

**HENDERSON CITY COUNCIL
MID-YEAR RETREAT
City Hall
August 23, 2018**

PRESENT: Mayor Eddie Ellington, Council Members Marion B. Williams, William Burnette, Melissa Elliott, Michael D. Rainey and George M. Daye

ABSENT: Council Members Coffey, and Simmons (due to health reasons), and Council Member Daeke (due to a scheduling conflict)

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Frank Frazier, Assistant City Manager Paylor Spruill, Human Resources Director Elgin Lane and City Clerk Esther J. McCrackin

GUEST: Ryan Hedrick (Daily Dispatch)

City Manager Frazier called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm.

The purpose of this meeting was to review the Strategic Planning Goals established at the February meeting and to consider any new goals Council wished to add.

Mr. Frazier reviewed each of the eight key objectives beginning with the first objective:

Implement Performance Excellence

The City Manager said CGI Communications will be filming various city entities in September and the Mayor will be taped doing a welcome to the City. Once complete the video will be placed on the city's website. He also said the public has responded well to the monitor in the lobby at City Hall.

Concern was expressed about the need to let citizens know what permits are needed and what codes need to be met. It was suggested information be placed on the web, in the water bills and on the monitor at City Hall.

Reduce Crime/Safe Community

The Manager said the City is still experiencing difficulty recruiting for several positions due to problems such as candidates not having a driver's license and/or are unable to pass a background check. Therefore he has met with the Human Resources Director to look into possibly rewriting certain job descriptions relative to the minimum requirements.

There was discussion about individuals re-entering the work force and Council encouraged staff to find ways to be flexible with those who have proven themselves and to also look at individual cases but to be sure to abide by the law. Council was pleased to know employees have access to an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) if needed.

Another discussion item was how the City ensures employees have a current driver's license (especially CDL licenses) and the process if an accident occurs while driving. Mr. Frazier said there are steps in place for reviewing accidents and that there is a Safety Committee that reviews and suggests steps to avoid accidents. It was pointed out that there is a policy in place to help protect employees which is continually tweaked. He said the last major update was in 2015 and it needs to be reviewed again.

One issue of concern was whether background checks are done on the athletic coaches. This led to a discussion about the Recreation and Parks Department seeking more tournaments throughout the season.

Mr. Frazier said interaction between the police department and the faith based community has waned some but interaction with other community agencies has increased. He also mentioned the Adopt a Block program and said he is still reviewing the possibility of a possible litter tax.

This led to a question about graffiti and specifically the Young Avenue/Corbitt Hills areas were mentioned. There were questions about hot spots throughout the city and whether they have changed as the police department focuses on known hot spots. Another police matter discussed was what will happen when the Federal/State agencies are no longer working with the city police in making arrests of serious offenders.

Before moving on, Mr. Frazier thanked Council once again for the salary increases that he felt has helped retain officers and other staff. Currently, the Police Department is only down 2-3 officers.

Mr. Frazier asked Council for input regarding what type of partnerships the City should establish. Comments were the partnership should be with legal entities that have filed with the State and that they should be reputable.

Overall, Council expressed concerns about litter and suggested installation of litter signs, and establishing a penalty if caught littering. It was suggested the City look into putting up cameras in specific areas to catch offenders and that focus should be on major entrances into Henderson. There was talk about re-establishing a Clean-up Henderson committee.

Regarding grant writing, Mr. Frazier said progress has been slow but he is looking at making some position changes that may help. It was suggested other communities that have been successful in this area may be willing to share some of their *tricks of the trade* and Warrenton was specifically mentioned. Mr. Frazier said he hoped to bring a proposal to Council at its next regular meeting.

Economic Development

The focus of this objective was whether a meal tax could be created and used to help with downtown funding. Mr. Frazier said he has met with Representative Terry Garrison but no concrete action has been taken.

The other item of discussion was the Christmas parade which will be held on a Saturday at dusk with the tree lighting to follow after which the Performing Arts Center has a holiday presentation. The City is planning on purchasing an artificial tree that can be used for hopefully several years. At the last Council meeting, approval was received to install the hardware necessary to put up seasonal banners. Mr. Frazier said he recently met with the director of the Tourism office and they are interested in flying banners at other times of the year, like for the Car Show.

The DDC (Downtown Development) is providing partial funding to make improvements to the Orange Street parking and the City will help by cutting down the trees.

Kerr-Tar Workforce Program has committed to working with the City's Urban Homesteading program and currently is waiting for supplies. This led to a question about the program Jason Williams talked about during a Council meeting earlier this year. Ms. Elliott said it was her understanding that he was waiting on something from the City but she was unsure what he needed before moving forward.

A short break was taken at this time.

(Clerk's Note: Council Members Elliott and Rainey left the meeting at 2:07 p.m.)

Before the two Council Members left, Mr. Frazier said if there are any action items any of the Council Members wish to add to these objectives to please let Esther or Pat Pearson, Executive Assistant know.

Improve Condition of Housing Stock

The Mayor said the Housing Committee needs to become more active and the Manager said the Redevelopment Commission needs to become active also.

Mr. Frazier also mentioned how much work he has seen throughout the city regarding housing improvements. And with this, he mentioned concern regarding grass cutting on city owned lots saying the City needs to set the example.

Provide Reliable Dependable Infrastructure

City Manager Frazier said Council may have to consider a larger project to identify infiltration/inflow problems and making the necessary repairs a priority to reduce sewer overflows which are happening more often. He also said he will be bringing an item of concern

to Council in September regarding Elmwood Cemetery and the possible placement of a columbarium. This was on a previous master plan for Elmwood.

The pipe was delivered to the job site and work will start this week on the Beckford Drive/Young Avenue/Shirley Drive project.

Lastly, Mr. Frazier said the City Engineer is working on a sewer modeling project and at some time in the near future Council will need to consider a replacement project for water and sewer lines in the downtown area.

Develop and Maintain a Qualified Workforce

A lot of discussion about the workforce fell under the *Reduce Crime* objective but Mr. Frazier did mention that the City used more interns this summer than in past years.

Expand Leisure and Cultural Services

Mr. Frazier said staff has met with a contractor and the amphitheater project is moving forward with getting quotes to perform the work. Everyone is excited about the pavilion, and the Veterans group has agreed to include/move the monuments from Memorial park into the circle area at the police station.

Council Member Burnette has met with Recreation and Parks Director Kendrick Vann about drawing in more outside traveling teams for various events/tournaments.

Provide Financial Resourcing

Mr. Frazier said he has a meeting next week to look into reducing energy costs at the Reclamation Facility.

A proposal for a stormwater utility fee will be brought before Council soon. If approved, this fee will help offset the cost of the replacement pipes that are badly needed.

Other

Mr. Frazier asked Council to review at their leisure the Downtown Development Commission information that he distributed regarding the City's mainstreet work.

The City received a letter from the NCDOT regarding the State's consideration of installation/repair of ADA curb ramps at various intersections throughout the City.

Mr. Frazier said he received a call from the County Manager asking that Council consider partially funding the cost of placing three buildings on the National Historic Register: Eaton Johnson Annex, Western High School and Henderson Middle School. Mr. Frazier said he did not think the City should fund Western High but felt consideration should be given to the other two buildings. This will be brought before Council at its next regular meeting.

Council Member Williams asked if the City could do anything to influence downtown owners to improve their storefronts --- especially those with torn, dirty looking curtains in their windows.

Mayor Ellington said he met with the President of Maria Parham Health who would like to set up a meeting regarding ways to change the perception of the City. This led to a short discussion about ways to help citizens understand what the City does and how it works.

Although she was unable to attend due to health reasons, Council Member Simmons asked that the City Manager do what he could to encourage the NCDOT to install crosswalks with crossing lights on Dabney Drive near McDonald's and also on Andrews Avenue near City Tire where children cross the road from the apartments to go to the grocery store.

With no further business, Mr. Frazier thanked the Council Members for their time and reiterated if they have any further suggestions/action items to please let the City Clerk or his office know.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Eddie Ellington
Mayor

ATTEST:

Esther J. McCrackin
City Clerk