



We Are Columbia

CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2013
2:00 P.M.
EAU CLAIRE TOWN HALL
3905 ENSOR AVENUE

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, August 13, 2013 at the Eau Claire Town Hall located at 3905 Ensor Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:17 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan arrived at 2:30 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa B. 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. 2013 James R. Clark Sickle Cell Memorial Walk – Ms. Yvonne Donald, Deputy Director of the James R. Clark Memorial Sickle Cell Foundation

Ms. Yvonne Donald, Deputy Director of the James R. Clark Memorial Sickle Cell Foundation announced the 8th Annual James R. Clark Sickle Cell Memorial Walk on Saturday, September 14, 2013 at 8:00 a.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 1300 Pine Street.

2. 2013 Jubilee Festival of Heritage – Ms. Robin Waites, Executive Director of the Historic Columbia Foundation

Ms. Robin Waites, Executive Director of the Historic Columbia Foundation invited the Council to the 35th Annual Jubilee Festival of Heritage near the Mann-Simons Cottage to include the Modjeska Simpkins House on Saturday, August 24, 2013.

3. Archaeology Project at the Modjeska Simkins Property – Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation

Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation provided an update on the archaeology projects at the Mann-Simons Cottage and the Modjeska Simkins site. He reported that preservation was incredible; 320 sq. ft. was excavated; and over 10,000 artifacts were generated from the Modjeska Simkins site. He said archeology answers questions like how people allocated resources and what is the dynamic between social structure and individual collective agency. He said they will be applying this project focus to other areas starting with Wheeler Hill. He explained that they will be working with honor students from the University of South Carolina to learn preservation through documentary research and there will be public archaeology days throughout the year.

- **Mr. Runyan joined the meeting at 2:30 p.m.**

Councilor Devine asked where the artifacts will be displayed.

Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation explained that the basement at the Mann-Simons house is being converted into a storage facility to house the artifacts, which will be rotated in displays at various institutions. He said it will be one of the nicest collections in the nation of African-American artifacts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He noted that the collections will be available to researchers and other interested individuals.

Mayor Benjamin asked about other cities that are involved in preservation.

Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation said Annapolis is the model for preservation; the City of Boston has a nice program with city archeologists who investigate construction sites; Oakland, California has a great model for preservation; as do Mobile, Alabama; New York City; and Baltimore, Maryland.

Councilor Baddourah asked how the sites are selected.

Mayor Benjamin said they pre-approved these sites.

Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation said the Mann-Simons Cottage came about serendipitously; the Modjeska Simpkins site was an important site to the State and the City; and they are working to determine what other sites are significant to archeological knowledge, social knowledge and community knowledge.

Mayor Benjamin asked if they are still going to look at Black Bottom, Waverly and other places that were previously discussed.

Dr. Jakob D. Crockett, Director of Archaeology / Historic Columbia Foundation said yes and over the next year they will end up with the knowledge of where they want to dig and with a document that outlines the below ground integrity of all the sites and empty lots throughout the city. In closing, he stated that books on the history and archaeology of the Mann-Simons site can be purchased or downloaded. [Click here for more information.](#)

4. Fiscal Year 2013 / 2014 General Fund Capital Improvement Projects Part I – Ms. Melissa Caughman, Budget Director

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager recalled that there were discussions about tracking projects and today's discussion is a primer to talk about the Capital Improvement Plan; how to put together a five year plan; and to provide an overview of the projects that were carried forward from last year. She noted that the list is not in the final format, but it is an attempt to put the house in order and it also incorporates the Build Columbia principles and how to prioritize projects based on safety, security and then moving into the wants with the understanding that the needs absolutely come first. She said there is a list of proposed priorities for fiscal year 2013 /

2014 that are truly based on those fundamental principles, but that doesn't mean there aren't many other items that were proposed through the budget; this is just where we are with the projects that need the most attention first. She noted that these projects haven't been prioritized citywide and we won't be able to do all of them.

Councilor Devine asked if Able South Carolina completed their assessment and if there are plans to look at other parks. She requested a copy of the final report.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said the assessment was completed at City Hall two (2) weeks ago and the final report is now due. He said they will be conducting training internally and we will seek assistance from Able SC as needed.

Ms. Melissa Caughman, Budget Director explained that the purpose of capital improvement programming (CIP) is to develop an orderly schedule for the expenditure of city funds for major improvements. She explained that the operating budget is prepared separately from the capital budget, because the capital budget crosses over multiple years and it includes multiple funding sources. She reviewed definitions of terms and funding sources commonly used in relation to the capital improvement program. She outlined the current process for considering capital projects. She added that a project remains on the CIP until it is funded or it is determined that the project is no longer needed. She explained that the process is being revised so that it is more comprehensive, consistent, and aligned with our strategic objectives and the Build Columbia principles. She presented recommendations for fiscal year 2013/2014 proposed general capital projects for General Services, Parks and Recreation and Public Works in the total amount of \$8,967,000.

Mayor Benjamin asked what \$6 million pays for in Finlay Park.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said this addresses the park as a whole; there are a number of structural issues that pose significant problems.

Mayor Benjamin asked if this deals with the restroom facilities as well.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said it's upgrading the entire facility; this is a placeholder number; and we need to do an assessment of the entire facility.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the restaurant will be included as well.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said the goal is to address everything; bringing it up to code and safety standards.

Councilor Plough asked if this includes landscaping for the whole park.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said yes; some plants will be replaced and some will be augmented.

Councilor Plough asked if this includes ongoing maintenance and operation costs.

Councilor Devine said based on the additions they talked about, our current maintenance needs would be increasing anyway.

Councilor Davis urged staff to consider low maintenance alternatives, even for renovations and landscaping. He asked how they arrived at the ratings and if the same procedure applies across the board.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the rating system and criteria for each department is slightly different, but the overarching principles are the same for each analysis.

Councilor Plough asked Mr. Caton to describe the park improvements that are needed, because the numbers are substantial for ADA compliance.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation reported that the golf center has an eminent safety issue with large openings in the safety netting. He noted that nearby residents have cut sections of the netting away to be able to cut through the property and balls end up in the roadway, which poses a danger. He said the fencing will prevent that pass through and the existing safety netting will be repaired to keep all balls within the driving range.

Councilor Plough asked if the replacement netting can be cut.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said they will install 8' fencing to prevent someone from easily walking through. He continued to report that the initial assessment in the master plan process showed that 27 parks have ADA deficiencies to varying degrees. He further reported that there is not an ADA accessible route to the building at Lorick Park. He proposed to create a parking lot near the basketball courts, which will bring us up to an elevation where we can get people up to the building in an accessible fashion.

Councilor Plough said she doesn't see people using the parking lot.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said people tend to make their own parking areas closer to the building and that is unsafe; it is a heavily used facility and parking is needed. He said that the Federal government identified Lorick Park and the Bellefield Center as not being ADA compliant and we committed to make every effort to become compliant as quickly as possible. He explained that the project at the Bellefield Center includes the restroom facilities and improved parking; to date, approximately \$400,000 has been spent.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there were significant roofing needs and asbestos abatement.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager recalled that there was a \$900,000 budget to do what needed to be done including the roof replacement, HVAC system replacement and ADA compliance. He noted that they agreed to renovate the front portion of the building, which is one level and to block off the rear portion, which eliminated the need to make the two story portion ADA accessible. He said the restroom facility has to be ADA compliant.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation explained that the parking area is an issue at Riverfront Park, because it doesn't meet ADA standards for quantity and slope. He said that other issues have been brought to their attention and due to the high level of usage we need to address those issues at Riverfront Park.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager explained that the list is not reflective of our city wide needs and other ADA compliance issues, but based on our fundamental issues, these are the projects that showed significant reasons for concern. In terms of funding other projects, she suggested they look at funding that was allocated for projects that aren't currently underway.

Councilor Plaugh asked Ms. Caughman about the audited balance from the previous year. She noted that there may be additional dollars that can be allocated.

Ms. Melissa Caughman, Budget Director said that the fund balance in the General Fund rolls forward from year to year. She reported that they haven't made any allocations from fiscal year 2011/2012 so the funds rolled into fiscal year 2012/2013.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Chief Financial Officer said that a fund balance in an audit may be surplus and we are looking at all of our projects to determine if there are surplus funds going back 1½ to 2 years. He said the goal is to have everything closed out and/or analyzed in October and excess/surplus funds will be identified at that time.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they wanted to show Council what was carried forward from the last fiscal year; this was an exercise with staff; and she may need to come back to Council to reconsider projects on the list. She hopes they will be able to deal with more specific requests from Council.

Councilor Plaugh noted that there is a CIP listing on our website that includes a variety of projects. She said that raises the expectation of the people from various parts of the City; they see the list and think the dollars are there.

5. Southeast Park Community Center – The Honorable Moe Baddourah

Councilor Baddourah recalled that the community center at Southeast Park was part of the hospitality bond issued by the city in 2007, but it was never constructed. He noted that there are 16 tennis courts and port-a-johns. He acknowledged that a lot of improvements have been done at that park. He said the park serves many communities, but it is not utilized as much as it should be, because there is not a community center. He asked that this project be added to the near future plans. He asked about the bond financing that was allocated for the building.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they are working to reconcile all of the bonds.

Mr. Ron Thompson, President of the Ashewood Homeowners Association stated that the subsequent phase for this park has not taken place. He said the city has been very cooperative in terms of the immediate concerns to include fencing. He asked Council to consider this as a capital improvement project.

Councilor Plough recalled that funding was allocated for restroom facilities to replace the port-a-johns at Southeast Park, but the \$125,000 was used to upgrade the tennis courts at Woodland Park. She raised this issue to her colleagues hoping that they won't continue to allocate funding for each district, but instead determine the needs of the greater community and fund those needs. She doesn't want to put any of her district colleagues in a position to pick and choose between projects; as a collective body, we should be making those decisions.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that is how staff is trying to approach this fundamentally in hopes of addressing the needs while realizing the give and take that has occurred.

Councilor Davis said that each project will have a dollar amount attached to it and he suggested that they look at federal and private funding to help provide relief.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director announced that they have \$700,000 in C-Funds per year pledged for road improvements for the next five years. He noted that the funds are not for road resurfacing, but it is for road maintenance. He reported that Columbiana Drive is an \$800,000 project and it will also be funded with C-Funds. He added that they are working to establish public-private partnerships. He reported that they have evaluated every road in the City and will use those evaluations to determine our needs. He announced that they also received Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that were used to pave Dorrah Street and will also be used for Bailey Street.

Councilor Devine noted that this was presented to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee; it will be presented to the full Council; and everybody will be pleased with what has been done. She said Council will have to realistically understand the difference between aesthetic needs and structural needs. She asked about the citywide roof replacements.

Mr. David Knoche, General Services Director said that a roof assessment was conducted last year on all City facilities in an effort to prioritize the projects. He reported that the immediate repairs totaled \$1.2 million, but \$212,000 is needed to complete the repairs. He further reported that \$50,000 is needed to replace the boiler at 1225 Laurel Street. He said the goal is to know what we are looking forward to in the next year and budget properly for it.

Councilor Plough asked if staff is setting up a reserve replacement fund.

Ms. Melissa Caughman, Budget Director said there is a replacement schedule for fleet and now General Services is working to do that with all assets.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they will look at grants for energy efficiency projects.

Mayor Benjamin asked if staff looked at an overlay of projects included in the Transportation Sales Tax.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they know what the projects are, but they can go back and look at sidewalks. She noted that the North Main Streetscape project is funded in the Transportation Sales Tax. She said there is an opportunity for discussion.

6. FIG Communications Package – Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager – *Consideration of this item was deferred.*

7. Bull Street Update - The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin

Mayor Benjamin reported that Mr. Hughes will be in town during the week of August 21st and will be reaching out to Council members about Bull Street; he is in continuous discussions with retail developers and retail recruiters; and he is very optimistic. He reported that they have been able to move forward with Dr. DePratter's excavation; a contract was executed with the Department of Mental Health; and Dr. DePratter is happy with the resources we appropriated for a comprehensive assessment of the Camp Asylum site. He reported that they continue to review additional preservation possibilities outside of the development agreement, which has been executed.

Councilor Plough asked if Mr. Hughes closed with the state and she requested a copy of the agreement.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager indicated that Missy Gentry is listed as the point of contact.

Councilor Devine asked when actual dollars will be needed. She asked the Mayor if it will be during the first quarter of next year.

Mayor Benjamin said that it will most likely be the third quarter of our fiscal year. He asked Ms. Gentry to clarify that.

Councilor Plough noted that the Mayor talked about retail; she asked if there has been any movement on office.

Mayor Benjamin said yes.

Councilor Plough asked about baseball.

Mayor Benjamin said we asked staff to look at firms that could possibly do a feasibility study; there are a few firms and we have quotes to get this done in a very short period of time.

Councilor Davis said he would be interested in knowing if some of the retailers being recruited have subsidiaries that may be interested in locating in other parts of the city.

Mayor Benjamin said some of those very specific questions should be put on the table. In response to Ms. Plough, he said we ought not seriously pursue any path on baseball until we have a feasibility study conducted and we know exactly what we're talking about in terms of what a stadium might cost, what the potential economic impact could be and what the possibilities of that type of venue could also mean; it can't just be about baseball. He said baseball might bring 7,000 people downtown 7 nights a week; it has to be about venues for concerts, facilities for the little league or our high school tournaments; it has to be about other events; and it also has to provide family friendly entertainment. He said there are a range of scenarios as to how a stadium

could be funded. He said we must have significant private participation in land acquisition, construction of the facility and in ongoing operations and maintenance of a new facility. He said that his cursory research shows that every city does it differently and if we chose to go this route, we'd have to take a path that works for Columbia.

Councilor Plough stated that this effort needs to be led by the private sector and they need to fund a feasibility analysis. She recalled the Mayor saying that Columbia is a prime location for a minor league team and one that lots of people were looking at. She said it is reasonable to expect that someone would be willing to step up and pursue it. She said a typical feasibility analysis will talk about the feasibility of coming to Columbia; they won't necessarily focus on coming to Bull Street. She thinks it is in our best interest to know where the best location is; maybe it's Bull Street, maybe it's not.

Councilor Devine asked that someone contact SCDOT regarding traffic requirements; specifically for egress and ingress. She said that these are major issues that need to be considered prior to us doing a feasibility study.

Mayor Benjamin said we need to consider that; we need to be looking at traffic issues as well as noise and light abatement issues.

8. Palmetto Compress Warehouse Update – Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation reported that the purchase of the building will go in the paper on the 30th and they have completed studies and structural and engineering surveys, which have demonstrated that the building is good and strong as it currently sits and has the opportunity for an adaptive reuse to its current configuration.

Councilor Plough asked about soil borings.

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation said they haven't done any soil borings; the structural engineer recommended that some be done at the point of the development, but the building hasn't shifted. He said they did complete specific surveys related to development issues such as the floors, lighting, a roof survey, a phase II environmental survey and other recommended surveys will be done as the project moves forward. He reported that they've conducted at least 25 tours for developers with interests in student residential, mixed use developments, lodging, offices, retail and restaurants. He noted that there are 15 interested developers at this point, but they want to cast a wide net by using brochures, a website and other marketing services. He noted that the Real Estate Committee has met several times and now a committee of the Columbia Development Corporation Board and city staff will meet later this week to approve the next steps. He reported that since the purchase of the building \$150,000.00 was spent on legal fees, studies and other matters with \$1,192,000.00 remaining in the budget.

Councilor Baddourah inquired about maintenance.

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation reported that the roof was damaged during a recent storm and it was repaired; the locks were replaced; a security system has been installed; and other normal maintenance was done, but nothing substantial.

Councilor Devine asked when will we open the process and begin receiving information. She said if people are already at the table, why not see what they have to offer.

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation said wholesale marketing will begin in the next couple of weeks and a formal request for proposals for the building will start shortly after that. He said the committee will make that decision. He estimated that this will happen within several months. He said that people are already making proposals, but there will be an open process for proposals.

Mayor Benjamin asked if Mr. Delk anticipated receiving unsolicited offers for the building.

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation said he had a number of contacts with people who are making proposals on the building, but the agreement was that we would offer the building through an open process.

8a. **Police Chief Search – Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager explained that they are ready to move forward, but recommended that they have everything in place once the ongoing State Law Enforcement Division's (SLED) investigation is completed, unless this Council would direct otherwise. She anticipated that the investigation would wrap up as soon as possible. She recalled that the last directive was to share the job description with City Council and that was done. She asked if the Council had a preference as to how this search is conducted. She noted that Spartanburg is asking other City Managers and community members to participate in an assessment of their police chief candidates.

Mayor Benjamin said it is prudent to wait until the SLED review is concluded and we all anticipate that will be done very soon. He said it is important to cast a wide net; have a national search for the next chief of police; and to open up the search to internal candidates. He encouraged staff to obtain a proposal from the Police Executive Research Firm and from other firms to look at how we can cast a very wide net that may be influenced by our staff and our processes.

Councilor Plough said that the draft job description was shared with all of them and she suggested revisions to the City Manager so that the job description will attract a senior person; someone who can bring a wealth of experience to this department. In fairness to our interim chief and the other staff, she agreed with the City Manager waiting until the SLED investigation is over. She said we have a wealth of talent in our police department and we need to let the air clear and give them an opportunity to be a part of a competitive process. She has been impressed over the last several months, because we had a lot of criminal activity, but we are making arrests.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager agreed to bring back a cost analysis for the search firms.

Councilor Davis agreed that we wait until the investigation is over, because it will help ease tension and clear the air. He said that a national search during an investigation may repel quality candidates.

Mayor Benjamin said we will get a lot of candidates. He has always liked the idea of seeing the final candidates engaged with local, community, business and neighborhood leaders, because it gives you a feel of how the candidates can relate with people. He said that should be an important piece of the process at the tail end.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if Council wanted to establish an advisory committee.

Mayor Benjamin said if there is a meaningful way to have community leaders involved in the process then let's do it; if there isn't, let's see what Ms. Benjamin and the consultants might recommend. He said if there is a need then the role of the committee must be defined from the beginning.

Councilor Plough said she would like to see all factors laid out before they consider using a firm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:17 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 9** through **11** as amended.

9. 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.*
 10. Receipt of legal advice regarding pending, threatened or potential claim - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 11. ****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 5:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk