



Prosperity & Livability Committee

(Virtual Meeting)

Chaired by Councilman Hudson

Committee Members: Hudson, Holmes, Jefferson, and Peters

June 23, 2021 –9 :00 a.m.

3rd Floor, Council Chambers

Minutes

As part of the city of High Point's on-going COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in-person attendance was not allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting was live-streamed and the public was provided a link to listen to the meeting as it was being live-streamed. www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hudson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Following a virtual roll call, the following attendance by Committee Members was duly noted.

Physically Present (1): Chairman Wesley Hudson

Participating Remotely (2): Committee Member Michael Holmes, Committee Member Cyril Jefferson

Absent (1): Committee Member Peters

Also Present: Council Member Victor Jones

Staff Physically Present:

Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Mary Sizemore, Library Director; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; Lee Burnette, Director of Planning & Development; Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Chris Andrews, Planning Administrator- Planning & Development Department; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; and Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Staff Participating Remotely:

JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Michael McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager

Others Physically Present:

Phyllis Bridges; Melody Burnett, Executive Director- Visit High Point; Dr. Patrick Harman-Hayden Harman Foundation

Others Participating Remotely:

Avis Robinson

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS**2021-269 Presentation-Community Read Project**

Dr. Patrick Harman and Mary Sizemore will give a presentation on the Community Read Project (This project is designed to encourage leaders and residents to read a book titled "Trust First").

Dr. Patrick Harman with the Hayden Harman Foundation advised that this idea has been cooking up for a while but was interrupted by COVID. He spoke to sharing the idea with Mary Sizemore, Library Director, in 2020 because of the empathy deficit in the country and he felt this book would address that. He reported that activities would begin in July which would be centered around the book, "Trust First," authored by Bruce Deel. He noted that Mr. Deel has successfully worked with over 20,000 homeless people in the last decade to help get them back to sufficiency and shared that it is much bigger than a day center for the homeless--it is all about trust. Mr. Deel will visit High Point on September 14th and be a keynote speaker and would introduce the Compassion Charter and a call to engage the community. He reported that books have been purchased for distribution throughout the community and noted that books have already been dropped off for Council Members. He then recognized Mary Sizemore for some additional comments.

Ms. Sizemore noted that this book is not a typical read and the fact that the author, Mr. Deel, is coming to High Point is just the beginning and that things leading up to the activities is laying groundwork even after the project concludes. She advised that the kickoff would be held in conjunction with the Farmer's Market at the High Point Library and there would be games, activities, and books would be given away. She noted it is all about simple acts of kindness and trust--concentrating on the simple things.

She reported on the following activities that will take place:

- ✓ *August 28th 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.- community leader panel discussion in person. People already involved in serving people in a trusting way will talk about how to transform community.*
- ✓ *September 14th at 7:00 p.m., the author, Bruce Deel, will be a keynote speaker at the High Point Museum.*

Ms. Sizemore thanked everyone for their interest in the project.

Chairman Hudson advised that both he and his wife have read the book and that it was a very easy read. He announced that if there are organizations out there that would also like a copy of the book to please contact Mary Sizemore at the Library. Ms. Sizemore noted that 500 books have been purchased.

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he thanked Ms. Sizemore and Dr. Harman for the presentation on the Community Read Project.

2021-270 Washington Street Cultural Center

Phyllis Bridges will give a presentation and provide an update on the Washington Street Cultural Center.

Chairman Hudson recognized Phyllis Bridges. Ms. Bridges advised that she wanted to touch base regarding the progress that the city has made as far as coming up with an agreement/solution pertaining to the land. She shared that she conducted some additional research on the land and found that there was a small community there that was part of the African-American community on the far end of Washington Street. She noted that she sent a PowerPoint presentation to the committee members to raise awareness of that past history that is no longer there. She brought to the committee's attention that it has not been replaced with anything to help enhance, benefit, or revitalize the area.

Ms. Bridges asked if the committee could share any updates as to how she can move forward. Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager, stated he understood at the last time this was discussed that the committee was going to take it under advisement; that the committee needs to discuss the next steps; and if there is a desire to move forward, then the committee could certainly make a recommendation to the City Council. He stated he was unsure if fundraising efforts have started on the cultural center but thought that would possibly be part of the criteria moving forward. Mr. McCaslin advised that he does not believe the city could turn over the property but if some kind of commitment was made for certain things to be done, then it might be possible. He pointed out that the city only controls part of the land, that some of the property is owned by the High Point Housing Authority and he was unsure if there have been any conversations with them.

Committee Member Jefferson recalled that discussion took place in a past committee meeting where staff was asked to come back with additional information which included doing some additional research and doing some sort of due diligence on past property conveyances. He noted this has not been done, that staff has not provided any additional information, and he hoped to have that information before this meeting so that the committee could discuss it further and make a recommendation. He asked the following questions:

- 1. What has been the precedent for the city when conveying property?*
- 2. What sort of information is generally needed?*
- 3. What steps are normally required?*
- 4. What other steps are being asked of the requester, Phyllis Bridges, for the proposed cultural arts center?*

He reiterated that more information was definitely needed and the committee members needed more knowledge before a recommendation could be made. He suggested that staff pull those records being sought and do the research, then maybe the committee could reconvene at a later date to discuss and make a recommendation. Mr. McCaslin advised that staff could certainly conduct the research and get back to the committee as to the findings.

Committee Member Homes inquired about the fundraising and recalled that it was reported in the last meeting that Ms. Bridges shared that she had commitments from donors and that was contingent on the transference of land from the city. Ms. Bridges confirmed that and stated that one of the key potential donors has not actually made a financial commitment because they are waiting on the transference of the property. She further noted that she also has two key donors who are ready to commit to this project, but until the land is acquired she cannot move forward. because that would be the kickoff for their capital campaign.

Committee Member Holmes asked if it might be possible to do this if Ms. Bridges could secure a written commitment to the fact that the donors would be financially committed to the project contingent upon the transference of the property. Mr. McCaslin replied that he was not sure and noted that it would be a question for Legal.

City Attorney Carlyle advised that it needs more investigation and more terms that can be incorporated into the contract in regards to the financing aspect and noted that staff will need to weigh the value to the city and the value of the land, which is generally what staff always looks at when donating property for a public purpose. She advised that they could include some claw back language in the contract that the property would revert back to the city in the event that it is not used for a public purpose.

Committee Member Homes felt staff was inadvertently "spit balling" terms and pointed out that Ms. Bridges came to the committee in early Spring regarding this matter. Ms. Bridges confirmed that it was in April. Committee Member Holmes advised that he understands that staff was busy with the budget preparation during that time, but strongly felt staff should put some due diligence on the matter to meet the needs of the citizens.

Committee Member Jefferson intervened and stated that he thought the motion made at the April meeting covered everything that has been discussed in this meeting. He reiterated that Ms. Bridges came to the committee in April with her request and he felt staff should have been speedier about a response and should have already performed, at the very least, due diligence. He hoped the information could be retrieved and discussed at the Prosperity & Livability Committee Meeting in July and that while the city is continuing to work on research, determined what it is that Ms. Bridges can be working on her end so that the project continues to move forward.

City Attorney Carlyle recommended that the committee request the Clerk to enter into the minutes that the Committee received an update from staff and that the motion made by Committee Member Jefferson remains on the table with additional research/work that needs to be done.

Chairman Hudson asked if this was acceptable for inclusion in the minutes and City Clerk Lisa Vierling replied in the affirmative.

Chairman Hudson apologized to Ms. Bridges for not getting this information to her sooner and asked if she would be available for a July 7th meeting. He asked staff if this would be adequate time for Legal and staff to come back with more information. Mr. McCaslin replied that staff would do its best. Chairman Hudson agreed with some type of contingency clause and felt the reversionary clause, benchmarks, and timelines all need to be spelled out. He

announced that this matter would be placed on the July 7th agenda for further discussion. He entertained any questions.

Committee Member Peters stated that she was expecting that staff would be reporting on information at this meeting so that the committee could possibly act on it, expressed disappointment that the information was not presented, and that she was looking forward to further discussion at the July 7th meeting.

2021-271**Presentation-Potential Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park Ordinance**

Staff will be giving a presentation on a Potential Recreation Vehicle (RV) Ordinance.

Lee Burnette, Director of Planning & Development, advised that the manager's office asked his staff to look at the RV (Recreation Vehicle) Park provision or lack of that is in the city's Development Ordinance. He provided a little background and noted that the city's current ordinance does not have a provision for recreation vehicle parks which includes any kind of camper, trailer, etc..... However, the city did have some standards set out in the prior Development Ordinance until the new Development Ordinance was adopted in 2017. It had a number of standards that was allowed in a couple of zoning districts--one required a special use permit.

Looking at the current environment as to what other jurisdictions are doing, staff surveyed it and looked at the top 20 cities in North Carolina to see what standards they have, how they regulate what zones and the allowance of RV parks. Most jurisdictions allow recreation vehicle parks in some type of commercial zone and some allow in their rural or agricultural zoning district, particularly if they have some kind of environmental attraction such as a lake, park, etc.... He noted that High Point's environmental attraction is Oak Hollow Lake, so more than likely any kind of recreational vehicle park that would be developed in High Point would be in a commercial zoning district. He explained in their studies, they found that they are typically located just like a hotel, along commercial corridors, near interchanges, etc.... where people can park, stay for a short period of time and move on to another destination. He pointed out it is typically not in an industrial zone or residential zone.

Staff is suggesting that RV Parks be classified as a commercial use and be part of the visitor accommodation standards uses. He advised that the definition of a recreation vehicle park is basically two or more RV sites or camping spaces and this can include tent camping, etc...so there is no restriction on the type of camping that could be provided. He pointed out that this aligns with the State Building Code in terms of a recreational vehicle and that it was basically any vehicle designed as temporary living quarters for recreation, camping, or travel us whether on its own power, whether it's towed, or mounted, etc....

Staff is recommending that RV Parks be allowed in the city's General Business District as this is typically where there is commercially zoned land or land that could be rezoned along the city's major commercial corridors, interchanges and the like.

Mr. Burnette explained there are two options.

- 1. To have it as a permitted use or a principle use that is allowed by right without any kind of board approval; to*

2. *To allow it as a Special Use Permit.*

Staff recommended against the special use permit for the following reasons:

1. *If standards are applied that protect and ensure that it is done properly, that type of review is not needed; and*
2. *With a Special Use Permit, the Council or approval body would have very limited discretion in denying a request.*

Staff is recommending the Recreation Vehicle Parks be allowed as a Principal Use in the General Business (GB) District with the following Use Standards:

Minimum Park Size

- *3 acres*

Density

- *Maximum of 15 spaces per acre*

Setback

- *Buildings and structures shall meet the district requirement, and*
- *Minimum of 50-foot street and perimeter setback for RV and camping spaces.*

RV & camping spaces

- *Must be designated on the ground by permanent markers or monuments, and*
- *Must be located above the base flood elevation and graded to prevent water from ponding.*

Parking and drives

- *Each RV or camping space shall have an asphalt, concrete, graveled or other approved comparable all-weather surface with sufficient dimensions to accommodate at least one motor vehicle or camping space.*
- *Park drives shall meet the private drive dimensional requirements and must have an asphalt, concrete, graveled or other approved comparable all-weather surface.*

Access

- *No RV camping space shall have direct vehicular access to a public street.*

Utilities

- *Public water and public sewer service are required for the park.*
- *Individual sewer hook-ups or a sewage dumping station is required along with individual RV electrical connections for the RV spaces.*
- *A central structure or structures is required that will provide separate toilet and bathing facilities for each gender.*

Length of Stay

- *No recreation vehicle shall be used or set up as a permanent dwelling unit.*
- *No recreation vehicle shall be occupied beyond 90 days in any 12-month period.*

Chairman Hudson asked if the Recreation Vehicle Parks would still not be allowed in the residential areas. Mr. Burnette replied they would not because of the possibility that people might want to live there year-round.

Mr. Burnette advised that if the committee is interested in sponsoring this, that staff could address it through some general amendment that they are currently working on that more than likely will be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission in August.

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any additional questions. Hearing none, he introduced Melody Burnett and afforded her an opportunity to address the committee regarding this matter.

Melody Burnett with Visit High Point shared some statistics from the North American Camping Report as well as Destination Analyst that she felt would be very complimentary to the drafted ordinance. She spoke to the following:

- *COVID has increased awareness and more people are now engaged in camping and Rving;*
- *Over 86 million travelers identify themselves as camping enthusiasts (up from 15% in 2015 which indicates an increasing trend;*
- *The usage at the Oak Hollow Campground has increased by 13% from 2019 to 2020;*
- *There is a lot of opportunity for High Point due to High Point's location off the interstate and being a transient destination;*
- *The average campground visitor takes a trip of 14 days per person and they are extending their vacation stays by four weeks;*
- *60% of campers are non-white groups indicating a very diverse leisure traveler that is emerging;*
- *Young professionals are taking more weekday trips with RVs, mixing leisure and work;*
- *54% are bringing their laptops while on vacation;*
- *RV sales are up 12% since 2019;*
- *More folks who are camping are buying used campers first which is a great opportunity for "do it yourselves" to explore renovation and custom design;*
- *Users are valuing technologies and finding camping amenities on more apps as we are looking for more on-line presence for High Point;*
- *46% of travelers are bringing their pets.*
- *Campers spend an average of \$600 per trip*

Ms. Burnett noted as we are now re-prioritizing our values, our work/life balance has changed; our connection with outdoor recreation has changed; our mental and physical health as changed. She advised that the city's Parks & Rec team does a fantastic job and in order for them to focus on or enhance amenities at City Lake Park, the new Master Plan, as well as enhancements to the greenway, the RV ordinance would be a great enhancement to make these updates. She further advised that you never know when a camper can turn into someone doing business or living in High Point and is a great compliment to our mission as we position High Point as a great place to live, work, stay, and play.

At the conclusion of Ms. Burnett's presentation, Chairman Hudson asked if there were any questions or comments.

Committee Member Holmes thanked Ms. Burnett for the information she shared in her presentation. He believed adding another layer of accessibility to the city is always a good thing, so hopefully there would be a way to maximize the new normal. He loved how Ms. Burnett spoke to people re-prioritizing post-COVID, reassessing work/life balance and how they approach travel and tourism.

As a side note, Ms. Burnett noted that RV camp opportunities do not levy occupancy taxes like hotels, motels, and short-term home rentals (Airbnb and VRBO).

Committee Member Jones thanked Ms. Burnett for her presentation and advised this conversation was started about six or seven months ago. He spoke to how High Point is uniquely positioned with all the highways there is a lot of transient travelers; he advised that he serves as the Council Liaison on the CVB and is treasurer of the Guilford County Hotel Association; his hopes that High Point would always be in the most competitive position for any tourism, traveling, commerce; that High Point is known as a place that is always full; there may be some amazing opportunities for tourism revenue to come into High Point; his hopes that this text amendment may lead to some other amenities opening up in High Point to make High Point more competitive.

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any additional comments. Hearing none, he proceeded to make a motion that the committee give this back to staff with a recommendation to bring it to the full Council for a presentation once it goes through the Planning & Zoning Commission process. Committee Member Holmes made a second to the motion.

For further discussion, Lee Burnette advised that the committee could direct staff to proceed with the RV Park Ordinance and have Council consider it as part of the text amendments that the planning staff is currently working on.

Chairman Hudson amended his motion to accept staff's recommendation to include the RV Park Ordinance as part of the text amendments that staff is currently working on and forward it to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Committee Member Holmes agreed with Chairman Hudson's amended motion.

City Attorney Joanne Carlyle asked if the planning staff has shared these amendments with legal for review. Mr. Burnette advised that this is a typical text amendment which has not even gone through the process yet. Ms. Carlyle asked the planning staff to work with Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney, on these amendments.

*There being no further discussion, following a roll call vote by Chairman Hudson, the motion to accept staff's recommendation to include the RV Park Ordinance as part of the text amendments that staff is currently working on and forward it to the Planning & Zoning Commission **carried by the following 4-0 unanimous vote.***

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Prosperity & Livability Committee, Chairman Hudson asked if there were any objections to adjourning the meeting. Hearing none, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wesley Hudson, Chairman

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk