

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. Those attending were: Council Members: J. M. Baker, M. E. Brooks, R. T. Donnelly, L. M. Hill-Lawrence, L. A. Hummer, J. A. Stimatz and J. B. Walton. K. K. Spence was absent. City Staff in attendance was: City Manager R. C. Olson, City Clerk D. S. Pierce-Tamplen, City Attorney W. H. Morgan, Finance Director S. E. Blanchard, Fire Chief L. M. Mackey, Police Chief E. M. Buffaloe, Parks and Recreation Director B. V. White, Inspection Director S. E. Ward, Planning Director J. C. Brooks, Public Utilities Director P. A. Fredette and Human Resource Director K. W. Felton.

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 on the prepared agenda.

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

2} VISION 2020 INITIATIVE:

Mayor Peel stated this process started back last October when we appointed a committee of about 95 people to look at two aspects of job creation. One was economic development and the other was community development. This group met four times for a total of sixteen hours. The charge to that group was to identify some areas in each of those two sub categories where we might be able to improve ourselves and make ourselves more attractive to businesses relocating here in the area. In the areas of economic development that committee identified five areas to work on. The first was K-12 Education, second was looking at enhancing the waterfront, third area was working on developing a more vibrant downtown, fourth was improving the business climate and developer climate in the City and County and fifth was looking at developing an economic development plan that would look at a variety of things such as

looking at strengthening our relationships with the Port of Virginia and other economic development opportunities that might be available out there. The committee also developed four areas under community development. Those areas were championing the region's diversity and heritage by creating a dynamic partnership among all citizens, improving and supporting strong family structures. We have learned during the process of those meetings that only about 40% of our children ages 0-5 are in daycare or some kind of pre K. Another area was looking at improving that area. He thinks since those meetings that area has become even more important because with the implementation of the K-2 curriculum across the state this year one of the things that kindergarten and first grade teachers are finding is that kids are coming to school even further behind than they were previously because the curriculum is even more advanced than the previous one had been. Finally looking at comprehensive job and entrepreneur training. This was to bring or looking at how we can develop workforce, civically how we can provide more mentoring and entrepreneur training and creating more opportunities for young people in this community. Once the areas were identified there were nine action teams of about 10-12 people created. These committees started working in mid January. Two of the committees have actually filed its final report. The Waterfront Committee is almost finished and will be finished in the next couple weeks. The other committees are still very much at work. A lot has been done and a lot of meetings have been held. The K-12 Education Committee has met numerous times. One of the first things we decided that we needed to get input from a larger number of people so we conducted two focus groups that had over 50 people in each meeting. We asked the following three questions:

1} What purpose should public schools serve. Why invest in public education in our county or city?

2} What role should public schools play in our children's lives and in our community?

3} What are the characteristics of an outstanding public school or school district?

The team developed a survey to gather the same data from additional people and placed the survey online for a period of two weeks. These responses will enable the team to identify areas of focus for their recommendations to the school board. That is where this committee is presently.

Mayor Peel stated the next committee that you have a report from is the Waterfront Committee. Peter Thompson will give you a report.

Mr. Thompson stated we made five recommendations after discussions and input. They are as follows:

- 1} When feasible the City of Elizabeth City to purchase available waterfront properties. That was based on the example of other cities in North Carolina.
- 2} The City to consider new zoning standards for commercial waterfront property.
- 3} Expert be retained to do an assessment of the Shipyard properties as a potential location for full service marina with a retail element.
- 4} Major housing associated with re-development would have to take place on the south side of Riverside Drive.
- 5} Expertise in Marine Management was needed in order to advise the Committee on present Marine/Marina trends and costs.

We realized shortly that we didn't know enough. We know what we would like to see there. The City should work with COA, private owners and marina developers to develop a full service marina with restaurant, retail, and excellent public access of the quality to attract boats from out of the area. We know there aren't enough boats in the area to keep a marina up float and make a good business allied. If we can attract those from Hampton Roads and maybe some from Greensboro and Raleigh then we will be in a good business.

Mayor Peel stated the next committee is the Downtown Team Report. They have been meeting several times and have also engaged in a number of webinars and there were some really good ones presented. They are in the process of developing a survey and have been working with the Small Business Technology Center to acquire some student interns that are going to help with this project. The next one is the Business Climate Report and this committee has actually finished. David Harris was the Chair and he will make a few remarks.

Mr. Harris stated his committee has completed its work and he would like to thank those who served as well as June Brooks and Mr. Olson. Our group was an excellent group and he thinks that is why we accomplished ours reasonably quick. We had people that are developers, owners of commercial property, business owners and managers and people who have been involved in the past with helping new businesses come into the community. We took all of their input on their experiences and worked together. You have our recommendations and we believe all of them are good and will improve the relationship with new and existing businesses. We recognize that some of the things that we are recommending are going to require expending some City funds. We felt like we should make those recommendations anyway and allow this group to look at implementing those recommendations.

Mr. Peel stated the next report is from the Economic Development Report. Bishop Sutton will report on it.

Mr. Sutton stated his team met numerous times over the last few months and we explored many options. The team utilized Vector's software for brainstorming ideas. We didn't want our ideas to be bias. We discussed potential projects and ideas and objectives for business development and economic stimulus.

Mr. Peel stated the next committee is under the Community Development and is the Championing Diversity. The committee is made up of approximately 10 individuals representing different races, age, gender and more. For more than three months we have been seeking methods to increase awareness of and appreciation for the diversity that exist among the individuals who call Elizabeth City home.

Mr. Peel stated the next committee is Building Strong Families and this committee has met on five occasions. The initial discussions included thoughts on the definition of a "strong family". They have a survey of sampling of citizens in Elizabeth City. This survey will allow the committee to identify those components of a strong family as defined by those surveyed but also determine what services would contribute to building strong families based on response. The survey will be designed to enhance awareness of existing services that they may not be utilizing which might positively impact the family environment.

Mr. Peel stated the next committee is the 0-5 and Pre-K Opportunities. They have been working on looking at some playground facilities.

Mayor Peel stated the last committee is the Youth, Job and Entrepreneur Training. They have had numerous meetings and have explored a variety of things. The Committee along with the Mayor agreed to move forward with the submission of the proposal to the Rural Center. The entire committee participated in the development of the proposal including one youth. It was submitted on April 16, 2013 and the grant proposal is pending.

Councilman Walton stated in looking over this Vision 2020 and you started about nine months ago it is moving kind of slowly. He knows that you stated at the beginning that it would be a slow process. He can't see any tangible things yet. He knows in this community we are losing jobs and if you go down McMorris Street it looks like a ghost town. If you go down many of the side streets that small businesses should be occupying the buildings and they aren't as they are vacant. How are we going to offer big commercial business incentives to come to this city when we can't even fill the small 20 X 20 space buildings? We have a long way to go. When he reads the newspaper he sees thoughts from business people and maybe Wayne Harris should have been here tonight to tell us about

economic development. He sees him in the newspaper talking about education and what we should do better if we have a better education system. Then he looks on the next day and he sees the education system say they are doing just fine and why don't the business community do something differently. If he was a business person trying to relocate here he would get mixed vibes because nobody is on the same page for some reason and nobody is building the next group up. They are just trying to make excuses for their own group from what he is seeing. Doing it that way is not going to work. We might just not need to sit down because if you are showing him the vision and he is a part of city council then two or three groups don't even show up to him that is not too tangible. We need to get better or look at other ways to make a vision because that is not a good way to get it done. He thinks you sold yourself short because going with the educational program there are charter schools being formed and you are putting together the stem program. Maybe you can give us a little bit more information on the stem program.

Mr. Peel said he thinks one of the things when you engage in this kind of process is that it is a slow process. It is slow because when you look at the variety of what these committees are doing is they are engaging a lot of other people in the process. We are also dealing with some very busy people and it takes time to get all of them together.

Councilman Brooks stated one of his concerns is that there were no council people on those committees or not enough of them. He thinks the Council should get involved. According to our Charter the responsibility of the Council is for the legislature functions of the municipality such as establishing policy, passing local ordinances, holding appropriations and developing an overall vision. Yes, what we are responsible for and we are elected by the people that you put on those committees. He thinks we should be part of the process. You can't take away our responsibilities and lay it all on the hands of our citizens. It has to be a joint effort. The waterfront is one of our assets. He thinks our biggest asset is our children. He thinks the waterfront has a lot of vacant buildings down there but he thinks there should also be a balance. He thinks if we could have had a retreat of Council and we could have discussed how to bring this city forward as far as a vision and include that with the thoughts of our citizens then that would have been a good way to go forward.

3} ALLEYWAY COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Mayor Peel called upon Councilwoman Hummer for comments.

Ms. Hummer stated they met last week and toured the Fourth Ward. It included 17 open alleys and we even got out and went into the brush and woods and did what we were supposed to do to find out just where the utilities were located.

We found quite a lot of violations. Mr. Olson will give us a presentation on our findings.

Mr. Olson asked to give a little history of the Alleyway Committee. The Alleyway Committee was formed under Mayor Roger McLean and the purpose of the committee was to address issues within the alleys. Back a number of years ago we had a variety of different issues such as should they be open or closed and should the City maintain the alleyways. Mayor McLean put together an Alleyway Committee. First thing the Committee did was work with City Staff to identify the different alleys. Staff researched all platted alleyways and created a database. To tackle this project the Alleyway Committee decided to break the alleys down by Ward. Then they looked at each alleyway and determined the alley's classification and then decided what should be done. We classified the alleys into three different uses. They are Used Alleys, Access Alleys and Unused Alleys. Of the 17 alleys within the Fourth Ward the proposed action recommended by the Committee is to close or abandon eight of the alleyways. The Committee discussed the best way to achieve the closing of the alleys. They are recommending that one public hearing be held for all alleys within a Ward, starting with the Fourth Ward. The Committee will visit the alleys in the First Ward in July and make recommendations to the Council to be followed by the Second Ward. He then went over the process for closing an alley.

4} COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a} Albemarle Economic Development Commission:

Councilwoman Hummer stated at the meeting last week Mr. Harris gave a brief overview of the Vision 2020 Economic Development meetings. He got feedback from team members without a background in economic development. He requested that Wayne Harris update the team on opportunities offered by our proximity to the Port of Virginia. In July the team will begin putting together a brainstorming list of opportunities for Elizabeth City with the Port of Virginia. This list will be classified and prioritized with a goal of presenting final recommendations in August. Also, another item that was discussed is the NC Department of Commerce decision to defund and replace the Rural Regional Economic Development partnerships. They will be replaced with privately funded prosperity zones. This will really be bad for the rural areas as far as economic development is concerned. They will have limited corporate donors to allow them to continue to deliver services. This was another move that will affect our area. There will be a change in the Economic Development logo. The Marketing Firm will come down in July and work on another logo replacing the current one. That is in the process right now.

b} Central Communications Advisory Board:

Councilman Walton stated they did not meet.

c} Fireman's Relief Fund Board:

Councilman Spence was absent.

d} NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency:

City Manager Olson stated we did not have a meeting last month.

e} Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc.:

Councilman Donnelly stated he had a couple of things. One deals with he is very optimistic that the ECDI Building construction will go forward. Secondly the downtown area there has been a rumor floating around that Toyama's will be relocating. That rumor is false. They are staying in their present location.

f} Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Board:

Mayor Peel stated the big news is Coast Guard Week which is the last week of July and runs into August 2nd. August 2nd will be the USO concert down on the Waterfront. Also, they are still looking for about \$5,000 sponsorships for the USO concert.

g} Finance Committee:

Councilwoman Hummer stated we met last week on the 19th and as always the recommendations coming out of the Finance Committee were forwarded to the full Council and are on the agenda tonight during the Regular Meeting.

h} Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

Councilman Walton stated they have not met. We are still asking for that letter of support of what we do.

i} Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Airport Authority:

Councilman Stimatz stated at our last meeting we adopted next years budget. There was no increase in the funds requested from the City or County. Two members are leaving the board and we will be happy to replace those. Don Parks will be the new chair.

j} Storm Water Drainage Advisory Board:

Councilman Stimatz stated we haven't had a meeting.

k} Tourism Development Authority:

Councilwoman Baker stated we have a meeting on Thursday and hopefully we will adopt our budget for the next fiscal year. We will also have election of officers. We had a visitor in town this weekend, Ms Angela Blue who was on assignment from "Recreation News." It is a monthly travel magazine. She came here to do a story on Elizabeth City and our tourism efforts. She was very pleased with everything she saw.

5} ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Work Session at this time, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Dianne S. Pierce-Tamplen, MMC
City Clerk

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor