



AGENDA

Henderson City Council Special Called Meeting

Monday, 15 June 2015, 6:00 p.m.

R. G. (Chick) Young, Jr. Council Chambers, Municipal Building

134 Rose Avenue

Henderson, North Carolina

Mayor and City Council Members

Mayor James D. O'Geary, Presiding

Councilmember James C. Kearney, Sr.

Councilmember Sara M. Coffey

Councilmember Michael C. Inscoe

Councilmember D. Michael Rainey

Councilmember Brenda Peace-Jenkins

Councilmember Garry D. Daeke

Councilmember Fearldine A. Simmons

Councilmember George M. Daye

City Officials

Edward A. Wyatt, Interim City Manager

D. Rix Edwards, City Attorney

Esther J. McCrackin, City Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. PUBLIC HEARING

a) Conduct Budget Public Hearing and Consideration of Citizen Input and the FY2015-16 Recommended Annual Fee Schedule

. (CAF 15-62-A)

- Public Hearing

IV. ADJOURNMENT



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PRESENT

Mayor James D. O'Geary, Presiding; and Council Members Council Members James C. Kearney, Sr., Sara M. Coffey, Michael C. Inscoe, D. Michael Rainey, Brenda Peace-Jenkins, Garry D. Daeke, Fearldine A. Simmons and George M. Daye.

ABSENT

None.

STAFF PRESENT

Interim City Manager Edward A. Wyatt, Assistant City Manager, Frank Frazier, City Clerk Esther J. McCrackin, Finance Director Katherine Brafford, Assistant Finance Director Michelle Daniels, Development Service Director Corey Williams, Recreation and Parks Director Kendrick Vann, Youth Services Director Donna Stearns, Engineering Director Clark Thomas, Public Services Director Mike Ross, Fiscal Compliance Officer Edna Vaught, Police Chief Marcus Barrow, Fire Chief Danny Wilkerson, Assistant Fire Chief Steve Cordell and Human Resources Director Cathy Brown.

CALL TO ORDER

The 15 June 2015 Henderson City Council Special Called Meeting was called to order by Mayor James D. O'Geary at 6:01 p.m. in the R. G. "Chick" Young, Jr. Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 134 Rose Avenue, Henderson, NC.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll and advised Mayor O'Geary a quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING

Conduct Budget Public Hearing and Consideration of Citizen Input and the FY2015-16 Recommended Annual Fee Schedule. (Reference: CAF 15-62-A)

Interim City Manager Wyatt said it is his understanding that some Downtown Development Commission (DDC) representatives will be present this evening to discuss its needs. The DDC would like to have additional funds for façade improvements. Mr. Wyatt clarified the grant funds will go to the property owners and he mentioned details should go before the Land Planning Committee. Mr. Wyatt then distributed a portion of the FY14-15 Adopted Budget Message and the minutes from the June 11, 2014 meeting pertaining to the DDC discussion.

Mayor O'Geary asked Council if they would like to hear from the DDC now or during the public hearing. It was the consensus to hear from the DDC now, so Mayor O'Geary asked Mr. Phil Hart to come forward.

As Chairperson of the DDC, Mr. Hart came forward and began by saying last year Council decided to do away with the Main Street Program and it was the DDC's understanding that they would receive funding for façade improvements. The DDC has worked diligently to create a grant program which he distributed to Council. He said the program was never promoted as funding was never received. However, three people did request an application and one returned a completed application.

Council Member Inscoe said his understanding was the City would try to provide additional funding which was not a guarantee. Mr. Hart said it was the DDC's understanding that funding would be provided based on unused funds from the vacant position(s) in the Planning Department.

Council Member Kearney asked for the amount of funding requested by businesses. Mr. Hart said \$2,600 for an awning and \$700 to replace windows damaged during the Christmas Parade.

Mr. Kearney said his recollection of the 2014 meeting was, after much discussion, \$10,000 was appropriated in the budget and the City would look for up to \$20,000 for additional funding. Mr. Kearney feels the City should honor its commitment and fund the applications the DDC has received. Council Member Daeke said his recollection is the same as Mr. Kearney's and said the commitment/intention was up to \$20,000 for improving façade.

Council Member Inscoe asked what portion of the grant the owner has to provide. Mr. Hart responded 25%.

Council Member Coffey asked why the owner only contributes 25%. Mr. Hart said there is a loan program in place; however, the 25% provides incentive for the owners to improve their façade(s) which is the goal of the program.

Council Member Inscoe how many loans have been given out this year. Mr. Hart said none. Council Member Coffey asked why. Mr. Hart said merchants are looking for grant funding rather than loans.

Council Member Daeke felt the grants should only be provided to active businesses. Mr. Hart said the DDC does not specify it has to go to an active business. Mr. Daeke said if the grant goes to an active business, he does not have a problem with the 75/25 split. Mr. Hart added it would be nice to have buildings improved before becoming code enforcement issues.

Council Member Kearney asked if staff has reviewed the requirements of the grant. Development Service Director Williams said he felt it would be a good idea to have a special workshop for the DDC to present the process. Mr. Kearney asked if the funds cannot be used, can the \$10,000 be carried forward into the next year.

Interim City Manager Wyatt said at this point in the year, he would suggest setting aside a specific amount from the Planning Development budget and asked whether Council would like to set aside \$10,000 of \$20,000. Development Service Director William proposed \$10,000 which has been set aside in the FY14-15 budget which he thought remains in his budget.

Council Member Peace-Jenkins agreed that Council should honor its commitment to the DDC.

There was then a brief discussion about how to appropriate the additional \$10,000 and Finance Director Brafford suggested amending the FY15-16 budget which will be approved at the June 22nd meeting.

Council Member Daeke asked Council if it was willing to appropriate more funding if needed. Mr. Inscoe said he would be *willing to consider* additional funding.

Council Member Kearney then asked why this needed to go before the Land Planning Committee. His concern was once the commitment is made, he did not want it to be bogged down in bureaucracy. Mr. Inscoe said it involves property and Mr. Daeke thought it was appropriate to go before the Land Planning Committee.

Council Member Coffey said she would like to review the grant information before she agreed to additional funding.

Council Member Kearney then summarized the discussion by saying if \$10,000 available this year can be made available in FY15-16, then the Land Planning Committee and staff should review the grant process for a good, viable mechanism which uses tax payer funds appropriately, then the DDC can proceed with its program. Mr. Kearney said he hoped this process could be completed in no more than 30 days.

Mayor O'Geary asked if this is agreeable, and Mr. Wyatt said the budget would be adjusted for approval next week. Then the Land Planning Committee will meet and the DDC can begin to receive applications.

Council Member Coffey said she would like to see businesses more involved and less dependent on the City. She suggested some type of dialogue with the merchants. Phil asked if this would be a downtown tax, merchants association or what.

Council Member Daeke suggested a meeting to see how committed the merchants would be, to discuss what merchants would like to see done, fund raising ideas, etc. Mayor O'Geary asked if this sounded like a good idea. With reservations, Mr. Hart said yes as it is time consuming to contact everyone. Mr. Daeke suggested the Development Service department or the City Clerk might be able to assist with this. This sounded like a great idea to everyone.

Council Member Coffey asked how many businesses were vacant. There was some discussion with 22 or more being mentioned. Mr. Hart said some buildings are not able to sustain a business due to poor conditions.

Mayor O'Geary asked Mr. Hart if he had a specific number. He said no. Since there is no longer a Main Street Manager, those statistics have not been kept current. The Mayor then asked Mr. Williams if he had the specific number. Mr. Williams said no but he could work on obtaining the data.

This led to a discussion about the need for a Main Street Manager.

Mr. Hart said for the City to qualify in the Main Street program, there is a prerequisite of a part-time employee (20 hours a week) with a commitment that the position will become full-time in 3 years. Unfortunately, the program will only accept 6-8 cities this year and the applications must be submitted by July 1.

There was then a brief discussion about what the County contributes to the DDC and whether they might be willing to make a commitment toward a portion of the salary for a part-time position. This year the County is contributing \$1,500 to the DDC.

There were no further questions so Mayor O'Geary opened the Public Hearing by asking if anyone was present who wished to speak in favor of this budget.

Curtiss White, 236 Dabney Drive Mr. White applauded Council for not increasing property taxes. As a realtor, he said marketing Vance County is difficult and felt a downtown director is needed. Mr. White made several suggestions on how to improve downtown including asking the County to step up and contribute more, and/or a meeting between the City, County and Downtown merchants. He would like to see the Grant application proceed and concluded by saying there are beautiful buildings downtown that just need some TLC.

No other citizen came forward, so Mayor O'Geary then asked if anyone was present who wished to speak in opposition to the budget. No one came forward.

Mayor O'Geary then closed the Public Hearing and asked Mr. Wyatt if he had any further comments.

Mr. Wyatt said the budget will be on the agenda for the June 22nd meeting.

Council Member Coffey asked who is going to speak to the County about the Downtown Development funding. Council Member Inscoe said a meeting is already set with the County for other issues this Wednesday and he would be happy to raise this issue if Council was agreeable and they were. Mr. Wyatt said he would alert Interim County Manager Murphy that this would be added to the meeting agenda.

With no further business, Mayor O'Geary asked if Council was prepared to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Coffey moved for adjournment. Motion seconded by Council Member Kearney and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

James D. O'Geary
Mayor

ATTEST:

Esther J. McCrackin
City Clerk