

CITY OF SALISBURY
WORK SESSION (VIA ZOOM MEETING)
NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Public Officials Present

Council President John “Jack” R. Heath
Councilwoman Angela M. Blake
Councilwoman April Jackson

Council Vice President Muir Boda
Councilwoman Michele Gregory

Public Officials Absent

Mayor Jacob R. Day

In Attendance

City Administrator Julia Glanz, Deputy City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Department of Infrastructure & Development (DID) Director Amanda Pollack, Deputy Fire Chief James Gladwell, Community Development Director Ron Strickler, City Attorney Mark Tilghman, City Clerk Kimberly Nichols, and members of the Public and press.

On November 2, 2020 the Salisbury City Council convened in a Work Session at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. The following is a synopsis of the topics discussed:

Ordinance accepting a grant from the Wicomico County Health Department for two commercial floor cleaners

Deputy Chief James Gladwell reported the Wicomico County Health Department (WiCHD) received a direct allocation of funds through the Federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to support medical response expenses related to COVID-19. The Fire Department requested funding to purchase two (2) commercial floor scrubbers and associated battery supplies for Stations One and Two. Station 16 currently has this technology to scrub its floor but was not practical to move the machine from station-to-station based on its size and weight. The scrubbers would help reduce the spread of COVID-19 through the use of chemical extraction of the floors as opposed to using mops and buckets, which do not truly sanitize. The cost of the project was \$14,590.00 and it was approved by the WiCHD.

Council reached unanimous consensus to move forward with accepting the grant.

The Ross Developers Agreement- Department of Infrastructure & Development Director

DID Director Amanda Pollack reported that in January 2020 the Council passed a resolution to accept the Ross Developer’s Agreement. It was agreed that the agreement would be re-visited should there be substantive changes requested by the developer, First Move Properties, LLC.

The changes requested by First Move Properties, as discussed by Ms. Pollack, included:

1. Defining First Move as the owners of the properties.
2. Increased the number of parking permits from 256 to 278.

3. Increased the length of the term of the agreement to eight years.
4. Increasing the length of the renewal term of the agreement to four years.
5. Defining that the price for each parking permit shall be the established Student Rate charged by the City for that fiscal year.
6. Adding a clause for the cancellation of the agreement.
7. Modifying the effective dates of the agreement.

Mr. Boda asked if the City had discussed student parking rates. Ms. Pollack said the Field Operations was heading up the effort by looking at all parking rates in the City.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the agreement to the next legislative agenda.

Homeownership Incentive Discussion

Deputy City Administrator introduced two community partners/non-profit organizations, which were currently working in the homeownership field. He thought it would be a crucial component of the City's decisions to not only incorporate one, if not both, of the organizations into some of the City's development/rehab discussions, but to also give Council an understanding of what was currently existing in Salisbury.

Molly Hilligoss, Executive Director of **Habitat for Humanity (HFH)**, presented the "Building Hope" PowerPoint. The following are key points of discussion:

- HFH's Mission- Build communities, homes and hope
- HFH has built 70 homes in Wicomico County and has been a non-profit since 1987
- HFH has "Aging in Place" roof and home repair program which served homeowners aged 62 and older. If the owner is low income and needs assistance, they assist them.
- Retaining homeownership was critical in the City limits
- Currently (7) partner families wished to be future homeowners
- She discussed several projects and plans for 634 E. Church St., 504 Tangier St., 319 Martin St., 321 Martin St., 704 S. Westover St., and 414 Elizabeth St.
- HFH needed more properties to build homes on
- Homeownership in Salisbury was about 30%, possibly less
- Discussed the barriers for renters to become homeowners
- HFH applicants were making difficult choices between home costs and paying for health care, education, nutrition and transportation
- Fewer people can afford to buy. In 2018, the average home sold for \$200,000 in Wicomico County, with the required medium income of \$71,800 to buy the home
- Since HFH did not charge interest, they could sell to families earning about \$27,000
- Discussed requirements to buy a home (credit score, criminal background, ability to purchase electric in their name, etc.) and problems with State and Federal programs
- Discussed the need for multi-generation housing solutions to survive economically
- Discussed how the City of Salisbury could support HFH

Ms. Jackson asked Ms. Hilligoss why HFH never concentrated on the Fitzwater St., Hill St., First and Second St. area on rehabbing homes. Ms. Hilligoss mentioned HFH owned two lots in the

Delaware Ave. area which were in the 100 Year Flood Plain, and she was concerned that low income families would have difficulty affording the Flood Insurance. HFH had other lots that they could build on that did not require Flood Insurance and they were looking for larger lots.

Council thanked Ms. Hilligoss for the information which gave them many things to discuss to make homes more affordable for families in Salisbury.

Cheryl Meadows, Executive Director of Salisbury Neighborhood Housing Services (SNHS), presented the PowerPoint on homeowner incentives. Below are points she discussed:

- SNHS was incorporated in 1994 as a 501 C3 non-profit organization.
- The Mission- to cultivate sustainable neighborhoods with partnerships and lending that inspire self-reliance, growth and optimism
- Goals- increasing and preserving homeownership; reducing neighborhood blight; providing resources for Home Improvement; encouraging private investment by banks; homeowners, commercial users, and landlords; fostering sustainable change through education, training and leadership development; and developing self-sustaining programs
- Homeownership benefits- financial benefits and social stability
- Homeownership challenges- poor credit history, lack of financial literacy and understanding the process, high rent payments causing difficulty to save for down payment, older housing stock expensive to heat/cool, student loan debt, forced to sacrifice quality vs. affordability
- SNHS challenges- low inventory of homes for sale, costs to rehab older homes, historic district regs, finding credit worthy borrowers, lack of flexible funding sources, limited City CDBG funds, expense of lead pain reduction, lack of building lots suitable for CTE houses, and challenges in purchasing foreclosed properties
- Opportunities- current low interest rates, a variety of programs were available to help with down payment/closing costs, SNHS able to adapt to current community needs, strength of NeighborWorks America network of organizations, and potential for new or expanded partnerships
- Educational programs and services offered by SNHS- homebuyer education workshops (group sessions and online classes), free financial fitness workshops, free individual credit and budget counseling, and free foreclosure counseling and intervention
- Discussed loans, homeownership incentives, and programs for existing homeowners.
- Discussed ways the City could help further homeownership opportunities and retention.

Ms. Jackson asked Ms. Meadows why SNHS never concentrated on the Fitzwater St., Hill St., First and Second St. area. Ms. Meadows said that about 20 years ago the decision was made to purchase and rehab the row homes on Fitzwater Street. They could not get consensus from any of the multiple owners to sell. They renovated and sold a property on Second Street and rehabbed some projects from the State Rehab Program on First Street and West Main Street. They were unable to make an impact in the area because of the high concentration of rentals.

Council thanked Ms. Meadows for the presentation and valuable information shared. President Heath suggested Council placing the discussion on another Work Session agenda to prioritize the next steps to take to coordinate the efforts discussed this evening.

HORIZON Program

Deputy City Administrator Andy Kitzrow reported the memo in the packet detailed the previous discussion held by Council on the HORIZON Program, and reiterated the focus was on the large-scale residential development projects within the HORIZON Zone.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

Council Remarks

Mr. Boda thanked everyone for the presentations this evening and for their hard work investing in the community. He encouraged everyone to shop local.

Ms. Jackson asked everyone to continue to be safe, as COVID was spiking. Wash hands, wear masks, and stay 6' away from everyone.

Ms. Blake thought the presentations were great, and asked everyone to donate blood.

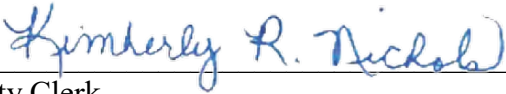
Ms. Gregory thanked those who sent their well wishes for her son who was in the hospital. She agreed with Ms. Jackson to be safe, wear masks, wash your hands and social distance.

President Heath concurred with all of the Council's comments.

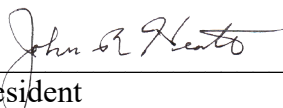
Ms. Glanz thanked Council for supporting HORIZONS, and Mses. Meadows and Hilligoss for the thoughtful and informative presentations.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session immediately adjourned at 5:47 p.m.



City Clerk



Council President