impressed by some of the development that has already occurred and what is on the table;
- Said she does not have another 87 years to wait and would love to see some of the positive things that we already have in place come to fruition;
- Said she is so thankful that the environment of this Council Chamber seems to be better and people are more respectful and that gives her heart a lot of encouragement since she lives in Rocky Mount

- ***Gwen Wilkins:***

- Said she would like to take a point of privilege and take 10 seconds of her three minutes to give a moment of silence for the Pierce family, the family of the young man who was gunned down yesterday in Ward 3;
- Said it is nice that the Council has seen the need for housing in South Rocky Mount and particularly for the neglected parks;
- Said she has been in the community since 1999 and has not seen a picnic table, a bench or a shed;
- Said she went to Buck Leonard Park the other day for a community event and it is a very nice park but said she kept thinking what happened to Branch Street, what happened to Southside Park;
- Said she is very happy to see that Council has allocated money in the budget for these things and for the boarded houses and even has grant for which homeowners can apply to get funding to fix up their houses but said she cannot help but wonder if this was done because it is an election year;
- Said she has been in the City almost 20 years and those parks have had nothing but grass although one has a basketball court and there is a monkey gym at Branch Street and Southside;
- Said there is no reason there should not be benches, picnic tables and things to make those neighborhoods more family-oriented;
- Said those who know her know that she knows politics and said this is political;
- Said she is happy for all the money coming into the community now but questioned where it was 10 years ago, where was it 15 years ago;
- Said she knows Council is going to approve the \$18M for the hotel parking deck and although it is probably fruitless at this point asked that Council reconsider their vote adding that \$18M is nothing to sneeze at;
- Said Council gave Hunt Services the contract for \$117,500 for a feasibility study and then he turns out to be the one who is the developer;
- Asked that city leaders stop giving the perception that it is us against them or them against us;
- Said we are all one City and we need to start acting like it

- ***Matt Gilliland:***

- Spoke about the hotel project
- Said he could talk about numerous things and could talk about his academic background or about projects in comparable cities and why they are a bad idea or

why it is a bad idea to base decisions like this purely off projections that are made with very loose assumptions but instead will talk about good stewardship;

- Said he is a partner in a management consulting firm, and you can find a consultant, particularly a municipal consultant, to say just about anything is feasible;
 - Said getting the opinion of a consultant is part of due diligence assuming the consultant does not have a conflict of interest;
 - Said due diligence is so you do not get sued, prosecuted or thrown out of office but good stewardship is about taking care of something as good as you would if it were truly yours;
 - Said politicians have a problem in doing that because most of our lives we make choices and then have the consequences and people tend to be more responsible when they get all the consequences of the choices they make, but politicians make choices for which others bear the consequences and that has a lot to do with why good stewardship is so uncommon in the political world;
 - Said the fact that the City hired a developer to tell them whether it was a good idea for them to pay him to do something and how much to pay him was not good stewardship;
 - Said the fact that the City is willing to compete with and undermine all the investors building the seven hotels in Rocky Mount that are under construction or in the planning stages is not good stewardship;
 - Said he is asking Council while there is still time to be better stewards because the best way to attract private investment is not to subsidize and said the private sector is effective because it bears its own consequences;
 - Said this project gives the Council and the developer the choice and residents the consequences
- ***Peter Gilliland:***
 - Said he has spent the largest part of his life in Rocky Mount, almost 40 years, and is saddened at the things he is seeing here;
 - Said most know he is minister and will not be surprised when he makes reference to the scripture that says among other things “to avoid the very appearance of evil”;
 - Said given that the matters that have been brought into the public about the hotel and that what hasn't been brought to the public is what it is really going to cost the citizens of the City, especially the poor citizens because when property taxes go up they get passed downhill and the people at the bottom are the ones who really wind up paying the property tax;
 - Said there is also the pretense of public hearings and said he says pretense because he has been to some of those public hearings and the firms who have been called to hold the public hearings have an amazing way of passing out surveys that guarantee they will get the answers that they want;
 - Said there is the matter of the obvious conflicts of interest that are involved in this deal that has been and is being pushed through so fast;
 - Said nothing about it has the appearance of righteousness and does have the appearance of evil and said it might not be evil, but it sure does look like it;
 - Said there is the matter of voodoo economics that goes with building this kind of monstrosity at partially the public's expense based on comparable cities is not a good idea;
 - Urged the City Council to look at themselves in the mirror and said this does not bear up to avoiding the appearance of evil
 - ***Gerald Cox:***
 - Said he is a City resident;
 - Said he is directing his comments to the City Council, Mayor, Manager and upper leadership and said they are not being good stewards of taxpayer dollars

- **Benjamin Moore:**
 - Said as a former corporate executive and entrepreneur he can assure Council that when one looks at projections that were posted online (and thanked them for the information being online) they can see some of the numbers are very unrealistic and totally absurd relative to retail sales which are very high;
 - Said the hotel occupancy rate at an average of over 70% is high although he would like to believe that would happen, but his experience tells him it will not;
 - Said a 40% occupancy rate listed for the parking garage is high and he does not think anyone can believe those numbers are real because they are high compared to other places and he suspects that information is spurious and not real;
 - Said the whole process in terms of how it has involved is convoluted to say the least and the information only came out since the presentation on June 25 (although he is glad the information is posted on the City's website and believes other citizens are as well);
 - Said no other developers were able to bid on the project;
 - Said his real concern is whether the City will be able to pay back the \$17M and thinks the revenue streams are suspect;
 - Asked the City Council to reconsider and look at the project as if it were their own money

- **A. B. Whitley:**
 - Said when he addressed the Council earlier in the year, he made a statement that he is going to make again tonight and that is that perception is reality;
 - Said he had hoped the Council would have taken that seriously and as time went along things would get better but the perception now, based upon conversations he has had and articles in the paper, is that things are no better;
 - Said the perception is what the City Council has created;
 - Said because of that perception more people have been attending Council meetings although the crowd has now dwindled some but now citizens have to go through a metal detector;
 - Said it is embarrassing at times to say he is from Rocky Mount;
 - Said he has been to Council meetings in seven or eight different counties of similar size and has never had to go through a metal detector and there is now a dozen or more police officers here in order for there to be a Council meeting;
 - Said with the crime in the City and the drug problem police officers should be out in the community;
 - Asked Council to take their stewardship responsibility seriously and change the perception of where the City is currently and where it is headed and that is the only way the City will ever get better and be united and headed in the right direction;
 - Said it seems like every time we turn around something else comes up that appears not to be above board;
 - Asked the Council to be more open with the public about what is going on and said citizens should not have to find out from the newspaper or never find out at all until after something happens that City funds are being used because those funds are public funds and belong to the citizens as much as they do to the Council, if not more;
 - Asked the Council to make changes for the better

- **Anntionett Cutler:**
 - Said she is a pastor here in the City and is grateful, happy and ecstatic for all that is going on and is not here to influence anyone's voting rights but knows what is right and working for her and her City;
 - Said she is not only a pastor but a Downtown property owner and is looking forward to the City flourishing and stands in support of the hotel and parking deck and anything else that will enhance the City's growth;
 - Said she has been here for 30 years and has seen City Managers go and come;
 - Said for the past 16 years she has watched the City grow and it is the City on the rise;

- Congratulated the Parks and Recreation Director and his staff on receiving recognition tonight and thanked him and his team on behalf of the Hillsdale Community for the work at Lancaster Park and said they are looking forward to other enhancements at the park;
 - Said as a pastor and a citizen she thinks the Council is doing a great job;
 - Encouraged Council to keep moving forward and said backwards is not our direction
- ***Nehemiah Smith:***
 - Said the City is moving forward under the progressive and insightful leadership of the Mayor, City Council and Manager;
 - Said the new Event Center isn't perfect but is improving every day and he believes it will be a financial boon in the coming years;
 - Said new developers are looking to enhance the area with hotels, a parking deck and other amenities;
 - Said it is a great time in Rocky Mount;
 - Said the City has an outstanding Police Chief and the City Manager has announced the hiring of a Fire Chief, Corey Mercer, who we were fortunate enough to wrangle away from Elizabeth City and he welcomed Chief Mercer home to Rocky Mount;
 - Said he will continue to advocate for parity and equality in the Fire Department because the future is watching and destroying the current culture in the Fire Department may mean that some will not be able to stand the heat;
 - Said he has every confidence in Chief Mercer and knows that not everyone is happy and not everyone likes the direction in which the City is headed but in life we are not going to like everything;
 - Said the other day he was in a restaurant in Raleigh enjoying a bowl of soup and the waitress brought over two or three packs of saltine crackers and said he hates salt on his crackers; he said we are not going to like everything but perhaps we will learn that something positive can come out of even of what we consider a bad situation like the old adage “when you are given lemons, make lemonade”;
 - Said who knows one day maybe he will even be able to stomach salty crackers
 - ***Lige Daughtridge:***
 - Said he agrees with Mr. Turner that it is nice to see so many people showing up for City Council meetings;
 - Said several weeks ago he attended a Committee of the Whole meeting where there was conversation about the City being in the position of needing parking now;
 - Said it was stated that the naysayers against the Event Center are the reason there is now a need for parking because the naysayers were against parking, which he said was incorrect because he went back to records from 2014 where people questioned if there was adequate parking;
 - Said he is the member of the Planning Board and has been for many years and when it came up December 12, 2016, he questioned parking among many things and in fact the *Rocky Mount Telegram* mentioned and quoted his comments relative to his concern that handicapped parking being in the rear of the building was an impediment; he read those comments;
 - Said he was promised at that meeting there would be a rear entrance into the Event Center for handicapped people and said to his knowledge there is not;
 - Said Council was aware of his concerns because on December 13 the City Council had those Planning Board meeting minutes when he came to a Council Meeting and stated his concerns with regard to parking;
 - Said apparently that was not a concern when Council voted to pass a \$15M Event Center but now the narrative is that they need to spend \$18M more dollars and that is just not right;
 - Said he wanted to do dispel the narrative that was at the Committee of the Whole meeting a few weeks ago

- **Robert Carr:**
 - Said just about everything he wanted to say has been said already;
 - Said he will briefly go through a lot of the articles written by Lindell Kay who is no longer with the *Telegram* and read the following headlines: Embattled City Official Put on Leave; Developer Touts City's Hotel Plan (he said the City is putting a lot of money into the: Event Center, hotel, parking lot, parking garage and all that stuff and taxpayers are going to be paying for it); Hotel Fiscal Projections Ambiguous; Critics Pan Downtown Hotel Plans (as City pushes the project); Hearing is Set to Discuss Hotel Plans;
 - Said the hotel is sure en vogue these days and he hopes there has been enough discussion about the hotel and Event Center to take care of the next couple of meetings

- **Arnold Gordon Bray:**
 - Thanked the City for supporting the burial of William Hoover Jones;
 - Said there were some comments made thanking the civic leaders, those in the Legislature and elected leaders, for attending and that is a true statement, but it appears that people focused on those just present at the memorial; he said there were also folks out in the heat for the other events and he thanked them as well;
 - Said the paper (*Telegram*) has a bad problem in that it has a tendency to stir and you have to be careful stirring;
 - Thanked the community for support “Hoover” and said it brought a lot of attention to the goodness of the City except internally;
 - Said an investigation was done on the City and how it operates; Nexsen Pruet (an outside group that Council hired) and the City got an A+ and A rating for what it is doing but the paper hammered the City; said an outside source said the City is more balanced than most cities;
 - Said you cannot stop perception and if a person is working and feels a certain way is true that is a legitimate concern and it was borne out;
 - Asked all present to read the report – don’t read the newspaper;
 - Said there is a consensus about the hotel and a lot of concern and said what the Council owes the citizens are their measures of merit, those things that they based their decisions on and asked that they provide them to the public and not give them to the newspaper unless the newspaper is going to quote them directly because the City has to be careful;
 - Said Rocky Mount is a great City, but the challenge is that citizens quit listening to somebody who told somebody who said something to somebody and if we do that, we can be the great city that we are supposed to be

FY 2020 INSTALLMENT FINANCING

The City Council received a resolution authorizing the filing of an application for approval of an installment financing contract authorized by North Carolina General Statute 160A-20 in preparation of the City’s next installment financing. Council was advised that the resolution is required by the Local Government Commission (LCG) and is a finding of necessary fact to support the business reasons for financing and authorizes the City to proceed with filing the application.

Council was advised that the total proposed financing is estimated at approximately \$17,750,000 and consists of the following item:

PROJECT	FUND	ESTIMATD COST	TERMS (MONTHS)
Downtown Development/Structured Garage Project	General	\$17,750,000	240

It was recommended that the Council adopt the Resolution in order to meet the deadline for having the application reviewed by the Local Government Commission (LGC) this fiscal year.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and carried by a vote of 4-3 (Councilmembers Miller, Rogers and Bullock opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2019-27** entitled **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT AUTHORIZED BY NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTE 160A-20** be adopted.

This resolution authorizes the Mayor, City Manager and Director of Finance to act on behalf of the City in filing an application with the North Carolina Local Government Commission for approval of the project and the proposed installment financing contract and other actions not inconsistent with this resolution.

The Mayor and City Councilmembers made the following statements:
Councilmember Miller:

- said she will be voting no and would like to share a comment that she had intended to make during a Council meeting two weeks ago when she was out of town and sent in as a written document but now understands that Council did not have a procedure in place to allow a fellow Councilmember or the Mayor Pro Tem to enter that statement on her behalf;
- She shared the following background and prepared statement:
 - o Background: The Event Center and, before that, the Rocky Mount Train Station Renovation, the Downtown Streetscape Project, the Imperial Centre and the Douglas Block were public investment projects undertaken by the City in order to create a Downtown attractive to private investment, in order words, to incentivize private investment
 - o Statement:
 - The Event Center has been open less than a year. There has not yet been time for the resulting private investment to be fully realized;
 - Construction of the Event Center required taking on significant debt. Council was told at that time that the City should not take on additional debt until that debt was significantly amortized;
 - Entering into this proposed Public-Private Project will require further direct and indirect public investment and will further restrict the City's capacity to borrow should the need arise;
 - No Design Plan has been created to guide development of the Downtown area around the Event Center;
 - No Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued before City staff entered into discussions with the current intended Developer. Therefore, Council does not have

alternate proposals to consider. However, construction costs per parking space appear to be higher than comparable construction;

- At each step in the process, documents have come to Council late in the week, allowing insufficient time for Councilmembers to read and absorb before a vote is expected the following Monday;
- Objections to this practice have been expressed to Management privately and in public meetings, yet, the practice continues;
- For all the reasons stated above, I vote "No" on Concept One and "No" on Concept Two at this time;
- A Downtown Hotel will be a great economic boost - at the right time, IF properly planned and properly executed

Councilmember Knight:

- Said he supports the project;
- Said people talk about the appearance of evil and throw in a little white church that has been there almost 80 years and the history of it is over 100 years;
- Said the church was built for a black mission, the Holy Hope Mission, and became a church;
- Said the appearance of evil, like Reverend Smith said, is an agenda driven to continue to starve economic development on the east side of town and Downtown and support all the development on 64 and I-95;
- Said it has been a long time coming that we rise together for parity and prosperity for all;
- Said people say they want to make Rocky Mount great again... he said we are great, and we are going to get greater and greater and greater;
- Said he wants to say he does support the project and it is not the appearance of evil; it is the appearance of progress and progress for all

Councilmember Rogers:

- Said that he has spoken about this project a couple of times in the past and said he shares the vision of those who want a hotel Downtown and Council has talked about that for a long time;
- Said he still believes that there can be a hotel Downtown but believes the City is going about this the wrong way and that the next step in this process should have been, and that he puts the mirror in front of his face when he says these words, for the City to have developed a plan for how the area around the Event Center should be developed and that should include not only design but affordable

incentives and then a true request for proposals process to seek investors and developers in the Downtown area;

- Said he thinks we are doing this in a backwards way and spending a lot of time and a lot of money analyzing the first offer without any real plan;
- Said this project requires, as has already been mentioned, \$18M of investment on the City's part and he doesn't remember any discussion like that during Council's consideration of the Event Center and said certainly it would be prudent to consider spending that \$18M of borrowed money on other priorities and needs of the City and said he does not think the City is doing that;
- Said, with great respect for those who feel differently, he thinks the City is moving in the wrong direction with this project at this time

Mayor Combs:

- Said he would like to make a comment because it was in the paper and said his concern is that the City obviously made a major financial investment in the Event Center, it has not even been open for a year yet;
- Said if there is a need for parking, he thinks the City should look at other options whether it is a combination of a parking deck and/or surface parking to reduce the costs if this is something that Council wants to move forward with;
- Said he did bring this up and would hope that the hotel developer would look at the possibility of doing more surface parking which would reduce the cost dramatically and that is his concern going forward;
- Said obviously everybody would like to have a hotel and retail and condos built Downtown but questioned if it is being done at the most affordable level to get both the parking, the hotel and the other investments;
- Said he wants people to understand that he certainly supports development but thinks that the City ought to look at other options and there ought to be an Option 3 so the City can reduce its cost if, in fact, it is going the move forward

Councilmember Watkins:

- Said she wants to go on record as being in support of this project;
- Said she thinks the City has properly vetted the project and said the good thing about it is the City has signed the development plan but continues to vet the project as we move forward in this process so that anything new that comes to the attention of staff/Council, the same way it was

addressed during the Event Center process, the City is prepared to address;

- Said she thinks the time is now, the energy is now, and she does not want to wait any longer;
- Said she supports it as it moves forward

Councilmember Bullock:

- Thanked all for being here tonight and saying what they felt they needed to say;
- Said there are a lot of people who are misinformed, and they need to find out all the information that they can;
- Said everybody is not right and everybody is not wrong;
- Said he agrees with what has been said - it is a good project and he would love to see it be successful but is not willing to support the City borrowing another \$18M to add onto what we already have;
- Said he appreciates everyone being honest, being here and saying what they feel

Councilmember Blackwell:

- Said he agrees with his fellow elected officials that Council appreciates the participation and engagement of all to talk about this project;
- Said he has some history he wants to bring to the table and then wants to leave us with some words that were spoken here in this City;
- Said, first of all, when he came on this Council in November of 1999 and was actually seated in December the first question that he asked when he participated in his first Committee of the Whole meeting was, "What are we going to do about Downtown Rocky Mount?";
- Said he was told in 1999 that the powers that be in this City had determined that there would be no convention center Downtown because the convention center was focused on the Winstead Avenue exit;
- Said when the City was recovering from the flood, as we did together in this region, we had a dilemma about how to finance the rebirth of all of those assets that were lost during the flood and we did that together;
- Said we built a phenomenal Imperial Centre that has received awards, spent a lot of money and it was the State's first new market tax credit project and that project was financed because OIC gave the City an introduction to new market tax credits;
- Said we had no business plan; we had no cash flow projection; we had no business development plan, but we built it because we had vision and we have never regretted

the Imperial Centre being Downtown from that moment to this day:

- Said we vetted the Event Center project years later and it is interesting that while the City supported infrastructure development across this entire region, but especially in corridors of commerce, the City Council, regardless of the hue and tone of the skin of these individuals that sit at this table, made investments on the Nash side of town and the Edgecombe side of town;
- Said we were told by the entity that held the trust of hotel tax revenues that our money could be spent anywhere in Rocky Mount except in the convention center Downtown; we were not allowed to invest hotel revenue in the Event Center Downtown;
- Said, but yet, he looks at marketing materials about what makes Rocky Mount great and the Event Center is all in there because it is making Rocky Mount great; it is phenomenal, the energy and the activity taking place in our community; and it is overdue;
- Said now this parking deck is what the developer of the hotel said that the flagship or flag hotelier (Marriott) required in order to make this investment possible;
- Said he has been doing economic development for 30 years and when people bring money into your community and look for opportunities to grow your community most folk open their arms wide and say how can we help you;
- Said we have done that for every industrial customer that has come to this community, whether it is in Nash County or Edgecombe County; this City has participated in joint ventures across county borders and we have seen the benefit come back to all of our residents and all of our communities from Macclesfield to Spring Hope; it did not matter, our investment and our vision brought return in multiples;
- Said a parking deck is not an Event Center - it is a parking deck - you park cars in a parking deck; it is there to support a hotel across the street from the Event Center;
- Said if you go to Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte or Winston-Salem, DC, New York, Los Angeles or Chicago, there are parking decks and there are hotels in close juxtaposition to the convention center;
- Said we don't have a convention center, we have an Event Center and already we see the benefit coming to our region and to our city;
- Said he hasn't heard one complaint about 1,000 jobs being created and thanked Mr. Cunningham for his comments; he said 800 temporary constructions jobs have been created and

long-term jobs in the hotel - hundreds of jobs, entry level, but Council is dedicated to ensuring that people can make living wages there;

- Said the Event Center was all about Downtown redevelopment - questioned if he needs to remind us again - the Event Center was about Downtown Redevelopment and while Council received a caution about ensuring that it not make large public investments, it was also told that the crux of the matter will come that they will know if they were successful if a major hotel wants to locate near the Event Center within 3 to 4 years;
- Said in 3 months [after the Event Center opened] somebody was coming to the table saying they want to put some money down here;
- Said the City has seen retail sales growth increase in Edgecombe County in numbers that have not been seen since he became a Councilmember;
- Said people are working; there is excitement in the real estate market and people have hope that there are jobs;
- Said he wants to read something that somebody said when he came to Rocky Mount, he read: "in a sense have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable rights" of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It is obvious today that American has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice."";
- And added that was not his final comment and continued, "we have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury'";
- Said this is what Dr. King said in 1962 "engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and

desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.”’

- Said now is the time to lift our nation and Rocky Mount from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood - it is time for us to have a hotel in Downtown Rocky Mount and it is time to have a parking deck and it is time to build our City in every sector in every community;
- Said he supports this project

Mayor Combs stated that this public hearing is a requirement of the Local Government Commission (LGC). He explained that the LGC is a commission in Raleigh from which a municipality must obtain permission to borrows over a certain amount of money. He said nothing is being approved tonight other than to move forward and meet this requirement of the LGC and the Council is looking at all the information and the project will go before the LGC at some point, but it could be August, September, October or November. He stated there is another layer between now and this project being approved.

Councilmember Joyner:

- Stated that the greatness of Rocky Mount is not that it is always in agreement; the greatness of Rocky Mount is that we always build together and if we want to build together let us not be so short-term that this separates us but let us be long-term and let this unite us; and so that we do not condemn Rocky Mount;
- Said he is in support of the Downtown project and committed for a long term not a short term

RULES OF ORDER OF CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS/CODE AMENDMENT

The City Manager provided the City Council with an amendment to Chapter 2 of the City Code entitled "Administration" to amend the rules of order of City Council meeting to add a new section entitled Community Update by City Manager.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2019-59** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ENTITLED "ADMINISTRATION"; ARTICLE II. CITY COUNCIL** be adopted.

POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN AMENDMENTS

The City Council received a recommendation for the following amendments to the City's Pay and Classification Plan:

- That the following new positions and assigned ranges be approved for inclusion in the City's Personnel Pay and Classification Plan:

Department/Division	Classification	Range	No. Positions
City Manager's Office	Management Analyst	19	2
Human Resources	Wellness Coordinator	21	1
Finance/Business Services	Billing Technician I	10	1
Development Services/ Inspections	Administrative Secretary	11	1

b. That the following existing position be reclassified from part-time to full-time as indicated below:

Department/Division	Classification	Range	No. Positions
Community & Business Development-Community Development	Compliance Coordinator	19	1

In response to a question by Councilmember Bullock, City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated that each of the jobs above will be evaluated during the compensation and pay study. The Mayor reported that the City is undergoing a pay and classification study and at times it is necessary to undergo such a study to be competitive and retain talent.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and carried by a vote of 6-1 (Councilmember Bullock opposed) that **Resolution No. R-2019-28** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN** be adopted.

AMENDMENT/WATER TOWER LICENSE AGREEMENT

Assistant City Manager Chris Beschler advised the City Council that the City entered into a Water Tower License Agreement dated October 22, 2010 with T-Mobile (formerly SunCom Wireless) to install antennas on the Marigold Street water tower. He provided the City Council with a consent letter from T-Mobile requesting consent of the City to modify the antenna facility in order to install three (3) additional antennas and three (3) radios. He advised that the City Attorney has reviewed and approved the consent letter and the Water Resources Department recommends approval of the modification.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Miller and unanimously carried that the Consent Letter/Agreement be approved, and that the Mayor be authorized to execute the same on behalf of the City. The Consent Letter/Agreement will be placed on file in the City Clerk’s Office with Water Tower License Agreement – Marigold Street (C-1999-31).

AMENDMENT/CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDY

The City Council was advised that Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. was awarded a contract to perform a city-wide classification and compensation study on November 17, 2017. The City Manager told the Council that Phase I of the contract is near completion; however, during meetings with Department Directors and employees a large amount of position class displacements and lack of job description discoveries as well as additional desk audits and site visits were made thus prolonging the completion of Phase I. Council was further advised that correcting this issue is paramount to ensuring proper position placement for the compensation analysis component of the study and Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. estimates the authorized

contract award of \$142,000 will need to be amended to authorize the appropriation of an additional amount not to exceed \$72,500.

Councilmember Rogers stated that the study is too expensive. Councilmember Miller stated that that she does not disagree; however, is voting for approval of the amendment because the study needs to be completed and has already taken too long. She stated she believes shifts and restructuring of positions has increased the cost of the study.

