

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL

April 4, 2022

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, April 4, 2022 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.

The Mayor gave the invocation.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, the minutes of the March 21, 2022 regular meeting were approved as submitted.

ANNOUNCED DELEGATIONS

Debbie Bennett, Stanly County Health Department – To Discuss Results from the Health Department Survey

Ms. Bennett came in front of Council to discuss the Health Department's 2021 County Health Assessment Survey. She presented results via a PowerPoint presentation.

The following information was shared by Ms. Bennett:

- An overview of the study, which included the survey and 6 focus groups covering a variety of county organizations;
- What data was collected and reviewed to provide full data analysis of health trends in the county since the last survey 5 years ago;
- An overview of leading causes of death and illness among residents in the county overall and in Albemarle specifically;
- What the leading health and community issues were among county residents and Albemarle residents;
- What overall and individual focus group issues were for health and community; and
- How to access the survey results and assessment on the County Health Department's website, as well as a community resource list.

Ms. Bennett took questions from Council. Councilmember Aldridge thanked her for her positivity and years of service to the community and noted that the survey results were good stuff to know. Mayor Pro Tem Hall noted that based on other work in which she is involved she has understood that there had been a dramatic drop in the birth rate in the county and wondered if it had gone back up

recently. Ms. Bennett pointed Council and the public to the website posting for the analysis of the County and City versus other similar counties in many vital health statistics such as number of live births per year. Mayor Pro Tem Hall then announced Operation Medicine Drop would occur on April 11th from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm and that there is a flyer about it which she has been circulating.

Council thanked Ms. Bennett for providing this information and for presenting to them tonight.

UNANNOUNCED DELEGATIONS

Michael Greene – Candidate for Stanly County Clerk of Court

Mr. Greene, who resides at 32084 Pennington Road in Albemarle, was invited by the Mayor to come in front of Council to speak about his candidacy for Stanly County Clerk of Court. Mr. Greene thanked Council for allowing him to speak to them tonight. He first summarized his political affiliation, his family, and that he has served the public for over 26 years, primarily in public safety as a police officer. He spoke about his values and his career over 30 years as a City of Concord police officer, retiring as captain, then as a security officer for Concord Mills Mall for a number of years after he retired from his position on the Concord police force.

He then noted his experience with the court system particularly with juveniles, as well as administrative court duties. He concluded by stating that he is here to serve all of Stanly County should he be elected.

Council thanked him for coming.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Minimum Housing and Commercial Maintenance Update

Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson and Code Enforcement Officer Greg Morris came in front of Council to update them on minimum housing and commercial code cases undertaken by the department, which included property updates slated for demolition or burning, cases in progress, and closed cases.

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Morris took questions from Council. A question was asked about the timeline for demolition from the time the findings of fact and order is delivered to the property owner. Typically the City gives the owner 60 days before the City takes action to hold a public hearing and provide an ordinance for demolition to Council, which factors in time for staff to process a title search, announce the public hearing in the newspaper and create the ordinance. In some cases, if the property owner is working with the City to aid in the demolition of the property, the City could give the owner a bit more time to accommodate the efforts of the owner demolishing the structure on his or her own, thus saving the City some expense.

Councilmember Townsend questioned the time that has elapsed for 443 Colston Street's demolition. Mr. Robinson replied that although this structure has been on the "to be

demolished” list for a while, the Planning Department only recently has been able to gain any momentum on moving this case forward due to clearing out a 60-case backlog over the past few years. He also asked about the Gibson Street property. Mr. Robinson replied that the property might have been overlooked and that the department would double check on the status of that property.

Update on the Dance Floor at City Lake Park

Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came in front of Council to discuss findings on the estimated cost of installing a raised dance floor near the Amphitheater at City Lake Park, and to request more input from Council on next steps. As background, City Council voted to investigate the possibility of installing a dance floor at City Lake Park near the Amphitheater area at the March 21st meeting. Ms. Kiser noted that there are additional items to consider, as they will need to be addressed as part of the project or ongoing set up, removal, and storage of the dance floor.

Cost of construction (one time cost):

- * \$3,000 - concrete pad
 - * \$1,000 - concrete walkway
 - * \$2,000 - ABC stone
 - * \$4,500 – Fencing
 - * \$1,000 - Landscaping
- Total for construction of concrete pad = \$11,500.

The above does not consider cost for storage of the dance floor. It is staff’s understanding that the dance floor is (2) 16' x 20' sections of plywood and 2"x 4"s. The current size of this dance floor and the materials will make the dance floor extremely heavy. It will take 5-6 staff to work to put down the floor and take it back up. Parks and Recreation does not have a vehicle or trailer that will be able to transport the dance floor in its current size to and from City Lake Park.

Storage Facility (one time cost):

- * \$10,000 - Design/Permitting
 - * \$20,000 - Materials
- Total = \$30,000

Staffing Cost to transport put down and take up dance floor (on-going cost):

- * 6 staff x 5 hours = 30 hours x \$28.13/hour OT wages = \$843.90 per month
- * 7 concerts x \$843.90 = \$5907.30 staff cost for Food Truck Fridays

Other items for Council to consider/answer:

- * How was this dance floor transported from place to place under previous ownership?
- * How many people did it take to set-up under previous ownership?
- * Where will the City of Albemarle store the dance floor?
- * How will the City of Albemarle transport the dance floor?

Council discussed the dimensions and sections of the donated wood flooring and how that information would be important to have in order to figure out installation, set up/break down, and

storage issues. Mayor Pro Tem Hall noted that she would go back to the couple who are willing to donate two floor sections to get specific information as requested and bring back to Council and Ms. Kiser. Council also discussed researching and getting estimates on other “piece together” dance flooring which may be cheaper in the long run.

The Mayor asked if Council was willing to approve tonight the construction of the concrete pad and surrounding fence for the dance floor which would cost approximately \$11,500 per staff’s estimate as itemized above, with the storage question to be discussed at a later date.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Hall, unanimously carried, Council approved City staff moving forward with the construction the concrete pad and surrounding fence for the dance floor to be installed at City Lake Park.

After the vote Council and Ms. Kiser discussed the timing of installation of the dance floor. Ms. Kiser said that Parks and Recreation is aiming for the concrete pad to be ready in time for the June Food Truck Friday.

Ms. Kiser distributed the spring Parks and Recreation newsletter to Council.

The Mayor, Councilmember Dry, and Mayor Pro Tem Hall were complimentary about the previous week’s Food Truck Friday.

MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

Mayor Michael and Councilmembers received the municipal calendar prior to the meeting. The Mayor asked if Council had any questions or comments about the calendar.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ordinance 22-22 – To Amend the City-Wide Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

The budget ordinance amendment is for the grant received from the Cannon Foundation for the Fire Department Swiftwater Rescue Boat.

[Ordinance 22-22 – To Amend the City-wide Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-2022]

Ordinance 22-21– To Amend the American Rescue Plan Grant Project Budget

With the passing of the Final Rule by the US Treasury in January, the City can elect to allocate \$10 million as revenue replacement without having to perform the previously defined calculations. The City will in total receive \$5,177,559 from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and thus can elect to allocate the entirety to the revenue loss category. By taking this election the City's reporting requirements are a little less restrictive and appropriations are a little more flexible. The attached ordinance represents the Workgroup's decision to elect to take the standard revenue replacement option. It does not appropriate any funds from the grant project.

[Ordinance 22-21 – To Amend the American Rescue Plan Grant Project Budget]

Consider Road Closure for West Albemarle Baptist Church

West Albemarle Baptist Church will hold their annual Color Run on Wednesday, May 4, 2022 around West Albemarle Baptist Church. West Albemarle Baptist Church is asking for the following roads to be closed for the safety of the runners: Mill St. from Church St. to NC 73; Church St. from Mill St. to NC 73.

Consider Road Closure for Vac & Dash Beach Blast 5K

Vac & Dash will hold their annual Beach Blast 5K on Saturday, May 7th from 6:00 am - 10:00 am. Vac & Dash is requesting the following road to be closed:

- * Depot St. from Main St. to North St.
- * Depot St. from Main St. to Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

Consider Road Closure for Vac & Dash Moonlight 5K Run

Vac & Dash will hold their annual Moonlight 5K & 10 mile run on Sunday, September 4, 2022 from 5:30 pm - 10:30 pm around Badin Rd. Drive-In Theater. Vac & Dash would like the following road closed for safety of the runners:

- * Speight Rd. from Hwy 740 to Moss Springs Rd.

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

- Ordinance 22-22 budget ordinance amendment for the grant received from the Cannon Foundation for the Fire Department Swiftwater Rescue Boat;
- Ordinance 22-21 amending the ARPA project budget for election of allocation as revenue loss;
- Road closure for the West Baptist Church Color Run on May 4th;
- Road closure for the Vac & Dash Beach Blast 5K on May 7th; and
- Road closure for the Vac & Dash Moonlight 5K Run on September 4th.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Resolution of Support for NCDOT Project Funding

The NCDOT is seeking City support for funding to construct a left turn lane on West Main Street at St. Martin Road. Both of these are State roads. In speaking with NCDOT District Engineer

Marc Morgan, the NCDOT had previously identified this need. The proposed retail development at this intersection further increases the need for the turn lane. The funding the NCDOT will access are for improvements within the entire Division and are not solely dedicated to Albemarle, and they would like to use the funding to make this improvement. City support is required for the NCDOT to make the improvements with the funds they are seeking.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Hughes, unanimously carried, Council approved support for NCDOT funding to construct a left turn lane on West Main Street at St. Martin Road.

[Resolution 22-11 - Support for NCDOT Project Funding]

Discussion of First Tranche ARPA to Support a Park Study

In September 2021 the City Council approved \$250,000 to study a potential park in a qualified census tract located in and around the downtown area. The area staff proposed for study was the property on Morrow Avenue the City owns and has remained vacant for several years. Staff's initial thought is a park with activities to serve the surrounding area. Undertaking a study will closely examine the need and potential uses.

There appears to be some confusion with some thinking the proposal was regarding the property in the floodplain between 3rd and 4th Streets and East Main Street and MLK Drive the Morrow family donated to the City. One is property on Morrow Avenue and the other is property donated by the Morrow family, so it is easy to see how this could occur.

Council discussed the intent of the inclusion of a park located in an underserved census tract by the City's ARPA workgroup when it was considering fund allocations for the first tranche rather than the specific space or property. City Manager Michael J. Ferris agreed that a few ideas had been initially discussed related to the possible target area within the census tract for the park, and noted that staff was requesting clarification on which of the 2 properties described above would be the focus of a study for the park. He also noted that it might be the path of least resistance to explore possible land within the census tract rather than either of the Morrow properties.

After further discussion, Council and Mr. Ferris agreed that the study should be used as a first step to gauge the optimal location and level of need.

Ms. Kiser noted that Parks and Recreation would move forward by developing an RFQ for park design, which would include siting a potential location. That process was allocated \$50,000 which the department would use to leverage funds through a state grant, the deadline of which is November 2022.

Council agreed to allow City staff to move forward with the RFQ park design process.

COMMENTS

City Manager Michael J. Ferris:

- He announced that there will be public input sessions for the City’s proposed stormwater management plan, the first occurring on April 13th between 6:00 -8:00 pm in City Hall. Council asked if there would be a remote meeting link made available. Public Works Director Ross Holshouser stated that a Zoom link has already been advertised for this upcoming session.

Councilmember Townsend:

- He expressed support for the UNC-Chapel Hill men’s basketball team which is playing in the NCAA basketball championship game tonight.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall:

- She asked for an update on the Handy Sanitary District request for water from the City of Albemarle. City Manager Michael J. Ferris replied that this request is wrapped into a larger project which is being managed by LKC Engineering. LKC is trying to scope out an equitable cost sharing proposal currently. This proposal is estimated to be ready in about a month.
- Re: Foundation Forward’s Charters of Freedom and peeling paint issue – She is happy that City staff has cleaned the Charters of Freedom installation and is set to repaint around them to repair the peeling paint initially applied.
- She gave an “attaboy” to Parks and Recreation for last week’s Food Truck Friday event.

Councilmember Whitley:

- The EE Waddell Center parking paving work looks great. Public Works Director Ross Holshouser stated that the paving was completed today.

Councilmember Dry:

- He congratulated JT Cranford, Jay Voyles, and 2 other City employees for their recent promotions. He appreciates all that they and City employees do.

CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Whitley, unanimously carried, Council approved moving into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) consultation with the City Attorney; 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 Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Dry 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)(3) consultation with the City Attorney; N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) Real Estate, and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council approved the lease agreement with Stanly Community College for use of soccer fields.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Lowder, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to Monday, April 18, 2022 at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers at City Hall.