Council-Manager Memo #09
Wednesday, February 6, 2013

CHARLOTTE.

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AGENDA NOTES:

Revised Retreat Agenda
Staff Resource: Carol Jennings, City Manager's Office, 704-336-7285, cljennings@charlottenc.gov

In response to the request of City Council, a second closed session has been added to the Retreat Agenda on Friday afternoon by the City Manager. Attached is a copy of the revised agenda **(see "Retreat Agenda.pdf").** Copies will be available at the retreat.

INFORMATION:

Former Eastland Mall Update
Staff Resource: Peter Zeiler, N&BS, 704-432-2989, pzeiler@charlottenc.gov

Engineering & Property Management and Neighborhood & Business Services are jointly working to develop a full range of options for the future of the former Eastland Mall site as part of the City's Request For Qualifications and Proposals (RFQ/P) process.

This work includes obtaining and evaluating demolition costs versus maintenance costs for the buildings and exploring the potential value of the site with and without buildings. Staff will be

hosting a pre-bid meeting for demolition contractors for this work on February 15 at noon at the site.

The solicitation of bids does not represent an intended or recommended course of action. The intent of soliciting bids is to obtain additional information relevant to determining all available courses of action to avoid delays and unnecessary costs related to the property disposition.

The City is currently in the RFQ/P process, with RFQ responses due to the City February 15, 2013. The RFQ includes an inquiry on whether or not respondents would make use of the existing buildings.

RFQ finalists will be invited to submit a proposal for the property. The Request for Proposals will be issued on March 8, 2013 with responses due back to the City May 30, 2013.

March 4 – Public Hearing Set for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department Interbasin Transfer Request

Staff Resource: Barry Gullet, CMUD, 704-336-4931, bgullet@charlottenc.gov

In 2002, the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission (EMC) approved a 33 million gallon per day Interbasin Transfer (IBT) Certificate for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utility Department. This certificate allows CMUD to withdraw drinking water from the Catawba River Basin for use in the Yadkin River/Rocky River Basin.

The original certificate excluded an area in and around Mint Hill, specifically the Goose Creek Basin. At the time, there were concerns that environmental impacts of growth and development that could occur from allowing additional water connections would negatively impact the Carolina Heelsplitter mussel, a federally-listed endangered species.

CMUD receives requests for water connections in the Goose Creek area, and has asked the EMC to remove the restrictions around Goose Creek. Since 2002, new environmental controls have been put in place in an effort to protect and improve the Goose Creek Watershed to protect the Carolina Heelsplitter habitat. These controls include:

- 2007 Town of Mint Hill Storm Water Ordinance;
- 2009 Goose Creek Watershed Management Plan completed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services;
- 2009 Goose Creek Water Quality Recovery Program Plan for the Fecal Coliform TDML completed by Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services; and
- 2009 NC DENR Site Specific Water Quality Management Plan.

As a result of the local and state water quality programs and regulations listed above, parts of Goose Creek have been removed from the impaired streams list.

The restriction removal would not change the amount of water approved for interbasin transfer, but would allow for new water service connections in that portion of Mecklenburg County. Additionally, future infrastructure projects would trigger further environmental

analysis and impact studies, ensuring the health of the watershed is considered before major construction occurs in the basin.

A public hearing has been set by the EMC to receive comments on the change to the IBT certificate. It will take place at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 4 in the John M. McEwen Assembly Room at the Mint Hill Town Hall, 4430 Mint Hill Village Lane, Mint Hill, North Carolina 28227. The public may review the draft Environmental Assessment web site at:

http://www.ncwater.org/Permits_and_Registration/Interbasin_Transfer/status/cmud/

Staff will update Council further as this effort proceeds.

Charlotte Named One of America's Top 10 Urban Forests
Staff resource: Tom Johnson, E&PM, 704-336-3622, tjjohnson@charlottenc.gov

Charlotte's tree canopy was recognized Tuesday as one of America's Top 10 urban forests by the Washington-based American Forests. The organization's panel of urban forest experts from a broad range of scientific and urban resources disciplines identified the best urban forests from the 50 most populous U.S. cities.

"In Charlotte, the city government, citizen groups and nonprofits have banded together to improve the community's urban forest through initiatives on both public and private land," said Scott Steen, American Forests CEO. "The city has taken the lead on establishing clear goals for its urban forest to improve Charlotte and the well-being of its residents."

In addition to Charlotte, the judging panel selected Austin, Denver, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, New York, Portland, Sacramento, Seattle and Washington D.C. using these criteria:

- Strength of civic engagement between the city, nonprofits, community groups and individuals in maintaining the urban forest;
- Implementation of urban forest strategies addressing challenges such as energy conservation, storm water and recreation;
- Public access to the urban forest and green spaces, including percentage of park land per capita;
- Overall health and condition of the city's urban forest;
- The city's documented knowledge of its tree canopy, species diversity and age class range; and
- Status of urban forest management plans and important management activities such as tree canopy goals and ordinances.

This recognition comes in large part because of City Council's Environment Focus Area Plan, its "50% by 2050" tree canopy goal, the City tree ordinance, an aggressive street trees program, and the creation of TreesCharlotte.

January 23 Metropolitan Transit Commission Meeting Summary
Staff Resource: Carolyn Flowers, CATS, 704-336-3855, cflowers@charlottenc.gov

At its meeting on Wednesday, January 23, 2013, MTC had two action items and heard one information item:

Selection of Vice Chair
MTC unanimously voted to reappoint Davidson Mayor John Woods to the position of Vice Chair.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program Resolution
CATS has one of the most successful TDM programs in the state. MTC members unanimously passed a resolution to authorize CATS staff to submit a grant application to NCDOT for continued Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM) funding.

FY2014-15 Transit Operations and Five-Year Capital Investment (CIP) Plan
The CATS budget continues to be impacted by the recession which began in 2008. The recession caused a long-term reduction in sales tax receipts and created operating stress on the system. The recession also caused uncertainty in funding partner stability. Reduced funding impacts implementation schedules, which impacts project costs. Staff made budgetary adjustments to maintain fiscal stability and has maintained services at 2008 levels. The FY2014-15 Budget and FY2014-18 CIP will grow revenue service hours by 3% and provide stability for ADA service. There is modest recovery in sales tax revenue, fueling an increase in operating income. Staff projects 3.5% growth in sales tax revenue. Advancing the LYNX Blue Line Extension (BLE) project will account for the majority of upcoming capital expenses. A regular fare increase is scheduled in 2015. Delays in receipt of federal and state funds for the BLE project has increased short- and long-term debt. Work on the BLE project has continued to keep the project on schedule despite reimbursement delays. Debt financing is a challenging process in the current economic climate and will require an additional reserve fund. Key capital projects in the Five-Year CIP include replacement of revenue vehicles, railcar overhaul, replacement of the outdated farebox system, and upgrades for the systems for route scheduling and Automatic Train Protection.

CATS CEO Report
Under the CEO's report, Carolyn Flowers discussed:

a. **Recognitions**: Ms. Flowers led MTC members in a round of applause for CATS' budget staff for their work on the budget. She also led a round of applause for staff in Operations, Safety and Communications for their hard work on First Night. Staff gives up its New Year's Eve to ensure that services are provided for First Night. Maintenance of Effort has been a flat number since MTC's inception; Ms. Flowers thanked the county, the City and Huntersville for the escalator this year on Maintenance of Effort. Ms. Flowers introduced Allen Smith, the new General Manager of Rail Operations.
b. **Legislative Issues**: Staff participated in the legislative briefing with the Mecklenburg delegation on January 14. The discussion included the state legislative agenda. The delegation asked questions about the request for 65-foot buses and about the sunset extension on special assessment districts. Ms. Flowers reported that she will

be going to DC January 30 with Dana Fenton to brief the staff of the new Congressional delegates on the status of CATS' projects and the need for continued transportation funding and appropriations to advance the transit plan.

c. **Miscellaneous**: CATS staff will attend a meeting with Transportation Security Administrator John Pistole on January 24 to discuss security improvements and transportation. The Charlotte Chamber is hosting the meeting.

On January 22, Charlotte City Council approved a zoning ordinance change to allow advertising on platforms. The ads are not permitted to feature alcohol. No more than six ads can be placed at each ground-level station; the ads must not be visible from the street. Staff projects approximately $200,000 yearly additional revenue from this change.

Staff is working with the City of Charlotte Finance Department to prepare for initial discussions with the NC Local Government Commission on the BLE financing plan. More detailed discussions will take place when the financing plan is finalized.

Other Business – Creation of Transit Funding Working Group
Mayor Foxx suggested that the MTC develop a committee made up of representatives from the business, community, and elected sectors to review and make suggestions on moving the transit visions forward with an emphasis on creative and alternative financing/funding mechanisms. Mayor Jill Swain and City Council member David Howard will co-chair the committee. The goal is to conduct a series of meetings in the winter and early spring with a recommendation to be presented to the MTC in mid to late April. MTC unanimously agreed to establish the committee.

The next MTC meeting will be February 27, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. Note that the meeting will begin a half-hour later than usual.

City Source Tells Stories of Citizen Service
Staff Resource: Sherry Bauer, Corporate Communications & Marketing, 704-336-2459, sbauer@charlottenc.gov

City Source is the City of Charlotte's unique 30-minute program for citizens to learn about the City's services as well as how its employees serve the community. The program airs the first and third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. on Cable 16 (Time Warner Cable), AT&T U-verse and is streamed LIVE online at www.charlottenc.gov.

The Feb. 7 – Feb. 20 edition includes a look at a why a clear sidewalk is a safe one, how technology is helping to save taxpayer's money, a Council Spotlight on Housing & Neighborhood Development, how residents can turn their dream neighborhood or business into reality, and what's happening in CMPD's Metro Division.

This information is also promoted in CMail, the City's electronic newsletter, emailed to more than 1,100 subscribers and distributed by City departments whose services, programs and employees are featured in an upcoming episode **(see "CitySource.pdf").**

ATTACHMENTS:

January 14 Transportation and Planning Committee Summary **(see "TAP Summary 01.14.13.pdf")**

January 16 Community Safety Committee Summary **(see "CS Summary 01.16.13.pdf")**