

Worksession

Present: Mayor Charles R. Worley, Presiding; Vice-Mayor R. Carl Mumpower (arrived at 5:30 p.m.); Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilman Joseph C. Dunn; Councilwoman Diana Hollis Jones; Councilman Brownie W. Newman; Interim City Manager James L. Westbrook Jr.; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; and Deputy City Clerk Phyllis Corns

Absent: Councilwoman Terry M. Bellamy

CONSENT AGENDA:

Community Meeting vs. Special Meeting – March 29, 2005

Mayor Worley said that March 11, 2005, was the deadline for receiving applications for the City Manager position. We have heard from our executive search firm that approximately 80 applications have been received. They would like to schedule a closed session with City Council to review the applications to bring them to a short-list. It was the consensus of Council that we not hold a community meeting on March 29, 2005, but instead hold a special meeting at 3:00 p.m., in Room 209, for the sole purpose of having a closed session to review the applications and process.

Buncombe County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Summary: The consideration of a resolution adopting the Buncombe County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The City of Asheville is required to adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan by State and Federal law. Local governments in Buncombe County have recognized the importance of working cooperatively during emergency situations. Seven governmental entities in Buncombe County have jointly developed a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan. Each of the local government units have adopted the plan or are in the process of adopting the unified county-wide plan.

Hazard mitigation is defined as “sustained action that reduces or eliminates long term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects”. The Federal Mitigation Act of 2000 and North Carolina Senate Bill 300 require local jurisdictions to have prepared and adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan in order to be eligible for certain types of disaster assistance for both Presidential and State-declared disasters occurring after November 1, 2004.

In order to fulfill this requirement for our area, Buncombe County Emergency Management formed a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation planning committee that included representatives from the County and each municipal jurisdiction. The committee conducted risk and vulnerability assessments for each jurisdiction and, based upon the results of those assessments, developed hazard mitigation strategies to address the hazards that threaten our area.

The Hazard Mitigation Plan was then submitted to the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency for their approval in August of 2004. That approval was granted in October of 2004, pending the adoption of all seven governmental entities.

Buncombe County properly advertised and held a public informational session on the Hazard Mitigation Plan for all of the jurisdictions. In addition, Buncombe County properly advertised and held a public hearing on the Hazard Mitigation Plan for all jurisdictions.

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This action clearly supports the City of Asheville Strategic Plan in Goal #3 – Strong City and County Partnerships – explore ways for the City and County to work together to meet mutual needs, to gain efficiencies or to share in regional infrastructure investment needs.

PROS:

- Adoption of the plan enables all of the jurisdictions in Buncombe County to better work cooperatively in the event of disaster and emergency situations by working from the same plan.
- Adoption of the plan enables the city to potentially receive grant funding in the future as well as enables some types of disaster assistance to city residents in the future if the need arises.
- Adoption of the plan better enables the City Manager through city staff to develop and coordinate operational procedures in a unified manner.

CONS:

- None have been identified or known at this time.

City staff recommends City Council adopt the Buncombe County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Fire Chief Greg Grayson responded to questions from Council regarding the Plan.

Acceptance of Tiverton Lane, Clovelly Way and Bideford Row

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to accept Tiverton Lane, Clovelly Way and Bideford Row, in Devonshire Subdivision, as City maintained streets.

Section 7-15-1(f)-4.a requires that streets dedicated for public uses be accepted by resolution of City Council.

Tiverton Lane, Clovelly Way and Bideford Row are developer-constructed streets that have an average paved width of 26 feet and a length of 0.35, 0.23 and 0.25 miles respectively for a total length of 0.83 miles. Inspection reports were provided to the City indicating these streets have been constructed in accordance with the approved standards.

Following City Council's approval of this resolution, these streets will be added to the official Powell Bill list. A two-year warranty, from the time of Council acceptance, will be required by the developer to cover major failures in the roadway.

City staff recommends City Council accept Tiverton Lane, Clovelly Way and Bideford Row in Devonshire Subdivision as City-maintained streets.

Amendment to Civic Center Independent Contractor Agreement

Summary: The consideration of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a service agreement with the International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees Moving Picture Technicians ("IATSE") for the Asheville Civic Center.

IATSE personnel are independent contractors engaged by the Center to install and remove the ice rink as well as do a number of specialized tasks on behalf of the Civic Center. Because of the number of well-trained and available personnel, it is necessary for the Civic Center to continue to employ them in the future. No other staffing procedure would allow the Center the flexibility in staffing as using IATSE members.

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The original amount of the contract was \$49,000. However, with the addition of hockey, the Civic Center needs to increase the contract amount by an additional \$40,000. There is currently money in the Center's budget and no new funds are required.

Pro: This contract allows the Civic Center to use experienced independent contractors to setup, take down and change over different events without having to hire a full time staff.

Con: None noted.

City staff recommends authorizing the City Manager to enter into a service agreement with the International Alliance of Theatrical State Employees Moving Picture Technicians ("IATSE") for the Asheville Civic Center.

N.C. Dept. of Transportation Agreement for Long Shoals Road

Summary: The consideration of a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a Municipal Utility Agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for widening NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) from east of I-26 to US 25 (Hendersonville Road), including replacing the current 16 inch plastic water line along Long Shoals Road with a new 24 inch ductile iron line.

The current water line on Long Shoals Road is a 16-inch plastic line that has numerous emergency breaks during winter months. The NCDOT betterment project will be the first phase of placing a 24-inch ductile iron pipe line along Long Shoals Road, including crossing the French Broad River and replacing the 16-inch plastic line and an old 8-inch cast iron line on the other side of the interstate. The project cost from US 25 to I-26 is \$1,805,799.61 which will be paid in three (3) equal annual installments to the NCDOT.

The annual budget ordinance to be adopted in late May will provide funding for the first installment payment. The funds will come out of the Water Revenue Fund.

Pro:

- This project will enhance customer service by eliminating costly line breaks which cause water outages to area customers on the current line and will help loop the water system to the west and south regions of the system.

Con:

- The final construction cost of this project is \$600,000 above the original engineer estimate due to dramatic increases in material cost in the past 18 months.

City staff recommends approval of the Municipal Utility Agreement with NCDOT for the NC 146 (Long Shoals Road) Project: R2813 C.

A short discussion was held about non-betterment costs.

Interim Water Resources Director David Hanks responded to questions from Councilman Dunn regarding plastic waterline pipes.

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

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UDO AMENDMENT REVIEW

- City Attorney Oast said that this Unified Development Ordinance amendment is being brought before City Council in order that staff may respond to questions Council may have prior to the public hearing, which has been scheduled on March 22, 2005. He advised Council that it would be inappropriate for Council to receive comments from the public at this worksession.

On-Street Parking

- Urban Planner Julia Cogburn said that this is the consideration of an ordinance to amend the Unified Development Ordinance to allow for on-street parking to be used to meet the parking requirements for a development.

This ordinance amendment is proposed to provide a development option for meeting UDO parking requirements with the use of on-street parking. The City of Asheville's Unified Development Ordinance does not currently provide for the use of on-street parking to meet the stipulated minimum parking requirements for a development, except in a few use districts where on-street parking is allowed. Staff has been presented with some development options where on-street parking provides an appropriate parking solution with additional beneficial development aspects such as buffering the sidewalk from traffic.

This ordinance amendment sets forth that on-street parking may be counted toward the fulfillment of parking requirements if meeting certain standards. Those standards include: that the on-street parking must be newly constructed; that there shall be a minimum of four (4) contiguous on-street parking spaces constructed; that these spaces must typically be parallel parking spaces; that these spaces be located within five hundred (500) feet of the development and be appropriately zoned; that these spaces must connect with adjoining sidewalks that lead to the entrances of the buildings within the development; that these spaces will be public spaces with any easements or rights-of-way conveyed to the City; and that the City Traffic Engineer approve the overall design of the spaces being provided. Any approved parking space meeting these standards shall count as 0.75 of a required off-street parking space.

The amendment has been routed to CAN, CREIA, and CIBO for review and comment.

Pros-

- The amendment provides for a parking design option not currently provided for in the UDO.
- Allowance for on-street parking might open up additional possibilities for adaptive reuse of existing properties where providing on-site parking is difficult.

Cons-

- On- street parking may be seen as disruptive to the flow of traffic on the streets where it is located.

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of this code amendment on March 2, 2005, by a unanimous vote of 6-0 and City staff recommends approval as well.

Ms. Cogburn also explained two additional amendments to the ordinance before Council and she would have the revised ordinance before Council at their public hearing on March 22, 2005.

Ms. Cogburn responded to various questions from Council.

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Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council received this information and instructed the City Manager to place this public hearing on the next formal City Council agenda.

CONSOLIDATED STRATEGIC HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 2005-2010

Community Development Director Charlotte Caplan presented the key features of the draft Consolidated Strategic Housing and Community Development Plan for 2005-2010.

Every five years, the City is required to prepare a Consolidated Strategic Housing and Community Development Plan to set out

broad priorities, strategies, and targets for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds. This Strategic Plan covers not just the City of Asheville, but also the four-county Asheville Regional Housing Consortium (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties) within which HOME funds are used.

Under the direction of the Consortium Board, staff has commissioned a detailed Housing Needs Assessment for the entire Consortium, and prepared a more limited assessment of non-housing community development needs for Asheville. We have held fifteen public meetings to gather community input on priorities and strategies, and have drafted realistic, measurable targets for each area of activity.

She explained that resale prices are up by 39% in five years; that the median sales price is \$170,000; and the minority homeownership rate has decreased from 58% in 1990 to 45% in 2000.

She reviewed the affordable housing priorities as follows: (1) Provide housing for people near minimum wage; (2) Help those with special needs – homeless, elderly, disabled; (3) Make efficient use of land and infrastructure; (4) Preserve existing housing stock through rehabilitation; (5) Coordinate housing with transportation, jobs, and services; (6) Increase affordable housing stock through new construction; (7) Emphasize energy efficient, neighborhood-compatible designs; (8) Help people succeed through housing support services; (9) Build and preserve affordable multifamily rental housing; (10) Use local resources - local contractors and locally-made supplies; (11) Promote homeownership; and (12) Preserve long-term affordability.

She then reviewed the performance targets for housing as follows:

<u>Production Type</u>	<u>5-Year Target</u>
New construction for homeownership	200
New construction for rental	300
Homeowner rehab or repair	200
Rental rehab	75
Downpayment assistance	50
Rent assistance	<u>175</u>
Total	1,000

Ms. Caplan explained that homeless priorities being (1) to maintain existing Continuum of Care; and (2) implementation of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. She reviewed the performance targets for homelessness.

She outlined the non-housing community development priorities being (1) develop living wage employment and job training; (2) provide services that support affordable housing, public transportation, youth and employment; (3) provide infrastructure to facilitate affordable housing,

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multi-modal transportation, and economic development; (4) help people improve credit and avoid predatory lending; (5) support start-up and growth of small businesses; and (6) support plan to eradicate homelessness. She then reviewed the performance targets for non-housing activities.

The entire draft Plan will be published on or before March 30, to allow for a 30-day public comment period. A final public hearing is scheduled for the April 12 Council meeting, and staff will seek Council's approval of the Plan on April 26. The Plan is due to be submitted to HUD by May 15.

Concurrently with these stages, the Consolidated Annual Action Plan for 2005, which will allocate CDBG and HOME funds to specific activities, will also be published, discussed at a public hearing, and approved.

Ms. Caplan responded to various questions from Council regarding the Plan.

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK – SAWYER MOTOR COMPANY BUILDING – 100 COXE AVENUE

Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten said that this is the consideration of a motion setting a public hearing on April 12, 2005, to consider designating the Sawyer Motor Company Building, located at 100 Coxe Avenue, as a local historic landmark.

The 2025 Plan calls for continued efforts involving the preservation and enhancement, of historic properties. The Sawyer Motor Company Building has been recommended by the HRC for landmark designation.

The Sawyer Motor Company Building was found to be historically significant in the areas of commerce and architecture. The Sawyer Motor Company was the first automobile dealer to announce plans to build a new showroom on Coxe Avenue in the newly created automotive business district which was developed by E. W. Grove when he filled the deep ravine that existed between Patton and Southside Avenues with the earth obtained from the leveling of the hill where the old Battery Park hotel had stood. The Sawyer Motor Company was founded by Eugene Sawyer who was the first automobile dealer in Asheville, selling his first automobile in 1903.

The structure was completed in 1926 and was built as a grand four-story concrete and steel framed auto showroom and garage. The structure is faced with dark red brick and ornamented with cast concrete trim. Cast concrete names plaques are located at both the corner and at the center of the front entrance as part of an ornamented parapet. The exterior of the building provides a strong example of the streetscape of Asheville as it would have existed on Coxe Avenue in the late 1920's. One of the most interesting features of the 60,000 sq. ft. building was the use of the roof, accessed by an interior ramp to an additional 15,000 sq. ft. of parking.

The Sawyer Motor Company Buildings is a contributing structure in the Downtown Asheville National Register District and is part of a cluster of three automobile showrooms that remain standing on Coxe Avenue, including the B& B Motor Company Building and the Conabeer Motors Building located at 162-164 Coxe Avenue.

The Sawyer Motor Company Building has been rehabilitated and developed as condominiums and commercial space. The garage level on the second floor remains relatively intact with the original concrete framing, beams, pipes, electrical conduit and ductwork all exposed. The commercial area on the first floor has been designed to allow the concrete structure of the building and mechanical systems to remain visible overhead and the exterior walls and windows to remain visible.

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The ordinance designates the Sawyer Motor Company Building as a local historic landmark. The property included in the designation consists of Sawyer Motor Company Building and the .63 acre parcel on which it is located as identified on the survey. The designation does not include any interior features.

Designation of this site as a local historic landmark makes the property owner eligible for a 50% reduction in local property taxes. Currently the tax appraisal for the property included in the proposed designation is \$6,066,600.00. If the property is designated as a local landmark the potential tax savings for the property owners, including city, county and school taxes would be \$40,039.56.

When a property is designated historic, restrictions are placed on the property, and any modification to the land or structure must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County. All improvements must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. It is important that properties of local significance are preserved and protected for cultural, historic, and economic reasons and for the benefit of future generations.

Pros:

- A significant property will be recognized for its contribution both architecturally and culturally to the economic and industrial history of the area.

Cons:

- If approved, the tax deferral will result in a loss of revenue to the city and county.
- This property has been recognized as part of the downtown National Register district and currently is under no threat of being lost.

Based upon the foregoing, the Historic Resources Commission recommends that the Asheville City Council adopt an ordinance designating the Sawyer Motor Company Building as a local historic landmark.

Staff recommends that the City Council deny the request for landmark designation. Staff is concerned that although the HRC found that the property met the minimum requirement for local significance that overall the structure is not a leading candidate for landmark designation and as such, the potential loss of revenue to the City & County does not outweigh this concern, given that the structure has been recognized as a contributing structure in the Downtown National Historic District and is currently under no threat.

At this time, City staff recommends City Council set a public hearing for April 12, 2005.

Upon inquiry of Councilwoman Jones, Ms. Merten said that each individual owner would have to apply for the exemption. There is a question as to the eligibility of this property for tax deferral as the significant features are exterior only and the property is owned in common as a condominium. Eligibility will be determined by the Buncombe County Tax Assessor.

In response to Councilwoman Jones, Ms. Merten said that the average cost of a condominium ranges from \$180,000-\$300,000 and there are 20 condominiums.

Ms. Merten then responded to various questions from Council regarding this local historic designation request.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council received this information and instructed the City Manager to place this public hearing on the April 12, 2005, formal City Council agenda.

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DOWNTOWN SOCIAL ISSUES TASK FORCE IMPLEMENTATION

City Development Director Sasha Vrtunski said that this is the consideration of implementing two recommendations of the Downtown

Social Issues Task Force.

On September 28, 2004, the Downtown Social Issues Task Force (DSITF) made recommendations to City Council concerning panhandling, public drunkenness, and graffiti. City Council asked staff to prepare a resolution supporting more vigorous enforcement of panhandling, public drunkenness and graffiti violations and a resolution supporting the Asheville Mural project.

Pursuant to this direction, staff has prepared two resolutions for Council's consideration. Staff will be coming forward with other actions intended to implement other DSITF recommendations throughout the coming year.

City staff recommends City Council adopt (1) a resolution supporting more vigorous enforcement of panhandling, public drunkenness and graffiti violations; and (2) a resolution supporting the Asheville Mural Project.

Councilwoman Jones felt that, in particular the resolution supporting more vigorous enforcement of panhandling, etc., loses a lot of the history of what Council charged the DSITF to do approximately 2 years ago.

Councilman Davis explained that these resolutions are probably the most doable things from the staff's point of view. However, he noted that other action is going on that does not require Council action, e.g., the spare change for change program being implemented.

Ms. Vrtunski said that the first recommendation by the DSITF was the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. She explained staff is not asking for any more stringent regulations, but just more enforcement on the existing ones.

Councilwoman Jones understands the strategy of starting to work on these and then move onto others, however, the City Manager could direct the Police Chief to enforce existing laws. She felt the resolution is a weak response to a lot of efforts and work. She felt the DSITF wanted more community based integrated efforts and she felt we are taking the easy way out by just adopting resolutions.

Councilman Newman felt that the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness was very substantive document even though we haven't gotten to the implementation phase yet. He felt we are making a commitment in terms of the long-term approach on the homelessness issues. In fact, some of the other ideas the DSITF presented to Council we weren't sure we were going to do at all.

Mayor Worley saw a potential relationship in the sense of the 10-Year Plan requires homeless people to become a part of the Plan and not part of the problem. By occupying the housing to be provided through Housing First and in some ways a more aggressive enforcement of the panhandling ordinance, etc., is an extra incentive to move into the program.

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

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2006 CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIES

Mayor Worley said that on February 15, 2005, City Council discussed the 2006 congressional priorities and at that time Council felt it would be appropriate to postpone taking action on this matter until all seven members of Council were present. Unfortunately, at this time we are short two Council Members.

Based on the recommendations from Ball Janik, staff recommends City Council adopt the following congressional priorities for 2006:

Appropriations bills:

1. Methamphetamine interdiction: \$300,000-\$1 million – Commerce, Justice, State bill

Methamphetamine Enforcement and Clean-Up. This Department of Justice program funds over \$52 million in methamphetamine projects, much of it earmarked to specific state and local governmental entities. These funds help combat methamphetamine production and distribution, along with clean-up and disposal of hazardous materials. Ball Janik recommends that the Asheville Police Department work with the State Bureau of Investigation to develop a methamphetamine project for interested Western North Carolina law enforcement agencies. The project could entail methamphetamine education, training, equipment, or increased personnel for enforcement or clean-up. Rep. Taylor is very interested in enhancing methamphetamine response in Western North Carolina and would support a strong multi-jurisdictional project. Depending on the scope of the project and the entities involved, this request could be as high as \$1 million or as low as \$300,000.

2. Thomas Wolfe Cabin: \$300,000 – Interior bill

Thomas Wolfe Cabin. An amount of \$300,000 is needed to stabilize and refurbish the Thomas Wolfe Cabin located within the Azalea Park. This project is recommended because of an excellent funding source – America's Treasures in the Interior

Appropriations bill.

3. Veteran's Memorial: \$750,000 – VA/HUD bill, EDI Account

Veterans' Memorial at Memorial Stadium. The fact that \$800,000 has already been raised for this project will set well with federal appropriators. Privately, Rep. Taylor has indicated support for the Memorial. Strategically, the City may want to request \$750,000, but should realize that, even if successful, the amount may be reduced by appropriators.

4. Bus replacement: \$300,000 – Transportation bill

City Bus Replacement. Although \$300,000 was obtained for a bus in Fiscal Year 2005, this is likely a viable transit funding request for Fiscal Year 2006.

Authorizing legislation:

1. Pack Square: \$2-4 million – potentially the TEA-21 Reauthorization bill (with the City supporting the request of the Conservancy)

Pack Square. The Conservancy has requested \$4 million for the Renaissance project. It is recommend that the City support the Conservancy's funding request and assist the

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effort on Capitol Hill. Since the Conservancy will be taking the lead on the project, any funds obtained will flow to it. Nonetheless, all funds obtained will benefit the City.

2. UZA/transit funding issue – TEA-21 Reauthorization bill

A major piece of legislation unfinished in the last Congress is the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) reauthorization. Ball Janik worked on the bill to include language that would permanently or at least temporarily exempt Asheville from the "over 200,000 population" urbanized area (UZA) threshold that jeopardizes the City's use of federal dollars for transit operations. Language included in the temporary extension bill provided Asheville Transit with 100% flexibility on the use of transit operating funds through September 2005, our lobbyist will continue to pursue a permanent fix.

Since the 108th Congress adjourned without finishing the TEA reauthorization, the entire legislative process starts over again. That means the City has the opportunity to request a funding project through this major bill that it did not participate in last year. Ball Janik suggests that this account be explored for funding Pack Square. Should that coincide with the goals of our Congressional delegation, it would be a good source of money that does not compete with any of the City's "appropriations" requests. It could be in the range of \$2-4 million.

Councilman Davis felt we should try to obtain these funds if we can.

Councilman Newman would defer to Vice-Mayor Mumpower's request and not support the Veteran's Memorial earmarking. He would support the (1) methamphetamine interdiction; (2) City bus replacement; (3) making a top priority of having our lobbyist work on the census area problem that is creating the transit funding problem for Asheville; and (4) the Pack Square legislation. He also supported the funds for the restoration of the Thomas Wolfe Cabin in that it is not so much about the building, but what happened in the building – it's a part of Asheville's history.

Councilwoman Jones did not support asking for funding for the Thomas Wolfe Cabin.

In response to Councilman Newman, City Manager Westbrook said the cabin restoration is a part of the Azalea Road Park. The City purchased the cabin along with the property. The amount requested in the earmarking is only a part of the funding needed to restore the overall cabin itself and the area around it. It's meant to be a part of the overall larger Park that people can visit, which will be connected by walking trails from Azalea Road and accessible by vehicle from Oteen Church Road.

Councilman Dunn has not heard any public outcry for the Thomas Wolfe Cabin restoration.

City Manager Westbrook said that Vice-Mayor Mumpower had a meeting with the Memorial Stadium Committee and they had all voted to support (at some level) earmarking. He wasn't sure if Vice-Mayor Mumpower's decision to not support earmarking changed or not.

Mayor Worley suggested we recess the meeting, reconvene in the Council Chamber for the School Board interviews, and then resume this topic after the School Board interviews. Vice-Mayor Mumpower is expected to return shortly from Washington, D.C.

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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

It was the consensus of City Council to instruct the City Clerk to arrange interviews for W.E. Lack, Robert Middlemas, Scott Shealy and Starr Silvis for a vacancy on the Board of Adjustment.

BATTERY HILL PARKING DECK

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In response to Councilman Newman, City Engineer Cathy Ball said that she has met with the consultants and are moving forward on the design of the parking deck. If the design is going to change, they will need to know as soon as possible. City Manager Westbrook also noted that if the design changes, there will be a financial impact too. It was the consensus of Council to instruct the City Manager to place the parking deck discussion on the next formal meeting agenda to decide whether or not we want to have the west side of the project include some residential component.

At 4:40 p.m., Mayor Worley recessed the meeting to the Council Chamber to conduct School Board interviews. After said interviews, City Council will reconvene the worksession in order to continue discussion on the 2006 Congressional Priorities.

ASHEVILLE SCHOOL BOARD INTERVIEWS

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At 5:00 p.m., City Council interviewed Elizabeth Hubbell, Gene Bell, Alfred Whitesides Jr., Keith Thomson and Jim Taylor. At approximately 5:30 p.m., Vice-Mayor Mumpower arrived for the interviews from a meeting in Washington, D.C.

At 7:30 p.m., Mayor Worley reconvened the worksession in order to continue discussion on the 2006 Congressional Priorities. Councilwoman Bellamy was the only Council Member not present.

CONTINUATION OF 2006 CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIES

Historic Resources Director Stacy Merten reviewed with Council the significance of the Thomas Wolfe Cabin, which was constructed in 1923-1924.

Councilwoman Jones had concerns about \$300,000 to stabilize and refurbish the Thomas Wolfe Cabin.

Councilman Davis spoke in support of earmarking funds for the Thomas Wolfe Cabin refurbishment.

Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that in Washington, D.C., he tried to honor the role and speak for City Council with our lobbyist. The amount the lobbyist had for the Thomas Wolfe Cabin was \$237,000. (City Manager Westbrook said that the \$300,000 was reduced to try to go with the funding that might be available.) Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that the lobbyist is seeking money through the American Treasures Program, which is a dedicated fund. The money will be spent and the lobbyist's argument is let's try to see if there is something we can get to put towards a practical use. He felt the Cabin is worth salvaging.

Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that in his recent meeting with our two representatives and senator he provided bullet points of advocacy on each of these issues. Two issues that resonated with our representatives were the methamphetamine interdiction and the Veteran's Memorial. He felt that everyone was on board with the bus replacement issue. Personally, the two he is most comfortable with reaching for federal dollars are the methamphetamine interdiction

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and the bus replacement. The Veteran's Memorial request has been reduced from \$750,000 to around \$300-350,000 for various reasons. All three of the representatives he met with felt very strongly about the Veteran's Memorial and what the Memorial Stadium Action Committee and our Parks & Recreation Department is trying to do with the help of a lot of people in the community. He personally has trouble going after this money philosophically during the time of real deficit. However, he did talk with the Memorial Stadium Action Committee about it and it was their majority opinion that Council support and seek the funds. Another issue was the water system infrastructure upgrade for a number of neighborhoods, including The Block. That was between \$200-300,000. Bullet points included safety, water pressure, areas that needed revitalization, economic development, etc.

Mayor Worley said we most certainly can include the water system upgrade as another congressional priority.

Councilman Newman moved to waive the rules and take formal action on the congressional and legislative issues. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones and carried unanimously.

Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that our lobbyist seemed to have an interest in having the issues prioritized, but the point of stronger weight is to say that we have these 4-5 issues that are priorities because they all come out of different pots.

Councilman Dunn said that after hearing about the Thomas Wolfe Cabin he could support that issue. With the Veteran's Memorial, he felt that \$350,000 was more in line with what he could support.

Councilman Newman moved to support water infrastructure funding (funding level to be determined), the

methamphetamine interdiction funding (\$300,000-\$1 Million), the bus replacement funding (\$300,00), and the support for the Pack Square project (\$2-4 Million). This motion was seconded by Councilman Davis.

Councilman Davis moved to amend Councilman Newman's motion to include the Thomas Wolfe Cabin funding. This motion died for a lack of a second.

Councilwoman Jones said she would vote against the amendment of including the Thomas Wolfe Cabin.

Councilman Newman moved to amend his original motion to include their efforts to fix the census tract problem that is affecting our transit funding formula. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones.

Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that he has been in Washington, D.C., meeting with folks advocating for an agenda. To some extent the die is cast. He followed what was asked of him and he advocated very enthusiastically for the five areas that were on the congressional priority list for 2006, which included the Thomas Wolfe Cabin. He felt our legislators have embraced those areas. He said the Pack Square legislation for \$4 Million is a given as much as anything is and he relayed the Mayor and Council's appreciation for that effort on Congressman Taylor's part.

The motion made by Councilman Newman to support water infrastructure funding (funding level to be determined), the methamphetamine interdiction funding (\$300,000-\$1 Million), the bus replacement funding (\$300,00), the support for the Pack Square project (\$2-4 Million), and their efforts to fix the census tract problem that is affecting our transit funding formula, and seconded by Councilwoman Jones failed on a 3-3 vote, with Mayor Worley, Councilwoman Jones

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and Councilman Newman voting "yes", and Vice-Mayor Mumpower, Councilman Davis and Councilman Dunn voting "no."

Councilman Dunn moved that Council vote separately on each congressional issue. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones and carried unanimously.

(1) The methamphetamine interdiction funding (\$300,000-\$1 Million) was unanimously supported by City Council.

(2) The Thomas Wolfe Cabin (\$300,000) vote failed on a 3-3 vote, with Mayor Worley, Councilman Davis and Councilman Dunn voting "yes" and Vice-Mayor Mumpower, Councilwoman Jones and Councilman Newman voting "no."

Vice-Mayor Mumpower was concerned that the City spent a lot of money on lobbyist and a lot of money sending him to Washington to work with the lobbyist to advocate for these issues. The issues have already been tossed into the pot. Our representatives are working these issues. He wondered if Council is doing something productive now. He wondered how it would be if Council didn't take a formal position on these issues and just let the lobbyist do what they can.

Councilman Newman felt this discussion should have happened earlier and it's unfortunate that it didn't. He felt that if there is an issue that they do not believe should be funded with taxpayers dollars, then it should be taken off the list.

Councilwoman Jones explained that we have community needs and she feels that asking for \$300,000 for the Thomas Wolfe Cabin sends a mixed message of our community's priorities (e.g., community development funds that could be invested in infrastructure and housing).

Mayor Worley said that the process is already in motion due to Council's inability to reach a decision earlier than this. We started down this road because we know we have opportunities that we have not been able to take advantage of in the past for a number of reasons. We have now made an effort (we have hired a lobbyist) and we have representatives that are in a position to help us. Our lobbyist has met with City staff and City Council to determine where we have needs in our organization and then the lobbyist looked at the availability in Washington of sources of funds to fill those needs. For instance, the Thomas Wolfe Cabin funding will come from the American Treasures funding – there is not a choice to put it towards housing or another priority.

(3) The Veteran's Memorial at Memorial Stadium (\$350,000) vote failed on a 2-4 vote with Mayor Worley and Councilman Davis voting "yes" and Vice-Mayor Mumpower, Councilman Dunn, Councilwoman Jones and Councilman Newman voting "no."

Vice-Mayor Mumpower said that voted against the Veteran's Memorial funding because at this time of record deficits anything we get from the federal government should be very targeted to very specific needs and the community was told that there would be no City taxpayer money used to fund the Memorial aspect of the project.

(4) The bus replacement (\$300,000), the water infrastructure funding (level to be determined), the support of the Pack Square project (\$2-4 Million) and efforts to fix the census tract problem that is affecting our transit funding formula was

unanimously supported by City Council.

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N.C. LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- City Attorney Oast said that he received a letter from Senator Nesbitt indicating that he had introduced 4 blank bills on our behalf, as Council asked him to do. We are still waiting to fill in the content of those bills, which can be determined at a later time.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Councilman Davis suggested that RiverLink volunteers to participated in the Swannanoa River clean-up this past weekend should be recognized in some way.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:29 p.m., Councilwoman Jones moved to adjourn. This motion was seconded by Councilman Dunn and carried unanimously.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR