

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION
NOVEMBER 16, 2006
COUNCIL ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH STREET
6:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting Thursday, November 16, 2006. The meeting was held in the upstairs council room of the Municipal Building beginning at 6:00 p.m. with the Honorable Ann B. Slaughter, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Lisa D. Griswold (Councilmember Griswold left at 6:30 p.m.). There was not a quorum; therefore, no action taken.

Also present were: Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk. Management members Harold Smith, Cindy Carpenter, Robert Ellis, Bill Riemer, and Bob Bell.

Mayor Slaughter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcome everyone that attended. She explained that the purpose of the meeting is for citizen input on activities that the City is doing and on future concerns for the City of Laurinburg.

The City Manager explained that the citizen input session would be conducted differently than it had been in the past. He then explained how this procedure would work and that the 10-year plan would be revised to a five-year plan for a more manageable process.

He then stated that this procedure would consist of a SWOT analysis of the community. He then stated that SWOT is defined as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and that citizen input will be appreciated. He explained that, once the input is received, strategies along with an action plan would be devised to deal with each area in the SWOT.

The City Manager then stated that a time frame for discussion and a report had been developed with the final report to City Council with strategies and financial information expected in March 2007.

The City Manager then opened up the floor for discussion with the group's consensus regarding the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the City.

The following were listed as strengths:

St. Andrews Presbyterian College
Hospital
Scotia Village
Excellent governments
Few traffic jams-traffic flow
Low tax rate (City)
History of Generosity
Geographic location
UNC-P
Richmond Community College
Scotland County Schools
Commitment to economic development
Good educational system
Low cost of housing

Access to recreational facilities
Civic Clubs
Great number of volunteer agencies
Friendly community
Strong church community
Can-do! City
Prison
Airport (Laurinburg/Maxton)
Governing bodies work closely together along with chamber to bring in business
Winery
Civil War trails
Historical Sites
State Park
Infrastructure (water, sewer, wireless broadband)
Commitment to downtown area
Nice motels
Proximity to Ft. Bragg

The following were listed as weaknesses:

Loss of Jobs
Educational level of workforce
Lack of interstate
Lack of spec building
Lack of technical training center
Limited in recreation
Curb appeal
Attention to detail in completing work
Vacant Buildings
Deterioration of downtown
Marketing
Two main entrances –poorly lighted, poorly landscaped
Governmental Boards need to approach politicians to get things needed (ie. lights, exit numbers,)
Need to promote positives more
No grant writer
No lobbyist in Raleigh
High tax rate (County)
Drugs

The following were listed as opportunities:

Better cooperation with College (SAPC)
BRAC
Improve road between here & Fayetteville (US 401)
New Richmond Community College campus
Advertise activities in Laurinburg/Scotland County at Ft. Bragg
Central calendar of events
Opportunity to get grants
Connect volunteers with need for volunteers
Spec building
Interstate 74
Opportunities for development at airport
Visitors' center
Parental involvement with children

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The following were listed as threats:

Richmond Community College not being funded
Jobs leaving
More disenfranchised citizens
Deteriorating housing stock
Loss of historical black neighborhoods
Apathy
Negativism
Lack of marketable facilities
Lack of dynamic vision
Education
High literacy rate
Taxes
Diminishing tax base

The City Manager stated that the input reveals that there are more strengths for the community than anything else. He concluded by stating that what the City needs to do is to make certain there are strategies to maintain and improve on the strengths.

Mayor Slaughter thanked everyone for attending the meeting and sharing his or her thoughts.

The meeting concluded at 7:25 p.m.

Ann B. Slaughter, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk