

Tuesday - May 16, 2000 - 3:00 p.m.

Worksession

Present: Mayor Leni Sitnick, Presiding; Vice-Mayor M. Charles Cloninger; Councilwoman Barbara Field; Councilman Edward C. Hay Jr.; Councilman Brian L. Peterson; Councilwoman Terry M. Whitmire; and Councilman Charles R. Worley; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; City Manager James L. Westbrook Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

**CONSENT:**

**Grant for the French Broad River Park Phase IV from the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to apply for and enter into an agreement with the N. C. Department of Transportation, Transportation Enhancement Program for the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA21) to assist with the construction of the French Broad River Park Phase IV (FBRPIV).

FBRPIV represents the City of Asheville's next phase of a major greenway and park system being developed along the French Broad River on Amboy Road. The park will include greenways, bicycle facilities, lawn bowling, volleyball and soccer complex, softball field, playground, restrooms, roller hockey, open space, picnic shelter, parking, and a welcome center. Phase IV will also connect to a planned NC DOT funded greenway from Hominy Creek on the west, and eventually to the Amboy Road trail to the east.

The Parks and Recreation Department and RiverLink are in partnership to implement an ambitious fundraising plan to raise approximately \$2 million to build the park. To date, \$50,500 has been raised, and \$770,000 to \$820,000 in grant proposals are pending.

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting \$200,000 to \$250,000 in grant funds from TEA21 which will be used to construct neighborhood and park connections to the new park. One neighborhood segment will bring a sidewalk and safe pedestrian crossing to Michigan Avenue and across Amboy Road to the park entrance. The second crossing will provide a pedestrian connection at Riverview Drive at French Broad River Park to the Amboy Road trail using a safe street crossing and ramp into the park. The final sidewalk connection will link Amboy Road trail and FBRPIV along Amboy Road at Edaco Salvage. The grant requires a 20% cash match, which will be available through current fundraising efforts by Parks and Recreation and RiverLink.

The Parks and Recreation Department recommends the City of Asheville apply for and enter into an agreement for grant funds with the N. C. Department of Transportation, Transportation Enhancement Program for TEA21 to assist with the construction of the French Broad River Park, Phase IV.

**Budget Amendment regarding the Print Shop**

Summary: The consideration of a budget amendment, in the amount of \$22,700, to increase the appropriation of the Print Shops revenues and expenses.

The City's Print Shop has performed more services this fiscal year than it has in the past, requiring additional labor and materials. In addition, the Print Shop is paying for copier

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leases this fiscal year that were budgeted in departmental budgets rather than that of the Print Shop. This budget amendment for the increase of \$22,700 in expenses is offset by the same increase in revenues.

The Finance Department recommends the City of Asheville approve the budget amendment for the Print Shop in the amount of \$22,700.

### **Asheville-Buncombe VISION Office Space**

Summary: The consideration of a request to allow the continued use of City office space for the VISION.

The City of Asheville has provided office space to the VISION of Asheville-Buncombe County, hereafter referred to as "VISION", since Spring 1996. The office space is located in the City Development Office at 29 Haywood Street and has been provided at no cost. The City also provides funding to the VISION through "outside agency" funding.

On March 30, 2000 from VISION Board Chair Albert L. Sneed, Jr., requested the City continue to grant an in kind donation of office space and existing support services for Fiscal Year 2000/01. The VISION Board has expressed gratitude to the City and the "ideal location" for the office space. Additionally, a separate request was received to grant continued use of the Rankin Street parking garage at no charge by providing two parking passes.

In looking at the upcoming year, City staff is not aware of any changes in the City Development office layout or staffing levels that will require the space currently utilized by the VISION. Therefore, the current space arrangement is recommended to be granted for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2000/01. Likewise, Staff recommends providing two parking passes to the Rankin Street parking garage for use by the VISION staff.

Staff recommends that Council grant the request of the VISION by a motion to approve the request thereby providing the continued use of donated office space, the existing level of support services and two parking passes to the Rankin Street parking garage for FY 2000/01.

Mayor Sitnick asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place these items on the next formal City Council agenda.

### **FILM BOARD UPDATE**

Ms. Pam Turner, Chair of the Film Board, said that during the first year and one half of the Film Board's existence, the Board has set forth ambitious goals and undertaken numerous projects toward their implementation. The Board identified the following needs: (1) create a larger crew base to support the industry; (2) identify the strengths and weaknesses the community presents the film industry; (3) identify and establish incentives that will attract the industry; (4) create a film friendly community both in the public and private sectors; (5) establish a means of communication; and (6) create promotional materials.

Major actions and accomplishments include (1) created a logo for the Board; (2) created a web page for the Asheville Film Board (a) introduction and purpose; (b) incentives and production support (c) pictorial history of films shot in the region; (d) contracts and resource persons; (e) current events and announcements; (3) developed news releases for events; (4) sent a Film Board representative to the location trade show in Los Angeles; (5) planned and implemented an educational seminar at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College (a) six months planning for the first in a series of programs; (b) held the program "Lights/Camera,

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and You in the Action" on March 28, 2000, which was attended by approximately 250 persons; (c) presentations by Board members and six film industry professionals including casting, extras, action and locations; and (6) developed a promotional video with WLOS-TV.

She said that the Film Board has accomplished these projects through the volunteer work of the Board members, professional and competent support from Robin Nix, the City's staff support, a very small budget provided by the City, and the generous contribution of time and support from WLOS-TV staff in the production of the video.

The Board is very proud of its accomplishments to date and is eager to move forward with even more ambitious efforts to actively promote our area to the film industry. Development and implementation of effective promotions and projects will require staff and budgetary resources in order to reach the potential the Film Board envisions for the future of this vital sector of our community's economy.

Ms. Turner then showed the promotional video that WLOS-TV produced. She requested City Council to consider appropriating money for their next big project which will be a promotions book.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Sitnick thanked the Film Board members for their outstanding service on this very important Board.

### **EDUCATIONAL ACCESS CHANNEL COMMISSION**

Mr. Greg Dillingham, member on the Educational Access Channel Commission, provided City Council with a brief update of its current status and a report of planned future activities.

Ms. Marion Mathews, member of the Commission, asked if City Council would appropriate a minimum of \$20,000 to help purchase a video equipment playback system. She hoped Council would not only provide intangible support of the Commission, but tangible support as well to help meet the goals that they set together.

Discussion surrounded the possibility of sharing equipment with the Public Access Channel, why the \$60,000 video equipment playback system is needed, and are matches and grants available for needs of the Commission.

Mayor Sitnick asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place this item on the next formal City Council agenda.

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## **BUDGET AMENDMENT REGARDING THE CIVIC CENTER**

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Civic Center Director David Pisha said that this is the consideration of a budget amendment, in the amount of \$593,737, for the Civic Center.

It is apparent the Civic Center will need an additional transfer of funds in order to continue operations through June 30, 2000. Revenues for the fiscal year are now estimated to be \$1,406,896 versus a budget amount of \$1,737,000. Expenses are estimated to be \$2,293,315, versus a budgeted amount of \$2,082,078. A portion of the increased expenses for the year include electrical repair work.

Three major revenue factors contributed to the current financial situation at the Civic Center. The arena under-performed compared to budget. Not only did it face stiff competition

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from the Bi-Lo Center, but ice events and conventions did not deliver the results as expected. And with a shortfall in attendance, concession revenues were not able to meet projections.

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