

**CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
DECEMBER 4, 2012 – 2:00 P.M.
EAU CLAIRE PRINT BUILDING
3907 ENSOR AVENUE**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at the Eau Claire Print Building located at 3907 Ensor Avenue, Columbia South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plaugh, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. [3Rivers Music Festival Board Update](#) – Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee provided an overview of the proposed 3Rivers Music Festival. The committee hopes to engage the community and involve the Midlands area through this event. The proposal is to start in July 2013 at the Historical Columbia Speedway, which will bring in the West Columbia/Cayce area. She said that the committee is looking at Gervais and Main and/or the Gervais Street Bridge. The committee is working to provide a free weekend festival with ten (10) bands covering various genres. The committee is seeking sponsorships through the hospitality tax fund and corporate dollars. She sought Council's support and approval to move forward with this event.

Mayor Benjamin asked when the event would take place.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee said July 13-14, 2013.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about the structure of the organization.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee explained that Ms. Nnena Nchege is the Chair and she has organized several festivals throughout the nation. Ms. Sims said that as Vice Chair, she would serve as the face in our community. The organization also has a secretary and treasurer, eleven (11) board members and an advisory council. She noted that they recently organized an event in three (3) weeks' time at St. Andrews Park.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about the budget for this event.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee reported that they have established a \$500,000 budget and they think the corporate sponsorships will be around \$250,000. She said that they secured one person whose main job will be fund raising.

Councilor Plough stated this is the first time she has heard of it. She complimented the committee for planning events across the river and on this side of river; it's a good way to approach this and make it more regional in nature.

Councilor Devine inquired about funding and timing of the funding process. She asked if the festival would be contingent on receiving hospitality funds.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee stated that it's one of the things they want and need; obviously that plays into the budget. She explained that they have two (2) budgets: one if they get the hospitality funds needed and another if they have to raise the funds.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about the budget for the Atlanta Jazz Festival.

Ms. Nnena Nchege, Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee stated that it's \$800,000 to \$1 million. She has been doing it for nine (9) years and the largest budget was \$1.5 million and the lowest amount was \$250,000 in 2008, because of the economy. She noted that in 2008, they used money that was left over and it was a very small festival.

Councilor Plough recalled that the weather was one of the historic problems with the festival. She said that it's very hard to anticipate. She asked if they would buy insurance to protect the organization.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee said that they would look at that. She noted that they picked the month of July, because it will be hot. She noted that it is a rain or shine event with time delays. She said they do obtain insurance for the staging.

Councilor Devine added that they are anticipating this to be a free event whereas the previous festival was a ticketed event and ticket sales were dampened due to rain.

Mayor Benjamin stated that the popularity of the festival speaks for itself. He encouraged them to put a good application together for hospitality tax funds.

Councilor Baddourah inquired about the percentage of the outside market that will come to Columbia as a result of advertising outside of Columbia.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee stated that because of the magnitude of dollars being spent on advertising in the entire southeast, they anticipate that 25-40% of the people will come from outside of Columbia. She said that they are hoping to get national artists to draw people in.

Councilor Baddourah inquired about the times of the concerts.

Ms. Sandra P. Sims, Vice Chair of the 3Rivers Music Festival Committee said that it would be Friday evening and all day Saturday.

2. [Business Services Review Task Force Recommendations](#) – Mr. David Brandes, Principal of Genesis Consulting / Chair of the Business Services Review Task Force and Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer / Business Services Review Task Force Member

Mr. David Brandes, Principal of Genesis Consulting / Chair of the Business Services Review Task Force explained that they started this process a year ago after hearing concerns about how difficult it was to do business in Richland County and the City of Columbia. The focus of the review was on the process in zoning, engineering, business license, water/sewer and similar types of permits. Several surveys were conducted from quite a few aspects. He presented the taskforce recommendations to the members of Council.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer / Business Services Review Task Force Member reviewed the [staff's response](#) to the committee's recommendations.

Councilor Devine asked how often the members of land use boards/commissions are trained.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services stated that there is an initial six (6) hour training session, orientation for new members and an additional three (3) hours of training each year.

Councilor Plaugh asked about cross training employees that conduct plan reviews.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services said that plan reviews are conducted concurrently.

Councilor Plaugh asked if the fire marshals review plans at Ms. Hampton's office.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services said that they have desks that are located with the other plan reviewers.

Councilor Davis said that staff from both entities did a great job dealing with the technical aspect. He suggested that we reach out to smaller businesses to understand their perceptions. He stated that there was fairness in the process and it is good to do business in the city and county.

Councilor Runyan commended the taskforce for being solutions oriented. He inquired about the recommendation for an ombudsman and the two existing staff members.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer / Business Services Review Task Force Member explained that the two coordinators track the permitting process, but there is a need for another staff person to serve as an ombudsman and see the process through from start to finish.

Councilor Runyan asked what prevents one of the coordinators from being elevated to the ombudsman position.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services said that the ombudsman position would augment the coordinators.

Councilor Plough inquired about the city having the same staffing levels as the county, but less permits to approve.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Development Services said that staffing can be evaluated and she noted that some positions were cut and some were frozen.

Mayor Benjamin strongly agreed that an ombudsman is needed to guide someone through the processes. He suggested that a response is also needed from the policy makers.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Plough and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to send this report to the Economic and Community Development Committee for further consideration and recommendations on City Council's response within 60 days or less. The committee was also asked to make a recommendation on our ongoing participation with the taskforce to include the consideration of an advisory role or a sunset date.

Mayor Benjamin recognized and thanked the taskforce members for their work and constructive criticism.

Councilor Plough added that she did sit in on some of the committee meetings and they were impressive. It took a long time, but the depth of the analysis, the approach they took and the cooperation of staff was evident.

- **Council recessed at 3:28 p.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 3:43 p.m.**
- 3. [2010-2040 Population Projections Report for the Central Midlands Region](#) – Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments explained that earlier this year the Council of Governments adopted new population projections to the year 2040. He said that these projections are based on the county level, which is a good base to work from and it gives them the ability to disaggregate the numbers down into lower levels of census geography. He reported that the Central Midlands will increase in population by 64% and Richland County will increase by 61% over

the next thirty (30) years. He said that they don't typically produce projections for cities and towns, because their values are always changing due to annexations. He said that they will be working with city and county staff to refine the county projections and to ensure that the small area projections are accurate. He reported that South Carolina is expected to continue to experience growth due to retirees moving into the area; improvement in the economy; and significant growth in the Hispanic population.

Councilor Baddourah inquired about Columbia's growth rate.

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments said that Columbia is the fastest growing city in South Carolina.

Councilor Baddourah requested a breakdown of the growth in population by City Council District and he asked why Columbia is growing so fast.

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments said that the city's growth is attributed to Fort Jackson, the University of South Carolina, Midlands Technical College and the city's amenities.

Mayor Benjamin asked if these forecasts take into account aggressive or non-aggressive annexation policies.

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments said that moderate policies are taken into consideration.

Councilor Plough asked for a summary of the city's statistics.

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments agreed to provide a detailed report for the City of Columbia.

Councilor Plough noted that this is the first time that homeownership in the City of Columbia has dropped below 50%. She said that it's something that we as policy makers and city staff need to focus on; we need to be trending the other way.

Councilor Baddourah asked for the areas within Richland County that have decreased in population.

Mr. Ben Mauldin, Interim Executive Director of the Central Midlands Council of Governments informed Council that areas such as Blythewood and Southeast Columbia have decreased in population.

