

**CITY OF COLUMBIA WORK SESSION MINUTES
AUGUST 1, 2007 - 4:00 PM
EAU CLAIRE PRINT BUILDING
3901 ENSOR AVENUE**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, August 1, 2007 at the Eau Claire Print Building, 3901 Ensor Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann and The Honorable Kirkman Finlay III. The Honorable E.W. Cromartie arrived at 5:07 p.m. The Honorable Anne M. Sinclair was absent. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Schinikia Richburg, City Clerk Assistant.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- A. Proposed Lease Agreement for the USC / Columbia Technology Incubator Program located at 1225 Laurel Street – Mr. Donald R. Tomlin, Jr., President - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
- B. Special Property Tax Assessment for Historic Properties “Bailey Bill” Legislative Changes – Ms. Krista Hampton, Development Center Administrator

Ms. Krista Hampton, Development Center Administrator, explained that in 1992 State legislation provided for a special property tax assessment. In 2004 the assessment was amended to make it more flexible and easier to use. In order for the City to take advantage of this new enabling legislation, we need to amend our current Bailey Bill Ordinance. She asked Council to approve the amendments related to the threshold of investment; local review; the length of time; and the freeze on the fair market value.

Mayor Coble asked if the City would lose revenue and suggested that we needed the strongest Bailey Bill possible.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Development Center Administrator, stated that it is important for the City of Columbia and Richland County to adopt very similar Ordinances. If the new legislation were adopted in 2006, at a 20% investment threshold 13 projects would have been eligible; at 25%, 8 projects would have been eligible; at 50%, 3; and at 75%, 1. She suggested a two (2) year review period.

Councilor Rickenmann inquired about the suggested 20-year abatement.

Councilor Davis asked if there was an inventory of the properties that fall within the outlined criteria.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to direct staff to draft an Ordinance amending the City’s current Bailey Bill Ordinance based on staff recommendations and the need to have the strongest Ordinance possible. First reading consideration is scheduled for August 15, 2007.

C. History and Recommendation on the Energy Audit Request for Proposals (RFP) – Mr. David Knoche, General Services Director

Mr. David Knoche, General Services Director, explained that the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Energy Conservation Program. The RFP consisted of three (3) options for responses and four (4) vendors responded. Then two (2) vendors were selected to make presentations to City Council. The committee voted on the scores for option #3 and Ameresco received the highest score. The committee recommended that the bid be awarded to Ameresco. Johnson Controls contested the decision today.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager, requested that staff be allowed to review and respond to Johnson Controls prior to City Council voting.

There was a consensus of Council to allow staff time to review the protest received today from Johnson Controls and to bring back a recommendation for consideration on August 15, 2007.

D. Subdivision of Lots within the City of Columbia – The Honorable Mayor Bob Coble

Mayor Coble stated that the issue with the subdivision of lots in our inner city neighborhood is a good problem to have. It means that property values are increasing and people want to move back into the city. But, that leads to the inevitable attention of our Ordinances and Codes meeting the needs of the increased property values. He described the following categories of problems: **1)** the practice of a developer/builder with a lot that exceeds the minimum requirements that allows (under our Ordinance) a lot bigger than the minimum RS-1 requirements to accommodate a second house, so that the house is in the back yard. The development may meet the code, but does it fit into the context of that neighborhood. He referred to a house in Shandon on the corner of Duncan Street and Harden Street; **2)** a mansion, a house that in it's height and width; it far exceeds the surrounding neighborhood. He referred to a home on Wheeler Hill; **3)** a house is demolished on a large lot that can support many more lots and homes; this may be appropriate, but it changes the character in the neighborhood like a home at the corner of Kilbourne and Devereaux; and 4) the same issues are occurring throughout the City of Columbia. He stated that designations would help, but the process is time consuming, lengthy and staff is limited. He said that neighborhoods are experiencing these problems during the interim periods. He urged that they look at subdivisions and setbacks, noting that density isn't bad and that subdivision isn't necessarily bad. He asked that they consider a process for reviewing solutions.

Councilor Devine stated that this issue comes up at every Zoning Public Hearing and agreed that the items needed to be discussed and an evaluation process needed to be defined. She asked about how the process for resolving issues linked to proposals. She said that the biggest thing is to make sure the "neighborhood" is always involved.

Councilor Davis supports reviewing the current Ordinance. He is concerned about annexing properties and then owners deciding to do something differently once the property is annexed. He suggested that they create a system to encourage a procedure for resolving problems with developments changing the appearance of an existing neighborhood.

Councilor Rickenmann agreed that Council should look at the Zoning Ordinance. He noted that Columbia is unique and that we want to preserve the integrity of neighborhoods. He requested to hear from staff.

Councilor Finlay urged the Council to be clear on where they want density and redevelopment and where they don't want it. He talked with a constituent that is restrained by a 30% footprint on a lot. He reminded the Council that people buy into an area with existing zoning and don't want changes. He urged the Council to define the big picture vision.

Mr. Marc Mylott, Director of Development Services, stated that there are no easy answers to the concerns discussed today. He requested time to review the issues and provide staff recommendations.

There was a consensus of Council to direct staff to review the concerns as outlined and to provide recommendations for consideration on August 15, 2007.

- E. **A Resolution in Support of Forming a Joint Planning Commission With the City of Columbia – The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble

Mayor Coble presented a Resolution adopted by the Richland County Council at its last meeting. In summary, the new Resolution lists all the reasons why joint planning is needed. The City and County are currently working together on transportation, research and training, the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority and environmental issues. He suggested that a first step be to ask Richland County to do their Comprehensive Plan along with the City.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to accept the position on the taskforce and to direct staff to select a member from the Planning Department to serve on the taskforce that is being appointed to review the concept of a Joint Planning Commission and to ask Richland County to conduct a joint City/County Comprehensive Plan under Section 6-29-510, while consulting with Richland County staff to determine how this could be done.

- E1. **Modjeska Simpkins House – The Honorable Sam Davis - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*

- **Council recessed at 4:52 p.m.**
- **Mr. Cromartie arrived at 5:07 p.m.**
- **Council reconvened the Work Session at 5:08 p.m.**

- E2. **Policy Recommendation for Development Corporation Developer Fees – Ms. Dana Turner, Assistant City Manager for Commerce and Development

Ms. Dana Turner, Assistant City Manager for Commerce and Development, provided a 3-part recommendation in support of Development Corporations receiving development fees in certain circumstances. The perspective loan committees will evaluate each project that's being proposed by the Development Corporations.

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the following staff recommendations:

1. As long as the City continues to support the development corporations, staff recommends that no developer fees be paid to the development corporations or any other entity seeking funding from the City on projects funded entirely with federal sources of funds.
2. When a project is funded with private funds, staff recommends that the development corporations be entitled to earn a developer's fee on a sliding scale based on the complexity and cost of the project.
3. If a project is funded with two or more sources of funds and one of those sources is city funds, staff recommends that the development corporations or any other entity seeking funding from the City, be entitled to earn a developer fee, provided the developer fee is paid from a non-city source of funds. The developer fee should be based on the same sliding scale as referenced above and as contained in our draft policy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 5:28 p.m. for the discussion of **Items F.** through **I.** as amended.

- F. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to pending, threatened or potential claim
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- G. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
- Lower Richland Sewer Associates, LLC
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- H. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to matters covered by attorney-client privilege
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- I. **Discussion of employment of an employee
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- **Council adjourned the Executive Session discussion at 6:00 p.m. to convene the District I Evening Meeting.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk