

MINUTES
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
JULY 31, 2008, 5:45 PM
CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM—2ND FLOOR, CITY HALL

Council Members Present: Walker Reid, Chairman
Mayor Jennifer Stultz
Councilman Dale Burkett

The City Council Intergovernmental Relations & Economic Development Committee met on Thursday July 31, 2008, and discussed the following items:

1. Update on Sales Tax Distribution:

Mr. Jim Palenick, City Manager, was recognized for the purpose of staff's presentation. Mr. Palenick updated the Committee on the ongoing impact of the distribution of local sales tax as related to the 2003 Agreement between Gaston County and each municipality in the County. He said Gastonia is still experiencing no growth in sales tax revenues and will most likely not see any for the foreseeable future. Because the Agreement is based upon an Ad Valorem formula to determine how local sales tax revenues are distributed, it results in a circumstance that encourages higher property taxes in order to increase local sales tax revenues for municipalities.

Mr. Palenick said that because of the long term outlook of little to no growth in our sales tax revenues, staff recommended that the Committee and full Council consider alternative measures to address the increasing operating costs, such as in the area of public safety. These options include, but are not necessarily limited to: 1) major program funding cuts, 2) increasing property taxes, 3) lobbying for local (City) sales tax levy authority, and 4) renegotiating the City/County Sales Tax Revenue Distribution Agreement.

This item was presented for informational purposes (and has also been discussed by the Facilities and Management Committee). The Committee recommended continued dialogue with the County as well.

2. Marietta Street Pedestrian Improvements:

Michelle Nance, Development Services Manager, was recognized for staff's presentation. Ms. Nance said that staff is proposing improvements on Marietta Street between Long Avenue and Franklin Blvd. to promote better pedestrian access and safety through functional and aesthetic streetscape enhancements. She said the structural evaluation/impacts (based upon a preliminary design concept) is already in progress, as it relates the NCDOT and Norfolk Southern Railroad. Funding sources (grants) are also being solicited to offset anticipated construction costs.

This item was presented for informational purposes. The Committee directed staff to look at alternative guard railing and lighting designs, as well as, work with the GDDC (and others) on promoting the overall project.

3. Update on 212 W. Main Avenue – Land Swap for Pasour Mountain Property:

Mr. Palenick presented the chronological history of the proposed building/land swap between Gastonia and Gaston County related to the property at 212 W. Main Avenue and the City's Pasour Mountain property. He said the City continues to pursue more detailed environmental testing in response to Gaston County's Phase 1 Assessment Study and that staff anticipates the (Phase 2) testing work to be completed within the next 30-60 days.

This item was presented for informational purposes. The Committee directed staff to complete the Phase 2 testing as soon as possible.

4. ETJ Representation on Gastonia Board of Adjustment and Gastonia Planning Commission

Mr. Palenick said that staff recommended an Ordinance amendment related to ETJ representation on both the Gastonia Board of Adjustment and the Gastonia Planning Commission. He said that unless otherwise approved by local ordinance, NC Statutes allow outside (ETJ) representation to function only with respect to matters within the extraterritorial area. He said that because of the limited ETJ area remaining within Gastonia's jurisdiction, staff recommended that the Ordinance be amended to reflect such, and that ETJ appointed members on these two Boards have rights, privileges, and duties only on matters specifically related to the ETJ (and in accordance with State Statutes).

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend acceptance of Staff's proposal and if approved by the full Council, public hearings to consider the Ordinance Amendment would be scheduled by staff for further Planning Commission and City Council consideration.

Having no further business the meeting of the Committee was adjourned at 7:15 PM.