

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL
March 17, 2014

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, March 17, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall. Mayor Ronnie Michael presided, and the following Councilmembers were present to-wit: Troy E. Alexander, Bill Aldridge, Benton Dry II, Martha Sue Hall, Dexter Townsend, and Christopher Whitley. Absent, Councilmember Martha E. Hughes.

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

Recognition of former Mayor and former members of City Council:

T. Ed Underwood- City Council from 1996-2013
Judy U. Holcomb-City Council from 1987-1991, and 1993-2013
Jack F. Neel- City Council from 1987-2013
Elbert L. "Whit" Whitley, Jr.-City Council from 1965-1969, and Mayor from 1969-1977 and from 2005-2013.

Former Mayor Whitley and former Councilmembers Holcomb, Neel and Underwood received a gold plated key to the City presented by Mayor Michael.

Bishop Richardson of Saints Delight Church came forward and thanked former Mayor Whitley and former Councilmembers Holcomb, Neel, and Underwood for all of their service to the City.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Hall and unanimously carried, the minutes of the February 26 and February 27 adjourned session minutes and March 3 regular session minutes were approved as submitted.

The Mayor and City Council held a public hearing to consider a map amendment for the water treatment plant property at 2510 US Hwy 52 North (Tax Record 31862) from R-10 Residential, GHBD, and LID to HID. No one spoke for or against.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Hall and unanimously carried, the City Council closed the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the following ordinance:

(Ordinance 14-10. To rezone the Water Treatment Plant Property at 2510 US Hwy 52 N from R-10, GHBD, and LID to HID.)

The Mayor and City Council held a public hearing to consider a map amendment for the water treatment plant property at 1040 Coble Avenue (Tax Record 34194) from R-10 Residential and LID to HID. No one spoke for or against.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend and unanimously carried, the City Council closed the public hearing.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, the City Council approved the following ordinance:

(Ordinance 14-11. To rezone the Waste Water Treatment Plant Property at 1040 Coble Avenue (Tax Record 34194) from R-10 Residential and LID to HID)

Lacy Beasley, Vice President of Business Development with Retail Strategies, came before Council to discuss a retail development opportunity program being offered through ElectriCities. Ms. Charity Barbee, Economic Developer with ElectriCities was unable to be here this evening.

It was noted that ElectriCities had a pilot program with Lexington and Lumberton last year where they subsidized the cost of an in depth analysis of these town's retail opportunities. They want to expand this program to six new communities this year, and Albemarle is one of the six they have invited. The cost of the study is \$48,000, but they will pay \$28,000 with the cities only paying \$20,000 for the first year. They have advised the City's share can be paid over two fiscal years. Council received a copy of the Lexington study and Ms. Beasley gave a PowerPoint presentation and she answered any questions that Council had concerning this program.

Mayor Michael stated that this falls into play with us having a Business Development Task Force and being in the process of hiring an Economic Development Director.

Upon questioning, it was noted that the City would pay \$20,000 and ElectriCities will pay the remainder of \$28,000 the first year. The second and third year will cost the City \$18,000 each year, for a total cost over three years of \$56,000. ElectriCities previously negotiated this price for the 2nd and 3rd year down from the \$24,000 original cost per year.

Councilmember Hall stated that Council will meet again next week and asked that we be given until March 30 to give an answer to ElectriCities.

Mayor Michael stated that Council will make a decision at the next meeting which will be a budget work session on Thursday, March 27 at 6 pm.

Shannon Johnson, Executive Director, Albemarle Downtown Development Corporation, came before City Council to provide an update on the ADDC Downtown Progress Plan.

Council received a copy of the ADDC Progress Plan and Ms. Johnson stated that the plan is organized around four areas on the Main Street Program which are Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring and she gave the goals and objectives of each of these areas. Within each of the four areas, the plan lists tasks, responsibilities, cost/time, and date tasks are to be completed.

In the presentation, she is also requesting the need of committees and people with expertise in any of the four areas to contact the ADDC.

Ms. Johnson answered any questions that Council had.

Mr. Russ Sharples, Chairman, Stanly County Chamber of Commerce, came before City Council as a courtesy visit as the newly installed Chamber of Commerce Chairman. He stated that as the Albemarle Downtown Development, the Chamber is also taking a look at their present goals and mission statement. With Tom Ramseur past president retiring in the fall of 2013, they have added a new President Kathy Almond, former ADDC Executive Director. He stated that as the Chairman of the City's Economic Development Task Force, he will partner with Chamber President Kathy Almond who is a member of the Business Development Task Force for the City.

Mr. John Almond, 405-A Commerce Street came before City Council to request no parking zones on Commerce Street.

Mr. John Almond contacted Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris about a new traffic problem on Commerce Street. It was noted that according to Mr. Almond, when the State law changed requiring vehicle taxes be paid at the same time as vehicle registrations, this created each person taking longer to complete their transaction and there have been a lot of Union County residents frequenting this office in Albemarle because it is less foot traffic for them compared to Union County. Mr. Almond reported that the existing parking lot for this business is no longer sufficient to handle the volume of cars, resulting in people parking on Commerce Street.

Mr. Almond said this has created a problem for surrounding businesses as well as being a safety issue. Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris discussed with Mr. Almond the possibility of prohibiting parking on both sides of the entire length of Commerce Street, or at least on both sides where the curb and gutter is present. The latter will probably result in parking on the shoulder on the sections of Commerce Street without curb and gutter.

Council reviewed photos taken by Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris on Tuesday, March 11. This is not something that has been occurring until recently.

Mr. Harold Crisco came forward and stated that over the last several years the traffic has been worse but the last several months it is a constant traffic issue. You cannot get through the street due to parked cars on both sides of the road.

Assistant Police Chief Danny Bowen came forward and along with Mr. Almond, answered any questions that Council had.

Mayor Michael asked Assistant Police Chief Danny Bowen to look deeper into this issue and get back with Council at a future meeting.

Mayor Michael noted that the monthly administrative reports were in the agenda package.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, the following Ordinance passed second reading and was duly adopted:

(Ordinance 14-06. To amend ordinance concerning firearms and fireworks, Chapter 82, Section 84.

The Mayor and City Council considered a resolution authorizing the application to NCDENR for a low interest loan for construction of force main for landfill leachate collection system.

Ms. Underwood noted that they are still investigating all of the engineering and operational aspects of installing this force main instead of the pump and haul system in place now. She said they would like authorization to begin the loan application process because if they do not, they would have to wait until September for the next round. If determined this is not feasible, they can drop out of the application process. This has the potential for long term savings if this can be implemented.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, the following Resolution was duly adopted:

(Resolution 14-09, To authorize and application in the Landfill division of Public Works to NCDENR for a low interest loan for construction of force main for landfill leachate collection system.)

The Mayor and City Council discussed a request for a lower speed limit on a portion of North First Street. Councilmember Aldridge brought up this issue at the last Council meeting. It was noted that currently the portion of First Street from North Street to Old Charlotte Road (the downtown area) has a speed limit of 20 miles per hour. The balance of First Street north of North Street and south of Old Charlotte Road is the standard City wide speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The City does not currently have an adopted policy regarding setting local speed limits.

Councilmember Aldridge stated that he is unaware of any accidents in this area but was confronted by residents about the speed limit here and wants the City to consider lowering the speed limit from 35 mph to 20 mph due to the traffic. The City Manager stated that that currently the portion of First Street from North Street to Old Charlotte Road (the downtown area) has a speed limit of 20 miles per hour.

Councilmember Hall suggested that the parallel areas to North First and North Second Streets should have the same speed limit.

There was no decision made at this time. Further investigation will take place.

The Mayor and City Council reviewed information concerning the Department of Public Housing FY 2014 Agency Plan Update. Director of Public Housing Cedric Baldwin reviewed those items in the agency plan with City Council and the public hearing will be held April 17, 2014 at the Dept. of Public Housing office at 300 South Bell Avenue.

Mr. Baldwin stated that the purpose of this item is to advise Council of the proposed changes that will be presented to the Resident's Advisory Board and at public hearings and input sessions held at Elizabeth Heights and Amhurst Gardens with no action required of City council at this time but will report back to Council on May 5, 2014 with the results of the public hearing and request a board resolution to approve the Public Housing FY 2014 Agency Plan.

The Mayor and City Council received information regarding the Wilson property (Tax Record 26390) where several abandoned tractor trailers and other unsightly items are located. Councilmember Dry brought up this issue at the March 3 Council meeting.

It was noted that the owner of this property as shown on Stanly County GIS is Maude T. Wilson Revocable Trust. There are three heirs to the property including Tom Wilson, who is an attorney in Raleigh. When the US 52 Bypass was built by NCDOT, the building that was on the property was removed. The property is listed at 2.67 acres and is in the Light Industrial District.

During a site visit to the property, Planning and Community Development Director Keith Wolf observed six trailers, one boat and one small trailer that had been placed on a wooden frame.

Mr. Wolf stated that the planning staff found City regulations that may address this situation. It is possible that some other City regulations could apply, but have not been found. Council reviewed the documents supplied by the Planning Department.

It was the consensus of Council to let Councilmember Dry contact the property owner first and then Mr. Dry can contact the City Manager and/or Mr. Wolf with his results.

The Mayor and City Council discussed rescheduling a Councilmember Orientation Session and Budget Work Session.

It was the consensus of City Council to meet on Wednesday, March 26 at 12:30 at City Hall to complete their orientation session and to meet on Thursday, March 27 at 6pm at City Hall for a budget work session.

The Mayor and City Council were reminded of the Roger F. Snyder Greenway Phase III ribbon cutting which will take place on Monday, March 31 at 6:00 p.m. at the greenway entrance on Salisbury Avenue.

Councilmember Hall thanked the Stanly News and Press for the public service announcement of Operation Medicine Drop and she also thanked NC Safe Kids who sponsor this program. The main benefit of this program is to get old expired medication disposed of properly to prevent misuse per Assistant Police Chief Danny Bowen. Ms. Hall also thanked the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Councilmember Hall asked that Assistant City Manager Michael Ferris contact the Council of Governments to get the link to place on our website for interest on Phase III for the CONNECT our Future.

Councilmember Hall stated that Centralina COG each year has Region of Excellence Awards to cities that have projects with:

- Innovation and creativity
- Commitment to goals
- Contributions to regionalism
- Program successes and sustainable benefits
- Engagement of community members
- Interaction with public/private partners.

She asked for staff to consider anything that we can showcase. The deadline for this initiative is not until April 25.

Councilmember Hall mentioned that there are two houses on US Hwy 52 North, north of the old Morgan Motors building that Planning and Community Development needs to take a look at that are in extremely bad condition.

Councilmember Hall stated that the RPO TAC meeting will be this coming Thursday evening and the May meeting will be in Albemarle.

Mayor Michael stated that Councilmember Aldridge was appointed as the alternate for the RPO TAC along with Councilmember Whitley as the representative. Mr. Aldridge has a conflict and will not be able to continue as alternate. Mayor Michael asked that Council consider an alternate by our next Council meeting. The RPO meets six times each year with two meetings being in Stanly County, two meetings in Polkton, and two meetings in Union County.

Mayor Michael asked that the City Attorney David Beaver come forward and give a report to Council. Mr. Beaver stated that he is working on a public hearing for the April 7 Council meeting to allow greater density in the R-8A zoning district for redevelopment and /or revitalization projects.

Upon questioning concerning houses for condemnation, Planning and Community Director Keith Wolf came forward. Mr. Wolf stated that a title search has been completed on the following six properties by the City Attorney as listed below:

ADDRESS	OWNER
1. 904 Lowder Street (Taxrec 25255) burnt house	Daniel Vang
2. 231 Concord Road (Taxrec 5250) burnt house	Richard Huneycutt
3. 421 Wall Street (Taxrec 8732) structural damage	Roosevelt Garmon, Jr.
4. 507 Salisbury Ave (Taxrec 7211) structural damage	Wilbert Deese
5. 112 Heath Street (Taxrec 27905) burnt house	George W. Purkey, Sr.
6. 804 Austin Street (Taxrec 11644) structural damage	Oscar B. Hinson

Also, James Luster with COG is presently working on the following three properties for condemnation:

231 Concord Road – owner may demolish himself
421 Wall Street
507 Salisbury Avenue

Fire Chief Shawn Oke came before Council and stated that the issue on Commerce Street could possibly be a fire code issue. He stated that he will get with Fire Marshal Brian Taylor and have him take a look at this. Mayor Michael asked that Chief Oke coordinate this with the City Manager.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Hall and unanimously carried, the Mayor and City Council adjourned to a Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143.318.11 a) 4, 6 to discuss economic development and personnel issues.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Alexander and unanimously carried, the Mayor and City Council reconvened to open session. Mayor Michael announced that a closed session was held pursuant to NCGS 143.318.11(a) a) 4, 6 to discuss economic development and personnel issues and there is nothing to report at this time.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Hall and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned until Thursday, March 27, 2014 for a budget work session at City Hall at 6 pm.