

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
August 25, 2008

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Monday, August 25, 2008, at 7:00 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 City Council met to hear a presentation on the City of Albemarle Land Use Plan Update.

Mayor Whitley called the meeting to order. He began by thanking the members of the Land Use Plan Steering Committee and Director of Planning and Community Development Bob Sasser and Senior Planner Keith Wolf for all their hard work on this project.

Bob Sasser introduced Mr. Darren Rhodes of the North Carolina Division of Community Assistance who has facilitated the process to update the plan.

Mr. Rhodes indicated the City's most recent fully developed Land Use Plan occurred in 1965, with an update taking place in 1971. The current project is intended to provide guidance for land use development through 2028.

Mr. Rhodes said the plan is based on community facts and values. The purpose of such a document is to be a source of community information, serve as a guide for government decisions, and serve as a preview of government decisions. He reviewed the major areas of focus, including, water and sewer infrastructure, a unified development code, pedestrian walkway improvements, incentive policies for the downtown area, open space and recreational development, comprehensive transportation opportunities, traffic calming, improved community appearance, focus on Albemarle-Stanly County Airport as an economic development asset, and cooperation with other governmental agencies.

Committee Chairman Steve Chambers said the Committee members worked very hard and thanked them and the staff for all their work.

Councilmember Hall said some of the statistics that were noted by Mr. Rhodes as being incomplete when the research was initially performed may now be available and should be updated before the plan is finalized.

Councilmember Neel said the City would like to establish an ETJ, as this is a critical part of controlling growth around the perimeter of the City. He thought the plan should address this, which it currently does not.

Mr. Darren Rhodes noted that the plan only provides a concept of what the community can become. The specifics of how to achieve the goals need to be determined and implemented locally or else the planning effort will be in vain.

Councilmember Holcomb cautioned about being over-restrictive as the City moves forward.

Committee member David Smith noted that for potential growth, particularly industrial growth, there is not a lot of vacant land within the City to accommodate this.

Honorary Planning Board member Mr. Ell Wilson said he participated in the development of the 1965 plan and felt it has served the City well. He felt more industrial growth was needed.

Councilmember Hall said from her experience it is difficult to get citizens to participate and they typically only become involved when specific items are considered for implementation. She asked the Committee if any of them had thoughts on seeking citizen input at this point in the process. Committee member Cindy Beane said she felt the Committee was a very good cross-section of the citizenry and represented citizen interests very well. Planning Board member Mr. Tom Hearne said it is difficult to get citizens to understand the large planning process and they typically only focus on specific actions that are part of the implementation process.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Holcomb, seconded by Councilmember Underwood, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, August 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the Tuckertown Water Treatment Plant for a meeting with the Handy Sanitary District.