



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2015
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 1:11 p.m. and the following members of City Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

[Mr. Kenneth A. Bible](#) was introduced as the Deputy Director of the Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) Department at the U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters.

FISCAL YEAR 2015/2016 PRIORITY PLANNING & GOALS

1. [Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Parking Capital Improvement Program](#) – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director

[Ms. Melisa Caughman](#), Budget and Program Management Director presented the fiscal year 2015/2016 Parking Capital Improvement Program. She said the proposed budget is over \$2 million and includes work at five of the eight City garages. She noted that most improvements are related to structural repairs. She proposed that the Parking CIP be funded through the City's fund balance.

Councilor Plough asked about outstanding commitments related to the fund balance.

[Ms. Melisa Caughman](#), Budget and Program Management Director said the Parking Fund balance is \$12 million and there is \$2 million available. At this point, there are no commitments from the Parking Fund outside of this recommendation.

[Ms. Teresa Wilson](#), City Manager said the proposed vertical development should not impact our Parking Fund balance and any foot notes would be couched as potential obligations.

Councilor Plough asked if staff is exploring the concepts that were presented by the parking consultant. She said the improvements may be needed before those concepts can be considered.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said the capital projects are being done to expand the life expectancy of our garages and to improve safety and appearance. The operating budget did incorporate recommendations on staffing and some recommendations will require additional discussions with City Council prior to implementation.

Mr. John Spade, Director of Parking Services said the parking consultant's scope has been expanded and we've discussed having murals sponsored by other organizations as part of the marketing program. The parking consultant will present to City Council in August. He reported that a stakeholder meeting will be held with businesses to promote our pay by phone program and the validations that merchants can use for customer parking. He said pay by phone can manage pre-paid parking for events and guarantee parking spaces. He said the parking consultant wanted to see this in action. We will also roll out the ability for customers to pay parking citations online. He said we have been doing lighting upgrades for five years in all City garages; the last two are Park Street and Lincoln Street. He said new LED lighting fixtures will be added to the roofs of garages as part of the CIP and this will result in cost savings.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director reminded Council that the budget public hearing is scheduled for May 19, 2015; first reading is scheduled for June 2, 2015; and second reading is scheduled for June 16, 2015.

2. [Clean Water 2020 Program Update](#) – Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department reported on the Consent Decree deliverables. He said the Sewer Mapping Plan was submitted in July 2014 and the Capacity Assurance Program Checklist is an ongoing checklist that we maintain internally. The 12-month deliverables include the Maintenance Management System, which is our preventative maintenance plan for our assets; the Satellite Sewer System Agreements is a template of our new and renewed agreements; the Transmission System Operations and Maintenance Program is an operations and maintenance plan for our pressurized transmission system to include pump stations and force mains; the Continuing Sewer Assessment Program outlines how we analyze our system. He said the analysis oftentimes result in projects to address the deficiencies found in our system. He noted that the Consent Decree included twelve early action projects which are all complete. He said the next large group of deliverables is due in November 2014. He noted that all deliverables were delivered on time, we submit quarterly reports and the first annual report was submitted through December 31, 2014. He reported that Sanitary Sewer Overflows are 10% less than the previous year.

Mayor Benjamin said he previously asked staff if an aggressive approach to delivering more green infrastructure would allow us to invest less into our system. He said the ultimate goal is to help with storm water runoff. He asked if there is a way under our agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency that this could result with less cash being put into infrastructure.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said they discussed green infrastructure, but it doesn't take the other things away; we are expected to rehab our system. He said if we had a combined system, green infrastructure that reduces runoff would benefit our system.

An unidentified male said there isn't a provision in the Consent Decree for credits or deducts based on green infrastructure.

Mr. Tommy Lavender, Esq. said you could achieve a marginal, indirect impact on inflow if you implemented green infrastructure; you could relieve capacity problems in some areas. He noted that green infrastructure will help with the MS4 permit and improve the performance of the City's storm water system. He said the supplemental environmental projects in the Consent Decree are distinct, have been publicly noticed and they are in stone.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said new developments receive credits for using green techniques.

Mr. Tommy Lavender, Esq. said you can see a direct savings if those measures also have a positive impact on flooding.

Councilor Davis asked if the request for the negotiation of credits as a result of green programs was ever put on the table.

Mr. Tommy Lavender, Esq. said we received a 40% reduction in the civil penalty as a result of the \$1 million that was committed to supplemental environmental projects, which were three (3) stream restoration projects.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department added that the projects were in Smith Branch, Gills Creek and Rocky Branch.

Councilor Davis recalled the 100 year flood that occurred several years ago. He said that had an impact on the sewer system. He asked why we wouldn't get credit for the measures taken with green initiatives to reduce flooding.

Mr. Tommy Lavender, Esq. said it is difficult to measure and you won't avoid a capital project.

Councilor Plough asked if we have specific projects for the \$750 million.

Mr. Tommy Lavender, Esq. said he wasn't referring specifically to improvements to the sanitary sewer system based on the obligations. He said he was specifically referring to the supplemental environmental projects, which are etched in stone as an appendix to the Consent Decree and we are committed to do those projects in a 36-month period. We have a proportionate dollar credit against the civil penalty that reduced it down to where we ended up. Some of the projects that will comprise the \$750 million have already been

identified; others will be identified as a result of the Continuing Sewer Assessment Program. He said you have to identify the problems, schedule them and then complete them; that's where your hard dollars will end up.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department added that the eleven early action projects have been completed.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations added that with the exception of the supplemental environmental (storm water) projects, the remaining projects are sewer projects.

Councilor Devine inquired about the technique that was used to examine breaks in pipes.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said we use CCTV and smoke testing on smaller pipes and we use more advanced technology on larger pipes.

3. [Overview of the 208 Regional Water Quality Management Program](#) – Mr. Gregory Sprouse, Director of Research, Planning and Development for the Central Midlands Council of Governments

Mr. Gregory Sprouse, Director of Research, Planning and Development for the Central Midlands Council of Governments said they work with DHEC to certify that all sewer related projects are in conformance with Section 208 of the Clean Water Act. He presented an overview of the history of 208 planning prior to the enactment of the Clean Water Act in 1972. In the first planning effort, the City of Columbia was the designated service provider for most of Richland County, excluding East Richland County. Section 201 provided grant funding for constructing sewer facilities by giving local governments a 75% cost share for developing water treatment plants and lines. Section 208 was the area wide water quality management provision that required metropolitan areas to develop a regional planning and policy framework for meeting national water quality goals that were set forth in the Clean Water Act. He reported that in 1974/1975, the Columbia area had 170 individual domestic, commercial and industrial wastewater treatment discharges into the streams. The Board of the Central Midlands Regional Planning Council resolved to apply for federal funding to study this issue and to develop an area plan. The Regional Council received \$730,000 from the Federal government to develop this area-wide plan. In 1976, the Columbia Metropolitan Sewer Facilities Plan was adopted and the goal was to reduce the discharges to six by using a drainage basin approach. In 1978/1979, the Section 208 Plan was complete and it was updated in 1982, 1984, and 1985. He noted that by 1985, over \$50 million had been spent on major sewer improvements. The last official EPA sanctioned plan was developed in 1997 and it delineated the agency boundaries. In 2006, Kershaw County was removed from our 208 planning area. In closing, he noted that as part of DHEC's permitting process, anytime a construction permit is issued for putting a line in the ground or expanding a treatment facility, it has to be determined that the project is in conformance with the 208 Plan.

Councilor Baddourah asked when the next plan would be done.

Mr. Gregory Sprouse, Director of Research, Planning and Development for the Central Midlands Council of Governments said we are embarking on a new plan update. We are working with all sewer providers in the region to understand what their long term plans are to serve each region and that information will be incorporated into the regional plan.

4. [Vista Greenway Update](#) – Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer reported that community presentations were held; the project has been designed, we have funding and we are within weeks of putting this project out to bid. She reported that Alta Planning & Design was hired last year; they completed the project design; and they were asked to review site issues, concept plans, way finding signage and next steps. She noted that the first phase was completed in 2012 and the greenway extends from Lady Street to Taylor Street and across Finlay Park to Elmwood Avenue. She said the existing trail bed is overgrown with vegetation and there are slope issues. She reported that a parking area, a nice trailhead, lights and call boxes will be added to Elmwood Avenue under the overpass. She said it is a linear path and knee walls will be added. She said the path through Finlay Park will be constructed according to the Park Master Plan. She noted that the gates at Finlay Park are used by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Police Department. She reported that the consultant designed artwork for the entrance and the neighborhood is embracing that. She said the existing way finding signs were used as examples and the consultant created a similar way finding sign that is distinctive to the Vista Greenway. She noted that Leadership Columbia has finished the beautification project at the Taylor Street side of the Lincoln Tunnel and it looks great. She sought input on the gate at Finlay Park, because the neighborhood didn't want to have anything there.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we recognize that this is the way to go and this is what citizens want; they desire to have access and wonderful amenities such as this. She said it will be a novel concept for our City. She noted that across the country, we are finding that it is to be utilized at any time of the day and. She sought feedback from Council on their comfort level with the neighborhoods desire to have access to the Vista Greenway all of the time.

Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Chief of Police said they discussed this during the Public Safety Committee meeting last week and he thought Mr. Runyan asked several questions that were worthy of consideration. He acknowledged that it creates a public safety challenge that we want to be ahead of. He said a trail such as this puts the vibrancy we seek on an upward trajectory, but the tunnels and the fact that his incorporates a neighborhood makes this different. He said the primary purpose is for public access, but we don't want it to become an area that is frequented by people with other things in mind and the tunnels will become shelter for some of our homeless population. He said we are considering monitoring the tunnels and other strategic locations through our camera network.

Councilor Plough asked what lessons have been learned from the first phase of the Greenway being open.

Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Chief of Police said this will be heavily used and the more things are used it creates the perception of safety. He said the Police Department supports the Park Rangers who have a consistent presence that adds to the perception of safety.

Councilor Devine said the gates would make it feel more secluded and she wouldn't want to use it; opening it up makes it safer.

Mr. Bob Wynn, Past-President of the Arsenal Hill Neighborhood Association said the neighborhood is in support of the greenway being open 24/7 with police presence, lighting and other features.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager said there should be operating hours for the Vista Greenway and that would help to alleviate loitering. He agreed that the hours should be different from most parks. He noted that gated parks close at 9:00 p.m. and other parks close at sunset. He suggested that the Greenway close at 11:00 p.m. or 12:00 a.m.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about scheduling.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer said there is a six month construction period.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager recalled that they discussed opening during the spring when there is more activity.

Mayor Benjamin said there needs to be aggressive downward lighting, cameras and call boxes.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager reminded Council of the need for maintenance. He noted that 60% of a ranger's responsibility is maintenance, 20% is security and the remaining responsibilities include customer service and environmental items. He asked Council to consider adding to the ranger corps to properly maintain the facility.

Councilor Devine asked about extending the greenway to the other side of Elmwood.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer said staff has been working with DOT to obtain the land they acquired for 277 and we have been talking with the neighborhood about the easements.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said this is just a concept; this property would bring a lot to the table.

Mayor Benjamin agreed that activity helps deter the other concerns we have and we should invest in other security measures to include appropriations for more park rangers so that there is dedicated onsite staff on a regular basis. He said the gate inhibits use of the greenway.

Mr. Fred Monk, Earlewood Community resident said he is thrilled that we are at this point. He served on the first organizing committee and the major components were connectivity of the central neighborhoods and safety.

There was a consensus of Council to support not having a gate or bars at the Finlay Park entrance to the Vista Greenway.

5. Update from our Economic Development Partners – Mr. Ryan Coleman, Interim Director of Economic Development

- [World Affairs Council](#) – Mr. Fred Monk, Managing Director of the World Affairs Council / ECI Find New Markets

Mr. Fred Monk, Managing Director of the World Affairs Council said it has been an active year with tremendous programs and education outreach. He said we've been working with the Office of Economic Development to leverage our sister city relationships to have mutual benefits for both regions; we've been reaching out to our sister cities in Germany and Kaiserslautern. He said we now have two information technology prospects in Europe and we are looking to leverage Columbia as a landing place for companies. He reported that efforts to connect the Director of the Applied Research Institute in Kaiserslautern with the University of South Carolina are on track. He also reported that the World Affairs Council recently reconnected with our sister city in Romania and we will see how we can build on our other relationships with Taiwan and Ghana. He announced that this year's recipient of the Global Vision Award is Dr. Harris Pastides and he will be recognized on October 7, 2015.

- [City Center Partnership](#) – Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership, Inc.

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership, Inc. said we work closely with various City departments and council members; that partnership has helped us a lot over the years. He noted that both Main Street and downtown has changed; it's now a 7 days a week nation with almost 1,000 college students in the HUB and other apartment projects in the downtown area, new retailers and restaurants and the ever expanding Soda City Market, First Thursdays, Hip Hop Family Day, Indie Grits, Jam Room Music Festival, Famously Hot New Year, and many more events. He said these businesses and events bring money and jobs to the area and makes Columbia an even better place to live and work. He said we look forward to the future.

Mr. John MacArthur, Esq., Chair of the Board of Directors for the City Center Partnership, Inc. said Main Street will continue to improve. He outlined the top five (5) priorities of the City Center Partnership: pedestrian connectivity, growth opportunities on side streets; streetscaping on Main Street, a second major retail store and greater collaboration. He said the City Center Partnership will continue to work with the City of Columbia and others to accomplish these goals.

Mayor Benjamin asked the City Center Partnership to work with City staff to find ways to encourage current commercial buildings to repurpose street level space towards retail. He said they might see a significant increase in their value per square foot and it would add to the experience we are trying to have in the 1300 block of Main Street.

5a. **Annexation Policy

Councilor Plough said she asked for this to be added, because there was interest in moving in a different direction with annexations and Council needed to discuss what the annexation policy should be. She asked what the plans are for the existing staff.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said nothing has changed; we are still utilizing that staff person who worked on annexations and other tasks. She said Council wanted more of a grassroots effort to have citizens understand why they may want to come into the City of Columbia. She said our staff continues to work the areas that have been identified.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services said staff is continuing with Clemson Road, Spears Creek Road, Farrow Road and an area in Rosewood as previously presented and agreed upon. She said our staff may have to do more work due to increased volume as a result of this grassroots effort.

Councilor Devine said her position never changed. She said we talked about this grassroots initiative many years ago. She said we need staff working aggressively on the donut holes and compiling the data. Council needs to be thinking about how we grow our City and our tax base while working together with someone who can do the leg work. She said we need a plan for that and I support this.

Councilor Baddourah said there's nothing wrong with having someone on the ground doing the leg work, but he doesn't want someone representing the City who isn't a City employee. I don't want him to make promises that the City is going to do this and that if you come into the City. It's better to have an employee that follows City guidelines and policies. He added that people aren't happy with the company we endorsed for the water line warranty program.

Councilor Devine said those are two different things; that wasn't a contractor that we hired; that was a company that we endorsed. She added that a lot of our attorneys are contract employees, but they represent us because we hired them.

Councilor Davis said we could be more organized in doing this. He said that Broad River Road across I-20 to Chestnut Hills is a large hole. He said there are some gaps that show that we are inconsistent from a land use standpoint. He said it is perfectly clear what will be discussed.

Councilor Plough said staff did a complete analysis of Greenview and we understood that the sewer and water impacts were significant but the Council made a decision that it was important for the growth and prosperity of this city to proceed. She said from a policy perspective, we need to decide where it is that we need to grow and we need to understand the economic impacts of an annexation.

Mayor Benjamin asked Ms. Hampton if we are moving forward with our current annexation policy.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services said you have an annexation policy that identified donut holes and primary areas; we identified where we could provide services at that time. She said if there were issues with service, it would be considered as a secondary area or a long range area. She said we are not clear about the areas.

Mayor Benjamin said it should be a citywide approach looking at expanding the city, developing consistency, closing donut holes and expanding the natural boundaries of the urban area, but it is to be determined. He asked that specific questions be given to staff for a response. This policy decision should drive this engagement.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

6. A Report on the Columbia Archaeology Program – Dr. Jakob Crockett, Director of the Columbia Archaeology Program

Dr. Jakob Crockett, Director of the Columbia Archaeology Program reported that the project was reorganized, the timeline has changed and it has become more about Ethnography. He said most of the money has been used for staffing. He said they will have interns and continue working with the Heyward Career Center. He reminded Council that the goal of the project was to investigate four (4) areas downtown. He said both the Mann-Simons site and the Modjeska Simkins site are fully excavated and written up. He said the books are available through the Historic Columbia Foundation. He said they are working in the area bounded by Assembly Street, Wayne Street, Taylor Street and Washington Street; this is the historic African-American business district and the interface between the Jewish community and the African-American community. He described it as a historically vibrant and colorful place.

7. [Columbia Opportunity Resource Update](#) – Ms. Sarah Ford, Chair of the Board of Directors for Columbia Opportunity Resource (COR)

Ms. Sarah Ford, Chair of the Board of Directors for Columbia Opportunity Resource said COR is a 501 © 3 non-profit with the mission of connecting talented professionals in the greater Columbia area to diverse and meaningful networks for leadership, service and fun. She reported that COR has experienced a lot of success in growing its membership over 10 years with an all-time high of 400 members in 2014. She said they also secured partnerships with larger local organizations and focused on leadership development. She distributed the organization's annual report. She said their flagship program is Table for Six, which connects executives in the community with six young professionals. In closing, she said COR's goal is to continue to develop and integrate the professionals into the social and civic fabric of the community.

Mayor Benjamin recalled that Ms. Devine and former councilman Daniel Rickenmann stepped out to aggressively integrate and grow young professionals into all things pertaining to the City and it's awesome to see what COR has become.

Councilor Devine said the founders attended the 10th Anniversary celebration and it was amazing to see the diversity in that group. She noted that the City of Columbia no longer funds Good to Great. She asked that the Chamber no longer serve as the fiscal agent for COR and that Council fund COR directly.

8. [Fast Forward Update](#) – Ms. Dee Albritton, Executive Director of Fast Forward

Ms. Dee Albritton, Executive Director of Fast Forward announced the new board members for Fast Forward. She reported that through a Department of Labor grant they were able to place over 100 Veterans into employment since July. She introduced Cephus who is participating in the IHG Hotel Academy at Fort Jackson. She introduced Tony Barone as the Director of Remedy Staffing, who helped up to twelve Veterans gain permanent positions with local businesses. She acknowledged other employment partners. She reported that Mickey Cook continues to be employed at the Marriot and he enrolled in USC's Hospitality School. She thanked the Police Department for donating bicycles and Sisters of Charity for providing safety equipment. She said they are continuing the adult special needs and pre-school programs. She outlined the upcoming summer camps to include a new camp for designing baseball stadiums. She said they are working with the Columbia Housing Authority to teach 350 seniors to use the internet and email. She added that jobs are needed for individuals with special needs.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Plough and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to direct staff to outline a Veterans Hiring Initiative for the City and to report back to Council as to what that would like and when it can begin.

9. Columbia City Ballet Update – Mr. William Starett, Executive and Artistic Director of the Columbia City Ballet

Mr. William Starett, Executive and Artistic Director of the Columbia City Ballet reported having a stellar year. He said they just returned from Chicago for the Southside Community Center's 75th anniversary. This performance included an educational outreach component of the Off the Wall Ballet, which triggered thirteen additional invitations to London, Charlotte, Rhode Island, Detroit and Florida. He said the year started off with performances in Washington, D.C. for The Links Foundation, which is the largest African-American women's fundraising group in the country. He said the Columbia City Ballet is turning into the cultural ambassador for the City of Columbia. He thanked the Council for additional funding. He reported that ticket sales increased by 9%; the ballet had the highest grossing Dracula in five years; the ballet had the highest Nutcracker ticket sales in 55 years; and the Nutcracker sold out in Savannah. He said they were also invited to do a ballet series for the North Charleston Performing Arts Center. He said the average seating capacity for the Koger Center is 57% and the Columbia City Ballet is at 64%; there is 36% of potential. He said we have proved that with your increased investment we can do more. He requested additional funding for marketing.

Ms. Coralee Harris, Chair of Public Funding for the Columbia City Ballet Board of Directors said we are finding that as we go into these venues people have heard about the expanding arts community in the City of Columbia. She insisted that increased funding would bring more people into the area.

9a. **Air Rights for Vertical Development – Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager

Councilor Plough said the document is well prepared. She questioned the ability of the developer to assign this without the consent of the City. She asked why we wouldn't have an opportunity to consent on an assignment. She said it is important to have this information in public.

Mayor Benjamin said we went through a public RFP process and the media reported on this; continuing that same level of transparency is important. We are talking about creating the type of urban density that we need to continue to see the City prosper.

An unidentified male said the second clause can be deleted. He said any developer will assign to an affiliated entity; it's standard language. He said they will need to pledge it as part of the collateral package for the construction loan.

Mr. Bob Wynn, Chair of the Design Development Review Commission asked if the height of new construction will be guided by the current zoning ordinances.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager said yes.

**Councilor Plough reminded her colleagues to get their information for the City Manager's evaluation to the Human Resources Director. She said we will hold off for two weeks.

**Mayor Benjamin announced that Midlands Gives is at \$848,000. He encouraged everyone to give to one great non-profit to meet the \$1 million goal by midnight.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 4:01 p.m. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote.

10. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
11. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
12. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
13. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

Council adjourned the Executive Session at 5:45 p.m. to convene the regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk