

SUMMARY OF MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/HOUSING/GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

3:10 P.M., TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006

COMMITTEE ROOM

ROOM 239, CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Council Member Nelson L. Malloy, Jr. Chair
Council Member Dan Besse, Vice Chair
Council Member Evelyn A. Terry (entered at 3:58 p.m.)
Council Member Molly Leight

OTHERS PRESENT: Council Member Joycelyn V. Johnson (in at 4:08 p.m.)
Council Member Robert C. Clark (in at 4:12 p.m.)

Chair Malloy called the meeting to order and asked for the first order of business.

1. RESOLUTION APPROVING LEASE OF CIVITAN PARK TO WINSTON-SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY FOR A TERM OF 33 YEARS. [*Continued from March 11 committee meeting.*]

Mr. Derwick Paige, Assistant City Manager, and Mr. Tim Grant, Parks and Recreation Director, made the staff presentation on this item. Mr. Paige stated that this item is an agreement with Winston-Salem State University to allow them to lease 23 acres of Civitan Park. Under the terms of the agreement, WSSU would pay the City an initial amount of \$15,000, which will be used to create some new recreational open space on the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive across from Bowman Gray Stadium. In addition, WSSU will pay the City \$5,200 per year for the term of the lease, which is 33 years. At the end of the term of the lease, all of the improvements will become assets of the City. However, Finance Committee recommended the addition of a clause to authorize the negotiation of an extension if both parties desire. The improvements to be made to the property by WSSU will be a full practice football field, a half practice football field, NCAA regulation track, a regulation softball field, and a practice baseball field. Under the terms of the agreement, everything except the football fields will be open to the public at least 50 percent of daylight hours based on an annual average. The football fields could be scheduled for use by the public. He further explained that the agreement provides that the name of Civitan Park cannot be changed without approval of the City Council, and the agreement acknowledges the possibility that NCDOT may build a Salem Creek connector across the property. However, if by chance the road takes a portion of the improvements made by WSSU, the City would not be held responsible for those improvements.

Mr. Ron Seeber, City Attorney, pointed out an addition to page two of the agreement which was recommended by the Finance Committee and which reads as follows: "It is the intent of the City, six months prior to the termination of this lease agreement, to undertake good faith negotiations with the lessee to renew or to extend this lease agreement. Said renewal or extension hereto shall be duly authorized and executed only following a public hearing required by resolution of the City Council."

Council Member Besse stated that it is his understanding that the area covered by this lease agreement does not include the portion of constructed wetlands of Civitan Park or the greenway; therefore, the daylight hours use provision contained in the lease would not apply.

Mr. Paige responded that this is correct.

Council Member Besse made a motion for approval of the item as recommended by the Finance Committee. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Leight.

Council Member Besse stated that he does not believe that this action constitutes a loss of parkland. Although he is somewhat concerned about the loss of a softball field, this lease will provide additional facilities available for public use at no cost to the City. Council Member Besse expressed a concern about the overall trend of recent years to effectively treat City parkland as a "land bank" that can be used for other good purposes, and he would like to go on record as having a strong desire to have that perspective on City parkland to come to an end. He stated that he supports this item, but it would be his preference that the City not consider further negotiations over City parkland.

The motion for approval was unanimously carried.

2. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS RELATED TO THE DEMOLITION OF CITY-OWNED BUILDINGS FOR ADDITIONAL FOURTH STREET PARKING:
 - a. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACTIONS RELATED TO THE DEMOLITION OF CITY-OWNED BUILDINGS FOR ADDITIONAL FOURTH STREET PARKING.
 - b. ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA FOR FY 2005-2006.

Mr. Paige presented the staff report. He stated that the City currently owns five buildings on Third and Fourth Streets, which were formerly a part of the 120 West Fourth Street project and now known as part of the Civic Plaza project. This item would authorize the use of up to \$360,000 in 2006 Downtown Development COPs for the demolition of these buildings. Last year, \$500,000 was authorized to go toward demolition of two of the buildings, plus the construction of a parking lot. In conjunction with the One Park Vista project, the City will demolish all of the buildings which now sit between the Strollway on the east and the pedestrian bridge on the west and construct a temporary parking lot of approximately 64 public spaces.

Council Member Leight made a motion for approval of the item. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Besse and unanimously carried.

3. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS RELATING TO THE CONSOLIDATED HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

- a. RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FEDERAL FY 07 HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF THE 2006-2007 ANNUAL PLAN TO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.
- b. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR A SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE URBAN LEAGUE OF WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY, INC.
- c. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION, ACCEPTANCE OF HOMELESS ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDS, AND EXECUTION OF SUBGRANTEE AGREEMENTS.
- d. RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AND AUTHORIZING ACTIONS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.

Dr. Monica Lett, Director of the Housing/Neighborhood Development Department, made the staff presentation. She explained that July 1 will begin the fourth year of the City's current five-year housing plan. In spite of fund reductions, the City was successful in being able to address projected demand for on-going major programs such as rehabilitation through carryover of prior uncommitted funds, through reducing and eliminating some previously funded activities for which the current market demand and conditions do not justify, such as new multi-family and large scale retail projects. Homeownership assistance was reduced since the City has adequate appropriated funds to cover current commitments for all assisted subdivisions and the HOPE VI homeownership component. She stated that the result is that the City can meet its projected rehab program demand and can increase funding for homeownership production, specifically acquisition and infrastructure for Habitat and other new initiatives. There will be funds for neighborhood revitalization of inner-city neighborhoods, an increase in the construction training program and some public service activities, including funds for a summer youth employment program.

Dr. Lett advised that items c and d were held in Finance Committee to come back in May. The continuum of care is the set of project activities that are approved each year for which there is a collaborative process sponsored by the Council on Services for the Homeless. Most of the sponsors and projects are renewals; however, the number one priority project for which the City will receive bonus funds has to be for permanent housing. She explained that the conclusion from Finance Committee was that by the time the committee meets next month, the collaborative process would have been concluded and so there would be time to bring the item back to committees and then submitted for Council's approval prior to the deadline for submission to HUD. Dr. Lett advised that the Finance Committee wanted to make sure the renewal projects are consistent with the implementation of the ten-year plan, and there were concerns regarding the Bethesda expansion and the current issue with JKS Motorsports.

Council Member Malloy commented that the Bethesda Center was serving those persons with immediate needs and the Ten-Year Plan was designed for long-term.

Dr. Lett explained that the extra time would allow for additional reviewing of the rankings and may change the list of renewals. She also noted that Finance Committee asked for three changes in the appointment of the committee: one, to have one of the six City appointments affiliated with the Neighborhood Alliance or another neighborhood association; to have one of the City appointments someone with an accounting background; and finally, to change the wording of the resolution to make it clear that the Council will approve the appointments upon recommendation of the Mayor.

Council Member Besse made a motion for approval of a and b, and to hold c and d in committee until the May meeting. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Leight and unanimously carried.

4. REQUEST OF THE LIBERTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND MS. VERDE MORRIS TO DELAY ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1713 N. LIBERTY STREET.

Mr. Paige explained that in December of 2005, the Council approved the Liberty Street Corridor Redevelopment Plan, and as part of that plan, approximately six parcels were identified as being critical for acquisition by the City. The Council has authorized the staff to proceed with the acquisition of three of the six parcels. This item relates to the parcel at 1713 N. Liberty Street.

Mr. James Shaw, Executive Director of the Liberty Community Development Corporation, 3471 Cumberland Road, appeared before the committee with a request from Liberty CDC for the City to delay acquisition of this property for 60 days, so that they can negotiate with the owner for renovation of the space for offices for the CDC.

Council Member Leight made a motion for approval of the request. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Besse and unanimously carried.

Mr. Paige advised the committee that he has spoken with Council Member Burke about this request and she is in agreement with the 60-day delay in acquisition; however, if the parties have not reached an agreement in 60 days, on Day 61, the City is to begin the acquisition process.

At the request of Chair Malloy, Mr. Paige advised the committee about the status of the purple building on Liberty Street.

(Council Member Terry entered the meeting at 3:58 p.m.)

5. RESOLUTION APPROVING ACCEPTANCE OF A PUBLIC ART SCULPTURE TO BE PLACED ON CITY PROPERTY.

Mr. Grant was present to respond to questions.

Ms. Gail Fisher, 4520 Chinaberry Lane, addressed the committee on behalf of Habitat for Humanity.

Council Member Terry made a motion for approval of the item. The motion was duly seconded by Council Member Leight and unanimously carried.

6. REPORT ON REVITALIZATION OF URBAN COMMERCIAL AREAS.

Presenting the staff report were Mr. Paige, Paul Norby, City/County Planning Director, and Judy Hunt, Principal Planner.

(Council Member Johnson entered the meeting at 4:08 p.m. Council Member Clark entered the meeting at 4:11 p.m.)

In July of 2002, the Council recognized the problems and issues associated with declining urban commercial areas and their economic impact on the health of the City and neighborhoods by including the revitalization of such areas in its Strategic Plan. The Council noted underutilized, unutilized, and blighted properties are in need of assistance to change the trend. Because of the high number of commercial areas in some level or decline and limited financial resources for improvements, four different levels of urban commercial areas are recommended. Each type would have a different level of programs/improvements and financial commitment recommended. This would concentrate improvements for several areas, and still supply incentives for many others.

Mr. Paige stated that this would be a competitive process, with non-profits such as CDCs and churches taking the lead and submitting proposals which would be evaluated on a point system. He commented that a strong public/private partnership is critical to the success of the program, and he explained in general how proposals would be selected and how the program would work. He acknowledged that there would be winners and losers in the process.

A lengthy discussion ensued with committee members asking questions for clarification. Several concerns were expressed such as the disadvantage smaller areas would have in qualifying or being successful in the bidding; the types of improvements which could be done; pare the list down to prime areas.

Mr. Paige stated that recommendations for specific project areas would be brought to Council.

It was the consensus of the committee that staff should proceed with developing the Request for Proposals concept.

7. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN - WINSTON-SALEM/FORSYTH COUNTY 2015.

Marylin Moniquette-John, Project Planner, made the presentation on this item. She stated that the goal of the plan was to enhance recreational opportunities and quality of life of the community by guiding the location and development of new parks and recreation facilities and preserving open space. Key elements of the plan are the findings from the needs assessment and the County-wide survey and the public review during the Fall of 2005. She presented the recommendations of the plan: upgrade existing and develop new parks, complete a maintenance assessment and an upgrading plan for existing facilities in Winston-Salem, consider pedestrian and bike access when selecting new park sites, improve sidewalk access to existing parks by adding missing sidewalks

within one-half mile of parks to the sidewalk construction list, ensure that parks and recreational facilities are addressed in area plans, and explore the feasibility of establishing national standard soccer and other sport complexes.

Council Member Clark asked for comparison data of the City's parks and parks in other cities comparable in size.

Council Member Terry asked for the economic impact of regional parks in cities where they exist.

Council Member Johnson requested that the City explore partnering with other facilities such as the YMCA and YWCA in enhancing recreational opportunities for citizens.

It was noted that the Council will hold a public hearing on this plan on April 17. The report was accepted by the committee for information.

8. CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION ON CITY'S HIRING PRACTICES FOR PERSONS WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS. *[Continued from March 21 committee meeting.]*

Bill Hill, Human Resources Director, gave the staff presentation on this item. He explained that City staff met with staff from the Northwest Council of Governments (COG) which sponsors the at-risk persons, and outlined a partnership effort. From that meeting came the following recommendations: that the City's Human Resources Department would coordinate a non-traditional workplace activity; match the applicant with the appropriate department; pre-screen all applicants for clean records for one year from date of conviction. Applicants would be required to come through a COG-sponsored program to ensure they have a support system. This process would provide three options for the applicants: a three-month work experience, on-the-job training with COG-supplemented salaries, and an apprenticeship model utilizing skill building options through four City departments. Mr. Hill advised that the apprenticeship program is expected to begin on July 1 after the execution of a memorandum of understanding between the City and COG.

Discussion ensued among committee members regarding hiring preferences for people returning home to Winston-Salem, the difficulties encountered with re-entry into the workforce, and the need to differentiate between violent and non-violent offenders.

Mr. Hill and Mr. Lee Garrity, Assistant City Manager, assured the committee that applicants will be screened carefully and placed in areas where they would have a good chance of success while filling a needed position within City government.

The report was accepted for information.

9. PRESENTATION BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY REGARDING HOPE IV PROJECTS AT GATEWAY COMMONS AND HAPPY HILL GARDEN.

Mr. Fulton Meacham, 5205 Ivy Stone Lane, addressed the committee on behalf of the Housing Authority and reviewed the work being accomplished in the Happy Hill HOPE VI development. He distributed information and provided an update on Providence Place, Alders Pointe, and Willows Peake. Mr. Meacham responded to questions from members of the committee.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:20 p.m.