

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
CITIZEN INPUT
NOVEMBER 6, 2008
A.B. GIBSON CENTER
322 S. MAIN ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting November 6, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the A.B. Gibson Center located at 322 S. Main St., Laurinburg, North Carolina with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Rembert DeBerry, Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker, III and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. Councilmember Amanda Faulk was absent.

Also present were Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager and Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk. Management Team members present were: Bill Riemer, Director of Administration and Development; Johnny Evans, Chief of Police; Bob Bell, Human Resources/Risk Management Director; Stacey McQuage, Public Utilities Director; Harold Haywood, General Services Director; Harold Smith, Fire Chief; Robert Ellis, Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants Director; Ronald Pierce, Electric Utilities Director; and Jenny Tippet, Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Block welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember DeBerry gave the invocation.

Mayor Block introduced Councilmembers and City staff. He also thanked everyone in attendance for coming to the input session.

He then discussed last year's citizen input session and stated that there were three (3) issues that were introduced that have been the focus of the attendees in prior years. He explained that the issues were recreation (indoor), beautification (community more attractive), and retail recruitment.

Mayor Block stated that the City Manager would discuss the City's accomplishments over the past year. He then explained that then the audience would have an opportunity to voice their concerns.

The City Manager listed the following as accomplishments for the City:

- Completed Lauchwood Drive Utility Relocation – over \$600,000 project; construction to begin in Jan 09
- Landscaping Project on 401 - \$100,000 project with DOT finally started due to drought conditions this Fall
- Formed a Beautification Committee/Solid Waste Advisory Committee
- Completed the Mast Arm project Downtown with DOT
- Implemented the Neighbor to Neighbor WARM program (**W**inter **A**ssistance for **R**esidential **E**mergency Program)
- Finished the LMA Sewer relocation at the Shell Bldg. with grant from Commerce/ribbon cutting on Shell Bldg

- Installed \$1.2 million worth of fiber to all schools within the County
- Worked with the County and Chamber in revising how we do economic development
- Worked with the Lumber River COG with grants to study the water/sewer plant feasibility for a regional facility at WestPoint Stevens
- Upgraded the PD firing range with donation from County Schools for mobile classroom
- Helped with the coordination of President Clinton visit to St. Andrews
- Finished the Buxton project/still working on retail recruitment
- Implemented a Fund Balance Policy

Revised how we pick up recycling from curb sort to co-mingled

- Worked with County on 21st Century designation and committee
- Continual participation with the BRAC and relocation fair at Fort McPherson
- Received \$500,000 grant for sewer rehab work from the NC Rural Center; received \$650,000 sewer rehab grant from CDBG as part of 21st Century
- Began quarterly City newsletter (mailed and online) and bi-monthly employee newsletter
- Completed water/sewer extension to Mallard Creek subdivision
- Initiated 2nd Stage of Automatic “one arm bandit” automated garbage truck
- Design work for RCC project completed/bidding of construction to be first of year
- Police Citizens Academy initiated with 11 graduates
- Crimestoppers of Scotland County initiated

He stated that the above list includes projects the City has done in addition to the everyday operations and programs the City has in place.

A number of citizens discussed the good job that the City does especially in the Public Works Department (yard debris, garbage pick up) and also areas they would like to see improved and programs implemented.

The following is a summary of the input provided by the attendees:

WHAT THE CITY DOES WELL	SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW/IMPROVED SERVICES
Yard waste, limbs, leaves, etc. collection	Continue mosquito spraying
Solid waste collection (impressed with quality of work)	Put markings or reflectors on streets around Sycamore Lane School, St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Scotia Village
Health care is good	Consider public transportation between Laurinburg and Ft. Bragg to encourage BRAC residents - Start small with transportation system and build from there
Citizens Police Academy is fantastic	Blind spots caused by shrubs and trees blocking clear line of site while driving
Fire and Police are superior for town our size	Widen US Highway 401 all the way to Fayetteville
Overall, City is doing great job	Talk with military contractors concerning locating at Laurinburg/Maxton Airport
	Human Relations Committee needs to be reinstated
	Representatives (Mayor, Council, staff) need to attend public events
	Need swimming pool
	The Council/City should be leader in stopping unfair laws regarding jobs lost (globalization)
	Construction projects not completed fast enough and sites not cleaned up
	Following completion of new mast arm installation downtown, consider replacing street signs and getting pavers back in place
	Consider ramps and sidewalks near the Central School project and surrounding area
	Doctors/hospital need to accept Tri-Care

	(military health insurance). (This process has started.)
	Repair existing sidewalks
	Animal Control Ordinance - limiting number of animals
	Lack of progress by Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC). Encourage LDRC to be more involved in the downtown area.
	Consider more residential historic designation
	Pave road between Optimist Park and Deerfield Subdivision (part of Plantation Road)
	Need a community center for the City
	Do something to get the City growing and to bring new businesses into town
	Be creative
	Beautify road from North Main Street to cemetery
	When utility poles are replaced, the old ones are not removed - unsightly
	Erect fence in the back of Market Park for security purposes (referred to Scotland County)
	Pave dirt roads in the City

Question: Why does someone whose home is “all electric” have a lower rate than someone whose home is not?

The above question was asked by Councilmember Parker on behalf of a citizen and staff will forward that information to Councilmember Parker and then address the question at the Citizen Input follow-up session.

Upon question concerning a community center and parks and recreation, Councilmember Leak explained that the City is not in the parks and recreation business and that the cost to implement a program would be high. He shared some of the costs incurred by other municipalities which are involved in recreation. He further explained that the Parks and Recreation Department is handled through Scotland County Government.

Following further discussion about parks and recreation and a community center, Mayor Block

posed the question “would citizens be willing to support a 2-3 cent tax increase to fund such a program?”

No one responded.

Councilmember Rainer commented on the commitment he has seen from the community on projects that took the entire community to support. He also commented on change and stated that the City should change its way of thinking in order to make this community grow as well as provide opportunities to citizens that the City currently does not have in order to encourage more growth in the City.

A discussion ensued concerning a multi-cultural building and the benefit it could provide the community. Such a building could include a performing arts center and a place for young people to participate in activities rather than sitting at a computer all day.

Mayor Block thanked everyone for attending the citizen input session.

The City Manager stated that a summary of the meeting will be mailed to all attendees and will be posted on the City’s

website.

Councilmember Rainer suggested that a follow-up meeting be held to discuss the concerns brought to the attention of Council during this meeting.

A discussion ensued regarding the old Market Furniture building downtown, and it was explained that a non-profit organization was the owner of the facility.

Councilmember DeBerry stated that Council approved paving Deluca Street and that he is still getting complaints because the street has not been paved. He also shared that he was getting complaints about the road at Northside Square Shopping Center and the need for repairs. He then thanked everyone for attending.

Councilmember Parked stated that citizens did not need to wait for a public meeting to contact council if they need assistance. He stated that they should call the City or one of the council members if they have questions or concerns.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Parker, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk