

**CITY OF LAURINBURG
CITIZEN INPUT SESSION
MARCH 10, 2014
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
303 WEST CHURCH ST.
LAURINBURG, NC
6:30 P.M.**

Minutes

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg held a special meeting March 10, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building located at 303 West Church St., Laurinburg, NC with the Honorable Thomas W. Parker, III, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Mary Jo Adams, Dolores "Dee" A. Hammond, Andrew G. Williamson, Jr. and J. D. Willis. Councilmember Curtis B. Leak arrived at 7:18 p.m.

Also present were Charles D. Nichols III, City Manager, and Jennifer A. Tippet, City Clerk. Department Head members present were: Cindy Carpenter, Finance Director; Harold W. Haywood, General Services Director, Darwin Williams, Chief of Police; Betty Galloway, Human Resources/Risk Management Director; Robert Ellis, Water and Wastewater Services Director; Stacey McQuage, Utilities Director; Robert Smith, Electric Distribution Director; Randy Gibson, Fire Chief; Brandi C. Deese, Planning and Development Director.

Mayor Parker called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. He thanked the citizens in attendance and introduced the Council.

The Invocation was given by Councilmember Hammond.

The City Manager introduced department heads.

Upon request by Mr. Charles Parker, Mrs. Brandi Deese explained that most of the concerns expressed the prior year dealt with beautification and code enforcement. She provided a review of actions taken to address concerns expressed in 2013. Mrs. Deese also explained that City and County staff participate on the Chambers' Green Committee.

Mr. Stacey McQuage explained the inmate employment agreement with the prison system and that the inmates would be used to pick up trash along major thoroughfares.

Mrs. Laurene Stubbs explained that she would like to see some type of "Welcome Wagon" or other activities such as a block party to showcase the great things and people in Laurinburg and not focus on the negative.

A discussion ensued concerning the tax rates and property values.

Mr. Kenneth Samuda expressed concern about the younger generation and the drug and violence problems.

Mr. Rodney Hassler expressed appreciation for the City's sanitation and recycling programs. He added that he thought the City was going to add information on the website about litter education. He added that he still has concerns regarding animal control and feral cats in his neighborhood.

Mrs. Whitehurst stated that she had thought about having a block party.

Mr. Howard Whitehurst expressed appreciation for the City's immediate and timely response to various issues. He added that he was concerned with the paint that the gas company and other utility companies use when marking utilities.

Mr. Wade Hatcher explained that the community has numerous opportunities to volunteer to make the community better. He expressed concern about the rights-of-ways in his neighborhood that do not have curb and gutter. He also expressed concern about the following:

- Hole in his yard created by boom truck picking up yard debris
- Traffic lights that need attention: Blues Farm Rd. & Turnpike Rd.; Blues Farm Rd. and McColl Rd.; Cronly St. & Main St.; Cronly St. & Atkinson St.
- Lauchwood Drive exit from St. Andrews is not a good solution.

Mr. Charles Parker expressed that litter clean up and the need to educate the public about litter is needed.

Mayor Parker requested feedback on how to get more citizens to attend the Citizen Input Session.

Mr. Whitehurst explained that perhaps the reason there are so few citizens is that the City has not messed up.

Mayor Parker requested that the citizens gather as groups at tables to discuss ideas, and once the ideas were presented to vote for their top four (4) items. The following ideas were submitted:

Hospitality/Welcome Wagon

Stop Lights

Street clean up – South & North Main Street

Litter education

Car wash on North Main Street needs to be torn down

Be more proactive with focus on drug and youth violence

Animal control-improve that service

Quality of utilities companies and how they hurt environment

A more active litter education program

Mayor Parker thanked everyone for attending.

Councilmember Hammond also thanked everyone for attending.

Mayor Parker thanked Mrs. Deese for presenting responses to last year's Citizen Input session.

Police Chief Williams explained that his department has started a gang unit and will be starting a gang task force.

Mayor Parker concluded comments by stating that the City has a collection of great staff and that the more he works with staff, the more he is impressed. He added that staff are good stewards of taxpayers' money and are resourceful and talented.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Adams, seconded by Councilmember Leak, and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Thomas W. Parker, III, Mayor

Jennifer A. Tippett, City Clerk