



MINUTES

March 11, 2022

SPECIAL CALL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

THE LODGE AT FLAT ROCK | 42 MCMURRY ROAD | 8:30 a.m.

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

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

Special Guests: Judy Francis, NC Recreation Resource Service; Hunter Marks, Landscape Architect; Kieran Roe, Conserving Carolina; Patrick Bowen, Bowen International; Sonny Iller, Beverly Hanks Realty; Brian Wasser, DR Horton Builders; Ashlynn McCoy, Housing Assistance Corporation; Sara Odio, UNC School of Government; Wanda Austin, NCDOT; Tristan Winkler, French Broad River MPO; Jonathan Guy, Kimley-Horn; and Warren Miller, Fountainworks President

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 8:43 a.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all members in attendance. City Manager John Connet welcomed everyone and introduced special guests.

2. PRESENTATIONS

Maintaining and Creating Sense of Place – *Judy Francis, NC Recreation Resource Service; Hunter Marks, Landscape Architect; Kieran Roe, Conserving Carolina*

Hunter Marks discussed challenges of growth with maintaining sense of place. Judy Francis discussed change, opportunities and threats that may present themselves over the next several years. Ms. Francis discussed how parks and recreation are economic development opportunities for municipalities. Ms. Francis stated it was important not to discount the importance of parks and the sense of connectivity they bring to the community and urged Council to ensure parks are included in the Comprehensive Plan and open space protections. Kieran Row discussed the importance of conserving open spaces and impacts density bonuses have by acting as a disincentive to developers. Mr. Row stated there are options Council could take within ordinance to mitigate this. Mr. Row encouraged Council to identify places appropriate for conservation during the comprehensive planning. Ms. Francis discussed PARTF grant criteria and the importance of having recreation staff to oversee programming through a separate department from public works. Mayor Volk recalled the City providing the majority of programming for non-city residents in the past which led to the dissolution of the former recreation department.

Housing Needs in Henderson County – *Patrick Bowen, Bowen International; Sonny Iller, Beverly Hanks Realty; Brian Wasser, DR Horton Builders; Ashlynn McCoy, Housing Assistance Corporation; Sara Odio, UNC School of Government*

Patrick Bowen discussed growth rates within the city and county stating a minimum of 700 housing units would be needed to keep up with growth over the next several years. Sonny Iller discussed housing availability stating there is a lack of inventory on the market and said sales continue to outpace availability. Mr. Iller discussed price per square foot and supply stating many young persons and families are purchasing homes in upstate South Carolina and commuting to work in NC. Mr. Iller discussed average home prices and said the only two times this has decreased in Henderson County were during the Depression and Great Recession. Brian Wasser discussed development costs and pricing. Mr. Wasser stated the definition of affordability needs to be addressed and encouraged adding density to lower costs. Ashlynn McCoy discussed vacancy rates stating there is an extensive list awaiting assistance. Ms. McCoy discussed lack of available land, funding gaps, and suitability of housing units. Ms. McCoy discussed the importance of partnerships and education to address the problems. Sara Odio presented information regarding development financing initiatives across the state. Ms. Odio discussed affordable rental housing stating high rent pricing does not allow persons to save money to build a home of their own and said this is why rental vouchers are critical and said they go hand in hand with production. Ms. Odio discussed ways to remove barriers to production such as infrastructure and financing. Ms. Odio also discussed the importance of supporting preservation in older neighborhoods and historic districts through code enforcement, energy vouchers, rehabilitation

grants, and loan programs. Ms. McCoy and Mr. Wasser discussed cost impacts of infrastructure, materials, and skilled labor on projects.

Growth Impacts on Transportation Corridors - *Wanda Austin, NCDOT; Tristan Winkler, French Broad River MPO; and Jonathan Guy, Kinley-Horn*

Wanda Austin discussed road service levels with regard to traffic and additional factors for determining modernization and widening of roadways. Jonathan Guy discussed vehicle density and concentrations of vehicles on roadways as well as intersection delays. Tristan Winkler discussed the MPO's approach and level of service with regards to demographics and local development controls. Mr. Winkler stated 70 to 80 percent of the traffic on U.S. Hwy. 64 is not coming from Hendersonville and discussed the importance of prioritization and obtaining local input. Mr. Winkler discussed the importance of economic centers and multimodal transportation such as biking and walking to reduce the number of vehicle trips. Mr. Winkler and Mr. Guy also discussed funding challenges and the importance of partnerships.

General Discussion / Council Priorities – *Warren Miller, Fountainworks*

Warren Miller, President of Fountainworks Facilitation Management Consulting led general discussion with Council Members.

Mayor Barbara G. Volk discussed her thoughts and visions for communities stating she would like to see more mixed housing types in neighborhoods as well as green space and trees. Council Member Dr. Jennifer Hensley stated her visions were similar and said she would like to see more infill and density. Council Member Hensley stated she feels there are other entryways into the City she would like to see development explored. Council Member Debbie O'Neal-Roundtree stated her visions were more affordable housing and greenspace. Council Member Lyndsey Simpson stated her vision was more sustainable neighborhoods, inclusionary zoning, overlay districts with more strict design standards, higher density neighborhoods (pocket neighborhoods), and green space. Council Member Jerry A. Smith Jr., J.D. stated his vision of affordable housing including single and multi-family housing mixed with affordable housing, urban infill (smaller homes next to greenways), workforce housing, additional trees, and greenspace. Council Members discussed similarities in their visions and agreed on overall themes such as higher density, infill, green space, parks, trees, transportation, affordable housing, and the importance of partnerships. Council Members discussed various ideas for programs and services.

3. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m. upon unanimous assent of the Council.

Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela L. Reece, City Clerk