

The Washington City Council met in a continued session on Monday, November 26, 2007 at the Municipal Building at 4:30 P.M. Present were: Judy Jennette, Mayor; Darwin Woolard, Mayor Pro tem; Ed Gibson, Councilman; Richard Brooks, Councilman; Archie Jennings, Councilman; Mickey Gahagan, Councilman; James Smith, City Manager; and Rita A. Thompson, City Clerk; and Franz Holscher, City Attorney. Councilmembers-Elect Doug Mercer and Gil Davis were also present.

Also present were: Carol Williams, Finance Director; Keith Hardt, Electric Director, Mick Reed, Police Chief; Bobby Roberson, Planning and Development Director; Jimmy Davis, Fire Chief; Philip Mobley, Parks & Recreation Director; Bob Trescott, DWOV Director; Allen Lewis, Public Works Director; and Mike Voss, Washington Daily News.

Mayor Jennette called the meeting to order and Councilman Gibson delivered the invocation.

APPROVAL/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Gibson, Council unanimously adopted the Agenda, as presented.

RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Mr. Bob Harned, of HSMM, gave an update on the proposed Recreation Master Plan. A draft of the Plan had been given to Council for their review. He stated that Council can still have input into the draft. He stated it has been a long process but most of the public input has been completed. The recommendations and final elements will be captured in the final two chapters. One of the recommendations will implement an on-going effort of maintenance log and review and scrutiny of the individual properties and the time required for maintenance. He stated that recreation brings quality of life and should be looked at further than just the bottom line.

Mayor Jennette expressed that she was concerned there were no recommendations included in the Plan. Other areas of concern that were not stated or stated incorrectly were pointed out by Mayor Jennette and will be corrected.

Councilman Gibson asked if the document reflects any insufficiencies that will result in cost savings? Mr. Harned answered yes, from a maintenance standpoint. It appears that the level of services is adequate, but if additional programs are added, there will be additional costs. Mr. Harned stated that non-residents should pay additional costs, and sponsorships, or donations should be looked at. Councilman Gibson stated that increased cost mean increased taxes and residents should be informed.

Mayor Jennette stated that the demographics painted a rosy picture because we have not gone over the 10,000 population mark in 20 years. It talks about how we have such a low cost of living and basically says we have a much lower per capita per family income than the rest of the nation. Mr. Harned stated that the 2% ratio was used in looking at projected needs which is very conservative and based on historic records.

Mr. Smith stated there is more current data available when the 2000 census and as the population grows older, we need to look at the types of uses on the demographics.

Councilman Jennings stated that as a means of measuring sufficiency, will there be some sort of methodology recommended so we can monitor that? Mr. Harned answered yes, but looking at each individual park where it can be

assessed for its acreage, then more scrutiny can be placed on properties that cost more money to maintain or have a returned benefit. Councilman Jennings asked if that will come with the buy-in of current staff? Mr. Harned answered yes, the Master Plan will make recommendations. The adoption of certain standards is up to the department, but the consultant makes recommendations. Councilman Jennings stated that it needs to be "Washington Specific." Councilman Jennings stated that Section 4 lists current and potential facilities and there were some things missed in inventory....we own property in front of the Estuarium, the greenway space around Veteran's Park. He asked if this Plan will connect this concepts? Mr. Bob Harned stated that several studies have been recently adopted and this will set a strategy to include those and how it might be better developed in Washington. It will not give specifics on connections because that was not part of the study. Mr. Harned stated the Plan identifies potential and condition of City properties. He stated that the City needs to look at Land Use Plans and when and where property might be purchased to best benefit the City.

Councilman Gahagan stated he would like to see how we can bring tourists in and would like for this Master Plan to address that. Mayor Jennette stated that we have talked about how the Recreation Department can better utilize tournaments to increase tourism. Also, the inventory of the facilities says there are no walkways between 15th Street to the complex and there is a walkway there.

Mayor Jennette asked if the adopted Greenway Plan shown in this Plan can be phased in? Mr. Harned answered said it will say to implement it, but the Master Plan did not include implantation strategies, did it not? Mayor Jennette stated that it shows results of the survey.

Mr. Harned stated that the Recreation Trust Fund have changed their way of doing things as far as giving money for grant applications. They look at first and foremost at public involvement and public need before implementation.

Mayor Jennette asked that the age of the Bobby Andrews Center be included and the fact that the roof leaks, and we need to purchase the parking area across the street. Also, it needs to mention that the Havens Bridge (at Washington Park) is getting ready to be rebuilt. A shelter will be built at Beebe Park, Jones -Modlin Tennis Courts are moving to Washington High School, need shade at the Complex, and economic activity downtown needs to be clarified.

Mr. Smith asked if the City's Land Use Plan with the parks and look at the service areas for each of those. This will show that the west side of the city does not have any facilities. One of the opportunities to meet those needs are the joint venture so that the Housing Authority facilities and Boys and Girls facilities are areas where the City makes financial contributions or has a close working relationship.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Harned if he still had the addendum to the project scope and passed him a copy. Mr. Harned stated he would have to look at his record for that, and added that most of these items have been addressed and will be incorporated.

AUDIT PRESENTATION (MARTIN STARNES & ASSOCIATES)

Mr. Chris Costner, of Martin Starnes & Associates, presented a report on the Audit Report. He stated that it has an "unqualified opinion" which is good news, there was no finding or questionable costs and no internal control issues.

Mr. Costner highlighted some points in the Audit report with a slide presentation.

After the presentation, Mr. Smith touched on some other items in the Audit, as follows:

- Moody rating and Standard & Poore's rating has not changed
- Fund balance increased by \$1.056 million over last year
- Undesignated Fund balance up to \$4,298,000
- Rescue collections down from \$354,000 to \$334,000
- No overspent departments
- Reduction of two positions this year
- Did not have to use \$826,000 of fund balance in GF
- Will have to start showing retiree's insurance
- Water sales down \$110,000 (looking into)
- Revenue is \$21,000 over expenses in Electric Fund, dangerously low
- Need to continue to subsidize Airport
- Tax collections moving into the right direction

**SUMMARY OF LOGICS PROCESS REVIEW (JAMES TRIPP)
EXTEND MEETING**

James Tripp, Enterprise Fund Controller, stated that recommendations from the Logics Process Review included:

- Use PDF documents instead of copying
- Automated payment plan
- Credit Card processing
- Consolidate Billing, Customer Service
- 10 day grace period
- Meter reading process easier through AMR's

Mr. Tripp stated it will cost \$1800 to implement the recommendations.

Councilman Jennings suggested notebooks for each Councilmember which would be a savings. Mr. Smith stated there are some hidden costs, scanning equipment, etc.

On motion of Councilmen Jennings, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to extend the meeting to 6:30, followed by Closed Session.

Councilman Gibson asked that a manual reading be taken once and a while on meters.

**SPREAD SHEET ON FIRE DEPARTMENT RE-ORGANIZATION
(CHIEF DAVIS)**

Fire Chief Jimmy Davis passed out and reviewed information on the re-organization of the Fire Department as previously requested by Council.

There were no questions from Council.

REPORT ON TAR RIVER NATURE PARK (BOBBY ROBERSON)

Mr. Bobby Roberson, Director of Planning and Development, gave an update on the Tar River Nature Park. He stated that we are recommending the implementation of a strategic plan for the 300 acres south of Highway 17. We are looking for co-partners for the Plan. They are looking at Pamlico Tar River Foundation, Partnership with the Sounds, Coastal Area Management, and would like to include Beaufort County. We don't know what the Plan would entail or what the total cost of the project would be. They are recommending making a presentation in the budget sessions and postpone action now.

Councilman Jennings state he would like to see this ramped up, that this is a chance to do something. He stated this is a key note project for the City. Mr. Roberson stated that we need a Plan to convince PARTF.

Mr. Smith stated that with more money and with partnerships, we could go beyond restrooms and a boardwalk. We could have an extensive boardwalk, kayaks, camping platforms, etc, but we need to decide on activities first and what operating costs would be.

Councilman Jennings stated that he understands to wait for the numbers until the budget, and suggested a subcommittee to shape up the scale of the project, what we can and can't do, etc. Then it can get off the ground when we have the numbers. Mr. Smith suggested using the Recreation Advisory Committee to hold public hearings and get public input.

Councilman Gibson stated that we should have spent the \$100,000 we received for the project, and then get other money to make added improvements. Mr. Roberson stated that when bids came in, it was doubled and the State asked us to turn the money back in and wait and reapply for more money (up to \$400,000).

Mayor Jennette asked Philip Mobley to get the Recreation Advisory Committee involved and appoint a joint subcommittee between Recreation and Planning.

On motion of Councilman Jennings, seconded by Councilman Gahagan, Council unanimously agreed to form a joint effort between the Planning Department and the Recreation Advisory Committee to take this up with the primary focus to get public input, and also gain a greater knowledge of what we can do and what budgets would look like, etc. Mayor Jennette asked to add Tourism and Councilman Jennings agreed to the amendment.

STATUS OF THE GEORGE (BOBBY ROBERSON)

Mr. Roberson stated that the City of Washington has had an outstanding reputation regarding CDBG grant implementation, but they had to have a time table if we proceed on The George. Mr. Roberson stated that he called the owners of the property and they said they had gone back to the original proposal they had. He stated that no one has come to the table to talk about implementing the grant. By December 2nd, it's over.

Councilman Jennings stated that we have all been in favor of this project and we have a lot of equity in this process. He stated he heard from one of the partners who basically blamed the City for the lack of this opportunity coming to pass. Councilman Jennings stated that he requested two years ago, quarterly performance reports from them to let us know where they were. That's exactly what he was trying to head off. . .some sort of scape goating on behalf of the hand that fed them. He stated he hopes that we would have some written acknowledgement from that group, acknowledging the City's efforts and good partnership around this process. We may not get that but he thinks it's only fair for the City to say we are due that. Councilman Jennings stated that we have done everything we could to make this work and still want it to work. He stated it galls him to be blamed for something we tried so hard to get off the ground.

Mr. Roberson stated we implemented the other \$250,000 on the Façade Improvement Plan. Mr. Roberson stated that you have to look at our track record.

**DISCUSSION – TRADEWIND’S POSITION REPORT AND REQUEST
FOR CONTINUED SUBSIDY**

Councilman Jennings stated that we cannot be asked to subsidize every decision that is made at the Airport. Also, we need a proposed budget instead of comments in text.

On motion of Councilman Gahagan, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to postpone this item until the December regular meeting under New Business.

DOT BICYCLE GRANT

On motion of Councilman Gahagan, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to add the DOT Bicycle Grant on the agenda.

Philip Mobley, Parks & Recreation Director, stated that Holland Planning Associates will apply and submit the application. Funding is 80% NCDOT and 20% cash by City of Washington.

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously adopted a Resolution of Support to apply for a NCDOT grant for a Bicycle Comprehensive Plan.

**RESOLUTION STATING THE SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
FOR SUBMITTING A BICYCLE SYSTEM PLANNING GRANT TO THE NORTH
CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

A meeting of the City Council of the City of Washington was held in the Washington City Hall, the regular meeting place, on November 26, 2007. There were five (5) City Council members present.

The City Council members were advised that the City intends to submit an application for grant funding in the amount of \$25,000 to the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The grant application will be submitted under the North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program to develop a City wide bicycle trail system plan for the City of Washington. There is a local match of 20% that will be required of the City.

Council Member Woolard introduced the following resolution, which was read:

1. That the City of Washington is aware of the community’s needs with respect to providing a safe and efficient transportation system including access for cyclist.
2. That the City of Washington fully supports submission of an application by the City Parks and Recreation Department to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for funding to develop a bicycle trail system plan.
3. That the Parks and Recreation Director be hereby authorized to sign and execute the grant application to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
4. That upon completion of the application the completed document will be filed in the City of Washington City Hall. Upon motion of Council Member Woolard and seconded by Council Member Brooks, said resolution was unanimously passed.
5. That if the application for funding is successful, the Washington City Council authorizes the use of \$5,000 in general funds to be utilized as a local match required under the terms of the North Carolina Department of Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program.”

I, Rita A. Thompson, Clerk of the City of Washington, North Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the proceedings of the Washington City Council, at a meeting held November 26, 2007, as related to submittal of an application for grant funding to the North Carolina Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the said City of Washington, this the 26th day of November, 2007.

s/Judy Jennette
JUDY JENNETTE
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Rita A. Thompson
RITA A. THOMPSON, CMC
CITY CLERK

CLOSED SESSION – UNDER G. S. 143-318.11(A)(6) PERSONNEL

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Jennings, Council unanimously agreed to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) personnel at 6:40 p.m.

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to come out of closed session.

Councilman Gahagan congratulated the City Manager on last year and his performance, especially as reflected by the City's improved financial position. Council discussed his performance further.

On motion of Councilman Gahagan, seconded by Councilman Gibson, Council unanimously awarded the City Manager with a \$4,000 one-time bonus as long as the same is consistent with the terms of his contract in consideration of the performance for the 2006/2007 budget year.

On motion of Mayor Pro tem Woolard, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Rita A. Thompson, CMC
City Clerk