



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2015
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, September 1, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:44 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine arrived at 3:45 p.m. The Honorable Leona K. Plough and The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman were 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.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. [November 3, 2015 Municipal Election](#) – Mr. Samuel Selph, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration

Mr. Samuel Selph, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration reported that there were 69,939 registered voters as of August 26, 2015; voting machines will be deployed during October 19-26, 2015; and absentee voting will begin on Monday, October 5, 2015 during normal business hours in the lobby of the Richland County Elections & Voter Registration Office located at 2020 Hampton Street. He presented two proposals for Council's consideration: opening 82 precincts or combining the precincts into 61. He acknowledged that the County Attorney had not reviewed this information. He presented an Election Day schedule to include media updates at 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and at 7:00 p.m. there will be an official poll closure announcement. The election certification will be held on Thursday, November 5, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at 2020 Hampton Street in the 4th floor conference room. He noted that this schedule is tentative.

Mayor Benjamin said we historically looked at combining precincts, but it gives him a reason for pause. Every dollar saved is important, but looking at \$19,000 in savings against the backdrop of real challenges we are facing across the country in terms of voter suppression concerns me and I wouldn't support that. He said this is the second general election that we've held in November and as we continue to build election numbers, I want to keep the habit of people going to the same place they normally go. He said he is fully prepared to financially commit the City for option one.

Councilor Baddourah asked that the phone numbers for citizens to find precinct information be made available.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to request the opening of all traditional voting precincts as outlined in proposal one.

2. [Columbia Museum of Art Capital Funding Request](#) – Ms. Karen Brosius, Executive Director for the Columbia Museum of Art

Mr. Luther Battiste, Immediate Past President of the Columbia Museum of Art Board of Trustees recalled that he served on City Council for fifteen years and they worked hard to bring the Columbia Museum of Art downtown. He reported that over the past seventeen years the Columbia Museum of Art has attracted more than 1.6 million visitors. He noted that more than \$500 million has been invested in the Main Street corridor since 1998. He said the Columbia Museum of Art has been a catalyst for development, for improving the cultural life of Columbia and for bringing young people together; the Museum has made a big difference.

Ms. Karen Brosius, Executive Director for the Columbia Museum of Art said when the museum moved to Main Street a large part of the building was renovated, but other spaces remained vacant for future growth. She said we are now ready to expand the programs we are offering. She said the renovation project includes a new Main Street entrance, additional education space on the main floor, four additional galleries, renovation of the second floor flex space, and increasing the storage vault.

Mr. Claude Walker, Jr., President of the Columbia Museum of Art Board of Trustees said the Museum and its supporters have been working quietly on a capital campaign and we have raised \$10 million to add to our endowment, which allows us to do more exciting programmatic things. He said this project is being done to increase access and services and to renovate the space. He requested \$1 million from City Council to go with the money already raised. He noted that they are 67% toward their goal for the construction projects and the State of South Carolina granted the Museum \$200,000. He thanked the City of Columbia for what they've done for the Columbia Museum of Art.

Mayor Benjamin said you have strong and deep support from Council for continuing to build the Museum. He thanked Mr. Battiste for his compliments and acknowledged that this Council is building on a very strong foundation that set the stage for what we have here. The reorientation of the Museum's façade to Main Street is key to the continuing growth. He said the challenge is that we have a number of significant capital projects that don't fit in the typical box of the hospitality tax appropriations process. To make this happen we have to look at a small Hospitality Tax Bond that will include several projects and we will have this discussion in the next 30 to 60 days.

3. [Parking System Master Plan Recommendations](#) – Mr. John Spade, Director of Parking Services and Mr. Peter Flotz, P.E., AICP, Managing Member of the Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC

Mr. Peter Flotz, P.E., AICP, Managing Member of the Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC said it is great to be in a place where so many things are happening. He invited Council to comment on the draft report, because the final report will be issued in October. He recalled that a major parking master plan was done in 2001-2002. He said revenue from event parking and special parking in the evenings has tripled over the last five years and the City needs more nimble staffing for those situations. He said the recommended marketing position was approved in the budget and that position can communicate directly with the business community. He said the City built a good parking management system and should consider doing third party management through the system. He said that parking has a role in economic development and the forecast made 12 years ago has come true. A rate survey was conducted and recommendations were made for rate adjustments. He noted that the City hasn't made rate adjustments in some time and this should be looked at internally every year. Adjustments in rates will manage the demand, especially for reserved spaces. He recommended that the reserved rates be increased and limited to no more than 10% or 15% of the spaces per garage. He also recommended that parking be \$1 per hour and that there be a pilot project on dynamic pricing where high demand areas would be \$2 per hour in the middle of the day. He said you would go lower in some areas and higher in others. He reported that there were 8,000 transactions with Passport Parking in the first month. He encouraged Council to continue with the Capital Improvement Projects by implementing the priority recommendations from the study. This will improve the customer experience. He reported seeing a 15% to 19% growth in revenue over five years for the existing garages. He said this is mostly due to efficiencies. He said bringing the HUB into the Sumter Street Garage doubled the revenue and that should stabilize from this point forward. He reported that the City is short on parking in the Main Street corridor and office space isn't renting because there isn't enough parking. He reported that the Arsenal Hill Garage is an asset that is no longer needed and it's costing money; tax exempt financing is tying your hands and you need to look at what can be done; the City's parking corporation should tie into financing; and the parking meters need to go back on Main Street, because there was less turnover.

Mr. Matt Kennell, City Center Partnership acknowledged that there were differences of opinion; some people liked having the free parking, but it is hard to turn over parking in the area.

Mr. Peter Flotz, P.E., AICP, Managing Member of the Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC said there isn't sufficient demand to justify a large investment in new facilities, but there may be economic development reasons to add surface parking and a joint venture in Five Points. He said they are looking at ideas for parking in the South Vista. He said the implementation of pay by phone and the T2 system is going relatively well.

Councilor Davis asked about the current number of reserved spaces.

Mr. John Spade, Director of Parking Services said in major garages we charge \$105 for reserved spaces, we charge \$80 for reserved spaces in other garages and \$65 for unreserved spaces. He agreed that a cap is needed on reserved spaces. He reported that there are 274 reserved parkers out of 1,006 spaces in the Lady Street Garage.

Councilor Davis inquired about the parking corporation.

Mayor Benjamin said the Parking Facilities Corporation floated the bonds to facilitate the development of Innovista.

Mr. Peter Flotz, P.E., AICP, Managing Member of the Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC suggested that the City of Columbia isolate its assets so that the City is protected when making an investment.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about the assets that could be disposed of.

Mr. Peter Flotz, P.E., AICP, Managing Member of the Lansing Melbourne Group, LLC added Devine Street and surface lots. He said there are assets contributing small amounts that could be put back on the tax rolls.

4. [Busby Street Resource and Community Policing Center](#) – Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Police Chief

Mr. William “S kip” Holbrook, Police Chief recalled that the City began an initiative a few years ago to develop the Busby Street property. He said they have been working closely with the Architect Design Group to design the project. He said the Busby Street Community Center and Police Facility is a means to provide the public with training and educational classrooms in a community oriented policing facility, creating a tangible way to mesh police with the community. He envisioned that it would house the Citizens Police Academy, the Explorers Program and the newly formed Citizens Advisory Council. A space needs assessment was conducted in comparison to current law enforcement standards and the Police Department’s projected growth. He said they are redistricting the patrol regions and a sixth region will be added. The findings concluded that the Columbia Police Department has a total of 136,000⁺ sq. ft. and it is projected to increase to 165,000 sq. ft. by 2040. He noted that there are 16 facilities, the police headquarters is 31,000 sq. ft. and they recommended a facility with 76,000 sq. ft. He outlined the prototype for staffing a police region at 9,000 sq. ft. In the past, police regions occupied any available space as opposed to a facility designed for law enforcement purposes. He said there are three options for the Busby Street Community Center and Police Facility. He said the community facility is included in each option at 12,883 sq. ft. and the police facility would be a separate onsite option. He said option two would cost \$14.6 million and it is the option that we should concentrate on. He said the Bluff Road facility would be moved to Busby Street. He presented a site plan of the facility.

Councilor Devine joined the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Mr. William “Skip” Holbrook, Police Chief continued to report that a children’s play center would also be a part of the facility along with a perimeter walking trail. He said that a funding source has to be identified and then a final design will be prepared and presented to City Council.

Councilor Devine asked staff to look at the debris that is being left along residential fence lines on Guernsey Drive.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 3:48 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 5** through **9** as outlined.

5. Discussion of employment of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Legal Department*
 - *Municipal Court Judges*

6. Receipt of legal advice on matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Undergrounding Utilities*
 - *Lady Street Garage*

7. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Drayton Street*

8. Discussion of matter relating to proposed location or expansion of services to encourage location or expansion of industries or other businesses – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Potential Downtown Business Expansion*

9. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Professional Services Contract*

Council adjourned the Executive Session at 4:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk