

**MINUTE BOOK 23, PAGE 327
CITY OF STATESVILLE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – November 12, 2009
STATESVILLE CIVIC CENTER – 2:30 P.M.
STATESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

Mayor Costi Kutteh presiding

Council Present: M Johnson, J Johnson, Steele, Matthews, Gregory, Eisele, Stallard

Staff Present: Hites, Smyth, Pressley, Currier, Bullins, Cornelison, Salmon, Gaines, Davis, Cranford, Houpe, Windsor, Pritchard, Ashley, Hudson

Media Present: J McNally – Record & Landmark
D Vieser, Charlotte Observer

Visitors: 30

I Presentation of the Renovation Plan for the 200 Block of West Broad Street and the 100 Block of East Broad Street

Mayor Kutteh prefaced the meeting with the explanation that Council would be hearing presentations relative to two elements of the streetscape, first the 200 block of West Broad Street and 100 block of East Broad Street and then secondly, the 1500 and 1600 blocks of Shelton Avenue. At the conclusion of these discussions, Council will consider a leasing option in the to be renovated City Hall.

Larry Pressley explained that the two sections of streetscape Council is reviewing today are very different in scope due to the nature of the projects. In the Broad Street area the scope of the project and where to start is well defined and the boundaries of all work will occur from building face to building face. In the 115 area, the City will likely see considerable demolition and construction in a more expansive area with major change coming from the private sector. As a starting point for the project, staff is suggesting a focus on the southern most region of the project and the realignment of Amity Hill Road and Whites Mill Road to create more of a block type configuration in the area. Pressley told Council that the estimated cost of streetscape in the Broad Street area from Tradd Street to Mitchell College is \$4.6 million and the Phase 2A 115 corridor is \$6.88 million.

Mayor Kutteh suggested that Council look at each project individually indicating what they like or do not like about each. Discussion of these concerns will be at the conclusion of staff presentations. Pressley began with a more detailed explanation of what the plan entails for the downtown Broad Street area. He explained that basically on Broad Street from Tradd Street to Mitchell College everything from building face to building face will change. The City will install all new asphalt, curb, gutter, sidewalk, planters, lights and other amenities.

At the intersection of Broad and Center Streets, the streetscape creates an aesthetic focus on the area by the use of public art and two fountains. These fountains will be located on the east side of Center Street and are estimated to cost approximately \$125,000 each. Other amenities such as outdoor dining are also contemplated for this area.

The plan also establishes an island in the center of Broad Street that is twelve feet wide and changes the current angle parking to parallel parking. There will continue to be planters similar to the ones currently in place as well as a planting strip along the sidewalk where trees and lighting will be alternated on forty feet centers. New water and sewer lines will be run on each side of the street to accommodate development of the upstairs areas of the downtown buildings. There would continue to be traffic signalization in the area. Pressley presented three street level

views of the project as drawn by the plan designers and during these presentations, noted that crosswalks are also shown in pavers.

Pressley continued his overview by showing Council a cross section of the street indicating the location of sidewalk, planting area, curb, center median and other amenities. He pointed out the sidewalk on the north side of the street would be ten feet wider hence making the street ten feet narrower.

Mayor Kutteh asked Pressley if staff was looking at ways to incorporate existing parts of streetscape into current plan, for example granite curbing currently in place. Pressley replied he is presenting the plan as written until Council requests changes. If staff is prepared to answer concerns or questions today, they will but if not, they will research and get answers back to the Council at a subsequent meeting. Pressley indicated his presentation for the downtown area is complete and asked the electric utility to present information relative to their work in the area.

Houpe presented a map of the area telling Council that in the target area from Tradd to Mulberry, with the planned changes, there will be no overhead primary in this area. The current overhead crossings on Broad Street at Meeting Street and on Broad Street at Tradd Street will be put underground. The signals and crossings at Tradd Street are on the NC DOT system hence they will control that crossing. The department is currently working with the other utilities, Time Warner, Iredell County, and ATT on estimates to underground their utilities. Cost estimates include street lighting on forty feet centers as well as wiring for event planning, tree lighting and other uses. Houpe noted the cost of lighting could be reduced by expanding the distance between lights and using a higher wattage light getting the same effect. The plan does not contemplate installing any utilities in the median area. Councilmember Gregory inquired as to the cost for these changes. Houpe replied the department had been working with Progressive Engineering to establish costs for Phase 1A and 1B and they are fairly confident in the estimate of \$775,000. Unknown is the cost to relocate other utilities but if estimates given by the plan designers is accurate; the cost is \$60,000 per block totaling another \$180,000. Houpe confirmed the estimates for work on City utilities are included in the total numbers provided by Pressley at the beginning of this presentation but those numbers do not include cost to put other utilities underground.

Relative to questions regarding financing, Mayor Kutteh stated that Salmon will research options and be prepared to provide Council some general information like if you borrow "x" dollars at this percentage rate for this term, here is the cost. Council began a discussion of particular likes and dislikes in the plan. Mayor Kutteh noted that today's discussion is intended to focus on what happens inside the development area and what happens inside this area should not have an adverse impact on areas outside the development area. Pressley confirmed this information with the exception that storm drainage may run beyond the project boundaries.

Councilmember J. Johnson voiced his concerns with the change from angle parking to parallel parking and inquired as to the ability of property owners in the area to have a voice in this change. Councilmember J. Johnson stated that in speaking with the downtown owners, a vast majority voice opposition to this change and have presented a petition formalizing that opposition. Council discussed at length whether changes could be made to the plan that would accommodate angle parking. No solution was apparent. It was noted that if DOT would be agreeable to changing the parking on Center Street from parallel to angle, the total number of parking spaces would change very little in the immediate area. Other options discussed included keeping the sidewalk the same width on the north side, narrowing the median, parking on one side only and various other options however Council did not settle on any single response to the concern. Councilmember M. Johnson noted that parallel parking creates a non-invasive buffer for pedestrian traffic and it is not necessarily bad for retail business as evidenced by the Larkin development where parallel parking is proposed for 1.5 million square feet to retail

space. Councilmember J. Johnson noted his goal is to represent the concerns of his constituents and most are telling him they are opposed to this change. He strongly believes they should have some voice in the proposed changes. Councilmember Steele noted that although she is sensitive to the concerns of property owners in the area, her greatest concern is that decisions be made for the long term good of the City, not to accommodate whatever is in place right now. Several Council members concurred with Councilmember Steele in this analysis acknowledging these changes need to move the City forward into the next twenty to thirty years. They expressed that the concern for future impact is the reason Council needs to fully understand all options before moving forward with the plan.

Mayor Kutteh asked Pressley about the widening of the sidewalk. He clarified that the width of the sidewalk on the south side remains the same as is but on the north side, the sidewalk will be ten feet wider. Pressley acknowledged this as accurate and in response to Mayor Kutteh's question as to what is an "average" width, Pressley replied that from his observations, there is a huge variety of sidewalk widths within in the same City. Pressley explained there is a recent trend to make cities more pedestrian friendly by widening sidewalks, creating outdoor dining areas and other amenities to encourage walking in downtown areas thereby enhancing business activity.

Councilmember M. Johnson explained that having bulb outs like are recommended for the Center and Broad Street intersection, make street crossings shorter, particularly beneficial for the elderly and small children who have to cross the street. Councilmember J. Johnson said he liked the bulb outs but was not aware of pedestrian safety problems currently.

In the proposed plan, the median is currently twelve feet wide. Council discussed the possibility of reducing this width in order to create room for other options, such as angle parking. Councilmember M. Johnson noted that the smallest planter median on Broad Street is 10'4" wide, curb face to curb face and others are wider.

Mayor Kutteh noted that some of the stores currently have concerns regarding the trees and store signage. He inquired if the plan addresses this concern. Pressley noted the plan does not but Council may choose to control this by limiting tree types in the planting strip.

Council further discussed options for limiting width of sidewalk, width of median and other options that might create additional space within the area to allow for alternatives such as the angle parking. Pressley said the plan designers have had some preliminary conversations with DOT regarding changing the parking on Center Street to angle parking and DOT is at least open to this discussion. Pressley stated that changes will most likely require parallel parking if the City would like to keep a widened sidewalk and/or the median.

Councilmember J. Johnson and J. Gregory indicated they are not in favor of the fountains and could not see spending a quarter of a million dollars on fountains during the current economic times. Pressley explained that the concept of the designer for the intersection of Broad and Center Streets is to establish the center of town as a destination in itself. The public art and fountains are used as a statement that you have arrived and the extra amenities on this block are designed to give the impression that the individual has reached a hub. Councilmember M. Johnson said this intersection should be an "event" or a venue and is designed to bring as many people as possible to the area. Aside from the cost of the fountains, Councilmember Gregory expressed his concern that the fountains seem to be in the way of pedestrian traffic and suggested consideration be given to relocating them if they were to remain a part of the plan.

Relative to the intersection at Center and Broad Streets, Councilmember Steele inquired if it would be a roundabout. Pressley said it would not but it would permit

left hand turns. Mayor Kutteh noted that the crosswalks in this area are proposed in pavers and he inquired if now is the time to discuss brick pavers, textured sidewalk and other similar issues. Pressley said that these types of decisions could be deferred as they may result in some price variation but in the scheme of the project these decisions would be fairly minor

Mayor Kutteh expressed his concern that when looking at street views, he sees something very similar to Larkin and he is not sure whether this is good or bad. Pressley agreed that although there are some similarities, it is not the same. Larkin has roundabouts, downtown will not. Our buildings will retain their historic nature and the outlying areas will create distinctions not present in Larkin.

Councilmember J. Johnson noted that he is very diligent in trying to represent the concerns and opinions of his constituents and he is concerned the funding of this plan may result in a tax increase. Councilmember M. Johnson stated that the implementation of this plan did not mean an imminent tax increase to which Councilmember J. Johnson replied that however you juggled the numbers if you increase taxes to fund firefighters instead of this plan, it is likely a tax increase will result.

Mayor Kutteh said Council would meet again on this section of the plan and try to come to some consensus on disputed items. Once that is completed and a cost estimate can be obtained, Ms. Salmon will say here are ways you can pay for this project, as she has done with past projects. If implementation results in a significant tax increase, the plan may face more opposition but at this time, we do not know the financial implications of the plan.

Councilmember P. Steele inquired what happens when delivery trucks stop in the road and cars are blocked in because they cannot go around the truck without hitting the median. Several options to mitigate this issue were offered by various individuals including regulation and enforcement, loading zones, limiting delivery hours, and rear entry deliveries only.

Mayor Kutteh asked that further discussion on the downtown plan be completed at a future meeting so there is an opportunity to hear something about the 115 plan. Councilmember M. Johnson asked to make one final point regarding the downtown plan before moving to the 115 plan. In order to move forward with plan, the City Engineer needs to obtain some as built surveys and Councilmember M. Johnson would like to move forward with authorizing the use of \$75,000 of currently funded monies to begin these as built surveys. Mayor Kutteh said this item would be added to the Monday night agenda.

Presentation of the Renovation Plan for the 1500 and 1600 blocks of Shelton Avenue (Hwy 115), Phase 2A

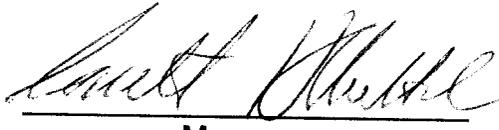
Pressley explained that the Highway 115 project would be very different in nature than the downtown plan. This plan is not nearly as well contained and there will be significant amounts of demolition and construction to accomplish this plan. In reviewing the plan at staff level, David Currier pointed out that the realignment of Amity Hill Road and Whites Mill Road in a manner to avoid another difficult five points type intersection was a critical element of the plan and a good place to begin. These realignments would begin a block type structure in area making it more congruent with other areas. Pressley reported that presently the area has a four lane highway and the new sub-area plan D will keep the two eleven feet lanes on each side of a median. This will require 100 feet of right of way and in most areas that right of way currently exists. Pressley estimated there may be approximately three areas in where it is necessary to obtain right of way on Phase 2A along Shelton Avenue

The electrical utility construction in this area is not as easy as it is in the downtown area. Larry Pressley introduced Perry Windsor, the City's new electrical engineer to explain the project along the 115 corridor. Windsor explained that the area has two circuits feeding it: one from Fayetteville Ave to Amity Hill that is overhead and one from Raleigh Street to Amity Hill that is underground. The changes in this area will be set up to serve new load only, not the load that is already there. This is because we really do not know what the new demand might be. There are two locations where lines are likely to remain overhead and they are a Duke transmission line on Raleigh Street and two transmission lines on Power Street. The cost for the electrical in this area is around \$900,000. Of that \$900,000, approximately \$150,000 will need to be done regardless of this project to reinforce the lines to serve Larkin. Mayor Kutteh asked if we started this work today, how long would it take to complete and Windsor replied approximately three to five months for installation but it would be necessary to obtain some construction easements prior to installation. Pressley further noted that the plan contemplates a linear park on the east side of Shelton Avenue but that utilities must go in early in this project and due to the numerous curb cuts and drive cuts, the installation is very complex. Councilmember M. Johnson asked Windsor to confirm that the realignment and reworking of electrical lines in the Amity Hill road relocation area would be required irrespective of this plan to accommodate the Larkin development. Windsor agreed.

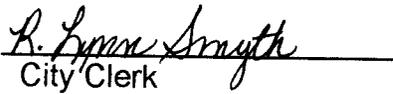
In concluding discussion on the Highway 115 corridor, Mayor Kutteh confirmed the consensus of Council that staff is okay to focus initial efforts in the area of the realignment of Amity Hill Road and Whites Mill Road. Mayor Kutteh reminded Council that a discussion for leased space in the City Hall building will be added to the pre-agenda meeting agenda.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Steele, seconded by Councilmember Eisele, and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:



Mayor



City Clerk