4. [Update on Information Technology Projects](#) – Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager reported that there are three (3) information technology projects that have citywide implications: automated time and attendance, utility billing upgrade and the public website consolidation. He said that they are also working on the emergency notification system, calls for service viewer and Raids online, which is a police program. He noted that over 100 projects are pending and need to be prioritized.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director reported that the City has contracted with KRONOS to provide an automated time and attendance management system. This will allow us to standardize time keeping policies; clarify and be consistent with enforcement of human resources and payroll policies for all departments; reduce our current inefficiencies and errors in payroll; provide greater compliance to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); capture cost center data in compliance with the Richland County fire contract; reduce the need for manual processes; and provide easily accessible analytics to identify, track and report on payroll exceptions. The anticipated implementation date is July 2013 and this will impact every city employee.

Ms. Carmen Fleming, Senior Application Specialist for the Information Technology Integrated Systems Division reported that the upgrade of the Utility Billing System supports Goal III, which is to invest in the overall infrastructure necessary to grow our city by expanding technology to support municipal services. This software is used to bill over \$10 million per month in service revenue and to service 135,000 citizens. We will strengthen the technical environment for the city's core utility billing; improve efficiency and tracking for work order management through the Cityworks migration; and enrich service delivery by refining business processes and maximizing enhanced Customer Suite functionality. This upgrade will reduce the cost of ownership, support automated meter reading and improve customer service and collections efforts. The target implementation date is July 2013.

Councilor Davis asked for a demonstration of the Automated Meter Reader.

Ms. Leshia Utsey, Public Relations Director said that the Public Website Consolidation project supports Goal IV, which is to significantly improve internal and external communications. The objective is to provide an easy to use website targeted to specific audiences. The launch date is the end of January 2013.

Councilor Plaugh asked if our email accounts will change.

Ms. Sylvia White, Interim Director of Information Technology said yes, but through a phased approach. She explained that there will be an alias for the *.net* address so that all emails are forwarded to the address ending in *.gov*.

Ms. Leshia Utsey, Public Relations Director said that a failsafe will be installed to route you from the *.net* website to the *.gov* website.

Ms. Kimberly Gathers, Director of Columbia/Richland CRC 911 reported that the Emergency Notification System was publicized in partnership with Richland County in November. Alerts and notifications can be initiated by authorized users through internet or telephone services. Citizens can choose how they would like to receive messages. It has the capability of high speed emergency alert notifications and employee messaging through a web-based system hosted offsite.

Councilor Plaugh asked how citizens would choose their notification option.

Ms. Kimberly Gathers, Director of Columbia/Richland CRC 911 said that this would be done on our website through the registration process.

Ms. Freida Bates, Information Technology Department reported that RAIDS Online was launched two weeks ago and it enables the public to be informed about crime activity via the internet or mobile services. There are multiple data sources and many options for filtering.

Councilor Plaugh asked how this relates to Nixle.

Ms. Freida Bates, Information Systems Administrator for the Information Technology Department explained that Nixle is an incident reporting system, but this system compiles and reports data and can be used to anonymously report crimes. There is an application for Apple products. A private component for law enforcement will give them access to more data. The web address is www.raidsonline.com. Nixle is an external component.

Police Chief Randy Scott said that this is separate from Nixle and it is tied to the Police Department's website.

Mr. Phil Weinbach, GIS Coordinator reported on the Calls for Service Viewer that has been developed to show the volume of calls for service from Police, Fire, Public Works and Planning & Development Services. It is an internal resource, but it provides static data from March to September. This data can be filtered by neighborhood or Council District.

Councilor Plaugh asked how often this will be updated.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager said that it can be updated quarterly. He said that he wanted a tool to address problem locations with numerous calls for service. He said that it is a good tool that can be used for each Council District.

Mr. Phil Weinbach, GIS Coordinator said that the information can be sorted by the type of call.

Ms. Elisa Limbaugh, Chief Information Officer said that they are completing a process of identifying the city project portfolio and will be able to provide additional information on those projects.

Mayor Benjamin followed up by saying that we have some cyber security measures in place and that the public knows about it. We've been very vigilant in protecting the integrity of the city and its citizens as well.

Councilor Newman inquired about the ability to make online payments, especially for parking tickets.

Ms. Sylvia White, Interim Director of Information Technology said that it's on the list.

5. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Update – The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine

Councilor Devine recalled that City Council passed the two ordinances on first reading and Richland County passed both agreements on first reading and scheduled a public hearing on the Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs), as well as, second reading. The school district is supposed to consider the agreements next week. She clarified that the ordinances were placed on the agenda in case we decided to vote tonight. The schedule calls for us to take our final reading after the county and school district take theirs. It is my intent not to take second reading tonight. She acknowledged that there have been several discussions over the last couple of days regarding changes since our first reading. She said that some of the projects that are listed in the TIF and as a part of the Penny Tax will be removed from the TIF and some of the some of the projects are complimentary. She noted that Main Street is funded in the Penny Tax at \$35 million; however, it's a \$42 million project. She said that we will continue to be open to listening to other funding opportunities. She encouraged everyone to call her if they have questions or concerns.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. began by listing the following changes to the IGA since August.

- Page 3 - Section 2(e) – This relates to the side agreement with the school district. The school district would like to extend those.

Councilor Plaugh insisted that the agreements with the school district not impose any costs.

Councilor Devine said that she requested that it say direct costs. One of the issues with us is extending the use of the Drew Pool for free. We know that it has indirect costs. That's why this language was proposed.

Councilor Plaugh added that the language pertaining to the Drew Wellness Center is very open ended; it puts them in the driver's seat of deciding when and if CA Johnson gets a swim team, they can determine when they would like to use the pool.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. said that this is not the actual agreement with the school district; another agreement is being drafted and can clarify all points. This agreement is conditioned on another agreement being entered into with the school district. The City Attorney has been working on that agreement.

Councilor Devine added that Mr. Baker has been working with the school district. We have encountered these issues at Drew with several swim teams. There will be discussions as far as how and when they use it. There will no open ended use of the pool at Drew.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. continued with the changes.

- Page 4 – Section 3(d) – The city’s public official ethics language has been included.

Councilor Plough said that you are applying a public official’s ethics code to a non-official.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. explained that the point was to say even if you are not a public official by virtue of serving on the oversight committee, you are in a quasi-governmental role and should be held to the ethics standards as council members would be. The next change is:

- Page 6 – Section 3(g) (vi) - Aggregate annual TIF revenues can be used to pay for long term capital maintenance.
- Page 11- Section 7 – Maintenance costs; it’s the same change as page 6.

Councilor Plough asked how that will be defined.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. suggested that they use the most generic definition and then ask your accountant and attorney when making a decision about long term capital maintenance.

Mr. Michael Seezen, Esq., McNair Law Firm said that the Oversight Committee will make a decision.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. reviewed the remaining changes.

- Exhibit D is an annual report that the City will provide to the Oversight Committee.
- Exhibit E shows how the allocation works; it’s not a projection. None of these values assume this money will be coming in.

Mr. Michael Seezen, Esq., McNair Law Firm added that Exhibit D item 2 is responsive to the requirements in Section 3(e), which is the city’s reporting requirement to the Oversight Committee. It requires the county to provide the city information on assessed values in order to complete the calculations. The amendment in Exhibit C reflects that we are updating the tax year information from 2011 to 2012. The amendments won’t be taken up by City Council until the discussions with Richland County and the School District are concluded.

Councilor Plough said that this is the first time she has seen some of the revised numbers. She asked if any of this contemplates the implementation of the Bailey Bill on properties within the Bull Street development.

Mr. Michael Seezen, Esq., McNair Law Firm said that they can ask Mr. Hughes.

Councilor Baddourah asked if this will be voted on tonight.

Councilor Devine said that there won't be a vote tonight, but based on tonight's conversations, we will know when a vote will be scheduled.

Mr. Eric Shyltle, Esq., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, P.A. said that the end goal is to amend the existing TIF plans such that the county and school district participate. Those entities have to make a decision prior to the plans being approved. They have both said that they won't consent to participate in a TIF without an IGA. He explained that the city gave first reading to the IGAs, essentially making an offer to the county and school district; those entities have a period of time where they can respond or comment; they can make a counter offer with proposed changes; and it would then come to City Council for second reading on the IGA. Council is not obligated to accept any changes to the IGA until that final reading.

Councilor Devine added that a public hearing is required with a 45-day notice. The intent has never been to ignore legitimate questions or concerns. We would like an opportunity to have a dialog going forward. Once the IGA is approved, the amendments may or may not be approved.

Councilor Davis said that due diligence has always been their intent. There have been positive and very frank discussions with the other entities. We are doing this by the book, but we don't want to drag it on.

Councilor Plaugh stated that they were asked to put this item on the agenda for this evening and public notice has been given.

Councilor Devine reiterated that the intent was never to vote tonight.

Councilor Plaugh asked if there will be a vote to amend the agenda. If so, she will vote no to defer a vote on this item.

6. Update on Water and Sewer Rates – Ms. Melissa Gentry, Assistant City Manager – *Consideration of this item was deferred.*
7. [Façade Improvement Program Code Revisions](#) – Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of Business Opportunities

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of Business Opportunities said that the code for the Façade Improvement Program was last amended in 1993 and that staff has been working to update the code. She sought Council's input on the funding of businesses that have previously received hospitality tax funds for security cameras.

Councilor Devine said that she doesn't oppose it.

Councilor Baddourah said that he doesn't want to fund additional camera purchases.

Councilor Devine said that if there is exclusion, it needs to clarify that their façade funding can't be used for cameras.

Councilor Plough asked if it could be used as match funding.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager stated that was discussed with the Economic and Community Development Committee. She said that staff does not have a problem implementing it, either way. She said that the Façade Improvement Program complements other loan programs. She stated that there is no more money for cameras. She suggested that this apply to someone who has already benefited from those funds.

Councilor Plough asked if there might be allocations in the future.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager asked if it was the will of Council to have the loans complement each other. She said if not, applicants would need to apply for a façade loan, but not for cameras.

Councilor Davis affirmed.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of Business Opportunities continued with the revisions, noting that the maximum amount for the façade loans is \$140,000.

Councilor Runyan asked for the term of the camera agreement with the Police Department.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of Business Opportunities said that there isn't a time frame referenced in the agreement currently used by the Police Department. She suggested that they add a term. She continued to review the rest of the revisions.

Councilor Davis said that the area benefits from the cameras and not just the business.

Mr. Paul Featheringill, Loan Officer explained that the underwriting criteria mirror the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund (CRLF) policy.

8. [Proposed Revisions to Fiscal Year 2012 / 2013 General Fund Capital Projects](#) – Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager reviewed a list of proposed revisions to the fiscal year 2012/2013 General Fund Capital Projects. He asked to use \$750,000 that was earmarked for the Police Department building renovations, because the work that needed to be done is in excess of that amount. The plan now is to construct a building over several years and use those funds for projects that need attention now. There will be \$387,000 remaining for the Police Department. He reported that they are looking at using the Parks and Recreation Building for evidence storage and they will start the planning process for the Police Department's long term needs.

Councilor Davis asked that they hold off on the recommendation for the pool at Greenview Park until they hear from residents of the Greenview Community.

Councilor Plough asked if the Greenview Park pool uses salt water.

Upon a single motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to approve the City Manager's revisions to Fiscal Year 2012/2013 General Fund Capital Projects, with the exception of the pool at Greenview Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 5:28 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 9** through **13** as presented.

9. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim—*This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 10. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege—*This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 11. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements—*This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 12. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed sale of property—*This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 13. Discussion of negotiation incident to the proposed purchase of property—*This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 6:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk