Council-Manager Memo #71
Friday, September 28, 2012

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (October 1)	Tues (October 2)	Wed (October 3)	Thurs (October 4)	Fri (October 5)
3:00 PM Governmental Affairs Committee, Room 280			10:00 AM Mosaic Village Grand Opening, 1548 West Trade St. 12:00 PM Economic Development Committee, Room CH-14	

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, October 1

3:00 pm Governmental Affairs Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: Federal legislative update; Approval of 2013 legislative calendar; 2013 state and federal legislative agendas; Contract for federal legislative services

Thursday, October 4

10:00 am Mosaic Village Grand Opening, 1548 West Trade St.

12:00 pm Economic Development Committee, Room CH-14
AGENDA: Out of School Time RFP; Youth Council

October and November calendars are attached (see "2. Calendar.pdf").

INFORMATION:

City/County Feasibility Study of a Community Sustainability Plan

Staff Resource: Rob Phocas, City Manager's Office, 704-336-7558, rphocas@charlottenc.gov

In March, the City Council referred the development of an approach to a City sustainability plan to the Environment Committee. As part of the early discussions, the Committee learned that the Mecklenburg County Environmental Policy Council (EPCC) has recommended that the County develop a community environmental sustainability plan. The EPCC is comprised of representatives of a number of County-appointed boards and each municipality, with the charge to discuss and prioritize strategic environmental issues.

The Environment Committee asked City and County staff to work together to develop a framework for undertaking a possible joint community sustainability plan. The City and County have retained a consultant to provide an assessment of the feasibility of developing a plan. The cost of the consultant is approximately $48,000 and is being shared equally. As one part of the assessment the consultant, ICMA (the International City and County Management Association), will be interviewing key community stakeholders over the next several weeks. Stakeholders will include representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

The objectives of this feasibility study are to determine the desire for developing a community sustainability plan, identify and describe possible needs and major drivers, present best practices from other cities, and provide an estimate of necessary resources to develop and implement a plan. The assessment will be critical information for City and County staff as they prepare recommendations for consideration by both elected bodies over the next few months. The Environment Committee will review staff recommendations and make a recommendation regarding a community sustainability plan to the City Council sometime after the first of the year.

Grameen America to Open Charlotte Branch

Staff Resource: Eric B. Nelson, N&BS, 704-336-2735, enelson@charlottenc.gov

The Board of Directors of Grameen America recently announced that its Charlotte Fund has successfully reached its fundraising goal of $2.5 million and will open its Charlotte branch office later this year. Charlotte will be the fifth U.S. city to house a Grameen America Bank, joining New York, which has four branch offices, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Omaha, Nebraska.

Grameen America is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit microfinance institution whose mission is to provide affordable micro-loans that financially empower low-income entrepreneurs and alleviate poverty in the United States. Its target population is unemployed or underemployed people earning an average yearly income below the household poverty level of $22,050. Applicants must undergo a financial training program before being approved for a loan of up to $1,500.

On November 22, 2010, City Council approved a $200,000 grant to the Grameen Charlotte Fund and an additional $30,000 to offset costs for Grameen borrowers seeking a business license. The City's participation was contingent upon Grameen successfully raising an additional $2.3 million in private funds. Council also requested that Grameen open its Charlotte branch in one of the City's designated business corridors, and staff is currently assisting Grameen officials in the search for a site.

City's EPLAN Review Program Wins Harvard "Bright Ideas" Award

Staff Resource: David Weekly, E&PM, 704-336-4103, dweekly@charlottenc.gov

On Tuesday, September 25, the City's EPLAN Review Program was recognized as a "Bright Idea" and top government initiative by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Awarded each year, "Bright Ideas" spotlights innovative programs from all levels of government.

The EPLAN program allows development plans to be submitted for review electronically in-lieu of paper plans. This substantially reduces costs, saves time and allows collaborative on-screen review of development plans by multiple reviewers on a single electronic file instead of many paper plan sets.

This plan review solution was created using existing technology with minimal added costs. Enthusiastically endorsed by the development community, EPLAN focuses on simplicity for the customer, using email to transfer PDF files and make them accessible to reviewers with different agencies. The City offered developers the EPLAN option in 2010, with conversion to 100% electronic submittal in January, 2012.

ATTACHMENTS:

City Council Follow-up Report **(see "3. Follow Up.pdf")**

Contents include:
-Transportation Support for Disabled Adults

Policy Calendar: October 2012 – December 2012 **(see "4. Policy Calendar.pdf")**