

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
COUNCIL RETREAT
JANUARY 23, 2010
8:00 A.M.
ST. ANDREWS PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE
PRESIDENT'S DINING ROOM
1700 DOGWOOD MILE
LAURINBURG, NC 28352**

MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg reconvened its meeting from Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., recessed on that date and time to Friday, January 22, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. and recessed on that date to this place, date and time, Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. in the President's Dining Room at St. Andrews Presbyterian College located at 1700 Dogwood Mile, Laurinburg, North Carolina with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker, III, Herbert M. Rainer, Jr., and Kenton T. Spencer. Councilmember Amanda F. Doerffel was absent.

Also present were: Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, and facilitators Steve Straus and Heather Lee.

Mayor Block reconvened the meeting 8:00 a.m.

Mayor Block welcomed everyone to the Council's Winter Retreat.

Mayor Block and each Councilmember had a few opening remarks.

Mayor Pro Tem Parker stated that Mrs. Amanda Doerffel is available by phone in order to keep her in the loop of Council's retreat if so desired.

Facilitators Steve Straus and Heather Lee stated that they see their purpose as helping Council to develop priorities and strategies for fiscal year 2010-11 and beyond.

Councilmembers were asked to state what they would like to see accomplished (legacy) during their tenure and/or what their vision is for the City.

Ms. Lee asked if there is a do/don't expectation that Council is focusing on at this retreat?

Councilmembers discussed the following dos/don'ts:

- a. Do stay on task
- b. Don't say "No" because we've done it before
- c. Do be clear about how to accomplish plans
- d. Do agree on core values to use as benchmark
- e. Dissent is ok, but don't engage in personal attacks
- f. Don't try to change things using the same methods
- g. It's a new day, do create a plan
- h. Do identify core problems

Following the ground rules and further discussion, Council concentrated on the following visions:

- "Swagger" back –Laurinburg town people choose
- All America status again

- Physical changes accomplished
 - a. “trees trimmed, streets paved, vacant lot built
- Sustainable projects that will continue going forward
- Create new revenue streams for city
- Create jobs, be proactive, lead for citizens renovation and innovation
- Leave city better than when I came
- Service based economy big opportunity for growth
- Laurinburg be a “quality of life” choice location
- Benchmarking budgets against desires
- Take leadership role in community (county, city, chamber,)

Mr. Straus and Ms. Lee then asked Council to distinguish priorities, strategies, details, etc in their discussions.

PRIORITIES

-
1. Create community jobs/economic development
2. Quality of life - a desirable place to live
3. Effective government
4. Constructive opportunities for youth and family

VALUES

Sustainable

Observable (physical)

Proactive (innovative)

Community building

Accountability

Leading the community

More informed community

User friendly

The below list were brainstorming ideas to create jobs/economic development

- A. Outdoor Theatre – Downtown
- B. Performing Arts Center
- C. Communicate with existing employers to make certain they are sustainable; find out what Laurinburg can do to help them grow
- D. Make State Representatives more accountable
- E. Partnership with Employment Security Commission
- F. Create service sector jobs by population government
- G. Business incubator for ecommerce
- H. Micro finance strategies for small businesses
- I. Force behind development of airport (encourage quick development, consider economic support - runway improvement
- J. Seek funding (e.g. grants, etc) - Green Economy Funding
- K. Retail Recruitment – Restaurants/Businesses
 - a. create loan fund for small businesses
- L. Encourage real estate developers to invest in Laurinburg (e.g. retirement community–patio homes, young active retirement options)
- M. Industrial park in Laurinburg city limits
- N. Create Community Mission
- O. Improving quality of housing in community
 - Low/moderate income

- Evaluate curb & gutter requirements
- No spec houses being built

The below list were brainstorming ideas regarding quality of life:

- A. SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis to identify Gaps - Ask advisory boards what is their vision of quality of life?
- B. Infrastructure (i.e. unpaved roads)
- C. Nuisance Ordinance (abandoned homes, etc.)
- D. Community Center
- E. Beautification, maintenance of building, streets, etc.
"Charm", Civility
- F. Variety of retail, restaurants
Recreation – things for kids (perception in community)
Discussion regarding lack of restaurants, shopping, recreation, etc.
- G. Residency Requirement – (if you work, community feeds you – you should live in community)
- H. Promote Laurinburg positive aspects (promote by comparing tax rates – City/County) (discussion on way taxes are calculated) (what it cost to live in Scotland County vs. elsewhere)
 - Laurinburg First Initiative, Website, YouTube
- I. Engage/partner with school system, literacy council
- J. Strategic partnership with non profits
- K. Evaluate opportunity to combine city/county functions, realistically
- L. Dynamic – place people want to be

The below list were brainstorming ideas regarding constructive opportunities for youth/family

1. (M) Youth Council approval by council at last meeting – January 19
(Partner w/school)

2. (N) Youth employment

- e.g. State/Federal programs (assuming funding available - if COG has summer program City should administer (Schools administered last year)

3. Recreation

- e.g. Community Center - adults, kids

4. Partnership with various agencies

- e.g. Business partnership with schools

5. (O) Get stakeholders together to coordinate programs, ideas across government, nonprofits, etc.

6. (P) Promote health & fitness in community

- Build on existing parks to make robust - make a park guide, partner with St. Andrews

7. Resources for mental health

- e.g. Counseling services (faith based program in town)
- Homeless shelter

Upon further discussion, Council elected to add the above reference ideas to the quality of life listing (Constructive opportunities for youth & families)

The below list were brainstorming ideas regarding effective government: (where is money going to come from?)

- A. Proactive - create atmosphere for/engage in best practices (shovel ready projects, etc.) – think out of box, but

- take small steps
- B. Evaluate budget allocations
- C. Evaluate effectiveness of city functions (e.g. Tax collection/How efficient are we?) Staffing levels to be most effective and efficient (right size, pay scales, job studies, succession)
- D. Partnerships to be more effective
- E. Engage staff in developing greater effectiveness (incentives - innovations)
- F. Analyze future water & electric needs – how to provide to customers effectively, efficiently and inexpensively as possible
 - Analyze manpower needs – cross training, succession planning
- G. Management infrastructure – performance evaluations, benchmarking against comparable communities
- H. City to be employer of choice, engaged energy

Mr. Straus asked that Council review the list and set priorities. A priority has to do with how important it is and whether it reasonable resource wise (a good investment of resources or something that will generate more resources down the road).

Some items may be able to be completed this budget year and others may require two, three or maybe even five years

CREATING COMMUNITY JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

- 1. Community Mission–(e.g. vision statement) (*Mr. Burchins to come back with plan to create mission statement*)
- 2 Create business incubator for e-commerce; micro finance strategies for small business; communicate with existing employers to make sure sustainable; find out what Laurinburg can do to help them grow; be force behind development of airport - encourage quick development, consider economic support - runway improvement (*strategies for incubator, etc.; evaluate the Ambassador Program with the Chamber - keep Council informed on what ambassador committee finds out from businesses if not a member of Chamber - City should initiate communication (e.g. How is business, do you need anything that the City might be able to help, etc.)*)
- 3. Force behind development of airport (encourage quick development, consider economic support - runway improvement (*Strategy for airport concerns*))
- 4. Outdoor Theatre (*downtown - north and south side of town into downtown*) (*low cost - high yield*) (Mr. Burchins to come back with plan (long-term).)
- 5. Industrial Park (Mr. Burchins to come back with plan (long-term) (Stewartsville Rd.) (look into curb and gutter requirement))

QUALITY OF LIFE PRIORITIES

- 1. Variety of retail, restaurants
- 2. Promote Laurinburg’s positive aspects
- 3. Community Center/Recreation for kids
- 4. Infrastructure (i.e. paved roads, beautification, maintenance of buildings, streets, etc. (“Charm”, “Civility”))
- 5. Get stakeholders together to coordinate programs, ideas across government, non profits, etc. (city/county functions realistically)
- 6. Youth Employment (e.g. State/Federal Programs - assuming funding - City should qualify as administrator) (**summer project**)
- 7. Promote Health & Fitness in community (e.g. building on existing parks to make robust, make a park guide, partner with St. Andrews; share resources for counseling services (faith based program in town; homeless shelter)
- 8. Create vision for Community Development including downtown

EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

- 1. Ed and Staff to analyze government - need a comprehensive self-look at ourselves
 - A. Proactive, create atmosphere for/engage in best practices (shovel ready projects, etc.) – out of box, but

take small steps. Analyze manpower needs – cross training, succession planning

- B. Evaluate effectiveness of city functions (e.g. Tax collection/How efficient are we? Staffing levels to be most effective and efficient (right size, pay scales, job studies, succession)
- C. Partnerships to be more effective (**Council**)
- D. Engage staff in developing greater effectiveness (incentives-innovations)
Mr. Burchins to create a career track for employees
- E. Analyze future water & electric needs – how to provide to customers effectively, efficiently and inexpensively as possible
- F. Management infrastructure – performance evaluations, benchmarking against comparable communities
- H. City to be employer of choice, engaged energy

Mr. Burchins suggested that the city create a mission statement before getting involved in a community mission statement.

Mr. Straus asked Mr. Burchins what steps he plans to take in order to accomplish Council's priorities.

Mr. Burchins stated that he will clarify what was accomplished at Council's retreat; meet as a Management Team and start developing, as a group, and brainstorming to define the problems; come up with some goals for solving those problems; brainstorm and prioritize the ways staff could develop ideas to attack or address the problems; present back to Council as a work plan before the budget is actually developed; and if Council likes the work plan, develop a budget around the work plan.

The deadline is the March work session which is March 9, 2010 (or a special meeting sometime in March) to get back to Council the details on what staff suggests to accomplish Council's priorities.

There was a consensus among Councilmembers that the tax rate should remain the same at .42 per \$100.00 per valuation. He is also to determine what tax rate it will take to get Council's priorities met. Council can then determine which direction the City should follow in the final budget process.

EXPECTATIONS OF MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, CITY MANAGER, CITY CLERK

Mr. Straus stated that it may be helpful for Council to review the expectations in order to determine if there needs to be changes.

Councilmember Leak stated that the expectations of Councilmembers are that there are no surprises when discussing issues. He expressed his opinion that, during the agenda workshop, discussions are held and the hope is that everyone is on the same page. He then stated that sometimes when an issue is discussed in the Council meeting there are surprises that others are not aware of.

Councilmember Rainer agreed with Councilmember Leak's statement.

A discussion ensued concerning Council's agenda workshop. There was a consensus among Councilmembers that all items be listed on the regular meeting agenda. During the agenda workshop, Council will then choose what items to eliminate or add for further discussion or action.

Council/Mayor Expectation of One Another

The following items discussed were:

Rules of Procedure for Laurinburg City Council (Ordinance No. O-1998-12) should be reviewed and discussed for possible changes. (#6)

The City Manager stated that he would pick up the current Rules of Procedure for Councilmembers from the School of Government and make copies for distribution. He then explained that Council can review the document and then

choose whether to stay with the current Ordinance No. O-1998-12.

An expectation should be listed to include "Ethics Training Completed". (added #14)

No other items discussed.

Council and Mayor Expectations of the Manager

Not listed as expectation but the City Manager asked if Council would like a weekly packet of information sent to them.

Consensus was that emails would be sufficient as long as emails are kept in compliance with the records and retention schedule.

No expectation listed as to above consensus.

Manager's Expectation of Councilmembers

The expectation (#14) "let staff function under the Council/Manager plan should also be amended to say, "the manager encourages the Board to deal directly with the staff to get information or to answer questions but to go through manager to request action".

No other expectations were changed.

A discussion ensued on how many processes Council has to go through in order to get some things accomplished.

There was also discussion on Council being informed and the process of any particular project that the Mayor or Councilmembers may be involved in. During this discussion, Mayor Block stated that the money allocated for the proposed Recreation Center was to conduct a feasibility study.

The City Manager stated that the money was allocated so that an architect could provide information on timelines, how it might tie into other projects, where it might be located, how much it would cost to build, and how it would be maintained. He also stated that there is a report to come before Council about the usage of other facilities. He stated that the report had been done but very informally.

Mayor Block stated that the Scotland County Parks and Recreation Department has investigated the opening of school gyms on the weekend and that the outcome was that this would be a very expensive project.

CRITIQUE

Mr. Strauss stated that he is interested in getting feedback about the retreat; how things went; what would Council change; and what would Council add.

Mayor Block stated that he was disappointed that Council did not take more interest in the downtown area by getting more involved in the area. Mayor Block stated he would like Council to develop a plan or to concentrate on the best way forward for the downtown area.

He then discussed the Beautification Committee and its desire to hire a consultant that would take a look at the City as a whole to determine what improvements could be done to give a better quality of life overview.

The City Manager discussed how the various committees involved in the City can come together to discuss a strategic plan for downtown, beautification, planning and zoning, water, electric, etc.

Councilmember Leak stated that there are lots of agencies in the City that perform and bring different ideas to the

table.

Ms. Lee stated that the above concerns would be addressed in Council's quality of life priority list with clarification on each project.

Mayor Block stated the items Council has discussed will cost money and inquired about Council buying into the idea to allow the City Manager to prepare a budget to complete some of the items.

The City Manager stated he could develop a capital improvement plan around the discussion.

Council then directed the City Manager to evaluate effectiveness including staffing levels during the budget process.

Councilmember Rainer stated that he thought the retreat was time well spent. He also stated that it would have been better if everyone could have attended. He then stated that the City needs to come up with some innovative ways to increase revenue for the City. He commented that everyone could be a little more effective in what the City does. He also commented on using more of the assets that the community has (e.g. the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport). He concluded by stating that he hopes that some of the ideas that were discussed can be completed.

Ms. Lee stated that by Council giving the City Manager their list of priorities that he has marching orders and that it is his job to put ideas together and bring back to Council for discussion.

- Councilmember Leak stated that the retreat was good. He commented that next year during the retreat, Council can discuss what has been accomplished.

- Councilmember Spencer gave a "hats off" to the City Manager for putting the retreat together. He stated that he feels that Council is a good team and can work together to bring about a unified Laurinburg and Council.

- Ms. Lee stated that she suggests that Council include in their expectations the process of having a retreat at least every year in order to evaluate how Council has worked as a team and to reaffirm common values.

- **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk