

**CITY OF COLUMBIA WORK SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 7, 2006
9:00 AM – CITY HALL– 3RD FLOOR
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, June 7, 2006 in the Council Chambers located at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. 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 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.

Mayor Robert D. Coble recognized Mr. E.W. Cromartie, II. He celebrated a birthday on June 6, 2006.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Discussion of the Proposed Water and Sewer Rate Increases – The Honorable Barry Walker, Irmo Town Council

Councilor Barry Walker, Irmo Town Council, asked the members of Council to consider appoint a taskforce to discuss the inequities of the water rates between the Town of Irmo and the City of Columbia. He said that the Town of Irmo owned their water system back in the 1970's before they sold it to the City of Columbia. He said that it is becoming expensive for his constituents to use the City's water and they need to find an amicable way of assessing the water rates.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to endorse the formation of a taskforce to review the water and sewer rates for the Town of Irmo. Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager was directed to appoint individuals to serve on behalf of the City of Columbia along with any Council members that would be interested in serving.

- B. Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism Update – Mr. Bill Dukes, Chairman of the Convention Center Authority Board of Directors

Mr. Bill Dukes, Chairman of the Convention Center Authority Board of Directors provided an update on the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism. He explained that the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism is a body appointed by the City of Columbia, Richland County and Lexington County charged with the oversight of the Convention Center, Conventions and Visitors Bureau and the Sports Council. He said that he spoke with each member of Council to address his or her concerns related to the Convention Center. In addition they have contacted complainants directly. As a result, they are creating a vendor list that specifically lists the opportunities available for small and minority businesses; changed their policy on valet parking; put one person in charge during events; and changed their policy on the payment of deposits. He noted that African Americans make up the majority of the Convention Center's service staff. Mr. Dukes suggested that the organization provide a monthly update to the Columbia City Council. The Conventions and Visitors Bureau has entered into an agreement with Ms. Cynthia Leggett Davis to highlight the limited schedule attractions. They are also developing in room promotional videos as requested. It is noted that the Authority does not use its funding to market the Convention Center. Mr. Dukes lessened the funding request to \$950,000 for the Columbia Metropolitan Conventions and Visitors Bureau from the Hospitality Tax Fund. The original request was for \$1,100,000.

C. North Columbia Master Plan Update – Mr. Mike Manis, Executive Director of the Eau Claire Development Corporation

Mr. Fred Monk, Co-Chair of the North Main Taskforce Coordinating Committee, stated that the North Columbia area from Elmwood Avenue to I-20 is a corridor of opportunity for Columbia. He said that a renaissance is already occurring and that the master plan provides a blueprint for the City to move forward in a positive direction. He noted that this was truly a grass roots effort.

Mr. Mike Manis, Director of the Eau Claire Development Corporation presented the North Columbia Master Plan to the members of Council. A diverse steering committee met with over 200 workshop attendees. The North Columbia area consists of 4,200 acres and one third of the City's population. The original plan was split into four clusters. The community's goal for the North Columbia Master Plan is to reinvent the image of North Columbia. The plan involves three (3) distinct areas: The Artist Village, College Village and Gateway Village. The plan will create destinations and services for these areas. The following five (5) neighborhoods were identified as Redevelopment Areas: Golden Acres, Hyatt Park Annex, Edgewood Acres, North College Place and Belmont. These areas need extra attention to reverse the current trends. He asked the members of Council to officially adopt the Master Plan as the new Master Plan for the North Columbia area. He said that the community endorses and supports this as the 10-year plan.

Mr. Ford Mason, Earlewood Community Citizens Organization President, stated that North Columbia is a rapidly developing area. He said that they constantly work with the City's Zoning Department and the Design Development Review Commission to ensure that developments are of high quality and reflective of their historic heritage. The proposed development of North Main Street and other areas will provide positive commercial development for the citizens. He supports the plan.

Ms. Emily Cooper, College Place Resident, stated that this is a wonderful plan, but asked the members of Council not to pass the plan if it was going to sit in a drawer and collect dust. She asked them to approve it only if it will be used. She suggested that the first catalyst be North Main Street at Columbia College Drive. She supports the plan.

Ms. Phyllis Coleman, President of the Windemere Springs Neighborhood Association and Co-Chair of the North Main Taskforce Coordinating Committee said that she is really excited about the project. She said that she chose to move to the North Columbia area and that she is always looking for things to do and more places to invest her money.

Mr. Henry Hopkins, Eau Claire Community Council, stated that it was time the City of Columbia to prioritize North Columbia as a developable area. He said that zoning matters needed to be enforced and that it is discouraging to have cell phone towers within the gateway. He supports the plan.

Councilor Sam Davis recognized Dr. Caroline Whitson, President of Columbia College. He thanked Columbia College for their support and participation in this process.

Upon motion by Mr. Davis, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to adopt the North Columbia Master Plan for implementation.

Councilor Tameika Isaac Devine encouraged the citizens to contact elected officials on other levels of government so that they understand how important this plan is for the North Columbia area and how the City of Columbia can not be prohibited from implementing the plan based upon any legislation.

Mr. Doris Jumper, 5200 Burke Avenue, stated that she supports the plan, but is concerned about it not being acted upon. She said that Burke Avenue was not written into the map, but they were told that they are in the cluster area. She said that the residents in the 5100 and 5200 blocks of Burke Avenue would like to see the street added to the list.

Councilor Sam Davis directed staff and the consultants to include Burke Avenue in all future documentation and maps.

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 10:16 a.m. to break prior to convening the Public Hearings.**
- **Council reconvened the Work Session at 12:24 p.m.**

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- D. Request from the Workshop Theatre – The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble
This matter was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- E. Accommodations Tax Review – Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman
Consideration of this matter was deferred.

APPOINTMENTS

- F. Affordable Housing Taskforce Guidelines – Ms. Dana D. Turner, Assistant City Manager - *Consideration of this matter was deferred.*
- G. Commission on Homelessness – The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble - *Consideration of this matter was deferred.*

**Councilor Daniel J. Rickenmann inquired about a recent meeting the City Manager had with Richland County Administration. He requested the cost of operating the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center along with information on Bonds and how that funding was spent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 12:34 p.m. for the discussion of **Items H. and I.** as amended.

- H. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege
- *Workshop Theatre Request
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- I. Discussion of the Employment of an Employee
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 2:24 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk