

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 15, 2006
9:00 AM – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1737 MAIN STREET**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, February 15, 2006 in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. The following members of City Council were present: The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Anne M. Sinclair, The Honorable Hamilton Osborne, Jr., The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

****Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr.**, City Manager announced that Development Services has sent out notices to all election candidates regarding the Sign Ordinance. Development Services staff will be checking across the board to ensure that there is consistent compliance.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- A. Design Development Review Commission Briefing - Ms. Lucinda Statler, Urban Design Planner

Ms. Lucinda Statler, Urban Design Planner, presented an overview of the Design Review Process and Historic Preservation at the staff level. She explained that the Design Development Review Commission (DDRC) is charged with the task of design review on permits to properties within the City's Design Overlay Districts. Its purpose is to protect the beauty of this city and to improve the quality of the environment; foster appropriate use; widen public knowledge and much more. The City of Columbia has nine (9) designated historic districts as well as the City Center Design Development District comprising of nine percent of the city's total acreage excluding Fort Jackson. She noted that Columbia has been transformed into a lively destination for residents and visitors alike. The following factors have worked together toward that common goal: Public investments such as streetscape improvements and public facilities; economic development initiatives by City agencies; the creation of a Tax Increment Financing District; The preservation of historic buildings; and Design guidelines for private development and signage. A well-designed, mixed-use, and pedestrian friendly urban environment benefits the whole community by protecting and enhancing property values of existing residents and business owners. In 1997, the City underwent a strategic assessment process with the overall purpose of identifying and implementing strategies to revitalize Columbia's City Center. An inclusive group of stakeholders participated in the process, which resulted in the City Center Design/Development Guidelines and the City Center Master Plan. One advantage of having a published, tangible set of guidelines is that it outlines what is expected for any project proponent prior to getting started so that there are no surprises. Unlike an extremely detailed design code, guidelines encourage high-quality development while maintaining flexibility of architectural style and adaptability to site-specific issues. While the city's zoning ordinance addresses many public safety, health, and welfare issues, it is suburban oriented and does not address many of the quality of life benefits that go hand-and-hand with good urban design. In addition to the long-term public benefits, there are also many benefits to those making improvements in the DP- overlay district.

Ms. Amy Moore, Planner, explained that they are charged with protecting, identifying and preserving the City's architectural assets and resources. There are 2,300 historic districts in the United States. Districts worthy of preserving were identified in a 1993 citywide architectural survey. Columbia's historic district comprises less than 4% of the City's total acreage to include two (2) pending designation requests. Designated properties gain value at a higher rate than undesignated properties and the rehabilitation of structures can be great catalysts for private development and tourism. As a certified local government, having an approved preservation program by the state regulatory agency, the City has access to grant monies toward preservation projects. She explained that neither staff nor the DDRC ever solicit neighborhoods for historic designations. They will present the information upon request from the neighborhood or association. All meetings and hearings are appropriately noticed before the designation may be adopted. Neighborhoods can apply for Architectural Designation, Protection Designation or Landmark Designation Districts. She explained that the Design Development Review Commission is a 10 member quasi-judicial volunteer board appointed by City Council to review projects that cannot be reviewed at a staff level. There are six designated positions: registered architect, licensed attorney, architectural historian, city planner, real estate developer or licensed broker; and architect with historic preservation experience.

Councilman Sam Davis asked how much money has been received through the grant process.

Ms. Amy Moore, Planner, stated that \$3,600 has been received this year. We also received grant funds for staff training.

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine asked if Council could amend the Ordinance to allow City Council to review appeals made to the DDRC.

Ms. Lucinda Statler, Urban Design Planner stated that State law requires that appeals be made to the Circuit Court.

Councilwoman Anne M. Sinclair stated that she is concerned about the board members not having to live under the impact of the designations. She said that more people needed to be appointed from neighborhoods that have one of these designations.

Councilman Daniel J. Rickenmann stated that changes should be made to the process. He said that there is a lot of cost involved. He stated that there is a way for them to work together and he looks forward to working with staff on the matter. Mr. Rickenmann agreed that appealing to the Circuit Court is both time and cost prohibitive. He agreed to meet with staff to develop some ideas to present to the entire Council.

Mayor Robert D. Coble stated that the McDonalds in the Vista would not look the way it does if it had not been for the design guidelines. He said that the private sector views the level of quality in the City Center as an essential part of any building they would build by large. The issue becomes speed and the ability to move forward more quickly. He said that Council might want to fine-tune the process. He stated that he has received good reports on the process, but there are concerns.

Councilman E.W. Cromartie, II asked if City Council could increase the number of board members.

Ms. Amy Moore, Planner, reported that the DDRC volunteers have spent an average of 18 hours each in 2005 attending training sessions and sub-committee meetings in addition to the monthly meetings. She said that they began using a Consent Agenda, which has been a great success. Applicants whose cases are on the consent agenda do not require attendance. The order of the agenda has been changed to hear City Center cases before 5:00 p.m. and historic district cases are heard after 5:00 p.m. Subcommittees have been set up in between formal monthly hearings to work out complicated issues in a round table setting before the next hearing. In 2005, subcommittees reviewed 5 projects. In 2005, the DDRC heard 52 cases; 51 cases were approved; 88% of the cases were approved with a single hearing; 142 (72%) of cases were approved at the staff level; 37 cases were heard by the DDRC since November 2005, 43% were approved on the Consent Agenda; and since 2000, only 6 cases have been denied.

APPOINTMENTS

- B. Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission – Ms. Melissa Smith Gentry, Director of Public Works. - *This item was moved to the regular meeting agenda. Please see Item 2a.*

TRAFFIC MATTERS

- B1. **Olympia Area Through Truck Traffic Restrictions – Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer (Sponsored by The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II)

Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer, stated that the South Carolina Department of Transportation has asked City Council to pass an Ordinance authorizing them to restrict thru truck traffic on Whaley Street between Assembly Street and Huger Street; on Huger Street from Blossom Street to Whaley Street. This will allow truck traffic to be routed on Blossom Street and Assembly Street around the Olympia area.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve a request from the South Carolina Department of Transportation to prohibit through truck traffic on Whaley Street, Olympia Avenue, and a portion of Huger Street through the Olympia Neighborhood.

**Councilwoman Anne M. Sinclair stated that she met with the Executive Committee of Engenuity and part of the discussion was looking at how we can use the technology ideas that are being generated from the University. She asked staff to meet with Jim Gambrell and Neil McLean to see if there are ways to partner with others to try new things.

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 9:52 a.m. to break prior to convening the regular meeting.**
- **Council reconvened the Work Session at 11:24 a.m.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Osborne, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:26 a.m. for the discussion of **Items C.** through **D.** as amended. Mr. Cromartie was not present for the vote.

- C. **Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege –
Mr. Jim Meggs, City Attorney
- East Central City Consortium
This item was discussed in Executive Session.

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session discussion at 12:21 p.m. to reconvene the Work Session.**

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- C1. **East Central City Consortium Request - Mr. Fred A. Johnson, II of the FA Johnson Consulting Group, Inc.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to provide previously allocated funding in the amount of \$335,000.00 as a Grant to the East Central City Consortium for purposes as outlined in the briefing package. Staff was directed to prepare the appropriate Resolution that would finalize this action. Mr. Cromartie was not present for the vote.

- C2. **Council is asked to approve Renovations to Capital City Baseball Stadium, as requested by the Parks and Recreation Department. Award to Porterfield Remodeling Co., in the amount of \$76,724.00. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: GL-4039999-659300 / JL-PK005601-659300*

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted four (4) to two (2) to approve Renovations to the Capital City Baseball Stadium, as requested by the Parks and Recreation Department. Award to Porterfield Remodeling Co., in the amount of \$76,724.00. Voting aye were Mr. Rickenmann, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis and Mayor Coble. Voting nay was Mr. Osborne and Ms. Sinclair. Mr. Cromartie was not present for the vote.

- **Council reconvened the Executive Session discussion at 12:34 p.m.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- C3. **Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege – Mr. Jim Meggs, City Attorney
- Board of Zoning Appeals
 - Planning Commission

These items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

- D. **Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – Mr. Jim Meggs, City Attorney
- This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk