

The Washington City Council met in a regular session on Monday, February 27, 2017 at 5:30pm in the City Council Chambers at the Municipal Building. Present were: Mac Hodges, Mayor; Virginia Finnerty, Mayor Pro tem; Doug Mercer, Councilmember; Richard Brooks, Councilmember; Larry Beeman, Councilmember and William Pitt, Councilmember. Also present: Bobby Roberson, City Manager; Franz Holscher, City Attorney and Cynthia S. Bennett, City Clerk.

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order and Councilmember Mercer delivered the invocation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

By motion of Councilmember Pitt, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council approved the minutes of February 11 & 13, 2017 as presented.

APPROVAL/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:

Mayor Hodges reviewed the requested amendment to the agenda:

- Add under Closed Session: 143-318.11 (A)(5) Acquisition of Property

By motion of Mayor Pro tem Finnerty, seconded by Councilmember Beeman, Council approved the agenda as amended.

**INTRODUCTION OF: DEAN BURBAGE ~ CHIEF BUILDING INSPECTOR
GARRICK WITHERSPOON ~ RISK & SAFETY OFFICER**



**RECOGNITION: WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL ~
A/AA MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING STATE CHAMPIONS 2017**



CONSENT AGENDA:

By motion of Councilmember Beeman, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council approved the Consent Agenda as presented.

A. Declare Surplus/Authorize – Electronic Auction of Vehicle through GovDeals

<u>Vehicle #</u>	<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Serial Number</u>	<u>Meter Reading</u>
554	2002 Ford Ranger	Water Lab	1FTYR1OU22PA94622	73,538

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

John Conway owns Beaufort Monument Company located at 15th and Market Street. Mr. Conway stated his business would lose parking spaces as well as the ability to display their products. In 2010, his property appraised at \$240,000; in 2017, the property re-appraised at \$80,000 ~ 66% drop in property value. He said the reduction in value was due to his appraiser securing a copy of NCDOT's 15th Street project map. He expressed concerned over vehicles being able to make a U-turn and said this design would not allow Fire/EMS trucks or similar sized vehicles to implement the turn.

Tomp Litchfield expressed concern with the NCDOT presentation on February 20. Mr. Litchfield discussed the plan for NCDOT to install new drainage pipes along the 15th Street project route, but in order for it to work; all the other pipes will have to meet the same specifications. There are several businesses along 15th Street that will suffer due to customers being inconvenienced during the construction of this project and taking their money elsewhere - which could cause some businesses to fail. Mr. Litchfield asked Council to put themselves in the business owner's shoes.

Polk Culpepper expressed his opposition to the 15th Street project. NCDOT had a second opportunity to make a presentation to the City regarding the 15th Street project, which is designed to increase traffic flow and decrease accidents. He stated that in his opinion the design is inappropriate for 15th Street and the City of Washington as a whole. A synchronized street is inappropriate for this area. Mr. Culpepper stated 15th street is a densely populated rural area. During construction, homes and businesses will be in a severe state of disruption. Most of the citizens understand that Council has Washington's best interest at heart. He requested Council to reaffirm their December decision and reject the proposal on behalf of the citizens that elected them.

Lori Champion-Melton, representing Tayloe's Hospital Pharmacy stated this project is supposed to deal with safety. She expressed opposition to installation of medians and the inconvenience/safety concerns with the U-turns. The pharmacy has been in business since 1889 and they currently employ 33 local Beaufort County residents. There is the potential for lost customers due to construction and/or U-turns. She inquired why the project needed to go all the way to 12th Street being there is already a turn lane from 12th Street to Hwy. 264.

Sarah Ninan asked how many homes/businesses would become abandoned because of this project. Mayor Pro tem Finnerty stated at least one home that will be lost due to the project. Ms. Ninan noted we have an opportunity to brand Washington and keep it different from Greenville – the proposed design will make Washington similar to Firetower Road in Greenville. She asked Council to look at the people they are serving when they make their decision. Are they serving the people of Washington or the people who are just “driving through”?

Ned Hulbert reminded Council that he has spoken before them several times. He referenced an earlier petition that was submitted to Council with over 180 signatures opposing the project. This decision will affect Washington for 30-40 years and he is requesting Council to consider this when they vote. Mr. Hulbert asked the public be given a 30-day notice prior to the meeting when Council would vote on the project. Mayor Hodges stated he could not guarantee a months' notice as he hopes to have this item on the March 13 agenda. Mr. Hulbert reiterated the public needs a 30-day notice, as he feels the public has not been given enough time to review the project.

Councilmember Mercer asked that Council be provided copies of the NCDOT February 20 presentation. The City Clerk noted the presentation and maps are on the City's website.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES: NONE

PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING - 6:00PM: NONE

PUBLIC HEARING – OTHER – 6:00PM: NONE

CORRESPONDENCE AND SPECIAL REPORTS:

MEMO – EMS SERVICES

City Manager, Bobby Roberson reviewed the EMS Services memo with Council.
BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS: The City Council adopted a Resolution to turn over EMS responsibilities to Beaufort County. Since the adoption, a sub-committee has been appointed and it has met on numerous occasions to discuss the agreement between the City of Washington and Old Ford/Clark's Neck Road EMS services. On two separate meetings held by Beaufort County, a motion was made by a Commissioner to continue the EMS service, provided by the City of Washington, to Old Ford/Clark's Neck. The motion denied for lack of a second. Therefore, the city staff has no other choice but to not include the revenue for the contract, provided by Beaufort County, in our up-coming budget FY 2017/18. Therefore, the city staff is seeking direction from the

Mayor and City Council on EMS services. We have several options for the City Council to consider and are not limited to one or any other arrangement the City Council feels appropriate:

- 1. Adjust the FY 2017/18 budget by subtracting the contract amount provided by Beaufort County for the City of Washington to furnish EMS services to Old Ford/Clark's Neck.*
- 2. Continue to provided EMS Services to the citizens of Washington and provide for EMS services to Washington Park under our current contractual arrangements.*
- 3. Inform Beaufort County that the city still intends to turn over all our EMS services to their agency, effective July 01, 2017.*
- 4. In the up-coming fiscal year 2017/18 the city will continue to discuss EMS services with the county and enter into a contract for the city to provided EMS services to the City of Washington on a contractual arrangement with the county.*

Councilmember Mercer said he has been serving on the EMS sub-committee with the County. Last year Council made a motion to terminate EMS services effective July of 2016. The County came back and requested we extend the deadline to July 2017 and we extended the deadline. The sub-committee meetings have digressed to discuss the Old Ford contract; discussions should focus on providing EMS service to the citizens of Washington. He continued by saying Council should not continue to address EMS in the city unless Beaufort County is willing to contribute to the operation of the EMS services within the city. Beaufort County has said their position is to have a countywide EMS service.

Mayor Hodges feels we are fighting a losing battle by trying to keep EMS. If we give it all to them we will be over \$1million short. Mr. Roberson voiced we need to move forward in the current budget as well as FY17-18. Mr. Roberson suggested increasing taxes to cover the shortfall or transfer out of the electric fund (or a combination of both). Mr. Roberson stated staff is seeking direction from Council.

Council members continued discussing the EMS issue and the potential budget shortfall.

Councilmember Brooks inquired if we can we get that money from the Electric Fund and Mr. Roberson said the shortfall can be covered several way. Options: 3 ½-cent increase in taxes, transfer plus tax increase, or a straight transfer out of the Electric Fund. Councilmember Brooks stated we should look at transferring from the Electric Fund. Councilmember Brooks said the county wants the EMS billing as well, but we need to make sure our citizens get the services they need and do what we can to make sure we have EMS services.

Councilmember Pitt said Washington had the first rescue squad/EMS in Beaufort County and they do an outstanding job to protect our citizens. We need to do all we can to keep EMS.

Councilmember Mercer stated there would still be EMS in Washington, but the question is who will pay for it? Councilmember Brooks suggested allowing it stay as is and to support EMS services. Councilmember Pitt agreed and stated we should go back to the sub-committee and tell them we want to keep it. Mr. Roberson reminded Council of an e-mail he received from Beaufort County stating the Commissioner's did not take any additional action regarding EMS at their last meeting - so their previous vote stands from October 2016.

Discussion continued.

Councilmember Mercer suggested the intent of county is to have a countywide EMS - service will include the City of Washington and we should give EMS to the county.

Mayor Hodges suggested trying to save EMS if any way possible. Councilmember Beeman inquired if there are minutes from those meetings. Mr. Roberson stated "yes" the county clerk was there and he will request a copy of the minutes.

APPOINTMENTS: HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL

By motion of Councilmember Pitt, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council appointed Florence Lodge to the Human Relations Council to fill a vacant term - term to expire June 30, 2019.

OLD BUSINESS:

AUTHORIZE – CITY ATTORNEY TO PREPARE THE LEGAL DOCUMENTS TO ACCEPT THE OFFER FOR LOT #2, LOCATED IN THE WASHINGTON-BEAUFORT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK, APPROVE THE SALE UNDER NCGS 160A-274

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS: The Committee of 100 is proposing to purchase Lot #2 in the Washington-Beaufort County Industrial Park from Beaufort County. In order for the sale to take place, Beaufort County, has made a fair market offer for the purchase of Lot #2 to the City of Washington. The Committee of 100 is proposing to build a “spec” building within the industrial park. The Board of County Commissioners in a regular meeting approved an offer to purchase the City’s 45% interest in Lot #2 located at the Washington-Beaufort County Industrial Park. The offer is 45% of \$7,000 per acre based on 5.507 acres which equals \$17,347.05.

By motion of Councilmember Mercer, seconded by Councilmember Beeman, Council authorized the City Attorney to prepare the legal documents to accept the offer for Lot #2, located in the Washington-Beaufort County Industrial Park, approved the sale under NCGS160A-274, and authorized the Mayor to execute the deed. The lot will be sold to Beaufort County.

DISCUSSION – CIP REVIEW (2017-2018 FOCUS)

Chief Financial Officer, Matt Rauschenbach stated the focus will be primarily on 2017-2018.

Councilmember Mercer stated he wants a separate meeting to go through the CIP as he has 50-60 questions.

By motion of Councilmember Mercer, seconded by Councilmember Pitt, Council agreed to have a separate meeting to go over the CIP on Monday, March 6, 2017 – 5:30pm in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Hodges inquired if Council has gone through the CIP and approved the requested items and approved the budget, why does staff have to bring these items back to Council for approval again. Councilmember Mercer responded that Council has to approve the purchase orders - those items could be placed on the consent agenda (the item could be pulled from consent for additional discussion). Councilmember Beeman asked Councilmember Mercer to forward his questions to staff to get them answered prior to the March 6 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

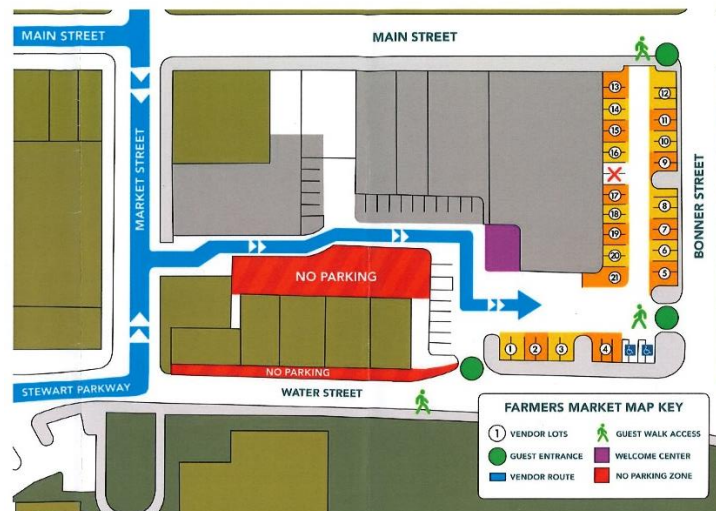
ANY OTHER ITEMS FROM CITY MANAGER:

DISCUSSION – RELOCATION OF THE FARMER’S MARKET TO THE PARKING LOT LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF BONNER STREET AND WATER STREET

John Butler, WHDA presented and reviewed a draft map with Council regarding the relocation of the Farmer’s Market. The Farmer’s Market will be relocated due to upcoming construction in the existing location.

Councilmember Beeman inquired how the vendors felt about the relocation and Mr. Butler stated they are ok with the change. He has worked with Teresa Hamilton, Parks and Recreation to coordinate the Farmer’s Market so it does not conflict with other events at Festival Park, etc.

By consensus, Council agreed to the relocation of the Farmer’s Market to the parking lot located at the intersection of Bonner Street and Water Street. (draft map below)



DISCUSSION – MINIMUM HOUSING UPDATE (MACSWOODS - PROCEDURE)

Mr. Roberson referenced the houses in Macswoods and asked Mr. Holscher to review the legal process for bringing the structures into compliance.

City Attorney, Franz Holscher reviewed the general statutes regarding minimum housing.

1. 160A-174
2. 160A-193
3. 160A-426
4. 160A-441

Mr. Holscher will prepare the proper documents to allow the building inspector to enter the structures. Mr. Roberson noted staff will be moving forward and will be incurring legal expenses in order to bring the structures into compliance with the minimum housing ordinance.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS FROM THE MAYOR OR OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL:
DISCUSSION – YOUR CHARTERS OF FREEDOM**

Mayor Hodges met with Gary Brinn and others regarding the Charters of Freedom display. The proposed installation site would be under the flagpole at Respass Street on waterfront. There will be no money required from the City, as the group will be raising their own funds. Mr. Roberson voiced this project would be inside the Historic District and would require Historic Preservation Commission approval. City Council approved this project and allowed staff to move forward with meeting with the necessary groups to accomplish this task.

CLOSED SESSION: UNDER NCGS §143-318.11 (A) (3) ATTORNEY CLIENT PRIVILEGE AND (A) (5) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY

By motion of Councilmember Pitt, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council agreed to go into closed session at 7:20pm under NCGS§143-318.11 (A) (3) Attorney/Client Privilege, and (A) (5) Acquisition of Property.

By motion of Councilmember Beeman, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council agreed to come out of closed session at 7:45 pm.

By motion of Councilmember Beeman, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, Council agreed to vote on the 15th Street project at the March 27, 2017 City Council meeting.

ADJOURN:

By motion of Councilmember Pitt, seconded by Councilmember Beeman, Council adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm until Monday, March 6, 2017 at 5:30pm, in the Council Chambers.

Cynthia S. Bennett, MMC
City Clerk