

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL

December 20, 2021

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, December 20, 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, Dexter Townsend, and Shirley D. Lowder.

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, the minutes of the December 6, 2021 regular and closed meetings as submitted were approved.

ANNOUNCED DELEGATION

Pam Blake – Candidate for Stanly County Clerk of Court

Ms. Blake requested to speak at this meeting to introduce herself to Council. She has lived in Stanly County her whole life. She and her family are members of the Union Grove Baptist Church where her husband is the pastor. She is a graduate of South Stanly High School. Her community involvement includes: Stanly Cooperative Christian Ministry, Community Inn, Butterfly House, Habitat for Humanity, among others.

For the last 23 years she has been employed with Stanly County working in different departments, most recently as a tax collection supervisor. She noted that she possesses many leadership qualities which would aid her should she win the Clerk of Court seat: leading by example; determination; patience; integrity; being reliable; transparency; passion; a positive attitude; and strong customer service skills. She thanked Council for allowing her to introduce herself to them and residents of Albemarle.

Council thanked her for being here tonight and sharing a little bit about herself.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Spotlight Presentation – Information Systems

Information Systems Director Owen Squires and the IS team (Nhia Ly, Amanda Lukach, and Cory Falgione) came in front of Council to present the IS Department. Mr. Squires noted that IS/IT work is interwoven into all facets of City operations, and that recent cyberattacks on local governments

has placed IT in a frontline role of protecting the City's assets and operations. He noted as an example the IT help desk application and the volume of IT tickets they handle in a month, which totaled 1400 requests in one year. Of those tickets, the IS team resolved tickets 95% of the time.

Ms. Lukach shared completed IS projects with Council, which included: Public Utilities digital work order system; Microsoft Office 360 migration to all City employees and City Council; the City's warehouse inventory system upgrade; addition of camera systems for multiple departments, among others. She emphasized that partnership and team work between IS and other departments allowed for these projects to be successful. The first project to go live in 2022 is an online City contract/agreement workflow/signature system requested by the City Attorney to make the process of managing hundreds of these documents more efficient, organized, and trackable.

Mr. Ly and Mr. Falgione came forward to talk about infrastructure technology and how crucial it is to City operations. The upgrading of the SCADA system (33 hours of IT time logged) now allows personnel to remotely monitor critical plant operations for water, sewer and electric. There are alert notifications that can be sent to phones in cases of plant issues.

Other infrastructure technology IS manages includes: the App Store which allows all City personnel the ability to access their desktop environment remotely, which became very important during the onset of COVID; the follow me print service which allows all employees to access their print/copy/scan capabilities at any printer within the organization; and new employee training where new hires are tested for understanding cybersecurity as an end user. These cybersecurity "tests" are sent periodically to all existing employees to remind them of safety in the digital environment.

IS recently analyzed the devices which they support. The total number they take care of organization-wide is over 800 devices.

IS goals and objectives moving forward are: implementing a City-wide technology prioritization system and locate effective and strategic initiatives by leveraging existing relationships with other local-government focused service providers. IS unveiled a new IT planning strategy which would help IS and other City personnel begin the dialogue all speaking the same language and moving forward as a team to plan out how to address the issue or request much like an incident mitigation workflow as developed by Fire Chief Pierre Brewton.

The IS team took questions from Council. How does the Webmaster citizen request online portal work in order for a Council member to receive an email notification? The resident enters input into the online system and it is sent to the appropriate party via email based on system prompts the resident answers online. That application is changing with IS launching a new City/resident interface very soon.

Councilmember Dry stated that although he is not well versed with much of what the IS Department does, they are amazing for such a small team to keep City operations and digital environment operating and safe.

Council thanked the IS team for all their work. The Mayor added that he was happy to see and hear from the IS employees too, and hopes that other department heads bring some of their teams forward so that Council can meet more personnel face to face and get to know them better.

Departmental Monthly Reports

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

A question was asked on the Economic Development report about a meeting to be held on December 18th. Since that was this past weekend was that a mistake? Economic Development Director Keith Tunnell responded stating that it was an error and that he would email Council with the correct meeting date.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consider Street Closure for YMCA Hot Chocolate 5K

The YMCA will host their annual Hot Chocolate 8K run on Saturday, January 8, 2022 from 6:30 am - 10:30 am. The event is to promote fitness in the community. Council would consider closing CB Crook Dr. from First St. to Second St.

HUD Budget Resolution

The attached resolution is an annual requirement of HUD certifying a budget for the Department of Public Housing has been adopted.

[Resolution 21-29 – Approving City of Albemarle Operating Budget for HUD]

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

- Street closure for the YMCA Hot Chocolate 5K on Saturday, January 8, 2022; and
- Adoption of Resolution 21-29 certifying that the City of Albemarle formally approved the FY 2021-2022 City budget which includes the Public Housing budget.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Approval of Major Subdivision 21-09 – S Bell Townhome Cluster Subdivision

Phase I

Development Coordination Specialist Jay Voyles presented the subdivision request and analysis to Council. MJSR 21-09 S Bell Townhome Cluster Subdivision is a multi-phase townhome development located off of S Bell Ave and Amhurst Street. The proposal is for the first phase, which consists of a 5.25 acre tract with 16 proposed lots. This will be fronting on all existing infrastructure, with no new streets or additional infrastructure. The second phase is proposed to be submitted in early 2022 with a potential street connection to Eastover Avenue and roughly 16 additional lots. For this

meeting, Council will be considering phase 1 as a cluster subdivision with 18 townhome lots on all existing infrastructure.

The proposed property is just over 5 acres, making it eligible for clustering. The developers have requested to do this subdivision as 1 cluster development in two phases, the first of which will be 16 units all fronting on S Bell Ave. Since they are working to acquire some small acreage to the west of this property for a street connection to Eastover they cannot develop the additional 16+ units yet. What is proposed is an approval of the first lots and the open space with a "set aside" for future development to include the additional lots, street and right of way.

Since cluster subdivisions require the 5 acre be kept intact, the developer will need to bring back the second "phase" as an amendment to the existing subdivision rather a new subdivision by itself.

The Planning and Zoning Board unanimously made a favorable recommendation to City Council to approve MJSR 21-09 Phase 1 subdivision plat with the following conditions: open space areas and calculations are revised to reflect the cluster subdivision ordinance requirements and that a landscape plan be submitted to show the type I & II bufferyard areas.

Planning and Development Services staff took questions from Council. Council and staff discussed the street extension connecting to Leonard Avenue, open space requirements and phasing of the development, lot size and driveway width and repercussions of these dimensions for on street parking.

Developers Todd Hicks and David Tibbals came in front of Council to respond to the parking concerns and assure Council that the development has been conceptualized thoughtfully and over time. Mr. Hicks noted that the subdivision design was considered to make the townhomes affordable, and so a one-car garage and driveway wide and long enough to fit one car needed to be the dynamic in order to configure lot size, street width requirements, and driveway and garage dimensions.

For Phase II, the developers stated that corner lots would have more open space and so there could be more parallel parking. Councilmember Townsend responded by asking the rest of Council whether they should table a decision on the phase I subdivision request now in order to give the developers time to work out other solutions to the parking issue about which they are concerned.

The Mayor called for a motion.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, and carried with 6 Council members voting for the motion and 1 voting against, Council tabled a decision on MJSR 21-09 until one of the meetings in January 2022 in order for the developer to provide more information to Council for a parking plan. Councilmember Dry voted against the motion.

Discussion of Speeding Concerns on MLK, Wall and Gibson

Councilmember Townsend reported he has received several complaints regarding speeding on these streets and requested the item be placed on the agenda for discussion. Many times with neighborhood speeding issues there are patterns and trends that can help focus enforcement, or

there are known individuals who create the issues that can be addressed. The more information we have, the more effective we can be at addressing the issues. He also noted that residents living by these streets came in front of Council last year requesting that the issue be researched – has there been a resolution yet for these streets?

Council discussed the issue, noting that does seem to be an ongoing issue, raising concern over pedestrians being hit. Will the City Manager work on the issue with the Police Department? Police Chief Bollhorst replied that APD will look further into the speeding issue on these streets by conducting analysis to focus and target the root causes of the issue. APD will come back to Council with their analysis. A few Councilmembers suggested that police presence could be a temporary solution by acting as a deterrent.

There was no further Council action on the issue.

Senate Bill 300 – Decriminalization of Certain Ordinances

As a result of Senate Bill 300 passing in fall 2021, municipalities are required to amend their Code of Ordinances to remove any criminal misdemeanor penalties associated with sections of their Code. This can be accomplished via ordinance. The ordinance submitted to Council accomplishes the following:

- (1) Eliminates the misdemeanor penalty for certain ordinances in compliance with Session Law 2021-138,
- (2) Retains the misdemeanor penalty for ordinances for which imposition of a criminal penalty is still permissible, and
- (3) Enforces civil penalties for ordinances that can no longer be enforced criminally.

Council received the following in agenda packets: a memo from the City Attorney explaining the legislation and its effects on the City's Code of Ordinances; and a summary of the section/s of the City's Code of Ordinances which have been amended per SB 300

This ordinance requires two readings before it can be adopted, therefore it will be placed on the next agenda for second reading and adoption.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, and unanimously carried, Council approved the first reading of Ordinance 22-01.

Introduction of Greg Morris – Chief Code Enforcement Officer

Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson introduced Mr. Morris. Mr. Morris came in front of Council to make some brief remarks. Previously he lived and worked for local government in Long Island, NY before moving to NC. He noted it's a pleasure to be here and thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity to serve the City of Albemarle. He looks forward to a fast start on the workload.

Council welcomed Mr. Morris to the City of Albemarle and stated they are glad he is here.

COMMENTS

The Mayor wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked all City of Albemarle employees for the work they've done over the past year.

City Manager Michael J. Ferris

- He announced that this will be the last Council meeting for Public Utilities Director Judy Redwine before she retires after 50 years of commitment and dedication to the City, its customers, and to customer service. Customer service was always her top priority throughout her long career here. Her retirement will be a big loss for the City. The Mayor asked Ms. Redwine to come up and say a few words if she wished. Ms. Redwine began by thanking the City and Council for giving her the opportunity to serve the City of Albemarle for 50 years. She thanked City Manager Michael J. Ferris and Public Utilities staff for supporting her over the years. Her work has been a rewarding experience in that she found that she learned something new every day. She is proud of Public Utilities staff – they are the glue making the department a success. She will miss them all but knows they are in good hands with Dan Worl. Council and the audience gave Ms. Redwine a standing ovation.

Councilmember Aldridge:

- He congratulated Judy on her upcoming retirement.
- He reminded everyone about how COVID19 is still around and that the City's mask mandate is still in effect.
- Re: littering – the NE Connector is an issue now with a lot of trash scattered along the highway. He asked anyone traveling on that road to think twice about littering out the car windows.
- He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked City staff for all they do.

Councilmember Hughes:

- She thanked Ms. Redwine for her many years of service.
- The City of Albemarle employee Christmas luncheon last week was enjoyable and she thanked City staff who helped put the event together.
- She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councilmember Townsend:

- He wished Ms. Redwine well in her retirement.
- He thanked Parks and Recreation staff and other employees who set up and provided food for last week's Christmas luncheon.
- He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall:

- The Christmas luncheon was great! She noted that leftover food from the event was removed by Public Works staff and taken to Community Table.
- She asked if the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was being updated. City Manager Michael J. Ferris responded that it was not being done this year.
- She wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Councilmember Dry:

- He regretted missing the Christmas luncheon and Ms. Redwine's retirement party.
- He noted that he worked with Ms. Redwine for years to solve problems and would miss her as an employee.
- He recounted a recent neighborhood situation as an example of people giving without asking and publicly thanked Steven Aldridge for his help with helping fix a resident's issue by trimming bushes and mowing the lawn.

Councilmember Lowder:

- She wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

The Mayor thanked the Albemarle Fire Department for their Christmas card.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Councilmember Whitley, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council approved moving into closed session pursuant N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of confidential or privileged information, N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) Real Estate, and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Upon a motion by Councilmember Whitley, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, and unanimously carried, Council returned to open session. The Mayor stated that a closed session was held pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of confidential or privileged information, N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) Real Estate, and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

The Mayor asked Mayor Pro Tem Hall to read Resolution 21-30 for easement settlements among four property owners for property to be developed as part of the Albemarle Business Center.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall read Resolution 21-30 aloud and made a motion to adopt it. Councilmember Hughes seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers voted in favor of the resolution. The resolution was declared passed and adopted.

[Resolution 21-30 - To approve the acquisition of real property to aid in the construction and development of the Albemarle Business Center]

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to Monday, January 3, 2022 at 6:30 pm in City Council Chambers.