

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City held its monthly work session on the above date and time in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building with Mayor J. W. Peel presiding. Members in attendance were: J. M. Baker, M. E. Brooks, R. T. Donnelly, L. A. Hummer, K. K. Spence, J. A. Stimatz and J. B. Walton. Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence was absent. City Staff members attending were: City Manager R. C. Olson, City Clerk D. S. Pierce-Tamplen, City Attorney W. H. Morgan, Finance Director S. E. Blanchard, Planning Director J. C. Brooks, Public Utilities Director P. A. Fredette, Fire Chief L. M. Mackey and Police Chief E. M. Buffaloe.

Mayor Peel established a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He called for a moment of silent reflection after which he led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

1} AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS AND APPROVAL:

Mayor Peel called for action regarding the prepared agenda.

A motion was made by Councilwoman L. A. Hummer, seconded by Councilwoman J. M. Baker to approve the agenda as presented. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Hummer, Baker, Brooks, Donnelly, Spence, Stimatz and Walton. Against: None. Motion carried.

2} UPDATE BY ARTS OF THE ALBEMARLE:

Mayor Peel called upon Mr. Mark Campbell, a member of the Executive Committee for AoA for comments.

Mr. Campbell stated what the Arts Council means to him and the community, him as a citizen of Elizabeth City, as a member of the Arts Council and as a parent of a Center Player. He moved to Elizabeth City thirteen years ago and one thing that really surprised him was there is something going on here every weekend. That is very unique for a small town and the Arts Council is a big part of that. We have something going on at least once or twice or three times a month throughout the year. It is a big factor and it helps to bring in a lot of people out of the area. The Arts Council does for our community is it provides arts, music and region cultural via performance, exhibits and educational programs. As far as his family is concerned the educational programs they

provided has allowed his son to really make something of himself. To drive that home he asked him to come here today and speak to that point.

Tyler Campbell stated he was one of the original Center Players and he started about when he was in the eighth grade. He had always loved the theater and he was fortunate enough that his parents would take him to see shows up at Chrysler Hall in Virginia. He was taking dance for a little while and when he found out about Center Players that was amazing. He was in the middle school then and it was tough for him because he was picked on a lot because he wasn't into sports. Finally, he found an outlet and was able to express himself through the arts. So far he thinks he has done about 14 shows with the Center Players. He has had a great experience throughout the whole time. It is an amazing thing because we all come together as a family and you get to meet great people all the time. Also, this is his last show with the Center Players because he just got accepted into North Carolina School of the Arts for his senior year of high school. He would not be where he is today without the Center Players and AoA.

**3} UPDATE: ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS PROGRAM:**

Mayor Peel called upon City Manager Olson for comments.

Mr. Olson stated approximately a year ago, the Council adopted a number of goals and strategies associated with the recommendations that were made by the energy commission. For fiscal year 2012-2013, the City Council appropriated \$160,000 to the Weatherization Program to retrofit homes. To date, \$102,573.72 has been spent. We do anticipate expending the entire \$160,000 before the end of this fiscal year. In addition, the Council provided \$20,000 for the high efficiency heat pump rebate program. There have been no permits issued for this type of work to individual homeowners; therefore; no refunds have been used. Finally, \$5,000 was provided for our attic insulation rebate program; and to date \$3,000 has been spent. All these programs are designed to increase the energy efficiency of the City's housing stock and assist our citizens in managing their energy costs. He briefly went over the goals and those goals that have been completed and/or expected date of completion. In staff's January update to the Council, we reported that a query-based solution had been developed for the City's website where a citizen could request an energy efficiency rating on their home. To date, we have received and responded to 22 requests from our citizens. In February, the City provided \$11,918.10 to the Salvation Army for distribution to customers for utility bill assistance. As required by the Energy Efficiency Commission's recommendation, customers were required to attend an educational seminar to help them be better consumers of electricity in order to receive assistance. Also, new to the program this year is each customer provided assistance receives no more than

\$300 as a utility account payment. Dennis Gordon conducted four educational seminars during which 45 people received instruction on energy efficiency. Since January 2013, we have had 117 requests for energy audits. From these 117 requests, 84 have been completed. Unfortunately, 33 residents were a “no show” for their appointment or the landlord denied access. To date we have completed weatherization of 38 homes. The average cost per home was \$3,152 of which \$1,174 is for materials and \$1,978 is for labor. There were 13 requests that were rejected because they were beyond the scope of the program. He briefly went over examples of three actual customer’s impact from weatherization.

Councilman Stimatz stated that after years on Council he is still not satisfied with Code Enforcement. The classic case being the house on Poindexter Street. He knows you may still be working on it now but it has been that way for four years at least. We are not addressing houses where the paint has come off almost completely. We have another ordinance which is a demolition by neglect which we are not using. We have state statutes that require a covering or that they be painted and we are not doing that. Your annual windshield inspection not withstanding as we are not that. He would encourage you to push a little harder. The last thing is the Renter’s Bill of Rights. He thought it was important when you guys put it in there and he thinks it is more important now. If HB or whatever goes through and there is nobody to look after them then it is going to behoove us to educate the renters on what their rights are and make them aware that they are going to have to be proactive because our hands are tied. He has a real problem with the State Legislation that talks about the Feds telling them how to do their business but yet they try to tell us how to do our business. That is another issue. He is disappointed that it is over a one year old action item and we haven’t done anything. You say there is an example on the State’s website and we haven’t even seen an example of that. He can only urge you to do this faster.

4} UPDATE: ROANOKE AVENUE DRAINAGE PROJECT PHASE III AND HERRINGTON ROAD BRIDGE DISCONTINUANCE:

Mayor Peel called upon for Mr. Olson for comments.

Mr. Olson advised that we have developed a decision matrix according to City Council of what your options are. Just wanted to remind City Council there is a public hearing that is scheduled for our last meeting in June where the City Council will basically make a decision on what is needed to be done and how it is to be done.

Public Utilities Director Fredette advised that the focus of his discussion tonight is the Herrington Road Bridge over Charles Creek. As you know the Roanoke

Avenue Drainage Project is a companion project to the Herrington Road. We completed three projects, Phase I and II and one prior to that. Now we are in the third and final phase of the Roanoke Avenue Drainage Project. We have the Stormwater retention ponds out there that we are familiar with and now we have to create a Stormwater pump station to pump that water over a dyke so the Pasquotank River doesn't come in on us via Charles Creek. We are looking at redesigned options recently DOT advised us that they were planning to rebuild the South Road Street bridge over Charles Creek. All of a sudden the Herrington Road Bridge over Charles Creek came into focus as we were evaluating the alternatives of the drainage project. During discussions with NCDOT, consideration of removing the bridge became a viable option. Consideration justifying the removal of the bridge included the State's recently completed bridge inspection concluded that there were deficiencies in the bridge. The bridge was to be posted for weight restriction and eventually the bridge will have to be removed or replaced. The traffic count on Herrington Road is very low. The City did a two-day traffic count and found the average daily traffic was only 615 vehicles per day. With the Herrington Road Bridge eliminate a redesign of the drainage project would allow for a much improved storm water discharge configuration into Charles Creek. The design concepts of eliminating the Herrington Road Bridge will also contribute to a better and safer road design at the intersection of Herrington Road, South Road Street and "B" Street. Staff is in the process of receiving input on the proposal to remove the Herrington Road Bridge over Charles Creek. The bridge condition is a contentious liability for the City. We looked at Federal Bridge funding and that is questionable and the issue is whether it is really a bridge right now. We tried to get an answer to that question today but the right people to give us that answer was not available today.

Mr. Olson asked to explain why that is important. You all may remember the Charles Creek Bridge. That bridge is a \$2 million bridge but \$1.5 million of that was paid by the Federal Highway Administration. We only had to pay \$500,000 and we utilized our Powell Bill monies to pay for that. If we can't access Federal Highway money and put it in the TIP program to have that bridge replaced then we have to bare 100% of that cost. We also have another bridge which is the Providence Road Bridge which has been waiting longer to be replaced than the Herrington Road Bridge. Those people in Oxford Heights have mentioned it to those Council people whether Third Ward or Second Ward.

Mr. Fredette continued by saying finally the question that is going to be before the Council at the end of June is going to be the discontinuance of the Herrington Road Bridge. That conversation as it did at the Monday night public hearing with the Community Watch Group gets pretty confusing. The Council has an option to do nothing with Herrington Road. If you take no action on Herrington Road we will be required to get property or property easements for

the dyke that is required that goes down Herrington Road as well as that level of discharge point to the east side of the Herrington Road Bridge as we know it now. Herrington Road will remain open in its present configuration. And, you will continue to have the Bridge liability which could be up to \$1 million. The second option that you have is to remove the bridge. If you remove the bridge obviously Herrington Road will become dead end as you travel north at which we will put some kind of turnaround. If you remove the bridge there will be no future liability. The third option and probably addresses most of the needs that we will address at the community meetings is to remove the bridge and to acquire the Rice property between Herrington Road and Road Street. That allows the City to build a dyke in the area where Herrington Road now exists. There will be no additional need for taking property. It will allow the City to reconfigure Herrington Road and the South Road intersection which thereby allows people traveling on Herrington Road to continue from McMorris up to the football field and vice versa from South to North and you will be able to use Herrington Road to get into the City. There will be no future bridge liability. The disadvantage of this is the acquisition of the property. To continue with the Roanoke Avenue Drainage project we look forward a direction based on one of the options given.

Mr. Olson stated that staff realizes that none of these options are an ideal option especially when you have an unwilling property owner. But, we would be happy if a member of the City Council has another option that they would like for us to investigate before the June 24th meeting. We would be happy to sit down, look at it and do some cost estimates but in its simplest form we believe we have identified the three main decisions that the City Council has to choose from. None of them are the ideal decision of course, but in all likelihood one of the three decisions is what you are going to be facing at your June 24th meeting.

5} COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a} Albemarle Economic Development Commission:

Councilwoman Hummer stated at last weeks' meeting the conversation was mostly about the Potato Festival that was coming up as well as the opening of Farmer's Market. Then the grand opening the day before of the new barracks and gallery for the Coast Guard personnel. A number of council members tour that facility. She would like to say something about a downtown business that is closing. It is one that has been here forever and that is Gregg's Shoe Store. While Gregg has been an important part of the downtown landscape, Charles Gregg himself has been an important community minded person and has volunteered for a lot of things. He has contributed a lot to downtown and to the City as well. We are surely going to miss him and his business.

b} Central Communications Advisory Board:

Councilman Walton stated we met and had a quorum. One of the main things that came out of that was if the 911 had problems and had to shut down and Elizabeth City State would be the backup.

c} Firemen's Relief Fund Board:

Councilman Spence stated we have not met.

d} NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency:

City Manager Olson stated our meeting that was scheduled for tomorrow has been cancelled. He did provide some information in his FYI concerning issues we are having with the Sheraton Harris Nuclear Plant and some on going issues with the Brunswick Nuclear Plant.

e} Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc.:

Councilman Donnelly stated ECDI thanks everyone that participated as volunteers at the Potato Festival. A portion of the crowd was surveyed during the festival to try to get an idea of where people came and what they liked about the festival. People came from as far away as Oregon and New York State. He thinks some of them had family members in the area but they plan on coming back next year and scheduling their vacations during the Potato Festival time. Most purchases were food related but many other people planned to purchase non food items. Most heard about the Potato Festival through friends or the newspaper. He guesses the printed word still gets out. An overwhelming majority were completely happy with the event with a few suggestions for improvement which included: more seating to eat or to sit around and watch the kids on rides, more potato related activities, more potato type foods and more public restrooms. The film festival is coming up starting June 4th at 8:30 and will feature a 1951 drama, "A Place in the Sun" starring one of our favorites, Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift and Shelly Winters. Please mark your calendars and hope to see you at the Film Festival.

f} Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Board:

Mayor Peel stated there is not a whole lot going on. Tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. Belks is having a rededication ceremony. They are in the process of beginning to celebrate their 125th birthday.

g} Finance Committee:

Councilwoman Hummer stated that all the things that were discussed in the Finance Committee meeting were on the agenda for tonight.

h} Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

Councilman Walton stated we discussed the pavilion and what is going on with that. Also, the gift of the Oak property is going to be discussed later on. A member of the Committee requested that the Council send the Board of letter advising if they feel we are keeping up with the goals that were set out for this board.

i} Alleyway Committee:

Councilwoman Hummer stated we haven't met yet but we will soon be finished with the budget and hopefully then we can concentrate on the alleyways.

j} Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Airport Authority:

Councilman Stimatz stated we met and talked about DRS and a couple of things that are happening out there. One is the compensation for the contract that DRS won requires them to give up their fueling and unfueling of airplanes. When they bring an airplane in and refurbish it they actually go out and fill it full of fuel to see if the weight of the fuel is going to cause any structure issues or leaks. They are going to be required to give up that service. That is something that the airport is going to take over. We will make sure it is a money maker. The other thing was we are very close to being put on the contract fuel station schedule. What that means is any DOD aircraft that comes in can fuel up.

k} Stormwater Drainage Advisory Board:

Councilman Stimatz stated we haven't met since our last meeting.

l} Tourism Development Authority:

Councilwoman Baker stated we had a meeting last Thursday and talked about our propose budget for 2013-2014. We also had guest that visited the meeting. The Elizabeth City State University Alumni representatives came to talk to the Tourism Board about hotel rates during the homecoming and special events. They are looking for some relief like they did in 2005. Since we didn't think we were the proper vehicle to convene that meeting the Chamber has agreed to meet with the hotel representatives and Alumni representatives. It will be held at the Chamber.

6} ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Work Session, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Dianne S. Pierce-Tamplen, MMC
City Clerk

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor