



# MINUTES

March 9, 2023 & March 10, 2023

SPECIAL CALL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

2-DAY BUDGET/STAFF RETREAT

OLD CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CITY HALL | 160 SIXTH AVE. E. 6:00 p.m.

Hendersonville Police Department | 630 Ashe Street 8:30 a.m.

Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk, Mayor Pro-Tem Lyndsey Simpson, and Council Members: Dr. Jennifer Hensley, Debbie O'Neal-Roundtree and Jerry Smith

Staff Present: City Manager John F. Connet, Assistant City Assistant Manager Pahle, City Attorney Angela Beeker, City Clerk Jill Murray, Communications Manager Allison Justus, Budget Manager Adam Murr, and others

Facilitator: Julie Brenman, Fountainworks Facilitation Management Consulting

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all members in attendance.

Julie Brenman of Fountainworks Facilitation Management Consulting gives an overview of the two-day event as follows:

Evening one was recessed at 8:02 p.m.

## Hendersonville Council Retreat

March 9-10, 2023



Presented by:



## Meeting Purpose

The Town of Hendersonville had a retreat from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, March 9, 2023, in the Council Chambers at City Hall. A second day of the retreat was held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, March 10, 2023, at the Hendersonville Police Department.

Fountainworks staff professionally facilitated the meeting. Comments were captured as the conversation flowed and do not reflect any priority unless otherwise noted. The purpose of the retreat was to:

- Update officials on town financials and various departments
- Share City Council priorities with staff to enable all leaders to be on the same page about upcoming priorities

## Day 1 - Welcome

The retreat kicked off with a brief welcome by City Manager John Connett, who discussed the goals for the day. He also set the theme as: *Building a strong foundation for our growing future*. Mr. Connett said his hope is the retreat would focus on establishing a foundation of growth for the next three to five years. Of the priorities from 2017, four out of the top five have been accomplished, and priorities set in 2020 are underway as well. We want to build the foundation and prioritize what is important to the City Council.

## Financials Overview

Assistant City Manager Brian Pahle and the budget staff delivered an overview of the city's financial situation. During the discussion, they reviewed dashboards available on the website that are live and available to the public. They also reviewed a Gantt chart with project status updates.

Officials then reviewed the city's financing options, which include 160A installment financing, general obligation bonds, special obligation bonds, and synthetic TIFs. This led into an overview of the key financials from the last audit (FY 2022). The City Council reviewed the budget to actuals for the general fund and enterprise fund accounts as well as the fund balance.

When discussing the salary and benefits for city employees, staff expressed gratitude for Council's leadership in updating the salary and benefits to recruit as well as retain employees. Other topics discussed included:

- There is no increase expected in medical premiums
- There is an interest to explore on-site day care, remote work, and extended time for paid family leave
- Staff would like feedback on a 401k match as well as what it would cost for up to 3% match
- Officials would like benchmarking information on merit pay
- There is a need for feedback on other benefits e.g. hiring bonus

Before wrapping for the day, officials discussed the general fund and a revenue neutral tax rate. Staff also shared the general fund model with the discussion continuing on day 2.

## Day 2 – Orientation and Accomplishments

Julie Brenman from Fountainworks welcomed everyone to the Hendersonville Police Department, which allowed the City Council to see their efforts pay off as the building was one of their previous priorities.



Hendersonville City Manager John Connett also highlighted the building as part of many accomplishments the City Council and staff have seen come to fruition in recent years. The police department and other recent achievements were featured on a graphic accomplishment map, which will be displayed at City Hall.



## Station Visits

After a brief break, the City Council took some time to visit stations set up throughout the room where staff covered topics including: transportation, development/housing, parks/greenways, financing and staffing, as well as sustainability. Each official got to ask questions and dig deeper into the topics before coming back together as a group to debrief.







## Station Debrief

Following the individual discussions, the City Council came together to discuss what they learned. The group discussed their priorities and got an opportunity to vote on their top choices with red dots representing their #1 pick, green dots representing their #2 pick, and blue dots representing their #3 choice. The following notes were captured from the discussion:

