

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION
FEBRUARY 3, 2011
A. B. GIBSON CENTER
322 SOUTH MAIN ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
7:00 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting February 3, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the A.B. Gibson Center located at 322 S. Main St., Laurinburg, NC with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Joy Ellison, Curtis B. Leak, Thomas W. Parker III, Kenton Spencer and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr.

Also present were Edward F. Burchins, City Manager, and Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk. Management Team members present were: Cindy Carpenter, Finance Director; Johnny Evans, Chief of Police; Bob Bell, Human Resources/Risk Management Director; Stacey McQuage, Utilities Director; Ronald Pierce, Electric Distribution Director; and Bill Peele, Planning Director. Brandi C. Deese, Planner/Zoning Officer, and Jenny Tippett, Administrative Assistant/Deputy City Clerk, were also present.

The invocation was given by Councilmember Ellison. Mayor Block welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Block introduced the Councilmembers. He explained that the format of the citizen input session would be different than previous years and that the City Manager and Bob Bell would explain the process further.

Mayor Block recognized members from the Scotland County Board of Commissioners who were present and Mary Robinson, Administrative Assistant for the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC).

The City Manager presented an overview of services provided by the City and the City budget so that attendees would have an understanding of the services provided by the City. He explained that the focus should be on the specific services the City offers. He explained the session was to be a dialogue concerning the City services, the value of these services, and the level of customer service observed by citizens. He explained that members of the City's Management Team would facilitate at each discussion table, and then requested that the Management Team members introduce themselves.

Mr. Bell explained that the Citizen Input Session is designed to collect information from citizens that will be used by Council at its Retreat to be held February 25-26, 2011. He added that each table would have two (2) lists, one for comments or suggestions regarding City services, and the other for comments or suggestions for services the City does not currently offer or for which the City has little or no impact. He further explained the process and concluded by stating that the information gathered would be shared with City Council and with attendees.

Ms. Rena McNeill requested that a representative from each table be allowed to present the list

and explain the items on the list.

The City Manager explained that the City is co-owner of the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport and has representation on the board. The City also helps fund LDRC, the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Discussions at the tables occurred from 7:24 p.m. until 8:01 p.m.

The following items were presented from the tables:

- Main Street improvements (long-term and short-term)
- Clear plan on/for development
- Higher Code Enforcement
- Likes new recycling bins
- Improve the aesthetics of the City buildings and grounds
- Kudos on the recycling carts and all of the services the City offers
- The abandoned Winn Dixie store looks terrible
- City-wide litter problem
- Stronger Planning Board to look out for the future of the City
- City recreational center
- Discussion of how to obtain some additional revenue for the City with the recycling program
- Determine citizens needs for size of recycling container
- Consider offering Wi-Fi and research grant for sustainability
- Explore the possibility of getting out of the electric business
- Stagger tax due dates between the City and the County
- Finish development of the website which links resources for homes and businesses
- Are there grants that might be utilized?
- Resource directory, centralize
- Combine law enforcement agencies
- Address curb appeal
- Lighting of major interchanges
- Drainage issue in some areas of town
- Thefts and vandalism in cemetery
- Low-cost electricity
- City Wi-Fi
- Update “welcome” signs into the City
- Improve sidewalks and build more sidewalks
- Recycling carts are awesome
- Install more streetlights in residential areas
- Stronger enforcement of animal control ordinance - dogs not on leash
- Improve appearance of vacant lots
- Improve the parking lot at Church Community Services
- Expand recycling to bring in more revenue
- Kudos on recycling carts
- Improve substandard property
- Have a Public Information Officer
- Have operating budget on-line
- Excited about new recycling carts

- Free Wi-Fi
- Utilize more native plants
- More progressive move to eliminate littering
- Review curb-side pickup versus behind the house pickup
- Better inform the public on services that the City offers such as if there is a death the family, the City will pick up trash if there is an abundance of trash
- Increase Animal Control to 7 days a week/on call 24 hours
- Increase awareness of Going Green
- Going Green
- Enjoying new recycling bins
- Free Wi-Fi for the entire City-apply for grant
- Install more street lights in residential areas
- Animal Control-less strays
- Improve appearance of vacant lots and structures
- Improve parking at Church Community Services building
- Improve and create sidewalks
- Need to address increasing number of abandoned structures
- Take more progressive approach to land such as rezonings
- Develop incentives to develop more restaurant and entertainment growth
- More education to inform citizens about what is recyclable
- Good job being done on solid waste collection
- In the future go to underground utilities. Any new construction should be required to have underground utilities and be required to have handicap accessibility
- Very receptive of new recycling containers
- Would like to see more new sidewalks and walking paths
- Keep sidewalks cleared of limbs and shrubs
- Improve method of removing limbs and debris without damaging yards
- Improve rights-of-way maintenance
- Very happy with Police Department
- Emergency Services is great
- All City departments are great. Always get an answer, and City employees are courteous and concerns handled in timely manner

Attendees then proceeded to vote for the four (4) items they considered the most important.

Mayor Block explained that the results would be compiled by the City Clerk for Council to consider when planning next year's budget. He added that the attendees would be mailed the results and the results would be posted on the City's website. He thanked everyone for attending.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Matthew Block, Mayor

Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk

