

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 22, 2006
9:00 AM – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1737 MAIN STREET**



The City of Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, March 22, 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 9:03 a.m. The following members of City Council were present: The Honorable E. W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Anne M. Sinclair, 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.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATIONS

- A. Installation of Fish Ladders on the Broad River – Mr. John Dooley, Director of Utilities and Engineering Mr. Harold Moxley, Senior Project Engineer for South Carolina Electric and Gas

Mr. John Dooley, Director of Utilities and Engineering explained that three (3) years ago the City of Columbia took ownership of the Columbia Hydro Plant, but South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G) continues to operate the plant under a contract with the City. He said that it has been a great experience and the initial contract has been extended for seven (7) years. Mr. Dooley explained that as part of the license renewal process for the Hydro Plant, SCE&G was required to build fish passages.

- **Councilwoman Anne M. Sinclair arrived at 9:09 a.m.**

Mr. Harold Moxley, Senior Project Engineer for SCE&G presented a brief overview of the Columbia Canal Hydro Fish Passage Project, which will be completed by May 2006. He explained that fish ladders would be installed upstream near the diversion dam first. He noted that viewing windows would be installed in the fish passage so that they can count the fish. The operational requirement of the fish passage structure is February 1 through May 31 of each year.

- B. USC Columbia Fuel Cell Collaboration – Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development

Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development explained the chain of events from 2000 that led to the plan entitled “Transitioning the Greater Columbia Economy into the Information Age: A Regional Technology Development Plan”. He further explained that Mr. Neil McLean and Sagacious Partners were hired to implement that plan. In November 2003 a business plan was adopted for the Technology Council and the next twelve months was spent organizing, financing and planning. The group was then renamed Engenuity SC. Consultants were then hired to develop the next energy strategic plan for the city and the region.

Mr. Neal McLean, Executive Director of Engenuity SC, explained that Engenuity is a strategic leadership council focused on growing Columbia’s knowledge economy. He said that they are working to develop a regional fuel cell cluster in Columbia. He stated that Columbia and South Carolina have major fuel cell and hydrogen production research assets. Mr. McLean presented this as an economic opportunity for the region creating high paying jobs and high margins. A fuel cell is a device that uses hydrogen and oxygen to create an electric current. Hydrogen can be found in many things. There are three key applications: portable power, stationary power, and transportation. Industry analysts project expedient growth in all three sectors.

The consultants recommended that Engenuity develop a strong innovation pipeline in order to form a regional fuel cell cluster; create a statewide collaboration to work with the congressional delegation; and that the regions focus on their core strengths. Mr. McLean noted that the USC Fuel Cell Collaboration was created to build critical mass. He described the many initiatives and partnerships that are underway.

Councilman E.W. Cromartie, II encouraged Engenuity to invite Benedict College, Allen University and Columbia College to be partners as well. He also encouraged them to get small and minority businesses involved. He insisted that this great opportunity represent the diversity of Columbia.

Councilman Sam Davis noted that this collaboration would have a significant impact on the economic and cultural aspects of the city; therefore, all colleges and universities should benefit from this effort.

- C. Columbia Area Mental Health Center Update – Mr. Tom Ward, Community Education Coordinator and Client Advocate - *The presentation of this matter was deferred.*
- D. National Youth Violence Prevention Week – The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and Ms. Kim Mitchell, Special Events Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine announced that the city would host the 2nd Annual National Youth Violence Prevention Week during April 2-7, 2006. She noted that last year's event was a great success.

Ms. Kim Mitchell, Special Programs Coordinator, outlined the schedule of events for the 2nd Annual National Youth Violence Prevention Week. She noted that the purpose is to unite the community, schools, businesses and organizations in an effort to address youth violence. Each day they will focus on a specific strategy that will demonstrate positive roles that the youth can take in making their communities and schools a safer place to be. The event will kick off with a walk to Finlay Park and a welcome address given by Mayor Coble. The youth are also participating in an essay contest. Students from Richland Districts One and Two have been invited to participate. This event will end with a Rap-Up Party for the participants.

Mayor Robert D. Coble and Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine presented a proclamation declaring April 2-7, 2006 as National Youth Violence Prevention Week in the City of Columbia.

- D1. ****Kids Day Columbia 2006 – Mr. Earl Brown, Chairman of the Columbia Action Council Board of Directors**

Mr. Earl Brown, Chairman of the Columbia Action Council Board of Directors, thanked the members of Council for their continued support. He stated that they would present five (5) projects this year including Kids Day Columbia 2006. He encouraged participation in the upcoming Kids Day Columbia 2006 scheduled for Saturday, April 1, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Anthony Morgan, Chairman of Kids Day Columbia 2006, stated that children are our future and we, as adults must continue to bring quality services and programs for our families and youth. He noted that a series of events would take place in conjunction with Kids Day Columbia 2006. Mr. Morgan recognized the many community sponsors and media contacts and thanked them for their support. He introduced Dooley and Sparky the Fire Dog to the members of Council. They will appear during this event along with other mascots.

- D2. ****Columbia Assisting Neighborhood Development Opportunities (CANDO) Grant Guidelines and Application – Mr. Rick Semon, Director of Community Development**

Mr. Rick Semon, Director of Community Development stated that simplified guidelines and application have been developed for the CANDO grant process. A technical assistance workshop is scheduled for today and \$258,000 has been allocated for the 2006 grants. They expect to receive at least forty -(40) applications for funding. Recommendations for funding will be presented to Council for consideration. Staff was directed to inform Council of any concerns that may arise.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- E. Sale of the Old Fire Station Headquarters – Ms. Robin Waites, Executive Director of the Historic Columbia Foundation and Ms. Jeanne McIntosh-Lirola, President of the Congaree Vista Guild

Ms. Robin Waites, Executive Director of the Historic Columbia Foundation, stated that over the years the City of Columbia has encouraged the Historic Columbia Foundation to take a more proactive approach to preservation so that owners and potential buyers of historic properties are aware of the guidelines associated with each site. She noted that the Historic Columbia Foundation provided to the City a list of properties that they own and are eligible for local landmark status. The old fire station headquarters was on that list. Both the headquarters and the fire tower have been deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. She reiterated the request to be involved in determining the best use of the building. Now that a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued, Historic Columbia asked to be included in the review. She requested that an addendum be added to the current RFP, since it fails to provide fairness to owners and purchasers of historic properties.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager, requested that staff be given an opportunity to review the proposed addendum.

Mayor Robert D. Coble stated that staff is under tremendous financial pressure to obtain revenue for the various projects that are on the table. From a policy standpoint the final decision is the City's. He said that every available option should be reviewed and HCF should be involved in reviewing the responses. He noted that he is in favor of adopting an addendum that will outline all available options.

Councilwoman Anne M. Sinclair stated that she hoped that the City would find someone to redevelop the building. She said that tearing the building down should be a last resort. She is supportive of HCF being involved in the review process.

Councilman Daniel J. Rickenmann stated that they differ in opinion on the historic value of the building. He stated that he is concerned about the Vista Guild's involvement in the process, because some of their members have approached him about purchasing the property. He noted that not everyone is interested in demolishing the building. He said that he is disturbed about the lack of interest in the building until now. He agrees that all options should be reviewed.

Ms. Jeanne Lirola, Congaree Vista Guild, responded that five (5) years ago the Guild did take notice of the site; because the station was being vacated and rumors of structural damage emerged. She noted that the Vista took a huge blow when they lost the jail and at that point they formed a preservation committee realizing that the neighborhood is not safe.

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine said that there are many people who want to renovate the structure, but the RFP should be amended to include all the available options.

Councilman Sam Davis stated that others are concerned about the time and expenses related to historic preservation. He noted that this may become a stumbling block for some.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to direct Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager to evaluate the committee that will review the responses to the Request for Proposal for the old fire station headquarters property and determine if the City's Historic Preservation staff could be added to the committee and to direct staff to review the proposed addendum presented by the Historic Columbia Foundation and to bring back recommendations in two (2) weeks.

F. Community Promotions Funding Recommendations – Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman of the Community Promotions Advisory Committee

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to approve the disbursement of Community Promotions Funding in the total amount of \$7,400 for February 2006. (See chart below)

Organization	Project Name	Request	Amount Funded
February			
City Year Columbia	Camp City Year	5,000	3,500
Columbia City Jazz *Eligible for other funds	Annual Koger Show Dance Production	10,000	0
Koban Columbia Inc. *funding for two teachers	Camp Computer Tutor	7,680	3,900
The South Carolina Multicultural Arts Center, Inc. *New event	Experience in Rhythm	1,000	0
The USC Dance Company *Limited funds/needed for other activities	Lecture Demonstration for Students	4,000	0

G. Accommodations Tax Review – Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman

Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman, asked for clarification from Council on issues concerning the Accommodations Tax Fund guidelines. She asked Council for their definition of a tourist and reminded them that the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (TERC) now looks more at the economic impact of the event versus the distance the people travel to be considered a tourist.

There was a consensus of Council to consider a tourist to be anyone who travels from outside the city limits and the zip codes therein.

Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman, asked for clarification on the advancement of funds. She noted that TERC will allow dollars to be advanced if needed to secure entertainment; however, this is usually a reimbursable process.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman to draft a policy for the advancement of funds to organizations based upon her experiences and the organization's track record.

Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman, requested clarification on the issue of funding events that give monies to charities or scholarship funds. She further explained that the Tourism Expenditure Review Committee is divided about the matter of funding charitable events, but their attorney's opinion is that if the event itself brings tourists, then it merits funding.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman to draft the parameters for funding events that give monies to charities or scholarship funds with the understanding that City Council is comfortable with funding such events.

Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman, asked for clarification on funding events located outside of the city's boundaries. TERC determined that the festivals, events or projects funded would not have to be inside the limits of the municipality, if the municipality benefits from it.

There was a consensus of Council to only fund events that are held inside the city limits of Columbia.

G1. **Proposed Funding for the Granby Olympia Area – The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II

Mayor Robert D. Coble explained that the efforts for a joint Tax Increment Funding district for the Granby Olympia area failed and that Richland County has secured funding for a portion of the beautification project and the City of Columbia needs to do the same.

Mr. G.C. Robinett, Chief Financial Officer, explained that there is a \$602,000 fund balance and that unneeded encumbrances could be released to bring the balance to the \$633,000 needed for one year. He suggested that the project be funded from the Hospitality Tax Fund over a three-year period at the same level for a total of \$2 million.

Mr. Larry Gates stated that there is no sacred cow, but the Mills will bring money back to the City through property taxes. He said that they need to beautify the area with lighting and landscaping so that people will want to live there.

Mr. Charlie Jacocks stated that the community organization has maintained the medians for many years. He said that there are countless events at the fairgrounds and the stadium, but no sidewalks for people to walk on.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to reserve fiscal year 2005/2006 Hospitality Tax funding in the amount of \$666,666 for the Olympia Beautification Project. This is a part of a three-year plan to provide match funding in the total amount of \$2 million. Staff was directed to reserve \$666,666 for the next two years with the understanding that City Council must authorize the disbursement of funding each year. Staff was further directed to work with Richland County on the beautification plan.

ORDINANCES – SECOND READING

H. Ordinance No.: 2006-014 – Authorizing execution of an Easement between the City of Columbia and Capitol Places I, LLC for property known as 1504 Main Street, Richland County TMS# 09014-09-17 and terminating Lease Agreement dated November 16, 1999 *First reading approval was given on March 8, 2006.*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to give second reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2006-014 – Authorizing execution of an Easement between the City of Columbia and Capitol Places I, LLC for property known as 1504 Main Street, Richland County TMS# 09014-09-17 and terminating Lease Agreement dated November 16, 1999.

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS AND AGREEMENTS

- I. Council is asked to approve an Amendment to the Software License and Annual Support Agreement for the City's Utility Billing and Customer Information Software, as requested by the Budget Administrator. Award to Indus International formerly known as SCT, in the amount of \$79,900.00. *Funding Source: The funding for this contract is budgeted annually as part of the City's support and maintenance agreement for the utility billing system.*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve an Amendment to the Software License and Annual Support Agreement for the City's Utility Billing and Customer Information Software, as requested by the Budget Administrator. Award to Indus International formerly known as SCT, in the amount of \$79,900.00.

RESOLUTIONS

- J. Resolution No.: R-2006-012 – Authorizing 3 Rivers Music Festival 2006

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2006-012 – Authorizing 3 Rivers Music Festival 2006, subject to the Legal Department removing the following statement from the final draft: "We have no documentation of SCDOT approval of the closing of the bridge." Mr. Harold Reaves, Deputy Director of Homeland Security received a copy of the approval letter today.

TRAFFIC CONCERNS

- K. Traffic Signal Installation at the Intersection of Pickens Street and Whaley Street

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the Installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Pickens Street and Whaley Street. Mr. Cromartie was not present for the vote.

APPEARANCE OF PUBLIC HAVING BUSINESS WITH CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Tony Clyburn said that as he sat and watched, he noticed a lot of whispering and movement during the meeting and that those actions seem to be disrespectful to the process. He appeared before the members of Council to seek assistance with an animal control matter. He said that one of his dogs escaped through a fence because of changes being made in the yard and was then picked up by Animal Services. He said that when they went to pick up the dog they were told that the dog would be fixed prior to being released unless there were medical concerns or if this was a show dog. He stated that he intends to breed the dog and does not want her to be spayed. Mr. Clyburn insisted that there should be provisions for responsible pet owners.

There was a consensus of Council to further discuss this matter in Executive Session.

Mr. Joe Azar stated that Mayor Coble has election signs in the City's right of way. He suggested that Development Services resend the letter pertaining to signs in the right of way.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:27 a.m. for the discussion of **Items L.** through **N.** as presented.

- L. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege
 - Liability Insurance Requirements
 - **Animal Services

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

- M. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim
- These items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

- N. Discussion of Compensation of an Employee
 - Assistant City Attorneys
 - **Municipal Court Judges

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

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk