



NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY
CITY OF OXFORD

Oxford City Hall – Commissioners Board Room
MONDAY, APRIL 5, 2010 – 4:30 P.M.
OXFORD BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' QUARTERLY SUMMARY

The Board of Commissioners for the City of Oxford met at the above-mentioned time and place for a Quarterly Summary Meeting. All members of the Board and local news media were notified of the same as well as the purpose of the meeting.

Present were: Mayor Pro Tem Howard Herring, Sr., Commissioners Robert B. Williford, Sr., Walter Cantley, Jackie Sergent, Danny Currin, Ron Bullock, and Calvin Harris, Jr. Present also were: City Manager Mark Donham and City Clerk Donna B. Hosch. Absent were: Mayor Al Woodlief, Jr. and City Attorney J. Thomas Burnette.

MPT Herring called the meeting to order, stating that the list of action items from the second part of the Retreat in February would be discussed.

LISTING OF CITY PROPERTIES

CM Donham distributed a list of all City property. MPT Herring asked what properties were not being utilized by the City. Donham stated some of the properties would not be sold, some were in flood areas, some parking lots, and some are triangle-shaped properties at intersections. Rucker Park has been looked at by several individuals, and Mary is looking at additional uses for the ball park. The pool is being utilized.

MPT Herring asked the status of the disposition of the copper at the old water plant and of the plant itself. Donham stated it has been viewed but no offers have been made. Donham felt it would be best for the Board to tour the plant to see it and its proximity to the pool, ball fields, etc. The Mayor indicated in the past leasing the plant. MPT Herring stated if someone leased Rucker Park, they would need a building in which to operate. He is not sure, but one group may be interested in the plant as an office building as they run the Park. MPT Herring stated the Building has been sitting for 10-15 years and the City needs to do something with it.

Commissioner Williford asked if any of the vacant properties could be donated to Habitat for Humanity. Donham answered that one property was donated last year, but the properties Commissioner Williford is referring to might not be satisfactory, as a street might have to be put in if houses are built. Donham will condense the list to those properties which have a good possibility of being sold, leased, etc. and pass it along to the Property Committee for review. Pictures of these properties will also be made available.

Commissioner Sergent stated she'd just received a book on how landscaping enhances the environment, and she supports beautifying the triangular strips. MPT Herring stated those strips could also be used as community gardens. MPT Herring asked the income of the building on Belle Street, to which Donham answered he did not know.

FOLLOW UP ON DOWNTOWN RESIDENCES

Donham stated that Tanya Weary has done an incentive plan and she has spoken with individuals on this topic. However, due to the economy, no one is looking at these types of investments. Donham stated that the dilemma with the incentive package is that there is no direct payback except over a large span of years. This requires a large sum of money compared to the investment made. Property taxes are generated and a percentage of the grant is given for a few years, but the grant is less than what the City receives in property taxes.

Commissioner Sergent stated that if the Century 21 and Team Care buildings put in fire walls, it would be an incentive. Donham stated that last year the City looked at water line improvements, some have been done, and that this would also be an incentive to help some of the buildings to be developed. Donham stated that Tanya has good experience and background in this area and that she will continue to look at this.

LISTING OF ALL CITY VEHICLES

Commissioner Currin stated his interest here is in knowing that some of the police vehicles need to be replaced. Donham stated that if the funding is appropriated, about five a year should be replaced. Vehicles couldn't be replaced last year, and they should be this year in order to not run them into the ground. Commissioner Currin asked if some of the current accessories, such as the blue lights, could be reused. Chief John Wolford stated some equipment could be reused but other equipment simply wears out. A fully-equipped cruiser would run about \$30,000. Vehicles are sold, stated Wolford, if they can be, noting that the equipment is

worth more than the vehicles. Some of the vehicles have been able to be used in other places within the City.

MPT Herring stated that if each officer had his/her own vehicle, maintenance costs would decrease and that he hoped to see the City get to this point one day. Wolford stated that this was started some years ago. If an officer lives within an 8-10 mile radius, then the cars go home with them. There are some 2002 model vehicles still in service because they are assigned to one person.

POLICY ON RESPONDING TO VEHICLE FIRES

Donham provided a preliminary draft of a policy for the Fire Department responding to vehicle fires. He is putting together a proposal which will be distributed to three companies, stating that he will present this to the Board after the proposals are received since there may be questions that would not be able to be answered until that time.

PART TIME PERSON TO MONITOR SWEEPSTAKES ESTABLISHMENTS

Donham stated that Wolford already has a person on staff who can monitor the sweepstakes establishments. The process is being tweaked, and the officer will continue to monitor the establishments to ensure all information is captured and that the establishments are being assessed properly.

POLICY ON STREET PAVING

Donham cited the City's current policy. This year ITRE assisted with assessing our streets, this information being passed along to the Public Works Committee. On some of the unpaved streets, the residents don't wish to invest in having them paved. The City's practice on this is to improve the condition of the street with fabric, gravel, etc., but not to pave them.

Commissioner Sergent asked how much tar and gravel would cost. City Engineer Larry Thomas stated that the City does not have the equipment to put down tar. Donham and Thomas stated that there are not many streets left in Oxford which are not paved. Thomas additionally stated that Powell Bill monies are being used, but that this amount is going down. Commissioner Sergent asked if the decrease in Powell Bill funds is due to the rising cost of gas. Donham stated that taxes are collected on volume and not value. With vehicles now being more efficient, less gas is being sold.

DESIGN OF CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Donham stated he contacted Steven Baxter of Baxter Umstead, an architect recommended by Larry Thomas. Pro bono he looked at the area and stated that for him to design and give estimates of construction drawings would be about \$1,675, with construction coming in between \$20-\$30,000. This is from the perspective of using the same quality materials currently in the area. Donham stated a proposed drawing from Baxter was included in the information he distributed.

Baxter's goal was to make the Clerk's work space larger and address the lack of privacy. Donham stated that as the City grows, there potentially may be a receptionist and the drawing accounted for that. Security in the proposed receptionist area would be addressed by a door and a counter. The goal of a larger and nicer Clerk's office and counter space to serve guests would be accomplished. The proposed design, Donham thought, would still have the same feel of the current space.

Commissioner Bullock asked if the cost estimate was using an outside contractor, to which Donham replied 'yes', adding that the cost also involved using similar type materials. If something less expensive were used along with in-house labor, the cost would go down. Donham stated that the charges stated by the engineering firm are similar to normal, and the cost for putting the drawings together is pretty reasonable.

Commissioner Harris read minutes from the January 4, 2010 Agenda Session and February 25, 2010 Retreat addressing this issue. Harris stated that this is stalling due to the fact that on January 4th the Board approved the office space to be done in-house. Commissioner Harris stated here it is three months later and nothing has been done. The original plan should have been stuck to. Commissioner Currin asked who were the previous clerks, to which several Board members replied Tanya Weary and Barb Rote. Commissioner Currin asked did they have enough space in Donna's office, to which he was informed they were not in Donna's office but in the office now occupied by Tanya. Donham stated the current clerk's office had been so for a pretty long period of time. When the building was first built, the space occupied by Tanya was for the assistant manager and then the economic development director for a while. Donham asked Weary was she the first clerk in her current office. She stated Barb was there about a year, but the space was not used by Ann [who was clerk prior to Barb].

Donham stated that because of budget cuts, three positions were combined into two. He recognizes it would be good to have additional space for Donna, but this needs to be thought through. Previously, every time he heard a proposal it wasn't thought through and it kept changing. When ready to move forward one afternoon with construction with City staff, he had never heard one definitive plan as to how the plan would develop with materials, etc. At this point, not knowing what it would look like and with the whole Board not involved in the discussion, he stated he wanted the whole Board to see a rendering before moving forward. If the space came out looking bad, it would look bad on him, stated Donham, that it was his idea to do this. He wanted the whole Board involved in the concept, at which point MPT Herring asked to get someone to look at the space. That's where we are now. Donham wanted someone to come in and do a design and then get an estimate off of that. He is trying to do it as inexpensively as possible.

MPT Herring asked Donham if the architect's rendition was submitted for Board or his own approval, to which Donham replied he wanted to see if this concept was something the Board wanted to investigate. We would pay for the design and then either bid out or do the construction in house. MPT Herring stated a rendition of the final product is needed whether done in house or by an engineering firm. Donham stated he didn't want to do this on the cheap and be dissatisfied. To do it right would cost money. MPT Herring stated the Board needs to make a decision; and the way to make the decision is to put the item on the agenda before the next Board meeting. Prior to that, it can go to the Property Committee for recommendation of the rendition. Then the decision can be made whether or not the work can be done in house.

Commissioner Williford stated that in order to save money, the Board could ask the Mayor to move into the conference room and put Ms. Hosch in the Mayor's office or move Tanya into Donna's office. \$30 to 35,000 is a lot of loot. Donham stated it is up to the Board what it wants to do. Commissioner Sergent stated yes, especially when there is an empty office on the other side of the building, Linda Sigmon's office. MPT Herring stated the clerk needs to be close to the Manager. Commissioner Cantley asked if this should go to the Property Committee. Commissioner Williford asked where the money would come from. Commissioner Sergent stated one of her issues with the rendition involves additional construction of the reception area. The way she understood the situation in January was that we would adjust the reception area for the clerk and no additional construction. She asked Donham was there discussion with the architect to just expand Donna's space and not the other area. Donham stated the counter did

not need to go in but cautioned that his experience over the years taught him that if you don't think things through, they end up costing you more. However, Donham stated that whatever the Board decides, we will move forward with that decision. Commissioner Williford stated a wall and temporary windows could always be taken down in the future, and he asked for a price to do this. Commissioner Harris also agreed with going back to the original plan which will save money and is something our staff is capable of doing. He asked this to be on the agenda for April.

ADJOURNMENT

WITH THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, MPT HERRING ADJOURNED THIS MEETING.