

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
April 22, 2008
(Afternoon Session)

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, April 22, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Annex. Mayor Elbert L. "Whit" Whitley presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Martha Sue Hall, Judy Holcomb, Jeanette M. Napier, Jack F. Neel, T. Ed Underwood and T.E. White. Absent, none.

The Mayor and City Council held a meeting for the purpose of interviewing consultants for a possible annexation study. The companies interviewed were Benchmark, The Wooten Company and Centralina Council of Governments.

Mr. Jason Epley and John McHenry, Benchmark, made their presentation. They indicated Benchmark specializes in local government planning issues and particularly annexation. Mr. Epley indicated his background is in planning and land use issues and Mr. McHenry noted he is a registered land surveyor who has worked for municipal government in North Carolina and has performed several annexation studies.

Councilmember Hall joined the meeting at this time.

Councilmember Hall said that if the City was to proceed with annexation, it would need to make sense from a cost/benefit standpoint. Councilmember Neel said he would like all the options for annexation presented to the City. Mr. Epley indicated this is something his company could provide.

Mr. Buddy Blackburn, The Wooten Company, discussed his company and services. He noted The Wooten Company has been in business for over 70 years and he reviewed a list of municipal annexation studies they have recently undertaken. He indicated his background to be in municipal land use and planning.

He noted that municipal annexation in North Carolina is a much more controversial and contentious subject than in years past. He said that county

governments are becoming more involved in these issues. He noted the key is to look at the costs and benefits derived from potential annexations before any final decisions are made. He noted that his firm would look at all the options available to the City and discuss goals and strategies.

Ms. Tricia Byrd and Mr. Al Sharp, Centralina Council of Governments, reviewed the services of their organization. Mr. Sharp noted that Centralina has probably performed more annexation feasibility studies than any other organization in the region.

Ms. Byrd reviewed their process for a study. She said they take a conservative approach because of the controversial nature of annexation. She indicated that service delivery and costs are a crucial component of an annexation study.

After the completion of the presentations, Mayor Whitley asked the Council what it was they would like to accomplish. He noted that annexation is a very controversial issue, often times ending up in litigation. He suggested pursuing special legislation for any desired annexations.

Councilmember Neel said he felt the feasibility study is needed to determine the City's options.

Councilmember Hall agreed annexations can be controversial and distributed an article concerning a recent highly contested annexation project in Salisbury. She also noted that annexations would need to be economically feasible before she could support an annexation.

The City Manager suggested pursuing an interlocal agreement with New London and Badin to establish areas of influence where each town would agree to adhere by and not encroach beyond the agreed upon boundary toward another municipality. He felt such an agreement would buy the City additional time in studying annexation feasibility because the City would not feel like they had to rush into an annexation before an area was annexed by another municipality.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.