The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in regular session on Monday, September 23, 2013 in Council Chambers, located on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Joe Peel  
Councilwoman Jean Baker  
Councilman Ray Donnelly  
Councilwoman Anita Hummer  
Councilman Tony Stimatz  
Councilman Michael Brooks  
Councilman Kem Spence  
Mayor Pro Tem Lena-Hill Lawrence  
Councilman Johnnie Walton

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Finance Director Sarah Blanchard, Acting City Manager  
City Attorney Bill Morgan  
Planning Director June Brooks  
Chief of Police Eddie Buffaloe  
Electric Department Superintendent Karl Clow  
Public Utilities Director Paul Fredette  
Inspections Director Stanley Ward  
Parks and Recreation Director Bobbi White  
ECDI Director Rebecca Cross  
Deputy City Clerk Vivian White

The City Council regular session was called to order by Mayor Joe Peel at 7:06 p.m. Mayor Peel welcomed everyone to the meeting and led in a moment of silent reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

1. **Agenda Adjustments and Approval:**

Mayor Peel called for any adjustments to and approval of the agenda.

Councilman Brooks requested to add a discussion of the STEM Charter School to the Regular Agenda. Councilman Walton requested to add the consideration of a resolution. Mayor Peel inquired the subject matter of the resolution, to which Councilman Walton responded “I’ll tell you that when we get there.” Mayor Peel stated the items would be considered as items “8b” and “8c”.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Anita Hummer, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lena Hill-Lawrence, to accept the prepared agenda, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

2. **Public Comments:**
Mayor Peel invited speaker, Helen Williams, to the podium and advised a time limit of three minutes.

Ms. Helen Williams began by stating that she is the founder and president of Garden of Hope. She stated that the Garden of Hope was closing its doors due to the poor direction of its Board of Directors. She indicated that she had been “ousted” in March because she had opposed the direction the board was taking. She stated that under her direction, the Garden of Hope homeless shelter at 709 Herrington Road had a good track record. She stated that she wanted to resurrect things, but had learned that the board had undertaken steps to disband the non-profit. She reported that she was attempting to start a new organization, “Vision of Hope” but did not yet have a 501c3 non-profit status. She asked to be considered as an operator of the 709 Herrington Road facility as a shelter for women and children.

Mayor Peel thanked Ms. Williams for her comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

   a. August 26, 2013 Regular Session

   Mayor Peel called for a motion regarding the minutes of the August 26, 2013 Regular Session.

   Motion was made by Councilwoman Anita Hummer, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Lena Hill-Lawrence, to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2013 Regular Session as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

   b. September 9, 2013 Regular Session

   Mayor Peel called for a motion regarding the minutes of the September 9, 2013 Regular Session.

   Motion was made by Councilwoman Anita Hummer, seconded by Councilwoman Jean Baker, to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2013 Regular Session as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Consent Agenda:

   Mayor Peel introduced Finance Director Sarah Blanchard, who was serving as the acting city manager while Mr. Olson was away at a conference. He called on Ms. Blanchard to provide an overview of the Consent Agenda.

   Motion was made by Councilman Tony Stimatz, seconded by Councilwoman Jean Baker, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA:

   a. Consideration – Authorization to Submit Grant Application for a State Farm Public Safety Initiative Program grant to purchase 20 body cameras for use by police officers in the field;
b. Consideration – Adoption of Resolution Authorizing Execution of Grant Documents and formally appropriating local cash contribution of $15,825 for NC Governor’s Highway Safety Program Grant in the amount of $47,475;

North Carolina Governor’s Highway Safety Program
Local Governmental Resolution

WHEREAS, the Elizabeth City Police Department (herein called the “Agency”) has completed an application contract for traffic safety funding; and the City of Elizabeth City (herein called the “Governing Body”) has thoroughly considered the problem identified and has reviewed the project as described in the contract;

THEREFORE, NOW BE IT RESOLVED BY the City of Elizabeth City in open meeting assembled in the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina this 23rd day of September, 2013, as follows:

1. That the project referenced above is in the best interest of the Governing Body and the general public; and
2. That Richard C. Olson, City Manager is authorized to file on behalf of the Governing Body, an application contract in the form prescribed by the Governor’s Highway Safety Program for federal funding in the amount of $47,475.00 to be made to the Governing Body to assist in defraying the cost of the project described in the contract application; and
3. That the Governing Body has formally appropriated the cash contribution of $15,825.00 as required by the project contract; and
4. That the Project Director designated in the application contract shall furnish or make arrangement for other appropriate persons to furnish such information, data, documents and reports as required by the contract, if approved, or as may be required by the Governor’s Highway Safety Program; and
5. That certified copies of this resolution be included as part of the contract referenced above; and
6. That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

__________________________________
Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

ATTEST:

__________________________________
Vivian D. White, NCCMC
Deputy City Clerk

c. Consideration – Authorization for Lease Agreement Renewal for Southgate Mall Customer Service Office for one year; and

d. Consideration – Adoption of Preliminary Resolution Calling for a Public Hearing on the Closing of Alleys in the First, Second and Third Wards, said Public Hearing to be held on
the 12th day of November, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers, Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC

PRELIMINARY RESOLUTION
TO CLOSE CERTAIN ALLEYS IN THE
FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD WARDS OF ELIZABETH CITY, NC

WHEREAS, NCGS 160A-299 authorizes the City Council to close public streets and alleys; and

WHEREAS, the City Council considers it advisable to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of giving consideration to the closing of the following certain numbered alleys, and shown on the attached map, which is incorporated herein by reference:

Alley Number 87 described as extending west approximately 650 feet of Griffin Street, parallel to McPherson Street; and

Alley Number 1 described as extending north approximately 350 feet of Burke Street, parallel to Charles Street; and

Alley Number 3 described as extending north approximately 700 feet of Church Street, parallel to Simpson and Harrell Streets; and

Alley Number 6 described as extending east and west approximately 250 feet between Simpson and Harrell Streets, parallel to Church Street; and

Alley Number 8 described as extending east and west approximately 300 feet between Pritchard and Harrell Streets, parallel to Hughes Boulevard; and

Alley Number 9 described as extending west approximately 125 feet of Pritchard Street, parallel to Church Street; and

Alley Number 10 described as extending east approximately 175 feet of Pritchard Street, parallel to Church Street; and

Alley Number 15 described as extending east approximately 100 feet of Martin Street, parallel to Ehringhaus and Church Streets; and

Alley Number 18 described as extending west approximately 130 feet of Martin Street, parallel to Burgess Street; and

Alley Number 19 described as extending south approximately 105 feet of Cypress Street, parallel to Road Street; and

Alley Number 20 described as extending north approximately 70 feet of Second Street, parallel to Walnut and Queen Streets; and

Alley Number 47 described as extending south approximately 130 feet of Pearl Street, parallel to Road Street; and
Alley Number 50 described as extending west approximately 60 feet of McMorrine Street, parallel to Colonial and Elizabeth Streets; and

Alley Number 80 described as extending east approximately 90 feet of Pool Street, parallel to Church and Fearing Streets; and

Alley Number 111 described as extending northeast approximately 120 feet of Walnut Street, parallel to Second and First Streets; and

Alley Number 116 described as extending east and west approximately 475 feet between Griffin Street and Hughes Boulevard, parallel to Elizabeth and Maple Streets.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City that:

1) A public hearing will be held at 7:30 p.m. on the 12th day of November, 2013 in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue to consider a resolution closing those certain alleys described herein within the First, Second and Third Wards.

2) The City Clerk is hereby directed to publish this Preliminary Resolution once a week for four successive weeks in The Daily Advance, or other newspaper of general circulation in the area.

3) The City Clerk is further directed to transmit by registered or certified mail to each owner of property abutting upon that portion of said alley a copy of this Preliminary Resolution.

4) The City Clerk is further directed to cause adequate notices of this Preliminary Resolution and the scheduled public hearing to be posted as required by NCGS 160A-299.

ADOPTED, this the 23rd day of September 2013.

________________________________________________________
Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

________________________________________________________
Dianne S. Pierce-Tamplen, MMC
City Clerk
END OF CONSENT AGENDA
5. **Regular Agenda:**

a. **Appointments to Boards/Commissions**

Mayor Peel stated that consideration is requested for the following two appointments. He also advised the Council that he had appointed today, two persons to serve on the Elizabeth City Housing Authority Board of Directors, which is the responsibility of the Mayor. Those two appointees are: Mr. Morrie Tharps, who is a retired CPA; and Ms. Annie Reid-McMurren. He indicated that these two individuals will replace Mr. Robert Pfeiffer and Mr. Tony Henderson, who both have moved from Elizabeth City.

1. Mayor Peel called for a Roll Call Vote regarding the appointment of Carlton O’Neal to the Planning Commission to fill an unexpired term of Johnnie Jones ending February 2017:

   - Councilman Brooks  Yes
   - Councilman Stimatz  Yes
   - Councilman Walton  Yes
   - Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence  Yes
   - Councilwoman Hummer  Yes
   - Councilwoman Baker  Yes
   - Councilman Spence  Yes
   - Councilman Donnelly  Yes

2. Mayor Peel called for a Roll Call Vote regarding the appointment of Robert E. Thorne to the Board of (Zoning) Adjustments for a three-year term ending September 30, 2016:

   - Councilman Brooks  Yes
   - Councilman Stimatz  Yes
   - Councilman Walton  Yes
   - Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence  Yes
   - Councilwoman Hummer  Yes
   - Councilwoman Baker  Yes
   - Councilman Spence  Yes
   - Councilman Donnelly  Yes

b. **Discussion of STEM Charter School**

Mayor Peel called on Councilman Brooks for his comments.

Councilman Brooks stated that there had been a lot of discussion regarding a STEM or Charter School, but he unfortunately had left most of his notes at home and would not talk long about it tonight. He said that most people did not know the pros and cons pertaining to these schools, and that he had researched the internet for information to determine how such a school could take our city forward or backward, because our citizens needed to be informed of that. He stated that the American Institute for Research (AIR) suggests that many African Americans and Hispanics owe much more than their White and Asian counterparts by the time they graduate in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. According to AIR, of the 19,000 newly-minted PhDs, only 51% of African Americans and 64% of Hispanics earning a STEM PhD graduated debt free in 2010. AIR information shows that at the elementary level, few teachers are qualified to teach in the areas of STEM and that there are no national standards for STEM education or teacher certification in these programs. Councilman Brooks referred to an article he had read that indicated that Pasquotank and other surrounding area public school systems
have a higher rate of graduation for twelfth graders. He indicated that his whole point is that if something isn’t broken, we shouldn’t try to fix it. He pointed out that a STEM school would begin at the seventh grade level and he questioned what would happen to children in kindergarten to sixth grades, because he does not believe in leaving any child behind. He stated that people need to realize that for every student that leaves public school and goes to a STEM program, the money, $4,200, goes with them. He stated that he is making that known because in the public school system this year, even with a higher graduation rate, they had to go into their reserve. He stated that we would have issues if the public school loses student money to a STEM school.

Councilman Brooks addressed information he had obtained that showed that STEM school parents would be responsible for transportation, and made the point that would prohibit participation by low income families. In addition, he said his research indicated that STEM schools provided less than optimum resources and facilities and don’t have to have certified teachers. He stated that this was an injustice to the teachers who have to go through the process of certification.

Councilman Brooks stated that he felt we should address the root of the problem and save those who are falling between the cracks, because you couldn’t build a “two story house without a solid foundation”. He stated that more African Americans are incarcerated or on probation or parole in America than were in slavery in 1840. He stated that these are the things that need to be fixed first. He indicated he would end his comments at that point, since he did not have all his research information with him.

Mayor Peel stated that he wished to give the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Lena Hill-Lawrence in order to respond to Councilman Brooks’ comments.

Mayor Peel stated that he had been in education for 45 years and did not have to look anything up on the internet. He said that the idea of a STEM school was driven by his conversations with lots of people in this community who are concerned about the fact that for many of the jobs that are coming in the aerospace field and other kinds of high tech jobs, folks who live here would not be able to get those jobs. He stated that we have made a lot of progress and cited COA’s Aviation Technical Training Program as a way to begin to get people trained. However, he stated that the ECSU School of Pharmacy has been closed due to a lack of students. He said that 65% of the students at ECSU come from Northeastern North Carolina, which means that the students coming to that school are not sufficiently trained in science, technology and math to be able to enroll in that program, which is another example of our students not being able to engage in the 21st century economy.

Mayor Peel stated that he and County Commission Chairman Jeff Dixon had begun exploring the possibility of creating a regional school that would be STEM in nature, which would focus on the aerospace industry, because that is what we have here. It would also be an early college high school with grades 7 – 13, which means that every student who graduates would have two years of college credit or would graduate with a certificate of completion from COA’s Aviation Technical Maintenance Program. The notion of this school is to build a pipeline for young people into these fields.

Mayor Peel stated that he and Chairman Dixon had concluded that the school needed to be a charter school as well, because dealing with five counties, school boards and county commissions might be more than is feasible to do.
Mayor Peel said that Mr. Brooks was correct in that money would follow the student. However, he said, the money would come back if the student went back to the regular school system. Mayor Peel stated that there were already 1,000 students in Pasquotank County alone who have opted out of public schools, to include those in local private schools and those being home-schooled. He made the point that if those students were attracted, it would actually bring more money into the region that is not currently here. He stated that a huge school was not planned, but would only contain 50-60 students per grade level.

Mayor Peel stated that they would also be working to answer the questions Mr. Brooks raised, such as the issue of transportation; however, the planning was not yet at that level of detail. He pointed out that a regional school was not feasible without the provision of transportation. He stated that early on, a meeting was held with Chancellor Gilchrist to inquire about locating the school on the campus of ECSU. Mayor Peel said that Chancellor Gilchrist was “extremely excited” about that and actually wrote a letter to that end. He stated that he has subsequently met with Interim Chancellor Becton and the Vice President of Academic Affairs for UNC-CH, who indicated that they and President Ross would like to locate the school on the ECSU campus permanently.

Mayor Peel stated that they had met with the US Coast Guard and every contractor at the USCG base, and all of them have committed to provide internships, summer work programs, and all kinds of experiences for these students in the field of aerospace.

Mayor Peel noted that a STEM school has a focus of whatever industry is located nearby and cited as an example the STEM school located in Bertie County at the Vernon James Center. The focus of that school is agri-business, since that is the industry there. Those students work with the scientists at NC State and the Vernon James Center and virtually all over the world. Our STEM students would be able to do the same thing in the aerospace field because we have phenomenal people working a few miles away on things that are pretty incredible - including a commitment from the folks at NextGen Air at NC State to be able to work with the students on the unmanned aviation vehicles.

Mayor Peel explained that a STEM school’s curriculum is very different from the ones found in regular schools. They are project based and problem based; kids work in teams constantly and usually work with someone in the field to solve the problems. He stated that these schools usually take the middle 80% of the student population and focus generally on kids who are first generation college students. He stated that this school is not for the elite, it is for the children who will not get into the pipeline.

Mayor Peel said that as far as commitments being made, they have met with all the school superintendents; and have met with the county commission from all five counties. He stated that they will also be meeting with some again; and have yet to begin to put a committee together to answer some of the questions in more detail. He said he realizes that it is a big concept, but he feels it will be good for the children in this community. He stated that he is also concerned about the school district; but his biggest concern is for the children, which is what he has always focused on as an educator. He stated that it may never work out or never happen but he thinks it is worth looking at.

Mayor Peel thanked the Council for allowing his comments.

Mayor Peel recognized Councilman Walton.
Councilman Walton acknowledged that Superintendent Williams did make a statement; but along with that statement he said that extensive conversation in the community is needed. He stated that Superintendent Williams felt that the stakeholders should have been involved from the original concept in Elizabeth City. Councilman Walton made the point that he felt you should start at home before you work outward, but he stated he thought we went to the top first, which makes it hard for anyone else to say no. Councilman Walton stated that the concept was not brought through this board, so the vision was Mayor Peel’s.

Councilman Walton pointed out that it had been said that we could not bring business here because of education – which he believes is a false statement. He stated that we live in the fourth poorest district in the Country and we have a lot of kids that need to be brought up to a standard higher than they are. He stated that we cannot focus on those that “already have.” Councilman Walton stated that we need to do things to help the education system we already have in place that graduates 82% of our seniors. Also, he stated, we need to provide help to exceptional kids - but when we take $5,000 per student away to help the STEM school, it will reduce what you can do for them.

Councilman Walton stated that he had done research on charter schools and he wanted to report what happened in Durham County. He said that the Maureen Joy Charter School has 263 students: 4.9% Hispanic, 94% Black, and .3% White. He stated that the Healthy Start Charter School has 377 students: 3.1% Hispanic; 96.6% Black; and .3 White. He stated that the Carter Community School has 169 students: 4.2% Hispanic, 95.8% Black and 0% White. He stated that the Research Triangle Charter School has 641 students: 3.7% Hispanic; 87.2% Black and 7.7% White. He stated that Voyager Academy has 352 students: 1.8% Hispanic; 16.9% Black; and 79.5% White.

Councilman Walton stated that he wanted to also report on Wake County. He said the Exploris Academy has 196 students; 2.1% Hispanic, 10.3% Black and 85.6% White. He stated the Magellan Charter School has 437 students: 1.8% Hispanic, 7.0% Black, and 88.2% White. He stated the Franklin Academy has 1,220 students; 2.5% Hispanic, 7.3% Black and 83.3% White. He stated that East Wake Academy has 934 students: 4.2% Hispanic, 12.2% Black and 82% White. He stated that Torchlight Academy has 353 students; 11.1% Hispanic, 88.9% Black and 0% White. He stated that PreEminent Academy has 578 students: .6% Hispanic, 95.5% Black and 1.9% White. He stated that Quest Academy has 136 students; 0% Hispanic, 3.1% Black and 93.1% White. He stated that Hope Elementary has 113 students: 0% Hispanic, 100% Black, and 0% White. He stated that they go on and on.

Councilman Walton stated that if you take these stats “this is segregation”. He stated that students are either black or white at these institutions; and that we were in that climate before and thought we had moved out of it. He stated that we don’t need to go back to that - and it looks like this is what these charter schools are producing.

Mayor Peel stated that the point of the charter school is to prepare our kids for the jobs that are available in the community and not to have to bring people in to fill them. He stated that when you look at the statistics Mr. Walton presented, you must also look at the purpose of some of those charter schools. He said that some charter schools are formed just to serve black children. He stated that he had been through integration in Charlotte-Mecklenburg; and if he was involved in the school, it would be for everybody and include every kind of student because his whole career was based on that. He stated that it would not be for one group or another, but would be all inclusive, which is the reason for starting it in the first place - to give kids an opportunity in an area where there has not been a strong opportunity before.
Councilman Brooks stated that he wanted to remind the Mayor that even though the school was for the children, the parents must be engaged with the education of their children; and he thought his statement was out of line. He stated that the Mayor did not have all the answers and it must be a collaborative effort; that he had not talked to anyone on Council to receive their input. Councilman Brooks said that the common folk – not the elitist - might surprise you with what they know.

Councilman Walton commented that there used to only be about 100 charter schools; and according to the State Department of Public Instruction, 62 of the 99 charter schools currently in North Carolina are either predominantly White or predominantly Black. He said that statewide enrollment at 41 of the current charter schools is 80% White or higher; at 21 charters, enrollment is at least 80% Black or Black and Hispanic. He stated that a major reason for this split - unlike traditional public school – is that charter schools are not required to provide transportation or meals to students and most don't. They are also not required to participate in the federal program of free or reduced lunches for low income students. He pointed out that the kids in Elizabeth City that are already at risk would not have transportation to go and would not receive a nice refreshing meal.

Mayor Peel said that he was willing to try because he thought that much of our kids.

Mayor Peel responded to Councilman Brooks that he agreed that we do need to involve a lot of people as we move through the process and reminded him that over 900 people have been involved to date in the Vision 2020 process. He said that the first thing that needs to be determined is whether this is a feasible thing to even begin to try to do. Mayor Peel stated that this is where they are in the process; and that they are not at a point yet to begin to talk with other people. He agreed that Mr. Walton's point is good - that there will need to be transportation involved and that they will need to figure out how the kids will be fed. He indicated that these are all issues that will have to be overcome.

Mayor Peel stated that there is a lot of excitement from outside people and big foundations and with money, which could be used to solve some of these problems. He said that one of the exciting things in conversations with the ECSU folks, and one of the things that would happen with a STEM school is that the school would be a magnet for teacher training and development. One vision for the school would be to provide training for all the science and math teachers around the region for the five districts who participate. He stated that would be a “win” for everyone. He also said that a conversation had taken place regarding the school becoming a lab school for ECSU’s School of Education students. He said this would be great preparation for those students enabling them to go to work anywhere. He pointed out that the STEM school would have a lot of positive spinoffs, but it may not be feasible to do, which is what they were trying to explore.

Councilman Walton asked what we are going to do for the kids in the lower grades who have not caught up yet – there’s a gap we already have. He stated we are not doing the small things we need to do – that Mayor Peel is only thinking “big”. Councilman Walton pointed to the Community Support Grant awards made as an example of not doing enough to help those who are being left behind.

Councilman Stimatz responded to Councilman Walton that he had been prepared to follow his lead on this issue for some time – but had been waiting for him to tell us what project he would like for us to work on. Councilman Stimatz stated that he was waiting to hear Councilman Walton’s idea and vision - and thinks that saying things like “we didn’t give the education foundation money” is our fault because they didn’t ask for money from us. Councilman Stimatz
stated that the Mayor, of his own initiative, doesn’t need Council’s permission or help doing this, because we aren’t committing to anything. He stated that the Mayor isn’t committing the City to anything, but is personally taking on this project because he thinks it’s necessary. He stated that the Mayor has gone to the people at the top because you don’t “head off on an idea and get everyone excited about it and then go tell the boss and the boss says that’s nice, but I’m not going to let you do it”. Councilman Stimatz commented to Councilman Walton that he was waiting to hear what project he’d like the Council to get behind. He requested that Councilman Walton bring a proposal and tell the Council where they can be proactive in the school system or wherever else he feels is important.

Councilman Walton responded to Councilman Stimatz that he had talked about what he had done, so he wanted to say what Councilman Stimatz does. He stated “it’s like a football game and the other team holds the team down on fourth down when they are trying to score. You come in like a referee and throw a flag. You do a good job of covering up for someone all the time.”

Mayor Peel responded to Councilman Walton that he was glad to know of his concern for children in the lower grades. Mayor Peel stated “you have been going around town poo-pooing Vision 2020 and one of the action teams of Vision 2020 is focused on trying to look at what we can do for kids 0 – 5 - because that’s where we get behind. We have only 40% of the children in this community who are in certified daycares. That does not mean the other 60% are necessarily in bad places, but we don’t know where they are.” Mayor Peel continued by stating “we do know that we have a lot of children who come to school in kindergarten way behind - and in talking with kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers in the last year, what I also now know is that they are even further behind now than they were two years ago as a result of the new curriculum that has been adopted. It is much more difficult than what we were doing two years ago. So this problem is bigger now than it was then.”

Mayor Peel continued by saying “again, I don’t know what we are going to be able to do about that but we have a team of people that are trying to come up with some solutions. We just had one of the top daycares close in our community and that is a real problem as well. We are going to have to come up with some creative ways to address that issue in 0 – 5.” He stated that he had been working with Dr. Robinson and Smart Start to try and figure out some things to do.

Councilman Brooks responded that with the education shortfall, especially with Head Start and day cares closing, he was trying to figure out how we were going to jump to science, technology, engineering and math when the students were already behind because of the massive cutbacks that the State of North Carolina is doing.

Councilman Brooks stated that while he was around during the course of the day, he gets to talk to a lot of young people. He continued: “It has been said that you took the initiative and it is your vision, but I can give you my personal vision. The children always say there is nothing for them to do. We need to get our students engaged. We have two universities, a junior college and five institutions that graduate 12th graders to include COA. I believe that if we can get a council of two people from ECSU, two from MACU, two from COA and two from the five institutions that graduate seniors, (preferably seniors) that will come and sit in these same seats that we sit in - and let it be televised - then let them tell us what they think we can do to make them want to stay in Elizabeth City. I’m sure they wouldn’t come up with science, technology, engineering and math. It might be a part of it, but these young adults are very bright and in tune; and they know what they need and want they want.”
Councilman Brooks continued by saying “They tell me all the time what’s not here for them to do. We have to be inclusive. Pay them $100 per month per student for every time they meet – it’s worth their time. That would be something for the eyes to behold. Then, what we have done is engage our students and they will feel like they are a part of and not being dictated to.”

Councilman Brooks stated: “If you put me on the 2020 Vision and the diversity thing, I would come up with things like that. Each one of us has a vision of what will move the City forward, but that’s why a Council is elected; and our Charter says that the purpose of the Council is to give the vision of the City, so we can do it collectively. We can have those entities you did, but you can’t leave Council, who are the voice of the people, out.”

Councilman Walton questioned if Mayor Peel had actually had a conversation with the superintendent; because the superintendent has to know much more about what is going on in the education system than anyone else in the City. He stated “if you don’t include him the way he should be included, we are off base and going down the wrong path.”

Councilman Spence said that he had talked to Mr. Williams and that Mr. Williams is more than willing to sit down and talk and discuss things - all we have to do is give him a call. He said that he respected Mr. Williams and feels that he is doing a great job as superintendent. He does not want the citizens to feel that Mr. Williams is not doing a good job by the way the conversation is going. He said that the students and teachers love Mr. Williams.

Mayor Peel responded that they have met with the superintendents and talked to them about all this and that they will continue to do so. Mayor Peel stated that he had lunch with Mr. Williams today and that they are good friends.

Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence asked if the Council was ready to move on and returned the gavel to Mayor Peel.

c. Consideration of a Resolution

Mayor Peel called on Councilman Walton for an explanation of this item.

Councilman Walton advised that he had brought this item before the Council a couple times. He said that the Council had talked about former ECSU Chancellor Gilchrist; and that he felt Chancellor Gilchrist had done a tremendous job in the community since 2006. He stated he felt that the Council should give him some type of recognition.

Motion was made by Councilman Johnnie Walton, seconded by Councilman Michael Brooks, to give Chancellor Gilchrist a resolution of recognition from the Council at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Peel called for discussion of this item.

Councilwoman Baker said that she felt this was premature. She stated that there was too much happening and too much potential, and too much down the road. She stated that she was not in favor of doing it at this time.

Councilman Donnelly stated that with the issues going on at ECSU, he agrees with Ms. Baker that it may be premature to move forward with such a resolution.
Councilman Walton requested that Councilwoman Baker repeat her comment. She responded that she “felt it was premature, that she was not saying no forever; just that there is a lot going on, a lot of activity, a lot of presumptions, a lot of investigations going on.”

Councilman Walton stated he wanted to proceed with his motion.

Councilman Brooks asked if the investigation is over. Mayor Peel responded that the SBI investigation is still ongoing.

Councilman Walton stated that it doesn’t matter – that Chancellor Gilchrist “had done what he had done and that he had been great for this community with many positive things.” He said a piece of paper was not asking for much.

Councilman Stimatz asked Councilman Walton to innumerate the things Chancellor Gilchrist had done. Councilman Walton said that the list goes on and on and stated, among other things that he had a 40 career devoted entirely to public education and most recently served as Chancellor of ECSU since 2006; and had served on the UNC Board of Governors. During his tenure at ECSU, the university received several recognitions, completed several new building complexes, received clean audits, and increased private giving and alumni participation.

Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence stated that she did not feel it was fair to Chancellor Gilchrist to discuss him on television like this and suggested that the discussion should be held in closed session.

Councilman Brooks stated that he did not feel anything negative had been said and felt with all the accolades mentioned Chancellor Gilchrist had done everything “but walk on water”. He stated that the accolades mentioned were true and factual. He said that the Council could find a reason not to give a resolution and not to do anything, but that we should find a reason to do it.

Councilman Spence said that the Council could go back and forth regarding what the Chancellor did or didn’t do, but the motion had been made and seconded and the vote should be taken.

Councilwoman Hummer inquired if there was some reason why the Council couldn’t wait if there were some that have questions about it. She further stated that she did not like an uncomfortable discussion like this taking place.

Councilman Walton responded that he was not comfortable waiting because he had been waiting for a long time.

Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence stated that, as she said before, she would feel better talking about this in closed session than in open session like this – because she would not want that done to her.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Peel restated the motion and called for the vote.

Councilman Walton called for a roll call vote:

| Councilman Brooks | Yes |
| Councilman Stimatz | No |
| Councilman Walton | Yes |
| Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence | No |
| Councilwoman Hummer | No |
Mayor Peel stated that the motion did not carry.

6. Comments and Inquiries on Non-Agenda Items:

a. Councilman Donnelly announced that this is Hunger Action Month and encouraged everyone to remember the needs of the Food Bank this season. He mentioned that tomorrow night is the last night for Music on the Green from 6 – 8 p.m.

b. Councilman Spence announced for the public that One Stop Voting is this week and reminded everyone that the voting place for early voting has moved to Edgewood Shopping Center by the Red Cross Office.

c. Councilwoman Baker stated that the Association of Realtors has adopted several Hopeline families; and that she has raffle tickets available for purchase with the proceeds being used to help make Christmas better for the Hopeline victims.

d. Councilwoman Hummer announced to those living in the Oxford Heights area that we are finally in a position to put the 17 South sidewalk out for bids.

e. Mayor Pro Tem Hill-Lawrence stated that she attended a wonderful service at ECSU last night.

f. Councilman Walton had no comments.

g. Councilman Stimatz stated that he was a member of the Building Strong Families committee, as part of the Vision 2020 Initiative. The committee will be at Southgate Mall on Sunday from 1 – 4 p.m. distributing surveys to solicit input to help the committee.

h. Councilman Brooks had no comments.

Mayor Peel thanked Councilman Brooks for placing the STEM school item on the agenda because he hoped it brought some clarity to those present and those watching. He hopes that people will now have a better understanding of what it’s all about. He stated that it is a long way from reality but has a lot of positive potential for our students, university and community college. Mayor Peel stated that the Vision 2020 K-12 Committee has a survey available on the City’s website and encouraged people to complete it.

Mayor Peel thanked everyone for their time and attention. There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

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Joseph W. Peel
Mayor