

## **PROSPERITY AND LIVABILITY COMMITTEE**

*Chaired by Council Member Ewing*

**June 3, 2015 – 9:00 a.m.**

**City Council Chambers**

### **Present:**

Committee Chair Jason Ewing and Committee Members Latimer Alexander, Alyce Hill and Jay Wagner

### **Also Present:**

Council Member Cynthia Davis

### **Staff Present:**

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Communications Officer; Nina McNeilly, Webmaster; Eric Olmedo, Budget and Performance Manager; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development; Mark McDonald, Transportation Director; Melanie Bruton, MRF Superintendent on Special Assignment; Wendy Fuscoe, Core City Administrator; Loren Hill, President, High Point Economic Development Corporation; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; Tom Vincent, Deputy City Clerk.

### **Others Present:**

Peter Freeman and John Kennett, Freeman Kennett Architects; Greg Suires, Hi Toms President; Richard Wood, City Project; David Covington, City Project; Tim Mabe, President & CEO HPCVB; Bruce Davis, Vice-Chairman HPCVB; Patricia and Michael Bellocchio, Gloria Halstead, Ross Lackey, David Rosen, Citizens.

### **Media Present:**

Pat Kimbrough – *High Point Enterprise*

### **Discussion on possible Downtown Baseball Park**

*Peter Freeman, of Freeman Kinnett Architects, presented plans and diagrams of a proposed baseball stadium for downtown High Point. Mr. Freeman stated there are many assets in the Core City and the proposed baseball stadium would pull these assets and the adjacent neighborhoods together. He gave statistics and demographic information about people who visit downtown High Point. Plans for the proposed baseball stadium would be close to Washington Street, downtown and High Point University (HPU) and most importantly there is a local baseball team. He added that the stadium would seat 2500 – 3500 people and host events in addition to baseball such as soccer and lacrosse. Mr. Freeman said the proposed stadium presents a gateway plaza into High Point as it would be bounded by Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (Kivett), Steele Street, Richardson Street and N. Centennial Street and pointed out the accessibility of the stadium site. Retail and other businesses planned for the first level of the stadium would activate Centennial Street by providing multi-use in the area.*

*Greg Suires, Hi Toms President, said the team has been servicing High Point since 1935. The Hi Toms were approached the by the High Point Convention and Visitors Bureau about the proposed downtown High Point stadium. Mr. Suires shared some of the successes of other downtown baseball parks in other municipalities. He added the organization has come up with programming that lasts from February to late October and would be bringing a proven calendar of events to High Point. Mr. Suires said in addition to Hi Toms games, they host colleges from northern states and high school games in the fall.*

*Committee Chair Ewing said it was a great concept and thanked Mr. Suires for presenting.*

*Committee Member Alexander asked if Finch Field was owned by Thomasville Parks and what Thomasville contributed to the field. Mr. Suires said they had a fifteen-year relationship with the City of Thomasville and the city owns Finch Field 100%. He added that Finch Field will remain in the Hi Toms program. Mr. Suires said the stadium in High Point would allow them diversify their operations.*

**Committee Ewing moved to request Staff and the CVB Task Force to come back to the July Prosperity & Livability Committee Meeting with some possible funding options and what some ownership models might look like moving forward. Committee Member Wagner made a second. The motion carried by a 4 – 0 unanimous vote.**

#### **July Committee Meeting (Change in Date)**

**Committee Chair Ewing moved to reschedule the July 1st Prosperity and Livability Committee Meeting to July 15th at 9:00 a.m. Committee Member Hill made a second. The motion carried by a 4 – 0 unanimous vote.**

#### **Review of City's Traffic Calming Policy**

*Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, distributed copies of the city's traffic calming policy to Committee Members. He shared a flow chart of how the current traffic calming policy works. The policy is not applied very often and added that it is citizen-driven and requires citizens to submit a request. Mr. McDonald said he was asked to bring this to the Committee and to discuss if any changes needed to be made or look at a different process and how we need to look at traffic calming consistently and fairly as a City going forward. Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin advised that the traffic calming policy was adopted by a previous Council about 3-4 years ago.*

*Committee Members Hill and Wagner asked for clarification regarding the "minimum criteria" mentioned in the policy. Mr. McDonald read the minimum requirements. Committee Member Alexander noted leading up to the 2004 bond package, the City was looking at various intersections and how to mitigate accidents there and noted he had not seen anything in a while to indicate if there were intersections with high concentrations of accidents. Mr. McDonald said the City is participating in a statewide program that is sponsored by Federal Highways and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) that is evaluating local street intersections to assess where the City can implement low cost improvements. He said as far as major intersections there are some intersections that need some operational improvements, but*

*there are no significant crash-driven issues at major intersections. Committee Chair Ewing reported that staff is going to look at other cities and see what their traffic calming policies are. Mr. Ewing said a number of cases have been brought to the Committee's attention: between Rotary and Johnson and off of James and wanted to know if Mr. McDonald would have enough information to bring back to the Committee in July to recommend a revised Traffic Calming Policy. Mr. McDonald said they would not have it ready in July, but it would possibly be ready in August.*

*Committee Member Alyce Hill asked, in reference to the specific items before them on Monday night, if the Committee could get some information about costs of different options so that they could get them on the July Council calendar. For example the four-way stop at Farriss versus the cost of speed tables versus the costs of traffic circles. Mr. McDonald said he could give the Committee some rough numbers now, but staff could also do some research. He said the four-way stop was very low cost and said the City of Raleigh reported they were spending \$2,500 to \$3,000 per hump. Mr. McDonald said traffic circles or roundabouts cost about \$15,000 for two. He shared some diagrams of a traffic circle for Rotary and Farris. Committee Member Wagner asked if humps and tables were suited for Rotary. Mr. McDonald suggested not putting them there because of the downgrade coming from Lexington. There was some discussion about combinations of speed humps and traffic signs and their effectiveness at slowing traffic.*

*Committee Chair Ewing asked staff to bring recommendations back to the Committee in August for possible revisions to the traffic calming policy, and come up with some different thoughts/ideas on Johnson/Rotary Street including cost estimates for consideration at the July meeting. Committee Member Wagner asked if Mr. McDonald had a chance to think about Johnson Street at all. Mr. McDonald said they had been doing a number of things over a period of time on Johnson Street to try and improve things including pavement marking, upgrading signs and additional signs and the problem continues. He showed a diagram of crashes at Johnson and Farriss. There was a discussion on different methods of cutting down on the accidents at that intersection including flashing lights, LED lights and lowers.*

*Committee Chair Ewing asked for staff to come back with options for vertical solutions for slowing down traffic on Johnson Street to be considered at the July 15<sup>th</sup> Prosperity & Livability Committee. He noted there was a multitude of options and asked staff to consult with people living in the neighborhood.*

### **Update on Complete Streets Program**

*Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, noted the Committee asked that a committee be formed to look at a Complete Streets Policy. Mr. McDonald advised that he and Core City Administrator Wendy Fuscoe worked on a guidance policy that addressed a commitment to moving forward with Complete Streets. He reported they formed a committee and met on May 14<sup>th</sup> and will be meeting again on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. McDonald said they will develop a policy document to bring to the Prosperity and Livability Committee for consideration.*

**Update on One-Way to Two-Way Streets**

*Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation, noted the Prosperity & Livability Committee directed staff to find out what other cities have seen as benefits of converting one-way streets to two-way. He distributed a handout with results of questions asked of other cities about this topic. Mr. McDonald noted that all cities indicated that the street conversions were part of a larger redevelopment effort and said he thought that was a key part of this. Committee Chair Ewing pointed out there was not much consistency in the other answers. Committee Member Wagner said one-way streets were not good for business, but were good for moving cars. Committee Member Alexander pointed out the Core City has changed and when it was more industrial things needed to move quickly through downtown.*

*Committee Chair Ewing agreed the information was good and it depended now, from a development standpoint, if the City wants to target an area to do something else and make the street conversions part of a larger development plan. He advised Council would keep this information until staff is ready to do something more with it.*

**Discussion on City Communication Efforts**

*Jeron Hollis, Communications Officer, reported that the Committee had requested him to look at some options for video recording City Council meetings. He explained this was a preliminary conversation to get some talking points and emphasized that no vendors have yet been contacted. Mr. Hollis advised that there may be grants available and often a condition of the grant was that the broadcast include a certain percentage of original video content. Mr. Hollis briefed the Committee on the City's current equipment and broadcast capabilities. Committee Chair Ewing asked if the City's current cable station and equipment had the capability to plug in as much video content as the City wanted to run. Mr. Hollis replied that the City has the ability to run the video on the channel; the question is how the City would capture, produce and edit that video. He noted there are additional methods of distribution such as running video on the City's website and websites like YouTube.*

*Mr. Hollis pointed out if the City wanted to video record Council Meetings, the lighting would have to be improved and cameras and microphones would need to be purchased. He also noted the need for dedicated studio space and trained staff. Mr. Hollis felt if the City starts recording Council Meetings, citizens would have the expectation that it would continue. He stressed that more research would need to be done about grant requirements and someone would need to come up with some cost estimates. Mr. Hollis shared that the proposed budget does have an additional communications officer position and if this position is funded, he would like someone with video production skills.*

*The Committee discussed methods of paying for improvements to the Council Chambers. Council Member Cynthia Davis said the budget could always be amended and noted citizens have been very vocal about being able to see what is happening at City Hall and want the meetings televised. Committee Member Alexander said the necessary improvements could cost up to \$1 million over the next couple years. Committee Member Wagner asked why the City couldn't put up a couple of cameras and stream the Council meetings to the website. Mr. Hollis said the quality would be so poor it would not be a good representation of the City. Council Member Cynthia Davis asked if bond funds could be used for upgrading the Council Chambers.*

*Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin said 2/3 bond funds could be used. City Manager Greg Demko said a new City Hall may be needed in the future and Council should consider how much money they wanted to invest in the current one.*

*Mr. Ewing said the consensus appeared to be for hearing more information on the cost of bringing the Council Chambers up to the standard where quality audio and video could be produced.*

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Jason Ewing, Chairman

Attest:

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Lisa B. Vierling, MMC  
City Clerk