CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024
CITY HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
6:00 PM

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall and Police Department at 6:00 p.m. with the Honorable James T. Willis, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Mary Evans, Rosemary Rainer, Barbara Rogers, and Andrew G. Williamson, Jr.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager; William P. Floyd, Jr., City Attorney; Harold W. Haywood, Administrative Services Director / City Clerk; Amanda Futrell, Administrative Support Assistant / Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Willis gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The City Manager stated that item g was added to the Consent Agenda. He stated that this item was added because the date of the National Night Out Event by the Police Department, formerly approved by the Council in August, had to be moved to October 1, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Councilmember Evans moved to approve the amended agenda, with a second by Councilmember Rainer, and the vote was unanimous.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Willis Read aloud the Consent Agenda:

a. Consider the approval of the draft minutes for the August 20, 2024, Regular Meeting.

b. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-19, Finding of Facts, for rezoning request for Parcel 01021001008 located on Elm Avenue approved at the August 20, 2024 regular meeting.

c. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-20, Finding of Facts, for rezoning request for Parcel ID #'s 01006101026 and 01006101027 on Kinlaw Drive from Residential-6 to Office/Institutional, and Parcel ID #'s 01006101028, 01006101029, 01006101030, 01006201009 on Kinlaw Drive from Residential15 to Office/Institutional approved at the August 20, 2024 regular meeting.

d. Consider Resolution No. R-2024-21, Finding of Facts, for a request for a Special Use Permit on Parcel ID # 04019808007 on Barnes Bridge Road for a church approved at the August 20, 2024 regular meeting.

e. Consider the approval of the use of McDuffie Square for the Scotland Memorial Foundation FUNd Run, followed by FUNd Fest on April 26, 2025, from 5:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

f. Consider the approval for the use of McDuffie Square and road closures for the Christmas on Main Event to be held on Sunday, November 24, 2024, from 7 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

g. Consider the approval of the use of McDuffie Square for the National Night Out Event by the Police Department that was rescheduled for October 1, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and approve the closure of Railroad Street, from Gill Street to Main Street, for this event from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Councilmember Adams moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Evans moved to second the motion, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Evans, Rainer, Rogers, Williamson

Nays - None
(Copy of Resolution No. R-2024-19, R-2024-20 and R-2024-21 on file in the clerk's office)

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Consider Incentive Agreement.

Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to consider an incentive agreement.

The City Manager stated that this item is for the Council to consider an Economic Development Reimbursement Grant between the City of Laurinburg and NC Laurinburg Hampton LLC. He stated that it would be for the development of a 7.9 acre tract which was the former location of Scotland Inn and Champs. The City Manager stated that NC Laurinburg Hampton LLC has pledged to invest $14 million and bring in at least 3 retail businesses to the property. He explained that the incentive agreement being proposed is a $100,000 per year reimbursement for a total of 5 years, once the entity has completed the pledges made to the City of Laurinburg. A conversation ensued about the additional revenue that would be generated for the City of Laurinburg through the water, sewer and electricity from the development.

Mayor Willis asked if there was anyone in attendance that wanted to comment on the incentive agreement.

Mrs. Myquel Wheat wanted to speak before the Council. Mrs. Wheat discussed the community's need for jobs that are not minimum wage jobs. She explained that the community needed jobs with benefits. She wanted to discuss the need to recruit higher-paying jobs with benefits or the ability to make those items a requirement for developers. A discussion ensued about the types of businesses that the developer hopes to bring to the parcel. The City Manager stated that releasing the identity of those businesses is at the discretion of the developer. The City Attorney discussed the parcel's location related to the major highway and its location in the commercial district of the city. He stated that, when considering the economic development grant, important factors were considered. These factors include the developer's plans to tear down a place with asbestos in it, removing a place where crime has been taking place, and developing a parcel that has been difficult to market. The City Manager explained the role of economic incentives in making projects work. He stated that incentives help developers with cost. A conversation ensued about requiring developers to use local businesses, such as contractors, on projects. The City Manager explained that the City cannot require the developer to use local contractors.

Mayor Willis asked if there was anyone else that wanted to speak about the incentive agreement. There wasn't anyone else that wanted to speak regarding the incentive agreement. Mayor Willis declared the public hearing closed.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve the incentive agreement and authorize the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the agreement. Councilmember Rainer moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Rainer, Evans, Rogers, Williamson
Nays - None

b. Consider a request to rezone Parcel No. 01003301019 located at 1216 N. Main Street from General Business to Residential-6.

Mayor Willis opened the public hearing to consider a request to rezone Parcel No. 01003301019 located at 1216 N. Main Street from General Business to Residential-6. He asked Mr. Mac McInnis, Planner/Code Enforcement Officer, to explain the request to the Council.

Mr. McInnis explained that Mr. Alonso purchased the property located at 1216 N. Main Street. He stated that there are 2 houses located on this parcel. Mr. McInnis stated that Mr. Alonso's intent is to remodel these houses to allow his family to reside in them. He explained that the current zoning of General Business would not allow the owner to be able to remodel the homes to live in them. Mr. McInnis stated that this is the reason Mr. Alonso has requested the parcel to be rezoned to Residential-6. He stated that this rezoning would allow Mr. Alonso's family to remodel the two homes so they can reside in them. Mr. McInnis stated that the Planning Board heard the rezoning request on August 13, 2024, and voted unanimously to recommend approval by the Council. A conversation ensued about the current condition of the homes. Mr. McInnis stated that the owner will have to obtain permits required for the remodeling. He explained that the homes would have to be inspected by the County for any restoration of power to the homes. Mayor Willis advised the Council that Mr. Alonso was present at the hearing tonight.

Councilmember Adams motioned to approve Ordinance No. O-2024-32 rezoning from General Business to Residential-6 the property located at 1216 N. Main Street and identified as Scotland County Parcel Number 01003301019 because it advances the public health, safety, and welfare, and based upon the following:

The rezoning of Scotland County Land Parcel number 01003301019 located at 1216 N. Main Street from General Business to Residential-6 is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable because:

1) The Residential-6 district is established to allow a variety of medium density residential uses such as single family residences, two family residences, and multi-family residences from 7 to 12 dwellings per acre.
2) The Comprehensive Plan 2035 Future Land Use Map indicates the development of mixed uses along North Main Street, which is where this parcel is located. Desired uses in the Mixed use sectors of the Plan are; Commercial, Office & Institutional, and residential uses.
3) There are already a number of R-6 zoned properties along with General Business zoning in the area. The rezoning will allow for residential uses compatible with desired future development in this area.

And it is reasonable because of the following:

1) The Rezoning to R-6 will allow uses consistent with other existing uses;
2) The rezoning to R-6 will help to maintain the present character of the City of Laurinburg, while promoting diversity and future growth.
3) The rezoning to R-6 will have no detrimental impact to values of surrounding landowners, and;
4) The rezoning will require no infrastructure improvements by the City of Laurinburg.

Councilmember Williamson moved to second, and the vote was as follows:

Ayes - Adams, Williamson, Evans, Rainer, Rogers
Nays - None
(Copy of Ordinance No. O-2024-32 on file in the clerk's office)

6. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

a. Discussion of Sanford Building lease and options.

The City Manager stated that this item is to discuss the Sanford Building lease or purchase options. He gave a brief history of the building. The City Manager stated that during the time of the pandemic, Smart Start was looking for a place to rent since they were not in a position to buy a location at the time. He stated that it had been a great partnership with Smart Start since they have been in the Sanford Building. The City Manager stated that an appraisal was done on the location, and it came back at $170,000 for the property. He stated that the appraiser also looked at the current market rates for a comparison of what the City is currently charging for rent on the building. The City Manager stated that the appraiser advised that if the lease were to continue and rent were to be increased, it should be $2300.00 monthly. The City Manager also discussed funds that the City of Laurinburg has spent on the building since acquiring it. The City Manager stated that he wanted to get directions from the Council as to what course of action to take with the Sanford Building. He explained that there are processes that a local government must follow in order to sell property that it owns. The City Manager stated that there is a general statute,160A-279, that allows cities and counties to convey real estate to non-profit entities. He stated that there would be a lot of clawbacks that would have to be in the deed as requirements for Smart Start to obtain the property. The City Manager discussed future costs that will need to be paid if the City retains ownership of the property. A conversation ensued about the appraisal value being below the Scotland County tax value. The consensus of the Council was to present the appraisal to Smart Start and allow them to decide if they want to pursue purchasing the property or continuing leasing the property at the new lease rate.

The City Manager stated that the new fire station is waiting for signage to be completed. He stated that once that is complete, the hope is to have a grand opening and ribbon-cutting event around October. He advised the Council that he would discuss the event further when he has more details.

7. APPOINTMENTS

a. Consider appointment of a member and alternate to the Lumber River Rural Transportation Organization's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

Mayor Willis stated that this item is an appointment to the Lumber River Rural Transportation Organization's Transportation Advisory Committee. He referenced material that the Council was given that showed Mrs. Mary Jo Adams as the current representative for the City of Laurinburg, with Mrs.
Rosemary Rainer as the alternate. Mayor Willis stated that both Councilmember Adams and Councilmember Rainer have expressed their desire to continue serving on the committee.

Councilmember Evans motioned to nominate the appointment of Councilmember Mary Jo Adams to the Lumber River Rural Transportation Organization's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and nominated the appointment of Councilmember Rosemary Rainer as the alternate member to the TAC.

Councilmember Williamson moved to second the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Councilmember Adams explained to the Council that the names of the nominees for the TAC would be sent to the County, and the County Commissioners would make the appointments. She stated that there is one municipal position, so someone from Wagram or Gibson may want to be on the committee.

8. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR AND/OR COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Willis stated that he attended the Laurinburg Institute Founders Day celebration and presented a proclamation from the City of Laurinburg. He stated that they had a nice event. He stated that a Laurinburg native, Elizabeth Monroe Jones, had recently written a book about the Laurinburg Institute that is available to purchase on Amazon.

Councilmember Adams discussed events taking place at the Lumber River Council of Government, including the Southeastern Economic Update with Dr. Laura Ulrich. She also discussed attending the North Carolina League of Municipalities Board of Directors meeting and listening sessions that the NCLM will be providing to get feedback from municipalities.

Councilmember Evans discussed the topic of homelessness in the City of Laurinburg which was addressed in the prior meeting. A discussion ensued about the efforts that are currently being made to try to open a place to assist with homelessness in the community.

Councilmember Rainer advised the Council that they were on the verge of announcing the new Parks & Rec Director. She stated that the new director would be filling the open positions at Parks & Rec.

Councilmember Rogers stated that the Kumba Festival will be held Saturday, September 28, 2024, in the field next to I.E. Johnson.

Mayor Willis stated that the Library's reopening will take place on Thursday, September 19, 2024.

9. CLOSED SESSION (IF NEEDED)

No closed session needed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Williamson, seconded by Councilmember Rainer, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

James T. Willis, Mayor

Harold W. Haywood, City Clerk