- Create a Parks Department (1 red, 2 green dots)
  - Parks bond? (2 blue dots)
  - Plant trees in flood plain- Southside park
  - 1¢ lodging tax earmark for parks- \$500k
  - Take care of existing parks and green spaces
  - Splash pad ribbon cutting
  - Signage for parks (people don't know them all)
  - Improve and expand parks- Purchase land (1 green dot)
- Public space/park
  - Caswell to Roundabout
  - Southside/S. Main Street
  - Connect amenities
  - Bike racks
- Striping South Main for bikes
- 1% Merit? (1 green dot)
  - Keeps people moving in pay grade compared to new employees
  - Increase COLA- want to keep up
- Appreciate the data available to public
- How to pay for what we want
  - 42¢ → Rev. neutral
  - 49¢ → to pay for basic plans
- Educate and lobby 1/4¢ sales tax, \$3.5m (1 green, 4 blue dots)
- Homeless Downtown
  - Graffiti and property damage
    - How to support law enforcement
- City Boards + Volunteers (1 green dot)
  - We hear them and value them
  - Educate them
  - Stay in ordinances
  - Simplify their "jobs"
  - They do a lot of work
- Comprehensive plan
  - The right density (1 green dot)
  - Support density to make more affordable housing
  - Consider height of development
  - Style guidelines, MSD overlays (1 red, 1 green dot)
  - Form based code, by-right development
  - Look for other areas to encourage commercial development to keep from overuse of downtown (like 7th Ave.)
- Strategic plan for affordable housing
  - Input from residents
  - Possible incentives for developers to do workforce housing (1 green, 1 blue dot)
  - Affordable housing with good quality of life (1 red dot)
  - Workforce housing
  - Resolution to have powers of authority (1 red dot)
  - Housing at all price points
- Tree canopy (2 blue dots)
  - Support neighborhood woods
  - Increase tree budget
- Continue to pursue grants
- H.I.I.P. program and educate on facade grounds (1 blue dot)
- More money for facade grants
  - Workaround
- Finalize + implement sustainability plan (3 blue dots)
  - Incorporate into comp plan
  - Combine environmental sustainability and Tree Boards

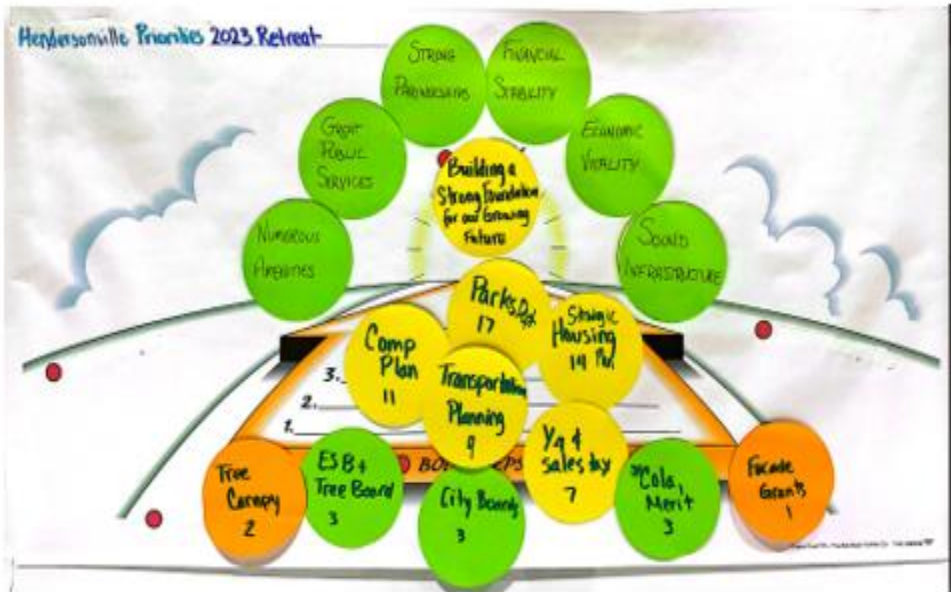
- Update or strengthen Tree Ordinances/Role of boards in review
- #1 in bike/ped accidents, #54 fatalities
  - Need more data on accidents
  - Red light runners, accidents widespread
- Transportation planning (1 red, 1 green, 1 blue dot)
  - Transportation bond? (include sidewalks)
  - How to address street cuts, repairs
  - Traffic calming policy
  - Fix the damn streets 😊
  - Traffic impact of new development
  - Better connectivity and traffic flow
  - Narrow King Street, allow sidewalks





# Priorities

As the final activity, the City Council discussed their priorities to ensure the staff had a good understanding of how to accomplish them.





The following weighted priorities were captured (in the dot voting exercise, red dots had a weight of 5 points, green dots had 3 points, and blue dots were weighted with 1 point):

Priorities:

- Parks department and park improvements (17)
- Strategic Plan for Housing (14)
- Comprehensive plan (11)
- Transportation Planning (9)
- 1/4¢ sales tax (7)
- Environmental Sustainability Board + Tree Board (3)
- City Boards training and appreciation (3)
- \*COLA, Merit (3)
  - \*Note some Council members said they assumed this would continue, thus did not set it as a new priority.
- Tree Canopy (2)
- Façade/Stormwater Grants (1)

## Wrap Up

Before adjourning, Mr. Connett thanked the City Council members for their time, ideas, and energy, adding it will help staff know they are working in the right direction. He said he appreciated all of feedback and said he looks forward to the future growth of Hendersonville and to building on the theme of *Building a strong foundation for our growing future*.

City Council Members thanked the City Manager and staff for arranging the workshop and were appreciative of each other's ideas.

## 2. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m. on March 10, 2023 upon unanimous assent of the Council.

ATTEST:

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Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

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Jill Murray, City Clerk