



**MANAGER'S BRIEFING SESSION
HIGH POINT MUNICIPAL BUILDING
June 5, 2017 – 4:00 P.M.
3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present:

Mayor William S. Bencini, Jr.; Mayor Pro Tem Wagner (Ward 4); and Council Members; Latimer Alexander (At-Large); Cynthia Davis (At-Large); Jeff Golden (Ward 1); Chris Williams (Ward 2); Alyce Hill (Ward 3); Jim Davis (Ward 5); and Jason Ewing (Ward 6)

Staff Present:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Budget & Administrative Director; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement; Loren Hill, President- High Point Economic Development Corporation and GCEDA Vice Chair; Sandy Dunbeck, Vice President- High Point Economic Development Corporation; Andy Piper, Senior Planner; Heidi Galanti, Planning Administrator; Lee Burnette, Planning & Development Director; Jeff Moore, Director of Financial Services; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Judy Stalder, (TREBIC); Brent Christensen, GCEDA Chair; Monica Peters; Mike Peters, General Manager, Eric Stacey, Director of Real Estate, Fairway Advertising; and Bill Phillips

News Media:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

Handouts:

- *Guilford County Economic Development Alliance*
- *Potential Outdoor Advertising Locations*
- *Possible Outdoor Advertising Sign Revisions – Survey Results Map*
- *Outdoor Advertising Inventory Map*
- *Chamber of Commerce Survey*

Note: *This handout will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.*

City Manager Greg Demko called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. and introduced Loren Hill, President-High Point Economic Development Corporation.

Update – Guilford County Economic Development Alliance (GCEDA)

Mr. Hill gave a brief update on the mutual contract that formed the Guilford County Economic Development Alliance (GCEDA) where at least twice a year he and current GCEDA Chair Brent Christensen would present an update to all three governments. He updated Council on what they have done since their last meeting which was to continue to work together. Council requested that GCEDA act as one

entity, and Mr. Hill reported they have done so. He explained they handle all projects together, have staff meetings, and noted how it has been a smooth process. He expressed how the GCEDA has been good for the High Point Economic Development Corporation (HPEDC) office, the City of High Point and how they continue to work very well together.

He reviewed the Leadership Group which includes the Board of GCEDA Directors for the organization along with the Business Advisory Council.

Mr. Hill referenced the GCEDA's annual report and mentioned they were a recipient of the "Regionalism and Cross-Border Collaboration" award last year. He then introduced Brent Christensen to share about projects they have been working on.

Mr. Christensen announced their leadership group meets the 4th Thursday of every month at the Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) facility near the airport and invited Council to join them anytime.

He mentioned that at the October 3, 2016 meeting with Council, they discussed the action plan they had developed. They hired some consultants to work with them, Development Counsellors International (DCI), (New York) and Garner Economics, (Atlanta) to put together an Action Plan. Mr. Christensen shared the following results:

- Alorica 800 jobs in November; 600 more in February
- Coca-Cola Bottling Company will open a new 135,000 square foot facility at the McConnell Center in Greensboro with 20 new jobs with an investment of \$4 million in operation
- Thomas Built Buses, announced another 100 jobs
- Proctor & Gamble in Greensboro announced another \$9 million expansion
- Precision Design Machinery, manufacturer for large equipment for the corrugated industry is expanding; 40 new jobs and opening a 2nd High Point facility
- Total Quality Logistics (North America's second largest freight broker) chose 4135 Mendenhall Oaks Parkway for its newest operation, 70 jobs will be created
- Crown Mark will construct a \$11 million, 250,000 square foot distribution center on a 30-acre site on Gallimore Dairy Road. They could also construct an additional 175,000 square foot flex space in a second phase.

He credits good inventory, and noted part of their job is to invest for future prospects and opportunities. He excitedly reported that Samet Corporation will begin construction on a 130,000-150,000 square-foot industrial spec building in the Piedmont Corporate Park.

Mr. Christensen mentioned another thing the Action Plan addressed was form them to begin marketing as a whole. He explained how they came together as one entity; came up with a tagline and logo "You Can Make it Here." Another recommendation from the consultants was to make sure everybody knows that High Point and Greensboro are fantastic municipalities. As a result, everything they use in terms of marketing will have Greensboro and High Point on it going forward.

In collaboration with Piedmont Triad Partnership, the Piedmont Triad Airport Authority, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, HPEDC and Winston Salem Business, Inc., Jim McArthur has been hired as Aviation Project Manager. He will also be promoting economic development opportunities. He shared they would be coming on board with 900-1,000 acres of developable property and pointed out the Piedmont Triad International Airport has fantastic potential future opportunities.

Council Member Alexander relayed that business owners in High Point are telling him that business is great for them and the only thing holding them back from growing is they cannot find enough qualified employees. He asked how this could be addressed and how they could find more people to enter the

workforce. Mr. Christensen advised they would be working with all workforce providers throughout the region to do this.

Mr. Christensen replied they are currently working on a regional study that would help with this moving forward keeping the following questions in mind:

1. What is the current workforce situation now?
2. What is it going to look like in the future?
3. How do we fill the anticipated gaps?

Council Member Alexander challenged Mr. Christensen to continue efforts to attract people that want to have a future in High Point, which provides a good place for them to live, work a good school for children to be educated in etc...

Update – Billboards

Mr. Burnette reported since this matter was last discussed by Council on November 21, 2016, up to that point Council directed staff to look at three areas allowing new outdoor advertising signs or billboards:

- Primarily along the I-74 corridor
- Business-85 corridor
- Along with Central Business District (CBD)

There was no consensus for Council to look at any other areas.

Mr. Burnette informed Council that historically these signs have been allowed for outdoor advertising in Heavy Industrial (HI) districts. He advised that Council also asked staff to look at a cap and replace approach ratio of 2:1; 3:1; or 4:1; this ratio would be determined by Council. One other thing that staff looked at was exploring the conversion of existing static signs or non-conforming static signs to digital where the total number of outdoor advertising signs would be capped and any new ones would only be allowed if they replace existing ones.

Mr. Burnette advised that during the November 21, 2016 meeting, Eric Stacey, with Fairway advised they felt they could eventually erect two signs along the I-74 corridor (along the northern and southern ends). They felt the Business-85 corridor was already fairly saturated with no marketing opportunity on that corridor. They did not see any marketing opportunities within the Central Business District (CBD) either. For that reason, they suggested the following additional areas:

- North Main Street from Westchester Drive to Belle Avenue
- Eastchester Drive from North Main to Ambassador Court
- Eastchester Drive up to the northern City limits
- Wendover Avenue within the City limits

He added that Council discussed whether or not to look at those specific areas. After detailed discussion, Council asked staff to gage the business community, especially through the Chamber of Commerce to see if there was any interest in changing regulations or in opening any of these areas up. Since that time, staff conducted some opinion surveys within the targeted areas to stakeholders to determine interest.

Mr. Burnette asked Andy Piper, Senior Planner, to provide the background information on the surveys. Mr. Piper advised Council that the surveys were sent to the following four groups:

1. Chamber of Commerce Members
2. Property Owners within the corridors that Fairway identified

3. Residents and business owners within 100 feet of that corridor
4. Randomly selected group of residents throughout the City

Mr. Piper shared they sent an online survey to the Chamber that they distributed through their e-newsletter that is sent out twice a month. Paper surveys were sent out to the other three groups by regular mail. He pointed out that these surveys were opinion polls and not scientific surveys, and he proceeded to review the areas that Mr. Burnette mentioned:

- North Main Street area
- Eastchester - Johnson Street to Ambassador Court
- North East2chester area from Hickswood Road to Meeting Way
- Wendover Avenue to Premier Drive
- West Wendover – Piedmont Parkway

The following questions were posed to the Chamber of Commerce Group:

1. Do you currently advertise on billboards in High Point?
(Yes: 88%; No: 12%)
2. Would you be interested in doing so if they were allowed in the areas shown on the following maps?
(Yes: 44%; No: 53%; Inconclusive/no response: 3%)
3. Would you be interested in advertising on digital billboards if they were available in these areas?
(Yes: 38%; No: 56%; Inconclusive/no response: 6%)

Response rate: 34 of 677 businesses (5%)

The following questions were posed to the property owners within the proposed corridors:

1. Would you be interested in having a billboard built on your property?
2. If a billboard was built on neighboring property, would you be in support of it?
3. Would you be in support if it was a digital billboard?
4. Which of the following answers best reflects your general feelings about billboards?

The following questions were posed to the property owners and resident within 100 feet of the proposed corridors:

1. If a billboard was built on property located in the area shown on the enclosed map, would you be in support of it?
2. Would you be in support if it was a digital billboard?
3. Would you be supportive if you knew that some older billboards located elsewhere in the City would be removed in exchange for a new billboard being built in the proposed area?

The following questions were posed to the randomly selected residents throughout the City:

1. If a new billboard was built on property in any of the areas shown on the enclosed maps, would you be in support of it?
2. Would you be in support if it was a digital billboard?
3. Would you be supportive if you knew that some older billboards located elsewhere in the city would be removed in exchange for a new billboard being built within one of these proposed areas?

Mayor Bencini mentioned how most of the responses from the sample groups were negative except for the business groups as it showed a 5% participation rate. He questioned how a conclusion could be reached with only a 5% response rate.

Council Member Alexander shared how he read an article in the newspaper regarding billboards and mentioned that people did not want to see billboards. He emphasized it was because of clutter and other issues. Council Member Ewing pointed out the question for the Chamber members was would they advertise on a billboard, not would they want to see one. As he noted, that was probably why they received less participation. Both Council Members Alexander and Hill stated that people do not want billboards.

Council Member Alexander suggested it might be possible to squeeze a billboard around the Highway 66 interchange. Mayor Bencini advised that it could not be in Forsyth County because they have rules against billboards anywhere along that corridor because they want to keep it a scenic corridor without clutter. Mayor Bencini stressed that the interest was not created by any of these four groups that were surveyed, but by the outdoor advertising company and reiterated that the interest in the change is not being initiated by this Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner advised that Council has been talking about billboards for the past seven years and the initial discussion was how to clean up the clutter and make the areas look more presentable. He mentioned there was a lot of discussion on the existing billboards that were grandfathered or nonconforming and because of this they are able to maintain the billboards, but there are a lot of places where it does not make monetary sense for the signs to be there anymore. Mayor Bencini mentioned the City's current policy which allows billboards in HI areas; the billboards in all other areas are non-conforming and have been there for quite a while.

Mike Peters, General Manager, Fairway Outdoor Advertising, agreed that most do not want to advertise on billboards that are not in a desirable area. He explained how it has taken a different direction and from an undesirable perspective to be in those areas. He suggested a solution would be to remove some of those billboards and relocate three or four in commercial areas because businesses want to advertise static or digital within the commercial areas. He stressed how the commercial location makes the site valuable. Mr. Peters also shared that they do have several High Point companies interested in advertising with static or digital billboards.

Mayor Bencini pointed out there are no commercial areas on I-74 or 311 and questioned the need for billboards. Mr. Stacey suggested they would like to see some billboards out there, but due to the zoning they are not allowed.

Regarding the question, "Would you be supportive if you knew that some older billboards located elsewhere in the city would be removed in exchange for a new billboard being built within one of these proposed areas?" Mr. Piper stated there was not much of a shift in opinion based on that question.

Lastly, he reviewed the three categorized groups:

1. Supportive
2. Supportive, but... (had a type of condition)
3. Non-Supportive

Council Member Alexander pointed out Council has been talking about billboards for a long time and he felt that the billboard company needs an answer.

Council Member J. Davis mentioned that there were a lot of nonconforming signs on buildings downtown and felt, in all fairness, signs should be regulated across the board. Council Member Williams pointed out the advertisement signs on the buildings downtown raise quite a bit of revenue for the companies.

Council Member Ewing pointed out there has been discussion for a sign ordinance review and shared that he gets a lot of complaints about companies that hang banners during the Furniture Market and how they get by with it. He asked how the City could be more equilateral to all businesses and if an ordinance is in place, then it should be enforced for all, or not any. Mr. Burnette stated the ones downtown are conforming because they are advertising on premise. Mayor Bencini pointed out there are different districts that should not be treated the same way. Council Member J. Davis agreed there is a need for a sign ordinance review.

Council Member C. Davis recalled in past conversations that the I-74 and 311 areas would be ideal to attract people traveling into High Point for events such as the Theatre, Coltrane Festival and other events.

Mayor Pro Tem Wagner reiterated Council has already directed staff to look at revising the sign ordinance. Council Member Golden felt there is not an appetite for billboards, and pointed out Council discussed this issue many times with no direction. He suggested to address the overall sign ordinance and for Council to contact the billboard company once the sign ordinance has been revised.

Council Member Alexander then moved to direct staff not to spend any more time on billboards and Council Member Ewing made a second.

For further discussion, Council Member C. Davis inquired about removing the old billboards that currently are not being used for advertising.

Mayor Bencini reported there is legislation regarding billboards going through the House. Mr. Burnette stated there are actually four bills rolled into one.

The motion carried by a 9-0 unanimous vote.

There being no further no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria A. Smith
Deputy City Clerk