

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MONDAY, MAY 22, 2017
5:00 P.M.**

{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has been either mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per their request. The agenda gives the date, time and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e).}

A council workshop was held on May 22, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Municipal building with the following present:

COUNCIL: Mayor Harold Thompson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner, Councilmembers Tommy Anthony, Vicki C. Morgan, Ricky Todd Harris, Pamela Sloss and Sonja Craig.

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF: Gloria Rogers, Municipal Clerk/Personnel Director; Walker Gallman – Finance Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director; Adam Harris – Assistant Utility Director; Leroy Edwards- Maintenance Shop Director and Laura Hembree – Accounting Supervisor.

CITY ATTORNEY: Larry Flynn

NEWS MEDIA: Mike Stevens – WBCU and Graham Williams- Union County News

OTHERS: Robby Moody and Curtiss Hunter

1. Call To Order

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order. He gave the invocation. The Pledge of Alliance was given by all present.

2. Business

A. ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC INCENTIVE ORDINANCE

Mayor Thompson states that Robby Moody, Senior Planning with Catawba Regional Planning Council will discuss the Economic Development Incentive Program Ordinance. This is an ordinance authorizing and establishing an Economic Development Incentive Program to encourage private investment in the Incentive Area of the City of Union and other matters related thereto. Mr. Moody first reviewed a map of the “Incentive Area” which is currently defined as the A-1 Zoning District on the map. This is the Central Business District zoning district in downtown Union. Mr. Moody has already talked with Attorney Lawrence Flynn regarding the “Incentive Area” and council can identify specific areas.

Mayor Pro Tem Garner feels that some type of incentive needs to be offered to businesses on the By-Pass because there are some many vacant buildings there.

Councilmember Morgan agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Garner in offering some type of incentive to a business on the By-Pass in case a business comes in such as a Home Depot or a big restaurant.

Mr. Moody states in those cases, you can have a number of employee thresholds or an amount of investment threshold which is already included in

the draft ordinance. He continued by stating that the A-1 District is where you want to encourage development.

Councilmember Morgan agrees that the downtown area is what they really need to push to encourage development but if someone has a business on the By-Pass, council can offer the same incentives to that one store or that one area; council should have that flexibility.

Councilmember Craig feels that it should depend on how big the store is on the By-Pass because there are small buildings on Main Street that would not hold a Home Depot or an Office Depot. Downtown buildings are for dress shops, shoe shops or restaurants.

Mayor Pro Tem Garner states that for all practical purpose they need to identify a district and a good start would be the A-1 to go into the ordinance; then there will be flexibility to change ordinance if needed.

Mayor Thompson states that the consensus of council is to start with the A-1 District with the flexibility to expand as needed.

Mayor Thompson asked the City Attorney the question of if someone wants to come before the Zoning Board and wants to protest, what legal recourse would there be for the City.

City Attorney Larry Flynn states that the way to deal with that is to expand the geographic area and to have a much larger number on what the investment would be; to have some control over that. Also council would want to dictate some of how they would have to go back in and change the language on the geographic area. The numbers on the By-Pass would be specifically larger.

Mr. Moody next discussed the value to the City of providing the incentives, which generally includes: increased property values within the Incentive Area and the City as a whole, increased revenue from property taxes, business license fees and permit fees; increased tourism and commercial activity within the Incentive Area as a whole and the improvement of the character of the City by preserving historic buildings within the Incentive Area and promoting the construction of new buildings that are compatible with its historic district character. He states that when Attorney Lawrence Flynn made a recent presentation, he mentioned Hartsville and Camden as examples for benchmarks just to see what they have.

Next Mr. Moody, the Mayor and City Council discussed recommended incentives of the City that they want to include in the draft ordinance. The council may, at its discretion and on a case-by-case basis, enter into an Incentive Agreement to reimburse or refund any person, firm or corporation the following fees and taxes up to the amounts and percentages provided for herein: (1) Up to 100% of the applicable capacity fees collected by the City; (2) Up to 50% of the building permit fees collected by the City; (3) Up to 50% of the business license fees collected by the City for as many as 5 years; (4) Up to 50% of the local hospitality taxes collected by the City for as many as 5 years, but funds received through such incentive are to be spent only for purposes permitted by S.C. law, and which have been approved by council and included in the Incentive Agreement (5) Up to 50% of the local accommodations taxes collected by the City for as many as 5 years, but funds received through such incentive are to be spent only for purposes permitted by South Carolina law, and which have been approved by Council and included in the Incentive Agreement. They also discussed the general eligibility criteria in order for a Development to be eligible to receive Incentives, the Council must determine that the Development meets, or upon completion will meet certain requirements –the Development must have a recommended minimum threshold investment of \$250,000.

Mayor Thompson will get Attorney Lawrence Flynn to review recommendations to be incorporated into the draft of the Economic Development Incentive Program Ordinance as discussed at tonight's council workshop.

Mayor Thompson gave the following updates:

- Blue Sky will be coming back to do touch-up painting on the mural.
- City will be looking at the awnings on Main Street; they have debris embedded and cannot be cleaned and there are holes from hail storm. Contractor has come in and gave an estimate of \$30,000 to re-cover. Funding will come from the Economic Development Account.
- Plans are being made to repair wall on the Main Street Junction building and the wall beside it; funding will come from a corporation grant.
- The Mayor will get a list of where they are on the demolition project to Mayor Pro Tem Garner.
- A copy of parking lot rendition will be given to council.
- New banner flags will be placed on Main Street. This will be funded out of the Hospitality Tax.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Council workshop adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved _____ 2017.