

REGULAR MEETING CITY COUNCIL

May 2, 2022

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in a regular session on Monday, May 2, 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 Hughes, unanimously carried, the minutes of the April 18, 2022 regular and closed meetings were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance 22-23 – Consider Map Amendment ZMA 22-04 To Rezone Property on South Bell Avenue from GHBD to R-6

Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson presented the rezoning request and staff analysis to Council. Rockstar Capital II has requested the rezoning of a property they have under contract from General Highway Business District to R-6 Urban Residential District for a new phase of a townhome cluster subdivision. The requested property is surrounded by previously approved R-6 properties and GHBD. If approved, this will be added to a previously approved cluster subdivision.

At the April 7th, 2022 Planning and Zoning Board meeting, the Board unanimously made a favorable recommendation to City Council to approve the map amendment application to rezone the property to R-6 Urban Residential District with the Consistency Statement.

The Mayor asked if Council had any questions.

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 Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the public hearing was closed.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Whitley, unanimously carried, approved Ordinance 22-23 containing Zoning Map Amendment 22-04 with the following consistency statement:

The Albemarle City Council finds the action to amend Tax Record 17999 from GHBD/General Highway Business 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 be reasonable and in the public interest.

[Ordinance 22-23 – Consider Map Amendment ZMA 22-04 To Rezone Property on South Bell Avenue from GHBD to R-6]

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

The Mayor added an unannounced delegation Ms. Tiffany Dahle for a special events road closure request next; Council consideration of two agreements: one for public parking installation near First and Main Streets, and another for the installation of utility improvements and additional public parking near Stanly Motors, Inc. on 224 West Main Street as the last item in New Business; and addition of closed session for consultation with the City Attorney and personnel.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, Council approved the agenda adjustments.

UNANNOUNCED DELEGATIONS

Tiffany Dahle – To Request Street Closing for Tiffany at the Boardroom’s Event

Ms. Dahle came in front of Council to request the following road closure for Downtown Cruise-Ins from 1:30 pm until 9:00 pm on May 14th, June 11th, July 9th, August 13th, September 10th, and October 8th:

- Main Street from 1st Street to 2nd Street

Ms. Dahle has already received permission from NCDOT to close down Main Street for these events.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Townsend, unanimously carried, Council approved the road closure for the above specified dates for Downtown Cruise-Ins.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

City of Albemarle Strategic Plan Presentation

City Manager Michael J. Ferris and Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser co-presented the final strategic plan to Council via a presentation and handouts. Mr. Ferris first noted that this strategic plan being presented to Council is the result of a multi-year process which included them, the City's leadership team, and citizens. The formal adoption of the City of Albemarle's strategic plan is part of this process.

Mr. Ferris went over the process timeline and described the process, acknowledged the participants in the process, and then discussed in more depth the components of the strategic plan: vision/mission/core values and goals/strategies/tactics.

Ms. Kiser summarized the monitoring plan, as well as the evaluation plan, and how they both would hold the City accountable for reviewing, implementing, communicating about, and refining the strategic plan over the next 3 years.

The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Ferris, Ms. Kiser, and the City's Leadership Team for gathering public input and managing the process.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council adopted the City of Albemarle strategic plan as presented.

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.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider MJSR 22-05 Eastover Townes Cluster Subdivision Phase 3

Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson presented a brief summary of the subdivision request to Council. Rockstar Capital II intends to add 19 additional lots to the previously approved cluster subdivision along S Bell Ave. This will be the 3rd phase of this subdivision and will be on properties fronting S Bell Ave, Eastover Ave, Bogan Ave and E Main St.

Mr. Robinson announced that a new plat has been provided by the developer, and so requested that Council consider tabling this item until the June 6th Council meeting.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council tabled the Eastover Townes Cluster Subdivision Phase 3 (MJSR 22-05) item until the June 6, 2022 meeting.

Presentation of the Proposed FY 22/23 City of Albemarle Budget

City Manager Michael J. Ferris and Finance Director Jacob Weavil summarized and highlighted the proposed next fiscal year budget drawing from Mr. Ferris's budget letter to Council and a prepared presentation. Mr. Ferris first summarized accomplishments achieved in this fiscal year to date, then presented highlights of the proposed FY 22/23 budget.

The proposed FY 22/23 budget will have the following revenue appropriations:

- General Fund: \$19,368,364
- Powell Bill Fund: \$777,405
- Water and Sewer Fund: \$13,100,663
- Electric Fund: \$33,734,759
- Stormwater Fund: \$2,515,180
- Landfill Fund: \$4,708,203
- Public Housing Conventional Fund: \$1,472,363
- Public Housing Section 8 Fund: \$1,029,500
- Health Insurance Internal Service Fund: \$3,475,912

Related to City taxes and fees in the General Fund, there will be no increase in property taxes, a slight decrease in the monthly solid waste collection fee due to moving the leaf collection service to the Stormwater Fund, and a slight increase in the solid waste disposal fee due to increased volume of solid waste being collected and disposed. There will be no change in the motor vehicle registration fee nor planning and zoning fees.

Related to the enterprise funds, there is a proposed 7% increase in the Water and Sewer Fund and is based on significant investment/improvements the City is making to the wastewater and water treatment systems. There is an estimated 8.50% decrease in the Electric Fund for the upcoming fiscal year. There is expected to be a 7.96% increase in the Solid Waste Disposal Fund, but no change in the tipping fee at the Landfill to either the municipal solid waste or construction and demolition fees. Since the City is developing a Stormwater Management Fund, a new fee will be collected starting this coming fiscal year. The fee has not been officially set yet pending a public hearing about it at the May 16th City Council meeting.

Mr. Ferris added that after speaking with the Leadership Team, the City is proposing to offer a 6% cost of living increase to all City employees in the next fiscal year rather than implementing the first one-third compensation study readjustment.

Mr. Ferris noted that public notice has been sent out about the proposed budget and that a public hearing should be set for the June 6th Council meeting.

Mr. Jacob Weavil, Finance Director, came in front of Council to bring up a few items to note about the proposed budget. He first thanked everyone involved in helping craft the budget. He then noted some clerical changes in how the budget has been set up, with new accounting codes for Public Information, Legal, and for the newly created Stormwater Fund. He also noted a change in terminology in the draft Budget Ordinance, exchanging "department" for "function." Finally, there has been a change in account groups for inter-fund transfers and debt service to make the transactions more transparent and easier to record.

The Mayor asked if Council had any questions about the proposed budget. Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked a series of clarifying questions. What would the proposed stormwater fund fee be? It will be \$11.50. Why was there the replacement of the one third compensation study implementation with the COLA raise? The original plan was to have the first third compensation study readjustment implemented in the upcoming fiscal year, but due to the Leadership Team vocalizing a need for an across-the-board COLA raise due to inflation, there was a change to the proposed budget to accommodate this. Mr. Ferris also confirmed for Mayor Pro Tem Hall that the line item for street paving is \$625,000, up from \$400,000 in the current fiscal year. Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked if there is another Downtown Retail Strategies meeting planned. Mr. Ferris was not aware of any, but the Economic Development team will let Council know once it's scheduled. Where does the performance appraisal system stand? Human Resources is still developing the plan.

Councilmember Aldridge asked when the proposed Assistant Fire Chief position could be filled. Mr. Ferris replied that assuming Council approves the position in this proposed budget, the position needs to be posted, and candidates need to be vetted by Chief Brewton, so likely not until fall 2022.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Whitley, seconded by Councilmember Dry, unanimously carried, Council approved setting the public hearing for the proposed FY 22/23 budget on June 6, 2022.

Information – Annual City of Albemarle Employee Cookout

Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser summarized plans for the Employee Cookout for Council. The annual City of Albemarle Employee Cookout will be held on Thursday, May 19th at City Lake Park from 11:00 am - 1:30 pm. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served, an employee health fair will take place, and employees and retirees can enjoy time in the Park. Rain location will be EE Waddell Center on the same date and time.

Public Parking Agreements

The Mayor noted that Council had both public parking agreements in hard copy form in front of them, and asked for a motion to approve one agreement for public parking installation near First and Main Streets, and another for the installation of utility improvements and additional public parking near Stanly Motors, Inc. on 224 West Main Street.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, Council approved both agreements.

COMMENTS

The Mayor noted to Council that the NCLM Town and State Dinner is scheduled for June 1st and asked any Council member who plans to attend to let the Clerk know so she can register them. He added that he has already extended invitations to State Representative Wayne Sasser and State Senator Carl Ford.

He also plugged the Hall of Fame dinner and asked staff to provide more details. Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came in front of Council to talk more about the event. It will be held on May 23rd on Pfeiffer's main campus in the Stokes Student Center. Council and Ms. Kiser discussed details for reserving a spot or a table.

City Manager Michael J. Ferris:

- He noted that the Planning and Development Services Department is ready to proceed with 7 to 8 minimum code public hearings. Council and Mr. Ferris discussed options for Council to hear the 7-8 cases and solicited and received input from the City Attorney on public notice requirements.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Whitley and unanimously carried, Council approved setting a special meeting for Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers.

- For the budget process, he noted that 1 budget meeting might not be enough time for Council to walk through the proposed budget based on last year's budget season, and so he requested that Council consider a second budget meeting date before June.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hughes, seconded by Councilmember Dry and unanimously carried, Council approved setting a second Council budget work session for Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 4:00 pm in Council Chambers.

Councilmember Hughes:

- She noted that when she was at Rock Creek Park there was an area near the trails which looked to be like a standing lake, and wanted to know if the City should do something about it. Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser replied that the area noted is private property and not the City's.

Councilmember Aldridge:

- He thanked the Police Department for paying attention to traffic issues by Ridge Street because he has had a lot of call ins complaining about traffic issues in the area recently.
- He welcomed back Councilmember Dry.
- He congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Hall for being voted onto the NCLM Board of Directors for another 2 year term.
- He requested that the gate by Chuck Morehead Park entrance be checked out because he has had some complaints about activities occurring in the park after it closes.

Councilmember Lowder:

- She inquired about whether the City has a noise ordinance in effect. The Mayor replied that yes the City does have one in effect. Ms. Lowder noted that the tire place on Main Street between First and Second Streets does seem to generate quite a bit of noise with bad muffler sounds. The Mayor noted that there is not much the Police Department can do in enforcing our local

noise ordinance and could use the state statutes on minimum noise levels in this case more effectively.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall:

- She gave an “attaboy” to the Stanly Historical Society for its garden tour this past weekend.
- This Thursday the Thursdays at Market Station will host the Stanly City Concert Band.
- This Friday is the next Food Truck Friday event.
- This Saturday the Still Runs Car Show will occur.
- She noted that this year’s Arbor Day event had a great turnout.
- She gave an “attaboy” to the Fire Department for its class of new recruits who just graduated and were recognized last Friday at Albemarle First Baptist Church.
- May is National Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month, and to recognize the month, the Butterfly House is sponsoring a breakfast on May 13th.
- At this past week’s NCLM City Vision conference one of the best attended sessions was about how to communicate with everyone who is new. She brought material back with her to hand to the Human Resources Department.
- She recounted a text she received last Friday from the Public Housing Director about a HUD representative wanting to contact the City about how the budget process works here. She passed that information along to a few City employees.

Councilmember Dry:

- He is glad to be back.

CLOSED SESSION

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

Councilmember Dry left the meeting prior to reconvening to open session.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hughes 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 and N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) personnel. There was nothing to report.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hughes, seconded by Councilmember Aldridge, unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to Monday, May 16, 2022 at 6:30 pm in Council Chambers at City Hall.