Motion was made by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and carried by a vote of 5-2 (Councilmembers Bullock and Rogers opposed) the contract with Gallagher Benefit Services to conduct the job classification/compensation study be increased in an amount not to exceed \$72,500 for a total contract of \$215,000 and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the contract amendment on behalf of the City. The contract amendment will be filed with the original contract (**C-2017-46**) in the City Clerk's Office.

BIDS/VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN WAYFIND

The City Council received the bid received for vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding. The bid was received and opened on June 7, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-13**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Rite Lite Signs, Incorporated at a total cost of \$215,000 and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order in accordance with the Council's award.

The City Council received an ordinance amending the FY 2019-2020 budget to increase the Powell Bill fund by \$145,000 for additional appropriations to fund the contract.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried that the motion be amended to direct staff to investigate the possibility of placing wayfinding signage around the railroad tracks to assist motorists in navigating around stalled trains Downtown, and that **Ordinance No. O-2019-60** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 FOR WAYFINDING SIGNS** be adopted.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS/ENGINEERING-ARCHITECT SERVICE FOR ELEVATOR REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

The City Council was advised that a request for qualifications solicitation was issued for the elevator refurbishment project on January 4, 2019. Council was further advised that the project included three (3) elevators at the administrative complex and one (1) elevator at the Judicial Center. It was noted that qualifications were due February 8, 2019 and one (1) qualification response was received and reviewed by the Property and Risk Manager and following negotiations both parties agreed upon a 10% rate of the estimated

project value. The Purchasing Department recommends award of the RFQ to The Wooten Company in the amount of \$170,000. The request for qualifications information is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-14**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the request for qualification be awarded to The Wooten Company in the amount of \$170,000, as recommended.

SOLE-SOURCE PURCHASE/SUNDYNE RE-CIRCULATION AND TRANSFER PUMP

The City Council received a proposal for the "sole-source" purchase of a Sundyne re-circulation and transfer pump to replace an existing pump that has been in place for 25 years. The information furnished by the Purchasing Division supporting the recommendation will be placed on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-15**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the "sole-source" purchase of the Sundyne re-circulation and transfer pump (\$43,830) be approved and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the system in accordance with the Council's award.

BIDS/SOLID WASTE TRANSPORT AND DISPOSAL SERVICES

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for solid waste transport and disposal services. Bids were received and opened on April 2, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-16**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Republic Services of North Carolina, LLC at their per ton cost of \$36.84 for an estimated cost of \$2,763,000 based on 75,000 tons (5-year contract with the City reserving the right to extend for one additional 5-year term) and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

Councilmember Blackwell said this is not just a five-year contract but a ten-year contract and while he supports it, he wants it recognized that the contract is for \$27 million over a 10-year period. He said he has looked at the huge disparity of the difference between the quotes and the lowest responsive responsible bidder was significantly less than the other two bidders on this project and thanked City staff for finding a deal. He said the cost of trash disposal should lead us all to be concerned with what we put in the trashcan and what we recycle. He said when the question was asked if any of these were minority contractors the answer was in the negative. He said there should be some kind of encouragement or measurement for a company being awarded such a large contract to be sure they are giving opportunity for employment to Rocky Mount citizens. He questioned how many Rocky Mount truck drivers work for this company and how many minority and women truck drivers are employed and voiced

a desire to see some of the tax dollars benefiting the local community.

Councilmember Knight questioned if there would be a problem in tabling the award of this contract.

The City Manager responded that she thought the award was important at this time and called upon the Public Works Director for comment.

Councilmember Miller questioned if all contractors are not required to meet certain requirements relative to minority and woman businesses and the Manager stated that requirement is 5% and the City has to demonstrate a good faith effort.

Public Works Director Brad Kerr explained that the current contract expired in December and a delay could cost the City \$25,000 monthly. He said a subcontractor works with the company and has for a number of year and the City if very pleased with them. He added he will research this question to obtain more information pursuant to the request.

The City Manager requested that Council allow this contract to go forward and said staff will sit down with the contractor to obtain a response and see what can be done to lift participation beyond the 5% requirement.

Councilmember Blackwell asked that the procedure for every major contract coming into the City move on a solid minority and women business program along with support of local business and said he thinks that speaks to the principles of equitable and sustainable development and shared prosperity.

TEMPORARY STREET CLOSING

Councilmember Joyner advised the Council that he has received a request for a street closing from Garland Jones of Mount Zion for Wednesday.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated she has not seen such a request but thinks it can be handled by polling the City Council.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for regular session, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:59 p.m.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk