

MAY 12, 2015
SPECIAL CALLED
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

PRESENT Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Bobby Coleman
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, BJ Fletcher, Roger Marietta, Bob Langstaff,
Jr. and Tommie Postell
Interim City Mgr: Tom Berry
City Attorney: CN Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

DOWNTOWN PRESENTATION

Sharlene Cannon, Interim Downtown Director, introduced Tony Peterman, Strategic Advisors, to present a power point presentation of a master plan (copy on file) and advised that this morning's presentation is an abbreviated version of the full presentation, which will be presented to the general public today at 5:00 p.m., in room 100.

Mr. Peterman stated that the impetus of the project Strategic Advisors was charged with began in 1996 as the Riverfront Master Plan as a redevelopment plan; the key being public enhancements and private investments. He said they looked at the financial and market feasibility for use of the downtown area to include identifying partners and opportunities, with the goal to move forward using the tools in place. He displayed a map of the study area, demographic zone (people in the study from 2002-2011), including a thermal map of primary job locations. He discussed Phase I recommendations (sports park, event space, residential rental, retail and which area to raze), and the connection (civic center/sports park area).

In reply to Commissioner Postell, he said his recommendation is to remove the civic center and put a sports park in that area, which is the most efficient use of space and a greater benefit for the community. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Peterman stated that the recommendation is to keep the façade of the Mule Barn. Commissioner Postell stated that the Mule Barn was looked at and it was recommended for demolition because of the cost to preserve.

Commissioner Marietta asked if the Mule Barn can be used for parking; Mr. Peterman replied that parking might not be the best use for that space and noted the slide where he recommends parking.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. Peterman advised that the public investment is estimated to be \$16.2 million, with private investments funding the balance. He discussed things that will bring people downtown and comments from the public on what they want in the downtown area.

Commissioner Marietta suggested a more conservative estimate on the costs presented and questioned the fall back position should one piece not work and discussed the history of downtown, which needs to be taken into consideration. He further suggested getting additional recommendations for a conservative view. Mr. Peterman stated that the brevity of the presentation is harder to understand, but that the full presentation will be presented this evening

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and will tie in the recommendations. Discussion followed on loft apartments, location of the Sports Park, etc.

Commissioner Howard stated that what is good today may not be good in 20+ years, adding that he cannot see a sports park downtown. He suggested leaving the civic center in place and not putting a Sports Park in that location and spoke of what will/will not work, adding that the Mule Barn could be better utilized, i.e., retail. He expressed concern regarding the job market, what draws people downtown, what young people want downtown, etc., and asked if this was taken into consideration. Mr. Peterman said they received input from ASU students and took all that into consideration, agreeing with Commissioner Howard that it is about foot traffic. In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Peterman stated that people who come downtown are 25-34 years old and will bring families and businesses. Commissioner Howard mentioned his visit to Austin, TX and what was done there to increase foot traffic downtown. Mr. Peterman stated that in spite of Austin's success, hotels in downtown are subsidized as an investment in the community. Commissioner Howard referred to the proposed new hotel coming downtown, which the City may have to subsidized, asking if this will be a good fit; Mr. Peterman clarified that when he says 'city' he means the public sector and funding from whatever entities are considered as such.

In response to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Peterman clarified that he was not involved in the 1996 Master Plan he referenced in which the former Mayor expressed disappointment about the lack of private investment, but that was not his work. The current proposal was not recommended ten years ago; he has only been involved since last year. Commissioner Postell referred to the sports complex, residential and outdoor dining, asking if alcohol factors were considered, i.e., open container law, etc. Mr. Peterman replied that the issue of alcohol is up to the City and County; he did not make a recommendation regarding open containers. Commissioner Postell asked what can be taken out to reduce the \$16.0 million cost to make it viable. Mr. Peterman stated that their charge was to look at the city, see what it has and make recommendations about what can be done to draw people downtown; he had no target amount for which to aim. He briefly discussed the reason for recommending the civic center site as a location for the sports park. Additional discussion followed regarding the sports park, foot traffic, the Mule Barn, no tax increase, etc., with Mr. Peterman stating that his charge was to look at the 100 block of Broad. He displayed a slide to explain the concept, adding that the 100 block is the starting point/core of downtown, which will spread to the rest of downtown; he encouraged being inclusive and continue improving. Commissioner Postell stated that he can see the long range picture, but it will take a lot of funding; he suggested looking at the entire scenario and asked how much it would cost to do the entire project; Mr. Peterman replied that will take decades to complete. Referencing Commissioner Howard's comment, in 20, 30, 40 years things will have changed drastically; the civic center was a good product for its day, but the sports park has greater value for today's needs/demands.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman mentioned that the last two events at the civic center were packed and suggested allowing the right person to run the civic center and bring in what they see as entertainment as opposed to city leaders telling them what entertainment is would be helpful. There were sporting events at the civic center, which the City let get away. He said this is not a

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sports-oriented town especially with the number of high schools and colleges conducting sporting events, citizens have many venues to satisfy their need for sports. He said he does not support the idea of tearing down the civic center for a sports complex.

Mayor Hubbard questioned getting developers and financial backing with Mr. Peterman explaining that developers will go through the authority with the plan being conceptual.

REQUEST FOR CDBG FUNDING FOR BLAST WALL re: OAKS AT NORTH INTOWN

Shelena Hawkins, Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding Phase 1 of the Oaks of North Intown Transportation Plan with a request of up to \$85,000.

Using a power point presentation (copy on file), Dan McCarthy, Director of Albany Housing presented the concept of the low income housing tax credit development. In reply to Commissioner Postell, he stated that Phase I is slated for 72, adding that it involves the demolition of McIntosh Homes and Golden Age Homes. He stated that the 'blue houses' on the corner of Madison and Residence were purchased and demolished. Commissioner Postell questioned historical houses in the area and asked if these were considered. Mr. McCarthy replied that he is uncertain about those; they are privately owned by people living in Columbus, and will not return his inquiries. Commissioner Postell briefly discussed the history of the houses in question and said he can assist in making contact with the family.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. McCarthy discussed the site plan and the application process, which requires a meeting with the City Commission and the community and is scheduled for this afternoon. Regarding funding, he showed the location of the blast wall and discussed environmental concerns/laws.

In reply to Commissioner Marietta regarding the propane gas, Mr. Berry explained that it was a filling station and not something that can be replaced with natural gas.

Commissioner Howard mentioned a compressor on US 19 that had similar environmental issues and expressed concern regarding safety of that area in the event of a tornado. He asked if the can sustain against such disaster. Mr. McCarthy stated that the blast wall will be sufficient for environmental calculations and discussed surrounding areas/protection, etc., adding that the area cannot be developed if the blast wall is not put in place; there will have to be additional mitigation for further development. Commissioner Howard questioned funding for the remainder of the project with Mr. McCarthy stating that they are looking at other donations, etc., and the \$85,000 is all that is currently needed. The cost to complete Phase I is \$11.0 million; they have applied for tax credits, but if not successful in obtaining the tax credits the project cannot move forward. He stated that as required, they have an MOU with the City, but if not approved, they will not be accessing the City's \$85,000 unless they obtain the tax credits.

Commissioner Postell moved to accept the request, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

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Mr. McCarthy asked the Commission to formally adopt the plan. Commissioner Postell moved to accept the plan, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

BUDGET DISCUSSIONS:

1. Planning – Paul Forgey, Director, discussed information (copy on file) pertaining to changes to his department and Code Enforcement, adding that GIS moved to Engineering; there are 28 employees in his department with a total budget of \$2.197 million. In reply to Commissioner Postell, he advised that the old budget was \$1.237 million; the current request is \$2.197 million.

Questions included: (Commissioner Howard) – combining Code with Planning and the reason. Mr. Berry explained cross training in order to have backup, etc., Mr. Forgey added that with combining the two departments into one provides continuum. Discussion followed on non-certified/POST- certified. (Mayor Pro Tem Coleman) – Current and previous budgeted amounts with the increase being due to the combination of departments. (Commissioner Marietta) – Demolition funding increased, with Mr. Berry adding that the compensation plan also increased the bottom line. (Commissioner Postell) – the number of employees within Code and Planning; Mr. Forgey reported 14 in each for a total of 28, advising that that is the number of positions, with some currently being vacant. Commissioner Postell asked the number of ‘live bodies’ in those positions; Mr. Forgey replied that there are 11 in each with each side being short three people. Robert Carter, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, stated that he will be interviewing soon and fully staffed. Discussion followed on salaries. (Commissioner Howard) – mowing/lot cleaning increase with Mr. Carter explaining the transfer of funds for mowing, etc., discussion on demolition cost, solicitor prosecution, lien on properties. (Commissioner Postell) – Property tax collection pertaining to liens, with Mr. Carter explaining that the County collects taxes. Commissioner Postell discussed flooded houses, in which renters moved out and subsequently the City developed low-income housing. The property owners were bought out and left Albany with the City left holding these properties to maintain. He asked that it be researched to see how the City can be reimbursed. (Mayor Hubbard) – combining the departments resulting in additional communications within the two departments and expect better customer service; Mr. Forgey agreed. Mayor Hubbard referred to the grant funded position with Mr. Forgey stating that it is being advertised. Mayor Hubbard asked how long the position will be in place with Mr. Forgey stating indefinitely, adding that the grant match is 20%. (Commissioner Postell) – Connection to the health department with Mr. Carter explaining logistics of both offices and the communication with the director (James Davis). Commissioner Postell asked to meet with both. Commissioner Howard asked that the Grand Jury report be given to staff. (Mayor Pro Tem Coleman) – a date to discuss amount of time violators will be allowed to have trash on the street. Mr. Carter replied that it is a procedural change within his department and requires no action from Commissioners.

2. Community & Economic Development, Shelena Hawkins, Director asked for questions. Questions included: (Commissioner Marietta) – energy efficiency program with Ms. Hawkins explaining the program including gas conversion, weatherization/installation program

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and working with the Utility Department to assist customers. (Mayor Pro Tem Coleman) – how the public is notified about the existence of the program, with Ms. Hawkins stating marketing, community meetings, newspaper ad, etc. Discussion followed on putting information/criteria on channel 16 with Mr. Berry stating that a presentation will be made at the next work session. (Commissioner Howard) – handling of vacant lots, with Ms. Hawkins advising that there are approximately four properties being looked at. Commissioner Howard asked about Section 108 loans; Deputy Director Phyllis Brown explained the process [principal payment and interest], which should result in a decrease. Commissioner Fletcher asked to schedule a meeting to answer her questions. Commissioner Marietta referred to page F-9/rental property maintenance line item. Ms. Hawkins explained the maintenance of units. (Commissioner Postell) – number of CHODO's with Ms. Hawkins stating currently Oaks @ Intown is the only one and discussed those being processed. Additional discussion followed on the CHODO process. Commissioner Postell commented on the HOME process with Ms. Hawkins explaining qualified buyers, property meeting requirements, challenges of reduced funding/requirements, etc. Additional discussion followed on the criteria of CHODO imposed by HUD, weatherization process, vacant lots, property disposal process (300+ properties and 168 FEMA lots). Mayor Hubbard asked the annual cost of maintenance; Ms. Hawkins replied that it is approximately \$36,000, which is appropriated in the City Manager's budget. Commissioner Postell stated that subsequent to the 1994 flood, the only way the City will get relief is an act of Congress to allowing flooded areas to be subsidized without being penalized; unknowingly, the City was penalized throughout the buyout of flooded properties. The policy is that property owners must elevate their home three feet if they want to rebuild and that should be changed. (Commissioner Marietta) – line item showing Cutliff Grove's repayment; Ms. Brown stated that Cutliff Grove has a separate account number/line item, which is not included in their budget. Mayor Hubbard stated that she receives monthly reports and payments have been made on time.

3. APD – Chief John Proctor thanked the Commission for their support and promised to continue striving to provide the highest level of public safety to this community. He discussed the recommended budget (copy on file), which represents a slight increase over FY 2014/15 with the majority of the increase being in personnel services (salaries/benefits) for the projected 245 APD employees, adding that the head count was reduced by five positions. He mentioned the wage increase as a result of the compensation study, the request for overtime in the investigative areas and on call policy and a 'holdback' for unfunded positions.

Questions included: (Commissioner Howard) – if gang task force positions are filled. Chief Proctor said that there is one vacancy. (Commissioner Postell) current vacancies at APD; Chief Proctor replied that currently there are 31 vacancies [sworn/civilian] with there being 39 civilian employees and of the 31 vacancies, three are civilians. Discussion followed regarding current vacancies with Mr. Berry explaining what is budgeted. Commissioner Postell asked about the gang task force budget being over \$1.0 million; Chief Proctor agreed. Discussion followed regarding the duties of the gang task force (patrolling/traffic enforcement vs rounding up gang members); Chief Proctor replied that the mission has not changed and explained the long/short term processes regarding gathering information, developing leads/intelligence, etc.). Commissioner Postell discussed the organization and funding of the Gang Task Force.

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Commissioner Postell alleged that Chief Proctor has attempted to 'back out' the gang task force and by promoting three females to captain started a decline within the force and caused gangs to flourish, and wearing saggy pants is part of gang initiation, but the ordinance is not being enforced. Chief Proctor assured Commissioner Postell that the gang unit has had his full support, regardless of what some may have said; he discussed changes in law enforcement and having to change the approach of dealing with criminals, etc. He explained that traffic stops gets officers in cars where they find contraband and make arrests. (Commissioner Marietta) – asked about buildings/policing centers, with Chief Proctor discussing the locations - (Broad Ave., E. Albany – the one on Dawson Road was sold and they have divested themselves of the one on Newton Road). Commissioner Marietta commended Chief Proctor for the work APD does, etc., and questioned traffic enforcement with Chief Proctor discussing pay/salaries, shortages/vacancies, etc. (Commissioner Fletcher) – Base pay; Chief Proctor replied that it is approximately \$32,000 for certified officers, adding that many work other jobs to supplement their income. (Mayor Hubbard) – asked if animal control officers are required to be POST-certified; Chief Proctor replied in the negative. Mayor Hubbard stated that she saw nothing about new equipment/technology; Chief Proctor explained that most of the technology that has been requested comes from SPLOST and grants.

ITEM FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman mentioned an incident in E. Towne Subdivision in which there was a police chase through neighborhoods at excessive speeds; he said this should never happen again. He asked the Commission to see what can be done to stop this as the chase ended in a crash and asked that those present (Captain, etc.) be present to be questioned.

Regarding the budget, Commissioner Howard asked for other departments to come before the Commission. Mr. Berry stated that Engineering, Solid Waste and Storm Water would be brought back at the next work session.

Commissioner Marietta recommended a budget amendment in order to purchase 50 speed humps. Mr. Berry recommended not allocating funds because of the new ordinance, which requires that this matter comes before this table; however, the City Manager's contingency fund can be increased to \$250,000 and would provide funds to handle this matter. In reply to Commissioner Marietta he explained adding back to the contingency fund to make sure there is \$100,000 for traffic calming.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman adamantly opposed allowing the City Manager a \$250,000 contingency fund budget and suggested it being put in a special fund and named.

Commissioner Fletcher said she has spoken with some who have speed bumps and it has made a difference in slowing traffic and agreed that this should be looked at.

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Commissioner Howard mentioned monies allocated to CVB, stating that three Commissioners visited the track meet and suggested that the CVB should be doing more in support of this. He also suggested that the Mayor issue a proclamation welcoming them next year.

Commissioner Postell asked what can be done to subsidize the Civil Rights Museum and ADICA with the same amount as previously allocated. Mr. Berry said he will look at this.

Regarding funding for speed bumps, Mayor Hubbard asked how the Commission would suggest handling. Commissioner Marietta recommended putting funds in Engineering, but said he is flexible. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman expressed concern regarding not earmarking funds; they end up being spent on other things and what they were slated for suffers. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, he said the funds can remain in the City Manager's budget with a stipulation that the monies are only for speed bumps. Discussion followed, with the consensus to allocate funding to the Engineering Department in the amount of \$100,000.

Commissioner Marietta stated that the budget presentation did not include the use of MEAG funds and noted the \$3.5 million expense under the Job Creation Fund. Mr. Berry said there should be \$2.8 million added to all funds. Commissioner Marietta commended the City Manager on the overall budget; not using MEAG monies and giving pay raises is an exceptional feat.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – personnel matter

At 11:11 a.m., Commissioner Howard moved to enter into executive session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Coleman; the motion unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 11:55 a.m., Commissioner Postell moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Howard, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

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Mayor Hubbard reconvened the meeting and announced that the process to hire a City Manager will continue. Discussion followed on whether Interim City Manager Tom Berry or the next City Manager will select the next Chief of Police.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK