

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 24, 2010 – 9:00 A.M.
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET
3rd Floor – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, March 24, 2010 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, The Honorable Kirkman Finlay III and The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager and Ms. Libby Gober, Council Liaison.

PRESENTATION

1. **Together We Can Read – The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine

The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine announced the 2nd Annual Together We Can Read Event. There are 1,800 third graders in Richland School District One that we will be reading to on tomorrow. She introduced Ms. Brenda Richards as the local author of *Bellman Visits South Carolina*. Ms. Richards worked with us on the purchase of 2,000 books and she and Bellman are also doing a special presentation for the third graders at Satchel Ford Elementary School.

Ms. Brenda Richards, Author of *Bellman Visits South Carolina* thanked City Council, noting that both she and her daughter are products of Richland School District One. As a retired teacher from Richland School Districts One and Two, I cannot tell you what an important gift you have given these students by showing them how important reading is and by giving them their very own book. Thank you for your willingness to invest in the students of Richland One. Bellman and I are excited to be able to go into the schools and share his book with the third graders.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Ken E. Gaines, City Attorney reported that the Supreme Court will be hearing the expedited appeal today at 10:00 a.m. Before you are two Resolutions and if the Supreme Court reverses Judge Barber's order then Resolution 2010-031 will be null and void. Resolution 2010-029 calls for the June 15th election with two contingencies and if Judge Barber's order is affirmed then Resolution 2010-029 will be null and void. We are on tight deadlines to get the notice in the newspaper. We are poised to get the notice in the paper if the Supreme Court rules by Thursday at 2:00 p.m. If the Supreme Court doesn't rule on tomorrow prior to 1:00 p.m., we will have to set the election for a later date. We are currently under Judge Barber's injunction and if they do not rule in a timely fashion, the April 6, 2010 election will not be held, because Judge Barber has not issued a supercedeas as requested by Mr. Carter's attorney. A supercedeas stays the injunction.

Councilor Devine asked if Mr. Bower's filing prohibits us from running the notice for the June 15, 2010 election date.

Mr. Ken E. Gaines, City Attorney said that it could be a waste of money, but we could do that.

Mayor Coble suggested that we wait for the Supreme Court ruling and that the election may need to be scheduled for June 22, 2010 in order not to confuse voters.

Councilor Finlay noted that if the Election is scheduled for June 22, 2010, the run-off would be scheduled around the Fourth of July holiday.

Mr. Ken E. Gaines, City Attorney further noted that we have not received pre-clearance from the Justice Department.

2. Resolution No.: R-2010-031 – Repealing Resolution R-2010-027 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2010-031 – Repealing Resolution R-2010-027.

3. Resolution No.: R-2010-029 – Authorizing Notice of Special Election for City Council District 2 – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2010-029 – Authorizing Notice of Special Election for City Council District 2.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

4. Efficiency Study Results – Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager explained that we undertook an efficiency study several months ago; the results of that study were reviewed with you a few weeks ago; and we have a more detailed discussion ready for today.

Councilor Devine acknowledged that there were matters that the Council needed to discuss in Executive Session, because there are some recommendations that would be personnel matters, if implemented by the City of Columbia.

Councilor Gergel requested that they only review what they must in executive session.

Ms. Angela Robinson, EquaTerra stated that they will be going into the details of all of the improvement initiatives that have been recommended by EquaTerra. This will allow us to have an open public. We know that some of these ideas have been recommended in the past, but EquaTerra not only brings you suggestions and recommendations, but we quantify those recommendations and provide a strategic roadmap for you to get to the end result, which would be your savings. I know that you all are getting ready for your budget process and there is some re-engineering that needs to take place there. Our recommendation is to make sure that you don't take the approach of doing what you've done in the past. We want you to change how you budget and look at different ways of allocating funds. The scope of this engagement was augmented to cover more ground and we were not able to go as deep as we could have.

- **Council recessed at 9:34 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 9:42 a.m.**

- **Mr. Davis left the meeting at 10:04 a.m.**

There was an in-depth review of the improvement initiatives as recommended by EquaTerra.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager to meet with Ms. Angela Robinson and Mr. Mike Russell of EquaTerra to prepare an action plan for moving forward with the improvement initiatives. Council members were encouraged to contact Ms. Robinson to further discuss individual questions and concerns.

- **Council recessed at 11:02 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 11:10 a.m.**

5. Census 2010 Update – Ms. Doris Green, Partnership Program / US Census Bureau

Ms. Doris Green, Census Partnership Program said that Mr. Chip Land, Census Liaison for the City of Columbia was very helpful during the awareness and educational phases of the census. We are now entering the motivational phase, because everyone should have already received their census form and mailed it back. In 2000, we had a very low mail response rate in South Carolina. We ranked number 49 in the nation. She reported that the US Census Bureau is currently tracking the participation rate and as of today, the national response rate is 16%; South Carolina is 18%; Richland County is 20%; Lexington County is 23%; and Newberry County is 24%. In order to place the census in the minds of all residents, the following three (3) events are scheduled:

- April 1, 2010 - Census Day - 12 hour Census Rally hosted by Allen University
- April 3, 2010 - Census Road Tour at Hyatt Park
- April 10, 2010 - March to Mailbox

Mr. Chip Land, Census Liaison for the City of Columbia announced the Red Ribbon Campaign wherein he challenged the Columbia Council of Neighborhoods to tie a red ribbon around the mailbox of homes that returned their census. We will determine which neighborhood had the highest response level and they will have a free neighborhood cookout in May.

- **Mr. Davis returned at 11:24 a.m.**

6. National Youth Violence Prevention Week – Mr. Terry Dozier, Special Programs Supervisor for the Parks and Recreation Department

Mr. Terry Dozier, Special Programs Supervisor for the Parks and Recreation Department announced the 3rd Annual National Youth Violence Prevention Week during March 28th through April 2nd. The events will focus on bringing awareness to our community about the dangers of youth violence and offering alternatives in an effort to build safer homes, schools, neighborhoods, relationships and communities.

SIDEWALK VENDING PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

7. Ordinance No.: 2010-048 – Granting a Franchise to David Roberts d/b/a Der Tacos, LLC for operation of a stationary sidewalk vending cart on the northwest corner of Main Street and Gervais Street – *The Sidewalk Vending Public Hearing was deferred until March 16, 2011.*

RESOLUTION

8. Resolution No.: R-2010-020 – Amending Sidewalk Vending Locations and Authorized Merchandise – *The Sidewalk Vending Public Hearing was deferred until March 16, 2011.*

Mr. Jonathan Chambers, Deputy Zoning Administrator recalled that at the last Council meeting staff was directed to meet with the applicant and the stakeholders. On March 19, 2010, the applicant, representatives of the proposed restaurant, the City Center Partnership and a representative of Holder Properties discussed the application. At this time, the parties are not able to reach a compromise, but the Applicant has requested additional time to work towards a compromise. All of the parties that were involved in that meeting, with the exception of the City Center Partnership are present today.

Mr. David Roberts, Applicant clarified that they did not leave the meeting with a compromise, but we had a chance to talk this morning. We did agree that the timing was not right. We don't need this many restaurants in one block. I propose that we hold this application over for one year until March 2011 to allow Ms. Seasons to open her restaurant; Holder can continue marketing their restaurant location at the bottom of the building; and I can continue to work on my business plan. I want Main Street to succeed and I have the flexibility to not be there right now.

Mr. Marc Mylott, Director of Planning and Development Services said that the Council will choose whether to approve or deny the application in one year.

A representative of Holder Properties stated that it is not a matter of timing for them; it is a matter of an issue going forward for what we wanted to see on that corner for an upper end restaurant. It's not a matter of this being okay in a year, because we can't market that to a tenant. That site needs to be removed from the approved list.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Finlay and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to defer the Sidewalk Vending Public Hearing for Ordinance No.: 2010-048 – Granting a Franchise to David Roberts d/b/a Der Tacos, LLC for operation of a stationary sidewalk vending cart on the northwest corner of Main Street and Gervais Street until March 16, 2011.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

- 8a. **Google Fiber Grant – Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs

Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs explained that the Google Fiber Request for Information is due on Friday, March 26, 2010. We collaborated with the Legal Department, Utilities and Engineering, and Planning and Development Services to complete the application. She said that the application is two-fold and City staff has only dealt with the technical aspect and not the community driven portion.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Gergel and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to designate Friday, March 26, 2010 as Famously Hot and Surprisingly Fast Friday in the City of Columbia.

9. Hospitality Tax Funding Request for the Jazz Under the Stars Event – Mr. Skipp Pearson, The Skipp Pearson Jazz Foundation

Mr. Skipp Pearson, The Skipp Pearson Jazz Foundation said that the foundation is committed to promoting jazz in the City of Columbia and each year we increase the number of tourists that come into Columbia for our events. The month of April is National Jazz Music Appreciation Month. My request for funding in the amount of \$25,000 is for the 6th Annual Jazz Under the Stars, which is a week long celebration beginning on Sunday, May 23, 2010. The funding will be used for the artists and the promotional costs of the program. The attendance numbers increase each year with 2,400 attending the event last year.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted five (5) to one (1) to take the request for funding under advisement and to review the pending request for funding from the Hospitality Tax Fund. Voting aye were Mr. Davis, Ms. Devine, Mr. Finlay, Dr. Gergel and Mayor Coble. Mr. Rickenmann voted nay.

Upon a motion made by Dr. Gergel and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to establish criteria for the use of any contingency funds by Council and to entertain the possibility of moving any contingency funding back to the committee.

10. Update from the City / County Ad-hoc Transportation Committee

Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs explained that another joint ad-hoc committee meeting will be scheduled; therefore, we need to clarify who the three (3) members are from the City Council. Currently, Dr. Gergel serves on the ad-hoc committee; I am unsure if Mayor Coble continues to serve; and we have a vacancy due to Mr. Cromartie's resignation.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Coble and seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Sam Davis to replace Mr. Cromartie and that the Mayor-Elect serve as an ex-officio member until he/she takes office.

11. Report from the External / Internal Auditors – Ms. Jackie Breland of Breland and Associates and Ms. Holy Scofield

Ms. Holy Scofield, Internal/External Auditor explained that they were asked to look at the program income and the grant balances for the Community Development Block Grant. We have a report on the procedures and findings and a report on the recommended procedures and policies for grants.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to direct City Manager Gantt and Senior Assistant City Manager Baker to review the reports and provide recommendations to City Council by April 14, 2010 on the changes that need to be made based on the recommendations provided.

APPEARANCE OF THE PUBLIC HAVING BUSINESS WITH CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Grant Robinson appeared before the Council as a resident of City Council District Three and a small business owner of City Council District Two to express concerns about the City awarding large contracts to firms outside this state; it is a waste of tax dollars.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 12:41 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk