

OFFICIAL MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
CITY OF GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020



A workshop of the Greenville City Council was held on Monday, January 6, 2020, in Conference Room 337, located on the third floor at City Hall, with Mayor P.J. Connelly presiding. Mayor Connelly called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Those Present:

Mayor P.J. Connelly, Mayor Pro-Tem Rose Glover, Council Member Monica Daniels (arrived at 5:20 p.m.), Council Member Will Bell, Council Member Rick Smiley, Council Member William Litchfield, Jr., and Council Member Brian Meyerhoeffer, Jr.

Those Absent:

None.

Also Present:

City Manager Ann E. Wall, City Attorney Emanuel McGirt, City Clerk Valerie Shiuwegar, Assistant City Manager Michael Cowin, Assistant City Manager Ken Graves, Interim Administrative Assistant Betty Moseley

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Council Member Smiley made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Council Member Meyerhoeffer seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION BY THE PITT COUNTY COALITION ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Information was provided by Ms. Lettie Michelleto, President of the Pitt County Coalition on Substance Abuse (PCCSA), Dr. Jennifer Matthews, and Ms. Melissa Larson on the work that is done by the PCCSA. They stated that the Coalition was formed to address community issues of drugs, underage drinking, and vaping. The Coalition also provides training for schools to understand the signs and effects of adverse childhood situations. They provided statistics for the Pitt County area that indicates high percentages of underage drinking, vaping, and overdoses. They stated measures that the Coalition is taking to address those numbers, including a lockbox distribution program to lock up prescriptions and opioids, and a health communication campaign with their youth team to increase awareness. They stated that the Coalition offers educational training and invited the City Council to their community event, Dinner of Hope, on February 29th.



BOARDS & COMMISSIONS UPDATE

City Clerk Valerie Shiuwegar stated that the City Council had expressed a need to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the City's boards and commissions. The City Clerk's office had been tasked with analyzing the work of the boards and bringing proposals on how to improve and maximize efficiency to the City Council for their consideration. The following measures were proposed:

- Merge the Affordable Housing Loan Committee (AHLC) and Redevelopment Commission (RDC)
- Merge the Greenville Bicycle Pedestrian Commission (GBPC) and Public Transportation and Parking Commission (PTPC)
- Merge the Investment Advisory Committee, Audit Committee, and Other Post-Employment Benefits Committee (OPEB)
- Merge Neighborhood Advisory Board (NAB) and Community Appearance Commission (CAC)

It was suggested that the City Council consider exploring other aspects, including understanding resources available to boards and commissions, implementing an orientation session for staff liaisons, modifying the application process, examining items that should be routed through boards, changing the format of board presentations, and a formal recognition of board volunteers.

Mayor Pro-Tem Glover expressed concern that the focus of the AHLC may be negatively impacted with its potential merger with the RDC. She asked that staff look at the work of the RDC to assess the City's need for that board.

City Clerk Shiuwegar stated that the City Clerk's Office will meet with the Chairs for each board presented and take their feedback with the direction given by the City Council and bring it back before the City Council at their March meeting.

PRESENTATION OF INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Public Works Director Kevin Mulligan presented information on special assessments to the City Council. He stated that a special assessment is a tax that is levied on property owners to pay for specific local infrastructure projects. He defined a special assessment district as an area in which the market value of real estate is enhanced due to public improvement and in which a tax is apportioned to recover the costs of the public improvement. He noted that the City's development



process would remain unchanged and the tax would only be charged to the owners of property in the neighborhood that would benefit from the project. He stated that an assessment could be utilized to construct on a roadway that has been dedicated but not accepted; to convert a roadway from a “ribbon” road to a road with curb, gutter, and drainage; and to convert a storm water ditch to a closed pipe system.

Director Mulligan stated that state statutes require cities to adopt a local rule to construct these types of roads, which require a petition by the homeowners. He noted that many peer cities have assessment language in place and advised that the City may want to consider adding the language in the City Code.

He stated that among the peer cities that were examined, the City of Raleigh seemed to be the most thorough, requiring that that dedicated streets be brought to City standards before they are opened or maintained. After the requestors go through an application and petition process, if approved, Raleigh further requires that assessments be paid in cash. Property owners would also have the option, by written request, to pay the assessment in a time period not to exceed ten years in equal installments that can bear interest per state guidelines.

Director Mulligan stated that special assessments can be initiated two ways, either by the City Council or by the property owners. An initiative by the City Council would require the City Council to adopt a resolution, have a public notice, and conduct hearings on the preliminary resolution and preliminary assessment roll. An initiative by property owners would require property owners to make the request to the City Council by way of a petition process. Petitions and a map of the property are provided by the City of Greenville. He stated that in order for the petition to be considered for approval by the City Council, at least 50% of the property owners must agree and it must total up to at least 50% of the property. He stated that if the petition is approved, then all property owners are responsible for the tax regardless if they signed the petition or not. He stated that the special assessment district would stay in place until the tax is paid back.

Director Mulligan provided the example of Club Pines Drive, a road that had been dedicated but not accepted by the City of Greenville. After an approved request from property owners, the City could build street, curb, gutter, sidewalk and drainage at this location. The approximate length is 100 ft. and would cost approximately \$100K. The assessment would be the cost of the improvement divided the number of property owners, repayable over a period of ten years. He noted that an interest rate could be implemented at local discretion up to a maximum of 8% per year. Using Raleigh’s example of 6%, improvements of \$100K would yield a total amount of \$135,867, which would equate to \$6,793 a year for a period of ten years when split between the two impacted households on Club Pines Dr.

Addressing follow up questions from the City Council, staff stated that the money confirmed that the investment for the assessment would be fronted by the City and by statute, the only property



owners that would be responsible for the repaying the tax would be the owners that are adjacent to the property. Referencing the Club Pines Drive example, they stated that it appears that the road should have been dedicated by the developer since it provides access to one of the driveways. In an effort to prevent similar instances, the City inspects all new developments to make sure that there is proper access to lots and that sidewalks and roads are constructed to City standards.

Director Mulligan provided an additional example of Teakwood Drive, an area outside of the City limits. He stated that the assessment may require local rule and is estimated to cost approximately \$250K. That amount would be divided amongst 56 property owners and equate to approximately \$600 a year per owner for a period of ten years. It was noted that it is a private road in the county that has not been accepted by the City nor the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Staff would have to verify that the City would be able to work on this road since it is not within the City limits, but it was noted that there were instances where other cities were able to provide special assessments in their ETJ with local rules. Staff addressed the option of annexation. If the property owners were interested in having the area annexed, the annexation request would have to be agreed upon by all of the property owners rather than a simple majority. Further, the road would have to be brought up to City standards before the City would assume maintenance of the road.

Director Mulligan provided information about converting ribbon roads. He stated that this is an instance where the City already maintains the road. If property owners would like to provide for curbs, gutters, and sidewalks on that road, they would need to complete a petitioning process with more than 50% approval amongst property owners. The City Council would then hold a hearing to make their determination. If it is approved by the City Council, then all abutting property owners will be responsible for the assessment tax whether or not they were in favor of the request.

Staff stated that the special assessments would be paid through general revenues and would have to be budgeted for. They stated that the ability to implement special assessments is a tool in the statute that gives local governments the ability to assist property owners with infrastructure but is not used often.

The City Council expressed concerns with using general fund balance on projects that do not have community-wide impact. They further expressed concerns with potential setbacks in recouping costs and road resurfacing prioritizations tied to potential annexations.

Council Member Smiley made a motion to direct staff to develop a process for special assessments and bring it back to the City Council for further consideration. The motion died for lack of a second.

Staff acknowledged the City Council's desire to put a hold on looking further into special assessments at this time.



ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the City Council, motion was made by Council Member Bell and seconded by Council Member Daniels to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Connelly adjourned the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Shiuwegar

Valerie Shiuwegar
City Clerk