

Tuesday – May 31, 2011 – 6:30 p.m.
Vance Elementary School

Community Meeting – West Asheville

Present: Mayor Terry M. Bellamy, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Brownie W. Newman; Councilman Cecil Bothwell; Councilman Jan B. Davis; Councilwoman Esther E. Manheimer; Councilman William A. Russell Jr.; Councilman Gordon D. Smith; City Manager Gary W. Jackson; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: None

Mayor Bellamy opened the meeting, welcomed the audience and introduced City Council members.

Urban Planner Alan Glines gave a brief overview and history of the process of the Haywood Corridor Plan. Since 2002 the Haywood Road Corridor Committee has focused on opportunities and constraints along the corridor. Broad areas for improvement were identified, such as safety; traffic; road layout; encouraging and preparing for new development; and streetscape improvements. Since then a lot of changes have taken place, increasing the sense of community and the west Asheville identity. In 2006, the Committee sent a survey to property owners, neighbors and business owners to understand their preferences for new development when it comes along the corridor. The results were seeing Haywood Road as a neighborhood and pedestrian friendly local commercial corridor serving the daily need of residents and visitors. People wanted new development to accommodate an expanding pedestrian population. Also along the corridor the interest of bicycle commuting and transit ridership has been noticeably growing. Staff then revisited the effort to organize a plan for Haywood Road in 2009. Because there are two separate areas of the Central Business District along Haywood Road (about 60 parcels), adjustments were made, as most people agreed to limit the height of buildings and also provide for a planted buffer for screening based on the height of the development adjacent to residential zones. The Committee has reconvened to develop a vision plan and initiate zoning changes for the corridor. We hope to have a plan developed by late fall.

Ms. Leslie Faye, representing the Haywood Road Corridor Committee, noted that the Committee has been meeting as a group since 2003 and recently they have set their goals for 2001 to develop a vision plan that could be used as a key tool to help direct future development of the corridor and maintain the authenticity of our community preferences. The Committee is addressing the following issues: zoning; traffic; economic development and sustainability; safety; and historic preservation. She highlighted the following items in their vision plan: (1) zoning and land use; (2) economic development issues; and (3) transportation related issues, such as parking, bike lanes, increased use of public transportation, and pedestrian density. Mr. Dan Kostalec, a transportation planner and west Asheville resident, compiled a draft safety and pedestrian assessment called "Haywood Road and Active Living" for most of Haywood Road. Volunteers from the Bike and Pedestrian Task Force measured the width of sidewalks, cross-slopes of sidewalks, and locations of signs, power poles and street crossings and suggested several solutions. She thanked Mr. Alan Glines for their ultimate success and hoped to be able to retain that leadership until their plan is finalized.

Mr. Hugh Monro, Treasurer of the West Asheville Business Association, explained that the Association's goal is the improvement of the west Asheville community. He explained how they support a variety of community organizations and facilitate meetings to help find common goals and solutions for the entire west Asheville community.

Weed & Seed Initiative Coordinator for the West Riverside Operation Rebecca Byrn gave a brief overview of the Weed & Seed program, which strategy seeks to improve the quality of life of residents in the targeted area by weeding out crime and seeding positive community change through resident leadership, support for youth and job training programs, and the creation of sustainable partnerships. They are heading into their fifth and final year of funding by the U.S. Dept. of Justice. They focus on three components (1) law enforcement/community policing; (2) prevention/intervention/treatment; and (3)

neighborhood restoration. She shared some significant accomplishments, such as (1) reduction of crime in the area (21% decrease in robbery; 34% decrease in violent crime; 14% decrease in aggravated assault; 60% decrease in drug calls for service; and 99 individuals have been charged as habitual felons); (2) two Safe Babysitter Certification trainings through the Red Cross for youth; and (3) seven paid interns for a film project addressing gun violence. Numerous neighborhood restoration projects have also been funded and leveraged by the Weed & Seed initiative. They have leveraged through community partnerships \$2.3 Million in funding which has benefited the West Riverside community. They have also supported grassroots organizations that have a significant presence and impact in the community.

Mr. DeWayne Barton, President of the Burton Street Community Association, explained their active association and gave a brief update on their recently completed neighborhood plan.

Ms. Allison Smith, representing the Housing Authority, was pleased to report success stories about Pisgah View Apartments, including the renovation of Building 16 which now operates as a community resource center, peace garden, installation of energy efficient windows, to name a few.

Mr. Isaac Coleman, representing the Housing Authority, was also pleased to report success stories about Deaverview Apartments, including new siding, new windows and new toilets, to name a few.

Director of Transportation Ken Putnam noted some system-wide changes arising out of the Transit Master Plan approved by City Council on October of 2009. Some include branding the system; changing all route to improve on-time performance; combining day and evening service; increasing frequency along five main corridors; eliminating dial-a-ride service; reducing the number of route deviations; streamlining bus stop locations; adding transfer points outside of the downtown area; creating two cross-town routes; and adding two new service areas. Specifically in west Asheville, they are working on (1) increasing frequency along Patton Avenue; (2) increasing frequency along Haywood Road; (3) new cross-town route between Bleachery Boulevard and North Louisiana Avenue; and (4) new service to the Land-of-Sky on Leicester Highway.

Mayor Bellamy then opened up the meeting for questions. Questions/comments responded to consisted of: Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway vision plan; need for better traffic enforcement when cars go straight from the turning lane on Haywood Road/Burton Street intersection; traffic concerns regarding crosswalks; suggestions of one-way streets during specific times of day; need for supervision at Burton Street Community Center; question if Biltmore Estate plans to purchase Pisgah View; need for more bus shelters; bus shelter at Asheville Mall needs windows replaced; history of Sulphur Springs Road; what is the budget for tourism in the City and how much is allocated for west Asheville; appreciation for climbing lane on Clingman Avenue and purchase of The Waller Tract; suggestion to help fund local currency projects; and need for more trash cans along Haywood Road.

Mayor Bellamy was pleased to report some of the major investments in west Asheville, consisting of the new fire station and the purchase of The Waller Tract. She noted the great after-school programs at Pisgah View Apartments, Project March (Make a Right Choice); and programs sponsored by the YWCA. She pointed out that the rezoning of 626 Haywood Road will be coming before Council soon, the single-family homes on the Brotherton site; and urged caution when the Malvern Hills pool opens. She suggested several resources for volunteers to the Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway. She suggested citizens attend the upcoming Citizens Police Academy and consider serving on one of the many City boards & commissions. She also explained how the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) has the responsibility for funding tourism from hotel taxes. Vice-Mayor Newman also suggested the west Asheville community develop a proposal and submit it to the TDA for possible funding, which proposal should benefit the local community and attract tourists (greenways, for example).

Mayor Bellamy and Council members expressed their appreciation for the community involvement.

Mayor Bellamy asked for a moment of silence in memory of former Mayor Richard A. Wood Jr.

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Bellamy adjourned the meeting.

CITY CLERK _____

MAYOR _____