

UNION CITY MINUTES  
WORKSESSION MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2014  
5:30 P.M.

Present: Mayor Vince Williams, Councilmembers Shayla Nealy, Brian Jones, Angelette Mealing and Joyce Robinson, City Attorney Dennis Davenport and City Clerk Jacqueline R. Cossey

Absent: City Manager Sonja Fillingame

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Williams.

- I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
- II. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO DISCUSS ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (2 MIN.)
- III. PRESENTATIONS/ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

Presentation by Michael Hightower and The Collaborative Firm regarding Community Development

At this time Mayor Williams turned the meeting over to Mr. Michael Hightower to make his presentation.

Mr. Hightower addressed the Council and introduced Ms. Vicki Coleman of the Collaborative Firm. Ms. Coleman provided the Mayor and Council with a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Hightower stated that he thanks Mrs. Calloway, Mrs. Fillingame and Ms. Harris for working with him and his team during this process over the past six months. He then stated that Vicki would highlight some of the critical elements. He added that the first portion of this assignment called for a current planning assessment which included process systems and workforce analysis, revised current planning documents and forms, current customer service and management training, meeting interviews and professional development resource guide. Mr. Hightower added that the next phase called for the Firm to provide current planning assessment on a regular basis and the Firm did so as well as provide additional support including reviewing and evaluating zoning requests, plans and zoning inquiries, zoning letters, drafting of text and map amendments. He further added that the other two phases included a code of ordinances and development process audit which allowed him and his staff to look at the processes that were related to the zoning code and some statutory requirements. Mr. Hightower stated that the Planning Commission served in a dual capacity of an advisory committee which will be the final piece. He added that during the course of working with the City Manager and Ms. Harris, he went back and organized the documents located in the old jail in City Hall. He further added that he appreciates the participation of the current staff, Ms. Harris, as this was an undertaking that she could not have done by herself for the past several years. Mr. Hightower continued stating that during this process he has found a host of files that go back for years and although this was not a part of their scope, they added it without any additional resource allocation. He concluded that as Ms. Coleman goes through the presentation the Council will find instances where there are some recommended actions by the Council as a policy body and others for the City Manager in lieu of the Director of Community Development and once the City hires a Community Development Director, that person will take over from the City Manager who

has been wearing a dual hat. He further added that for an additional 30-days his firm will be happy to provide assistance during this transition period for no additional cost. He then turned the presentation over to Ms. Coleman.

Ms. Coleman shared the following information with the Council:

#### Scope of Work:

- Current Planning Assessment
- Planning and Zoning Services
- Development Process Audit
- Economic Development Plan – Phase I
- Document Inventory

#### Overview

- Strategic Planning and Management
  - Balanced Scorecard
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Code of Ordinance and Development Process Audit
- Economic Development Plan – Phase I

#### Balanced Score Card

- Financial Performance
- Customer Perspective
- Internal Business Process
- Organizational Capacity
- Performance Metrics

#### Financial – Improving Performance

- Fees reflecting the cost of business
- Evaluate your plan review/analysis activities and assess fees accordingly
- Update the fee schedule
- Payment in-take protocols
- Reduce your expenses
- Traditional CD activities
- Color Printing

#### Customer Perspective

- Reduce permitting issuance times
- Provide customers access to regulatory information, fee schedules, and filing schedules
- Educate the business community about existing incentives
- Performance Metric – Avg reviews for an LDP issuance

#### Internal Business Processes

- Establish and track performance measures for the Community Development Department
- Permitting software – exporting to Excel
- Know and use historical data
- Performance Metrics:
- No. LDPs, building permits

- Conditional Use reviews, signage, variances
- Organizational Capacity
- Enhance Technology Use for Staff and Citizens
  - Upgrade your GIS software for interactive mapping
  - Promoting Employee Growth
  - Employee Training
  - Management Training
  - Cross-Training
  - Performance Metrics:
  - Annual Training, No. Website Visits
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Standardized Filing System – centrally located
  - Utilizing checklists
  - Create an agenda application/submittal calendar (7days prior to meetings)
  - Procedural Updates
  - Site Development Decision Tree
  - Understand technical issues v. process issues
- Code of Ordinance Audit
- Create and Maintain a library of zoning and development related ordinances – State Law
  - Ordinance Amendments – are there too many?
  - Segregate the Conditional Uses
  - Overlay Districts Regulations
  - Sign Ordinance – Major Update
  - Performance and Maintenance Bonds
  - Fee Schedules – Standalone Fee Schedule update and adopt with the budget
- Opportunities and Next Steps
- Staff Assistance with Transition and Implementation
  - Mayor and Council discussion about community development policy
  - Comprehensive Plan Update – Adopt 2015
  - Sign Ordinance Update
  - Unified Development Code

Councilmember Mealing stated that she thought we had a checklist. She then asked if she was wrong.

Ms. Coleman stated that with regards to the land development process, it was her understanding that there was a desire to have a checklist, but there was some pushback on using checklists. She then asked Ms. Harris to chime in.

Ms. Harris stated that the pushback was not from staff, but from the Engineers.

Ms. Coleman stated that the checklist does not solve everything, but it is about reviewing the checklist and making sure that the process is being managed. Councilmember Mealing stated that she would like to know if Ms. Coleman received feedback on how long it takes to go through the process.

Ms. Coleman stated that the City Manager asked her to look at the process due to the lengthy turnaround time, but a lot of that comes back to understanding what the requirements are. She then reiterated that the checklist is the minimum in the review requirements, but it is a baseline and there may be some additional things, but it helps if they have a checklist upfront.

Councilmember Mealing asked if Union City has a license for GIS.

Ms. Coleman stated that there was some discussion about that and the City has GIS, but the question is whether the GIS software has been upgraded to where it needs to be so that we can take advantage of the latest and greatest features.

Councilmember Jones asked if adjusting the fee schedule would hurt the City with regards to being competitive.

Ms. Coleman stated that it would not hurt the City. She added that Union City is nowhere near other surrounding jurisdictions and it would go a long way from a cost savings stand point for the City to adjust the fees.

At this time Mr. Hightower interjected and stated that during the past eight to ten years when the City grew rapidly, the City did not adjust the fees accordingly. He added that historically Union City was the fourth or fifth largest city in South Fulton, but now Union City is the second largest city in South Fulton so it is time to make some adjustments.

Mayor Williams stated that the fees should be adjusted because when we utilize engineers and consultants, the City pays the consultants but we do not recoup the cost, so the City is losing money to do business. He concluded that we have to reassess how we do business and with who we do business.

Councilmember Jones asked Ms. Coleman if we need to assign a case number with regards to a standardized filing system.

Ms. Coleman responded, "Yes, it is just that simple."

Councilmember Jones asked if the Mall should be an overlay district and if so, would that cause a conflict with the ordinance.

Ms. Coleman stated that the overlay districts are there to raise the standard as it relates to esthetics, so putting an overlay district will not necessarily cause a conflict, but it should not be done just for one site. She then suggested all of Highway 138.

Councilmember Nealy stated that with regards to the fee schedule, she has seen many jurisdictions use a valuation schedule. She then asked if this is what Ms. Coleman would suggest for Union City.

Ms. Coleman stated that the City should have a comprehensive review for what is appropriate for land disturbance permitting process and that may not necessarily be the appropriate way to go about it on the building permit side and sometimes on the building permitting side; you may want a little more flexibility. She added that the

International Building Code sets out one way of doing it and some jurisdictions find that if you stick to that schedule, it ends up out pricing what the market would have called for, for that structure. She further added that you want to make sure that you have explored all of your options and whatever your option is, have it codified.

Councilmember Nealy asked, with regards to record keeping, if the bulk of all of the LDP information is under a specific file name based on the project.

Ms. Coleman stated that she cannot say, but would have to defer to Ms. Harris, but it is a matter of making sure that it is centralized, so that when current staff is gone; the next person can find the information whether it is an LDP or plats.

Councilmember Nealy asked if we have a lot of work to do or are we ready with regards to Information Technology utilizing Zoning information as well as Public Services information with the structures and lay districts.

Information Technology Manager Trey Bennings stated that once we put the maintenance in place we can re-evaluate where we want to go in terms of the website, but the first thing we must do is get the maintenance in place and then we can make sure that we are getting the latest updates from GIS.

Councilmember Robinson stated that Mr. Hightower and Ms. Coleman have done a wonderful job and this has shed some light on and substantiated what she thought. She added that we are unorganized and Mr. Hightower and Ms. Coleman have compartmentalized it. She further added that she has no doubt that all of the things that they have found has given the City a benchmark in which to proceed and the Council knows that we have a lot of work to do. Councilmember Robinson stated that the Engineers will be hearing from her because no consulting firm should hold back on a check list that makes the City look good. She then asked for their recommendation with regards to personnel because the present staff cannot do it alone.

Mr. Hightower stated that the Mayor and Council have made a tremendous step by recognizing the need to go to the next level. He added that with regards to personnel, Union City is the second largest City in South Fulton and has one person supporting over 20,000 people. He added that College Park has two people in Economic Development and a planning consultant, City of Fairburn has an Economic Development person and Planning Director and outside planning help, City of East Point has four people in planning and at least two in Economic Development, City Hapeville has an Economic Development Specialist, an assistant and an outside consultant. He added that this is why he thanked Ms. Harris, but he does not want to speak to how much staff the City needs because some of the issues included policy decisions that needs to be made that have not been made over time. Mr. Hightower reiterated that he does not think that his role or responsibility is to tell the City how much staff it needs, but he thinks that there are strategic moves over time that can be made without a rush to throw a lot of resources out at one time that the City does not have.

Mayor Williams thanked Mr. Hightower and Ms. Coleman for their time and efforts. He added that we are not blind by the fact that we are still a bit dated and we know that we have job to do and this report will position us to point in the right direction with



3. Council to consider adoption of the current employee handbook.

Councilmember Robinson stated that the previous City Manager's name is on the cover letter.

Human Resources Administrator Teaa Allston led this discussion and stated that this is the current handbook that we are operating under. She added that we are in the process of making revisions to this handbook, so all of those items will be addressed, but at this moment we are currently operating under this handbook and asking for approval of the current handbook. She added that the revisions will be forwarded to the Council for approval. She further added that this is the baseline document that we will work from going forward with future revisions and she wanted to make sure that everyone had a copy of the current handbook, but many revisions will be made. Ms. Allston stated that we have been operating under this handbook since 2010.

Councilmember Mealing stated that she is fine with the document but wants to revisit the section with regards to sick time.

Ms. Allston stated that it will be addressed during the revision stage.

This item was added to the consent agenda.

4. Council to consider extending the contract with Lowe Engineers for Project Management Services for the CMAQ Project. (Contract expired on 09/07/2014)

Finance Director Tarsha Calloway led this discussion and stated that we entered into this agreement with Lowe Engineering in January for nine months, but there were some slight delays in the project and now we would like to extend it until to end of the project.

Mayor Williams asked if we had any idea when the project would end.

Mrs. Calloway stated that once we get the contract back to the vendor, fully executed, it will be nine months for the date of execution.

Councilmember Jones asked if \$24,000 was enough to finish the project.

Mrs. Calloway stated is should be, but there may be additional costs during construction.

This item was placed on the consent agenda.

5. Council to consider entering into a contract with the lowest bidder, Shepco Paving Inc., in the amount of \$120,513.97 for the LMIG 2013 Phase IV- Dodson Road Re-Pavement & Striping Project PS 14-03.

Mrs. Calloway also led this discussion and stated that she conducted a Request for Bid (RFB) and received four bids for the Dodson Road Re-paving and Striping Project and

Shepco Paving Inc. was the lowest bidder when she opened them as well as when she validated the bids. She then recommended approval of the contract.

Councilmember Mealing asked if the City has worked with Shepco before.

Mrs. Calloway responded, "We have not."

Councilmember Jones asked how soon can we get started.

Mrs. Calloway stated as soon as possible. She added that this project was moved up on the list.

Councilmember Jones stated that with the cost associated with this project, will the depth of the road be enough to cover the traffic load with the buses on the street.

Public Services Director Cedric Clark stated that the road does not have a good base right now, but it will when they finish and this should solve the problem.

Councilmember Nealy asked what is our outreach method for informing the public of possible delays or interference.

Ms. Calloway stated that we post notices on the website.

Councilmember Nealy stated that she wants to make sure that the residents are well aware in advance about the delays and how it will interfere with their trip time.

Mrs. Calloway stated that Mr. Clark will post notices on the website in advance.

Councilmember Mealing stated that she would like for us to reach out to the schools.

Mayor Williams asked Chief Odom is we could utilize Nixel because it is helpful.

Mrs. Calloway stated that she would be sure to coordinate with the Police Department to use Nixel.

This item was added to the consent agenda.

6. Council to determine if interest and penalties will be waived for Kellogg.

Mrs. Calloway led this discussion and stated that she received a request from a law firm requesting to waive penalties and interest for 2012 and 2013 taxes. She added that there has been a lot of dialog back and forth between Kellogg and one of our staff, Ms. Horne. She further added that two tax bills were mailed, one for real estate and one for personal property, and the personal property was paid, but the real estate was not. Mrs. Calloway stated that Kellogg said they did not receive the tax bill. She added that Kellogg paid the 2013 taxes in May of 2014, so interest and penalties were due, but they paid everything except penalties and interest for 2013.

Mayor Williams asked what is customarily done when events like this occur with the general public has the same incident.

Mrs. Calloway stated that we generally do not waive the penalties and interest.

This item was added to the regular agenda for further discussion.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

1. **Public Hearing** to consider a map amendment to the Official Zoning Map for rezoning of 1 acre located along Stonewall Tell from Fulton County AG-1 to Union City TCMU by Majestic Realty.
2. Planning Commission to consider annexing the 1 acre of property into the corporate limits of Union City by Majestic Realty.

Matt Vivian of the Galloway law Group, LLC addressed the Council and requested to defer this item until the October 21, 2014 Council Meeting due to a schedule conflict.

Councilmember Jones asked for the need for the annexation.

Mr. Vivian stated that it is a 1 acre parcel on Stonewall Tell Road surrounded on three sides by Union City property and if approved it would be a part of the Mack IV Project and would help with the grading of the site and allow it to stay at a higher elevation and not intended to access Stonewall Tell Road.

City Manager Reports:

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

VIII. REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR & COUNCIL:

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

*There being no further business the meeting adjourned.*