

**REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL**

March 15, 2021

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, March 15, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Mayor Ronnie Michael presided, and the following members were present, to-wit: Mayor Pro Tempore Martha Sue Hall and Councilmembers Bill Aldridge, Martha E. Hughes, Chris Whitley, Benton Dry, and Dexter Townsend. Absent: Councilmember Shirley D. Lowder.

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Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

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**Special Presentations:**

NC Main Street Champion Award

The Mayor announced that that at the annual NC Main Street Conference which occurred last week, Mr. Richard Lambert and Ms. Joyce Lambert were awarded the annual NC Main Street Champion award for their work with the ADDC and its Design Committee for the last 10 years. The Mayor requested that a short video clip about the Lamberts be shown. After the video the Mayor asked if the Lamberts would like to come forward and make some remarks. On behalf of Council and the City he thanked them for keeping downtown Albemarle beautiful.

Ms. Lambert spoke on behalf of herself and her husband. She stated that Albemarle has a beautiful downtown but there still is a lot to do with improving the streetscape. Also being members of the Stanly County Historical Society, they are excited to see what's being done with the Snuggs and Mark houses.

Council provided their thanks and congratulations to the couple. Mayor Pro Tem Hall thanked them for all of the local organizations of which they are a part and the work they do. Councilmember Townsend congratulated them. Councilmember Aldridge, Councilmember Hughes, and Councilmember Dry thanked them. Councilmember Whitley stated that if more residents were half as busy as the Lamberts are, a lot would get done in the City.

The Lamberts left the meeting.

Roy Jones, CEO – ElectriCities of NC to present the City of Albemarle with the 2020 Public Power Awards of Excellence

Mr. Roy Jones, CEO of ElectriCities of NC, was present to provide remarks and present plaques to the City of Albemarle Public Utilities Electric Division.

In Mr. Jones's remarks he summarized the City of Albemarle's Public Utilities Department and ElectriCities's accomplishments in providing consistent, quality power as follows:

- Re: the Value of Public Power award – This award is a testament to local ownership and community control of power here in the City. He pointed out that the City has done a great job of preparing residents for oncoming weather events and potential power issues via social media posts, the billboard, and talking to customers. He also commended Public Utilities for hosting the ElectriCities Day of Caring last fall in remote ways.
- Re: the Workforce Development award – He was pleased to see that the partnership with Stanly Community College to develop a lineman career development program was beginning to show results. He also noted that some of the linemen are participating in the state's journeyman lineman program. He advised Public Utilities linesmen that their focus on their career paths will keep them here and will pay off in times of emergency with more skilled, educated and seasoned professionals being able to assist.
- Re: the Grid Modernization award – This award goes to municipalities that show how they improve power response. The City this year installed a SCADA system which allows Electric Division staff to check lines and power connections remotely for troubleshooting.
- Re: the Wholesale Power Cost award – He noted that ElectriCities has one of the lowest cost, best operated plants in the US with the nuclear facility in Catawba, which is carbon-free. The City this past year replaced streetlights with LED lights to make street illumination brighter which also use less energy. Another example of the City's work in this area is replacing copper electrical wires with aluminum ones, which are heartier and less liable to break/wear down.
- Re: the American Public Power Association "Diamond" RP3 designation – He congratulated the Public Utilities Department Electric Division by earning this national award. This designation is good for the community and for businesses wishing to locate here knowing that there is reliable power on which they can rely.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Jones and ElectriCities for all they do to support the City of Albemarle as an ElectriCities member community. He invited Public Utilities Director Judy Redwine and any of the Electric Division staff present tonight to come up and accept the awards from Mr. Jones.

Ms. Redwine came up with her group and introduced the new Assistant Public Utilities Director Dan Worl. She stated that she was proud to be here with her staff accepting these awards. She then introduced the Electric Division staff present as follows:

- Dennis Curlee
- Jimmy Huneycutt
- Kenny Caudill
- Bryan Chandler
- Brian Bowers
- Dale Dennis
- Parsons Huntley

The Mayor thanked the Electric Division for helping keep the power on and keeping the community safe.

Mr. Jones, on behalf of ElectriCities of North Carolina presented Ms. Redwine with the following Public Power Award of Excellence in the areas of: Grid Modernization, Value of Public Power, Wholesale Power Cost, Workforce Development. He also presented the "Diamond" RP3 designation from the American Public Power Association to the Public Utilities Department for achieving the highest national award.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall announced that ElectriCities has agreed to be a partial sponsor for the April 9<sup>th</sup> Food Truck Friday event and thanked them for that. Mr. Jones replied that ElectriCities and the City should partner together more often.

Mr. Jones left the meeting.

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The Mayor noted that the March 1<sup>st</sup> closed minutes had one word which needed to be stricken and that he had provided the correction to the Clerk. Mayor Pro Tem Hall requested that the change be discussed in closed session tonight and not included in the motion with the March 1<sup>st</sup> regular minutes.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, the minutes of the March 1, 2021 regular session as submitted were approved.

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#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The Mayor announced that since the Project Rider incentive package public hearing was scheduled for 7 p.m. today per the public notice, this item will be moved to the end of the public hearings portion of the meeting.

#### Ordinance 21-10 – Zoning Map Amendment 21-02 to Rezone a Vacant Lot on Sides, Colston, and Rush Streets from R-8 to R-6

A public hearing was conducted to consider a request for a Map Amendment to rezone Tax Parcel 13852 from R-8/Neighborhood Residential to R-6/Urban Residential District.

Senior Planner Ellie Sheild presented the ordinance and summary of the zoning change to Council. Parcel owner Better Path Homes is proposing the changing of zoning from R-8 to R-6 to allow for the lot to be split into two lots for the proposed use of constructing two single-family dwellings. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Planning and Zoning Board held a public hearing for ZMA21-02 and unanimously recommended City Council approve ZMA21-02 with the adopted consistency statement.

Ms. Sheild asked if Council had any questions based on the rezoning request presentation. Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked about the different positions of the proposed two new houses in relation to the street per the maps provided in the rezoning packet. Ms. Sheild provided affirmation of the proposed houses' position and provided a brief explanation based on the R-8 to R-6 rezoning requirements.

Councilmember Townsend asked if there was public input at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting earlier in the month. Ms. Sheild replied that there was public input and that input was incorporated into the rezoning packet Council received.

The Mayor called Mr. Elijah English, petitioner for the zoning change and owner of Better Path Homes, to come forward and provide remarks. Mr. English stated that he takes pride in providing affordable homes such as the ones being proposed in this rezoning request. When he was made aware of the new R-6 zoning option, he thought that the lot being considered tonight would be a fit to place 2 new houses there.

The Mayor called for the public hearing to be opened and asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic. Mr. Ben Liles of 1067 Gibson Street came up to speak in front of Council. Mr. Liles was concerned that there would be homes with a back lots close to his property line, which would not be enough room. Ms. Sheild addressed Mr. Liles's concern by stating that the lot line as it currently stands in the R-8 designation as compared to the lot line with the new proposed R-6 designation is only a small difference.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the following request for Zoning Map Amendment 21-02 rezoning Tax Parcel 13852 from R-8/Neighborhood Residential to R-6/Urban Residential District and Ordinance 21-10 associated with this zoning map amendment were approved with the following Statement of Zoning Consistency with Adopted Land Use Plan:

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend tax record 13852 from R-8/Neighborhood Residential District to R-6 /Urban Residential district to be consistent with the adopted 2028 Land Use Plan. Council finds the urban residential district zoning on this parcel to reasonable and in the public interest.

[Ordinance 21-10 – Zoning Map Amendment 21-02 to Rezone a Vacant Lot on Sides, Colston, and Rush Streets from R-8 to R-6]

Ordinance 21-11 – Zoning Amendment 21-03 to Rezone Several Parcels on Bogan Avenue, East Main Street, and Eastover Avenue from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential and to Rezone a Parcel on Bell Avenue and Amhurst Street from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential

A public hearing was conducted to consider a request for a Zoning Map Amendment of multiple vacant parcels located on E Main St (Tax Record 15429) and Bogan Ave/Eastover Ave (Tax Record 15428) from GHBD/General Highway Business District to R-6/Urban Residential District. The public hearing also included a request for Zoning Map Amendment of a split-zoned vacant parcel on Bell

Ave/Amhurst St (Tax Record 11748) from GHBD/General Highway Business District and R]8/Neighborhood Residential District to R-6/Urban Residential District.

Senior Planner Ellie Sheild presented the ordinance and summary of the zoning changes for all of the affected parcels to Council. The properties are adjacent to existing housing stock and new homes under construction. The petitioner's proposal is to add to the new residential development with a combination of single family and townhome products as shown in preliminary concept drawings as provided in the rezoning packet. On March 4th, 2021 Planning and Zoning Board held a public hearing for ZMA21-03 and unanimously recommended City Council approve ZMA21-03 with the adopted consistency statement.

The Mayor called Mr. David Tibbals, one of the petitioners for the zoning change and co-founder of Olde South Land Partners, LLC, to come forward and provide remarks. Mr. Tibbals stated that his company's focus is single family homes and townhomes in the region. He noted that his company has a relationship with True Homes. They are excited about the addition of the R-6 zoning designation to provide a variety of housing types in Albemarle. He thanked Planning and Development Services staff with their help with this request.

The Mayor asked Mr. Tibbals to confirm that his company is planning to extend Eastover Avenue to Bell Avenue. Mr. Tibbals affirmed the Mayor's statement. The Mayor then asked if the company was planning to build the extension to City standards. Mr. Tibbals replied that is to be determined. There are two options. If the company decides to build single family homes they would build a public right-of-way but maintain as a private road, or if they choose to build townhomes, it would be privately maintained. Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson added that with the R-6 zoning there is a requirement to mark it as a public street, but the process has not gone far enough yet for that to be considered.

The Mayor called for the public hearing to be opened and asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic. Ms. Deborah Peoples, representing Sanctuary Deliverance Church on 201 South Bell Street, came up to speak in front of Council. She asked whether the developer is planning on building single family homes or townhomes. Mr. Tibbals responded by stating that the current plan is to build townhomes. Ms. Peoples replied the church is interested in this proposed development because of how it might affect traffic. Mr. Tibbals replied that a traffic study might have to be done. Mr. Robinson added that only the rezoning is being considered now, but that this issue will be reviewed at a future time.

Ms. Peoples then asked if there were plans to widen the road on Bell Avenue near Amhurst Street. Mr. Tibbals replied that it would be developed to City standard. Mr. Robinson stated that this would be something that City Council would have to consider and that it would have to be built to minimum width. Councilmember Townsend requested that Mr. Robinson explain what minimum width was. Mr. Robinson replied that it would be 26' from curb to curb. Ms. Peoples replied that the road currently is already too narrow. Mr. Robinson replied that his team would look at this issue during the planning phase for the build.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Hall, unanimously carried, the following request for Zoning Amendment 21-03 to Rezone Several Parcels on Bogan Avenue, East Main Street, and Eastover Avenue from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential and to Rezone a Parcel on Bell Avenue and Amhurst Street from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential and Ordinance 21-11 associated with this zoning map amendment were approved with the following Statement of Zoning Consistency with Adopted Land Use Plan:

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend tax records 15429 and 15428 from GHBD/General Highway Business District to R-6/Urban Residential District, as well as tax record 11748 from GHBD/General Highway Business District and R-8/Neighborhood Residential District to R-6/Urban Residential District, to be consistent with the adopted 2028 Land Use Plan. Council finds the urban residential district zoning on this parcel to reasonable and in the public interest.

[Ordinance 21-11 – Zoning Amendment 21-03 to Rezone Several Parcels on Bogan Avenue, East Main Street, and Eastover Avenue from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential and to Rezone a Parcel on Bell Avenue and Amhurst Street from General Highway Business District to R6 Residential.]

Resolution 21-04 - Consider a Performance Incentive Agreement for Project Rider

Council previously has been debriefed on specifics of Project Rider, the alias for Auria, and the incentive package. Economic Development Director Keith Tunnell came in front of Council to provide a brief summary of the incentive package covered in Resolution 21-04. Auria proposes to add approximately 18 new full-time jobs and invest over \$1.6 million in new building and equipment. This incentive is estimated to be \$28,239, with estimated City revenues to be \$18,826 over a five year period. Staff is requesting that Council adopt Resolution 21-04 to approve the incentive package.

The Mayor called for the public hearing to be opened and asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic. No one came forward.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Whitley, unanimously carried, Council passed Resolution 21-04 approving the incentive package for Project Rider/Auria.

[Resolution 21-04 - Performance Incentive Agreement for Project Rider]

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## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### Consider Adoption of Wayfinding Plan

Assistant City Manager Nyki Hardy came in front of Council to provide background on this project. In 2016 Council adopted the Streetscape Master Plan. Included in the plan was a recommendation to install a wayfinding system in Albemarle. In August 2019, Council received a presentation from consultant Arnett Muldrow on wayfinding. At that time, Council expressed a commitment to implementing wayfinding in Albemarle. In January 2020, Council approved contracting with Arnett Muldrow to develop a wayfinding plan. Since that time, the Downtown Vitality Project Team has been working with Arnett Muldrow to develop the plan, which included a design survey that was administered to City Council and the ADDC. Funding was also appropriated in the current budget and a project budget has been established in anticipation for a multiyear, phased implementation.

After several weeks of vetting, Arnett Muldrow is now ready to present to Council the draft wayfinding plan for adoption. Once Council adopts the plan, staff will begin implementation, which will start with the downtown. Staff has received quotes from sign vendors and requested additional funds for wayfinding in the FY2021-2022 budget, to add to the existing project budget.

Mr. Tripp Muldrow and Mr. Shawn Terpack from Arnett Muldrow came in front of Council to present their wayfinding design plan. They began by stating that the plan would be a multi-year, phased plan. The focus of this plan is to accomplish the following goals: curate the visitor experience; increase local awareness; create and reinforce a sense of place; and clean up years of sign clutter.

To promote these goals the plan would correct sign attrition/clutter and gateway redundancy. The firm believes that Albemarle is a victim of “bypass” syndrome, where people go by Albemarle to other destinations in the area. The plan would allow for sign aggregation and remove “clutter” signs to address local destinations. To reduce gateway redundancy, the plan would map either more efficient or more scenic routes through the City.

The team also summarized the trailblazer and park signage designs and finished their presentation by going over the phases and estimated cost of the system design process. They then took questions from Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked a series of questions. What would be the budget needs for the project? Ms. Hardy responded by stating that for this fiscal year it would be \$60,000 which is associated with the budget amendments in the consent agenda, and for FY21-22 \$150,000 would be requested to create and install downtown signage. Are there plans for creating and installing signage at Rock Creek Park? Ms. Hardy replied that Parks and Recreation Department Director Lisa Kiser is planning to add this cost to the budget for this coming fiscal year. What would the parks signs cost? Ms. Hardy replied that it varies depending on what the City decides.

The Mayor asked if the signs would be made of wood. The Arnett Muldrow team answered that specifications would be developed for metal fabrication of signs, but for the parks signs they are not sure if metal would be the best way to go materials-wise.

Councilmember Aldridge asked if Arnett Muldrow was just designing the signs. The team replied that they only creating the wayfinding plan/design and that a separate company would fabricate the signs for the City.

Councilmember Whitley asked if there was going to be consistency among signs created. The Arnett Muldrow team stated that the mapping system helps drive consistency, and that the Downtown Vitality Project Team has access to the system.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked if there was a way to incorporate the Pfeiffer University logo and colors on signs. The Arnett Muldrow team replied that in general the plan allows for the phasing of signs to accommodate growth and change, such as when a new destination is added similar to when the downtown campus opened. Per the specific question posed, the team replied that the City should want consistency in signs in terms of the color base, and so would not allow them to incorporate other colors. In terms of the logo, that is possible to do, but for the design created for the City of Albemarle, the signs would become too busy by adding logos, which would make them harder to read.

Councilmember Dry asked if the sign system would be consistent in terms of height. The Arnett Muldrow team responded that signs will not be exactly the same height from each other due to a few factors, such as federal regulations requiring that signs be larger when they are farther away and smaller when they are closer in relation to a person's viewing field, and to the readability of signs from a moving vehicle based on the posted speed limit.

The Mayor asked if the plan would use utility poles as a way to place signage. The Arnett Muldrow team responded that utility poles would not be used, but traffic light poles were planned as a method for placing signage in the downtown area.

Councilmember Dry asked the Arnett Muldrow team if they had created wayfinding plans for other local communities in North Carolina, since they are a South Carolina based firm. They have developed plans for Rutherfordton and Robbinsville. Ms. Hardy added that the Team has been in contact with Harrisburg, which recently implemented their wayfinding plan, to get information about challenges and other project-related experiences which they could share with the City. Also, there was a vetting process in the initial awarding of the wayfinding design contract, and although Arnett Muldrow is based in South Carolina, they did work for the City of Albemarle already and Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson has worked with them before, so they felt that the firm would be a good choice.

Councilmember Whitley asked if there would be sign consistency for the Albemarle Business Center. The Mayor replied that yes there would be consistency at that location.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hughes, seconded by Councilmember Hall, unanimously carried, Council adopted the wayfinding plan as submitted.

The Mayor asked if the City's utility poles would be painted green the same as the wayfinding signage. City Manager Michael J. Ferris replied the repainting of the downtown decorative poles was approved in the current budget and plans are in place to repaint the poles the same color green as they have been for years.



Council thanked Mr. Muldrow and Mr. Terpack for their presentation.

Update – Donation Box Nuisance Case on East Main Street

Mayor Pro Tem Hall requested this item be placed on the agenda. This item was initially discussed at the February 15, 2021 meeting. The City Manager previously reported to the Mayor and Council that outreach efforts were made to both the property owner and the box owner. A deadline for compliance on March 11, 2021 was provided. As of March 11<sup>th</sup>, the debris around the outside of the box was removed, which addresses the appearance issue. The box itself is not permitted in this location and Planning and Development Services is working on ensuring the box is removed. A final notice regarding the removal of the box was scheduled to be issued prior to the Council meeting. If the box is not voluntarily removed, the City intends to remove the box by the end of this week.

Departmental Monthly Reports

The Mayor and Council received monthly departmental reports for February 2021 prior to the meeting. The Mayor asked if any Council members had any questions or comments.

Councilmember Hughes asked Economic Development Director Keith Tunnell if there was an update on the interviews for the national downtown magazine article. Mr. Tunnell reported that the interview did not happen in February, but was scheduled instead for this week or next week.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall also had a question based on the Economic Development report. Per the ABC permitting process, it was discussed late last year that it would take around 30 days to secure the permits, and inquired about the status. Mr. Tunnell stated that Chambers Engineering is working on this. The 401 permit is being held up at the state level and he is trying to find out what the problem is. The Mayor provided more information stating that he just received an email earlier on today that the 401 permit payment just went through.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Mayor asked if Council wanted to move any items on the consent agenda.

Ordinance 21-14 – To Establish a Project Budget for Lobby Renovations

This Ordinance establishes a project budget for the security and safety improvements in the City Hall collections area previously approved. This project may overlap fiscal years and therefore a project budget is being created.

[Ordinance 21-14 – To Establish a Project Budget for Lobby Renovations]

### Consider Approval of Stormwater Contract with WK Dickson

The contract has been reviewed by Public Works, City Administration, and the City Attorney. It meets the scope of work requested in the storm water engineering RFQ.

### Ordinance 21-12 – To Appropriate Fund Balance for a Portion of the Stormwater Study

Ordinance 21-12 amends the General Fund operating budget to appropriate the Fund Balance to the General Fund to fund a portion of the stormwater plan development.

[Ordinance 21-12 – To Appropriate Fund Balance for a Portion of the Stormwater Study]

### Ordinance 21-13 – To Establish a Budget for Stormwater Fund

Ordinance 21-13 appropriates the budget for the Storm Water Fund.

This appropriation funds all of Phase 1 and Phase 2 (tasks 6.0-6.5) of the WK Dickson contract. Phase 2 (tasks 7.0-7.6) and all of Phase 3 will be funded from storm water revenue once program and fee is in place.

[Ordinance 21-13 – To Establish a Budget for the Stormwater Fund]

### Interlocal Agreement to Study Increase Water Sales

The proposed interlocal agreement between Concord, Kannapolis, and Albemarle to study the potential of selling up to 10 mgd (million gallons per day) of water to Concord and Kannapolis. The original water sales agreement contains a provision for cost sharing should an increase to up to 10 mgd be desired, which would require an expansion to the Jack F. Neel Water Treatment Plant. Concord and Kannapolis are desiring to begin the evaluation process.

The agreement under consideration contains a provision where Concord and Kannapolis reimburse the City for the cost of the study contract with LKC. The total cost of the study is \$55,000, with Concord and Kannapolis each paying 25% of the cost and the City paying the remaining 50%. The interlocal agreement provides a "not to exceed" figure of \$60,000 should there be any unforeseen additional needs. In discussing the study with LKC, we feel this is an appropriate cost sharing arrangement as the City has its own water capacity needs to be included in the study as well as those of our other wholesale customer.

### Consider Resolution 21-03 for Legal Assistance

City Council has recently discussed the engagement of outside legal services to assist the City Attorney primarily in the areas of real estate, nuisance abatement and code enforcement. This resolution authorizes Parker Poe and First Street Legal to assist the City Attorney in the completion of legal affairs for the City. Connie Josey, with First Street Legal, will focus on real estate matters. Parker Poe, being a larger firm with the ability to provide comprehensive municipal legal services, will focus on nuisance abatement and code enforcement issues. However, Parker Poe could be used for other areas if needed. The primary contact with Parker Poe will be Mac McCarley.

[Resolution 21-03 – Legal Assistance]

Consider Road Closure for West Albemarle Baptist Church Color Run

West Albemarle Baptist Church will be holding a Color Run to raise money for AWANA Clubs in South America. The date of the event is Wednesday, May 5, 2021 from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm. Roads requesting to be closed: Mill St from Church St. to Concord Rd; Church St. from Mill St. to Concord Rd.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council approved the following:

- Ordinance 21-14 to establish a project budget for lobby renovations;
- The stormwater contract with WK Dickson;
- Ordinance 21-12 to appropriate fund balance to the General Fund to fund a portion of the stormwater plan development;
- Ordinance 21-13 to appropriates the budget for the Storm Water Fund;
- The interlocal agreement for water needs study between Concord, Kannapolis, and Albemarle;
- Resolution 21-03 for outside legal services to assist the City Attorney primarily in the areas of real estate, nuisance abatement and code enforcement; and
- Road closures for the May 5<sup>th</sup> Color Run sponsored by West Albemarle Baptist Church.

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**NEW BUSINESS**

Consider 2021 Summer Meeting Schedule

Council discussed at the previous meeting about moving to a summer meeting schedule for the months of June, July, and August as they have done in recent years. When this has occurred, City Council typically has also adjusted the start time for the meetings, as the meetings are typically lengthier since there is a longer time in between meetings. Therefore, there will be more items on each agenda.

The Mayor added that going from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in May which is the last scheduled Council meeting before the summer period, if Council were to hold meetings 4 weeks apart for the following 3 months, then the meeting dates would likely be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in June, July, and August. Council can always adjust the start time. Councilmember Townsend replied that when Council considered the time change for regular meetings in late 2020, they had discussed remaining consistent with the start time regardless of the time of year.

The Mayor suggested that Council take this up again at the next regular Council meeting. Council agreed to table the item to the April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Consider Date for 2021 Christmas Parade and Christmas Open House

Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came in front of Council to discuss potential dates for the Christmas Parade and Open House. In an effort to start planning for the annual Christmas Parade and Christmas Open House, the Special Events Committee is requesting City Council consider two dates for this event. The first and preferred date is Saturday, November 27, 2021. This is Small Business Saturday and has no conflicts with any other parades in Stanly County. The second date is Saturday, December 4, 2021. Locust will hold their parade on this date at 1:00 pm.

Albemarle's parade would begin at 3:00 pm. Once the parade has concluded the Christmas Open House would follow from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

Councilmember Aldridge commented that November 27<sup>th</sup> would be a good date for the events due to the fact that it highlights Small Business Saturday.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hall, unanimously carried, Council approved the 2021 Christmas Parade and Christmas Open House to be held starting at 3:00 pm on Saturday November 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked Ms. Kiser to remain at the podium to provide an update on last Friday's Food Truck Friday and other upcoming events. She gave Ms. Kiser and the Parks and Recreation team who have worked on this event "attaboys" for hosting a great event that night. The Mayor thanked staff for staying there until the end given that it was a chilly night.

Ms. Kiser reported for the March 5<sup>th</sup> Food Truck Friday, 200 people attended the event, with 25 staying for the movie. She handed out a flyer for the April 9<sup>th</sup> Food Truck Friday to Council and noted that there will be 8-10 food trucks and a live band Too Much Sylvania for that date co-sponsored by Electricities and Councilmember Dry. Mayor Pro Tem Hall noted that developing this event was a team effort and applauded Ms. Kiser for fielding sponsorships.

For the May 8<sup>th</sup> Tiffany's at the Boardwalk Cruise-In, the live band Right Turn Clyde will be located on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street facing West Main Street. There will be food trucks, vendors and kids' activities set up much like a street festival.

Councilmember Dry asked about the publicity for these events. Ms. Kiser replied that there have been social media posts that have and will continue to be posted and a news release for local and regional news outlets to draw from a larger audience.

Councilmember Hughes asked if there were plans to apply for an alcohol permit for any of these events. Ms. Kiser replied that a permit is being completed for the May 8<sup>th</sup> event, and she is looking to apply for permits for alcohol sales for future events.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall announced that the band Too Much Sylvania, which is playing at the April 9<sup>th</sup> Food Truck Friday event, played their first gig at Pfeiffer University 30 years ago. She is hoping

that the City can partner up with Pfeiffer to co-host a 30-year anniversary concert featuring Too Much Sylvia at Pfeiffer this year.

#### Introduction of New Assistant Public Utilities Director

Public Utilities Director Judy Redwine introduced Dan Worl as the new Assistant Public Utilities Director. Mr. Worl previously was an Assistant Utilities Director from City of Greenfield, Indiana. He has 12 years of utility experience, in areas such as water, wastewater, storm water, gas, electric, customer service, and has an associate degree in Engineering.

Mr. Worl summarized his background. For 15 years he worked on building and managing factories. As part of a career pivot, he attained a degree in sustainable energy and went to work for the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (which is part of Electricities). He spent 10 years there managing a statewide energy efficiency program, as well as their solar energy program. He then worked for Greenfield managing their water, wastewater, and electric programs. It was an important factor for him to look for a role that tied in public power, and Albemarle was a fit for him. As a resident of his Indiana hometown, Mr. Worl became Council President and Wastewater District President. In these roles he oversaw multi-million dollar wastewater and water plant expansions. Since he has come on board here over the last few weeks he has found a tremendous amount of good people work here, with whom he is excited to work.

Council thanked him for his introductory remarks and welcomed him to the City of Albemarle.

#### Introduction of Interim Finance Director Sarah Richards

Ms. Sarah Richards was recently hired to serve as Interim Finance Director while the City searches for a new Finance Director. She stepped forward to provide her introduction.

She retired from the City of Charlotte in December 2019 after over 32 years there. She was financially responsible for 7 departments including CMA, Fire, 311 operations, and Engineering among them. In order to be in the City of Charlotte's Finance office, a graduate degree was required so she received her master's degree in Finance from Pfeiffer University via their Charlotte campus. She also has her budget certificate from UNC's School of Government.

Nine months after retiring, she found out that there was need for an interim Finance Director position in Yadkinville near her hometown of Yanceyville, where she completed a 5-month tenure. She found out through that retiring Finance Director that Albemarle was seeking an interim Finance Director upon the retirement of Colleen Conroy.

She appreciates the opportunity that the City Manager and the City are providing her to serve here. She noted that the City has a wonderful team with good energy, and is looking forward to helping out as she can in the next 4 months.

The Mayor and Council thanked her for agreeing to serve during the onset of budget season and welcomed her to the City.

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## COMMENTS

### Councilmember Hughes:

- She congratulated Public Utilities for their ElectriCities awards. She is proud of what they have accomplished and that speaks a lot to the nature of the City employees.

### Councilmember Aldridge:

- Re: trash pick up efforts – he noticed one day recently on Highway 52 near Trinity Place 8-10 people in orange vests picking up trash along the side of the road. They need a thank you for trash pick up that day. However, he still sees trash flying out of the backs of trucks even though they should be placing tarps over their loads.

### Councilmember Townsend:

- He thanked everyone for their thoughts, prayers, calls, and texts over the last few weeks; he and his wife are doing much better now.
- Re: Keep Stanly Beautiful/City campaign against litter – he saw 3 organizations picking up trash around the City recently. He hopes now the trend is catching on to pick up trash.

### Councilmember Whitley:

- Re: littering issue and trash pick up – bringing attention to the trash problem causes people to be more aware to pick it up; he has seen more posts on Facebook in the past week by DOT lately about trash pick up. If folks share these posts more people will pick trash up.
- Re: the rezoning hearings tonight – he hopes for infill housing on vacant lots – this can only do good for the City of Albemarle.
- Re: COVID vaccinations – As more vaccinations occur, more people will be able to get out and enjoy the City and all it has to offer. He encouraged everyone who is eligible to get their shot, so hopefully by fall folks can get out and go to the City events.

### Mayor Pro Tem Hall:

- She gave a shout out to Stanly County Health Department for doing a fabulous job with COVID testing and administering the COVID vaccine. She noted that with an initiative such as the COVID work the Health Department has done, this is a time to realize the benefit of having public employees available to perform a public good. She encouraged folks to go get the shot, and to thank the Health Department folks who are out in all kinds of weather to provide easy access to COVID testing and vaccination by little acts of kindness (i.e., bringing them baked goods).
- She noted that in a recent Our State magazine article, the Town of Troy and their Welcome Center to the Uwharries was spotlighted. The City should find a way to begin marketing itself in the magazine to advertise the things we have going on, and thought that Mr. Tunnell in the Economic Development Department could work on this.

- Re: trash pick up efforts – she committed to trash pick up and encouraged her colleagues on Council to commit to litter pick up once every 3 months for 3 years. She and her husband picked up trash two weeks ago, but has noticed that it comes right back.
- Re: the new federal COVID stimulus bill and funds for municipalities - she was glad to hear that Albemarle is due to receive an estimated \$4.7 million per the City Manager’s email update to Council and the NCLM legislative update email. She believes that these funds are icing for the City to seed capital projects or fund projects like stormwater management that are one-time expenditures. The Mayor added a thank you to one of the US Senators who recently moved the passage of an amendment to the new COVID stimulus bill to broaden the use of stimulus funds municipalities are receiving to fund expenses like “necessary water, sewer, and broadband.” Hopefully the City can move forward on some big projects in these areas with the stimulus money. Councilmember Hughes asked when the money would be available. The Mayor replied that currently the IRS is finalizing rules on use of the funds, so the timeline for receipt is unknown right now.
- Re: email received by Council about the roundabout drawing/concept for Five Points via NCDOT – she wanted to know if there was an update. The Mayor noted that the Rocky River RPO (RRRPO) will be meeting next week. Councilmember Whitley, who is a designated member of the RRRPO, did confirm that the roundabout will be on the group’s agenda to be discussed next week.
- Re: Charters of Freedom – she announced that the local committee will meet this Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> in the Ray Allen room in City Hall and via Zoom, which will be open to the public. She encouraged the public to purchase memorial bricks, with ordering information on the City’s Facebook page and the City’s website. The Mayor added that this would be a good opportunity for veterans groups to sponsor a brick. Bricks range in price from \$100 - \$300.

Councilmember Dry:

- Re: Charters of Freedom – He noted that there are many levels of sponsorship available for the plaques. He stated that the City and the County would be missing the boat if they can’t find sponsors for the memorial bricks and plaques, and requested that more exposure be given to the opportunities and the project as a whole via TV and radio. Mayor Pro Tem Hall requested that the City put posts on Facebook and other social media sites for the bricks. The City Manager noted that a post about the bricks had already been posted and that staff will put out reminder posts about it.
- City Council and the City is in the people business in order to enhance people’s lives. With Council making decisions like the stormwater plan funding tonight, he wanted to reassure the public that City business is moving forward and that the City is working hard to make things right. He appreciates the public’s patience.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall thanked Larry McGuire and his business for sponsoring the shred event this past Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup>. She also wanted to announce that per the City’s April utility bill stuffer, April 24<sup>th</sup> will be the next drug take back event, which is the safest way to get rid of expired and unused drugs.

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**CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, Council approved moving into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) consultation with the City Attorney.

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**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

Upon motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hall, unanimously carried, City Council reconvened to open session.

The Mayor stated that a closed session was held pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) consultation with the City Attorney. There was nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall wished everyone a Happy Easter.

Upon recommendation by the City Manager, the Mayor called for a motion to approve the March 1, 2021 closed session minutes as corrected. Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hughes, unanimously carried, Council passed the motion.

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Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to the next regular City Council meeting on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.