

CITY OF EDEN, N. C.

A special meeting of the City Council, City of Eden was held on Thursday, January 12, 2016 at 5:30 p.m., in the Conference Room at Eden City Hall, 308 East Stadium Drive. Those present for the meeting were as follows:

Mayor:	(absent)	Wayne R. Tuggle, Sr.
Mayor Pro Tem:		Jim Burnette
Council Members:		Angela Hampton
		Bernie Moore
		Darryl Carter
		Neville Hall
		Jerry Epps
		Jerry Ellis
City Manager:		Brad Corcoran
City Clerk:		Sheralene Thompson
Deputy City Clerk:		Deanna Hunt
City Attorney:		Erin Gilley
Planning & Inspections:		Kelly Stultz
Business & Economic Development:		Mike Dougherty
Tourism & Events:		Cindy Adams
News Media:		Dallas Britt, Eden News

MEETING CONVENED:

*Council Member Hall left the meeting at 6:10 p.m. and Mayor Tuggle joined the meeting at 7:00 p.m.*

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette called the special meeting of the City Council to order and welcomed those in attendance. He then asked for a motion to go into Closed Session.

CLOSED SESSION:

Closed Session to establish or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease, according to NC GS 143-318.11(a)(5).

A motion was made by Council Member Ellis seconded by Council Member Hampton to go into closed session to establish or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real

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property by purchase, option, exchange or lease, according to NC GS 143-318.11(a)(5). All Council Members present voted in favor of this motion. This motion carried.

OPEN SESSION:

A motion was made by Council Member Epps seconded by Council Member Hall to return to open session. All Council Members present voted in favor of this motion. This motion carried.

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Introduction of Lexington Mayor Newell Clark by Jim Burnette, Mayor Pro Tem:

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette stated that he had submitted an item in last year's budget calling for a type of visioning session where they would actually look at things that could be improved on. He explained that he had met Lexington Mayor Newell Clark at the North Carolina League of Municipalities meeting during a tour of the City of Lexington. During that tour, Mayor Clark told them about several things that were going on in Lexington and he talked about a strategic plan. He explained that it was a very interesting plan and really sounded like what they need to do here.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette then introduced Mayor Newell Clark of Lexington.

Presentation by Mayor Newell Clark on the Lexington Experience on Strategic Planning:

Mayor Clark thanked them for asking him to come and chat with them. He explained that Lexington was his hometown but he had lived and worked in California for over 15 years. He explained that when he came back home, he was involved with the community and wanted to help and then people asked him to consider an elected position. He explained that he felt he could do more and he shared that with them because strategic planning was one of the things that has happened in Lexington and the community has been doing strategic plans way before he returned.

He noted that they have just completed their third strategic plan, it was started in 2010 and completed in 2013. He explained that it takes a 3-year process to complete and the city does one every 10 years.

He explained that it was a mayoral appointed commission and city council members had input on people they thought could serve on it and he became one of the citizens who was asked to serve.

He noted that it was important that it was well represented and that one of the things they pushed. He pointed out that the citizens were not participating so the same people were volunteering so it looked like a "good old boy system" because these were the only people willing to volunteer.

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He explained that they decided that the committee needed to be diverse, have all ages, and it could not just be the same usual suspects in the room. He explained that they had representatives from age 20 all the way to 70 something. They were male or female, black or white, however they did not have any Hispanic representation and that was something they had hoped to get.

They also had cross sections of people that were appointed as well such as their school superintendent, their tourism director, and representatives from non-profits, private businesses and industries.

He explained that the group met once a month and it started out with them getting inundated with information such as how the budgeting process happens, what the budget is and where the money was going. The first several meetings were just to educate this group on how city government works. He stated that there was a lot of good dialog.

He explained that once they went through how the city government works they then went through the 2010 census. In terms of demographics, that told them things they needed to know such as the number of African American or Hispanic citizens they had. They were surprised to learn that Lexington was 52% people of color. They were also surprised to learn they were 52% female. In doing that they were learning who they were now not who they were. They are going to be planning going forward.

He explained that one of the things they found was that 16% of the citizens in Lexington did not have access to mobile vehicles. One in four children were considered to be in extreme poverty. They were educated on that and while they were planning and making decisions, one of the things that came out of that strategic plan was public transportation.

He reminded them that these were 10 year increments so they were giving themselves time to address this. He explained that they went through probably well over a year to two years of information with these citizens. He noted that although they did not have any Hispanic representatives involved, the committee did bring in a Hispanic focus group and had a roundtable discussion with their Hispanic community and it really opened their eyes on what that community said they needed and what they wanted to be a part of the community and how.

He explained that this was a true commitment from these citizens to serve on this committee. He explained that very few folks who served were retired. They wanted to be a part of their community.

Once he announced he was a candidate and then won as mayor, he removed himself from this particular planning process because at the end of this, the entire committee came and made a presentation to the City Council on recommendations on the things the citizens of Lexington would like to see happen in the next ten years. Not the mayor, not the council and not the city manager, but what the citizens say they want to see get done in the next ten years.

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He stated that each year they publish the accomplishments that they are doing as a city council and these go out to all the citizens in terms of what they were doing. He explained that their website showed their goals and what they do and how that was tied into the strategic plan.

He pointed out that one of the things they get as elected officials was that they go through their planning and zoning, it gets vetted out, a recommendation comes up to the council and then council calls for a public hearing. He explained that two weeks later they have their public hearing and nobody is there. Everybody looks around the room, they wait 30 seconds and then the council votes. Then the next day it is in the newspaper headlines and your phone starts ringing.

He stated that when he gets those phone calls, he tells them that it was on their website, it had been published for years, and they have a 10-year strategic plan that they asked them to do. They asked them to do these things and make these investments. People would say, no they did not, they were not on that committee, and he would tell them, they represented all of them, it was a three year process, all of their meetings were open, anyone was invited to them and when they had individual breakout sessions, everything was open to the public.

He explained that when the committee made their recommendations to the council, and the council had the final say in that.

Mayor Clark explained that one of the recommendations that came out of the planning committee was to provide public relations branding and marketing. They were telling them to hire a public relations branding marketing professional to market the city. Tell the story and ultimately foster economic development.

He explained that they were telling them to spend money, go get a PR firm and start marketing their city. So, from that the City of Lexington appropriated \$30,000 and they have just renewed their first year contract.

He explained that they put out an RFP that they were looking to hire a PR firm to promote their city. They were currently represented by Lou Hammond & Associates who is a marketing firm who had been in business for years. They are located in Manhattan and they also have an office in Charleston.

At the end of this past year, they came and gave a presentation to us on the amount of free media the City of Lexington had received on that investment. To date they have had over \$250,000 of free media that they garnered from that \$30,000 investment.

He pointed out that they have been featured in Wall Street Journal, Garden & Guns, Southern Living, Our State magazine and many others. The article in the Wall Street Journal was two thirds of a page and this was directly from their PR firm making contacts for them.

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He added that one of the things they did was form a Youth Council and they brought in these teenagers and used them as a focus group. They came in and they had a discussion. He noted that an 18 year old, you put a 10 year plan together, that was a 28 year old that he wanted living in his community. They could not isolate the kids either and some of the things that they said surprised them.

He explained that the folks really bought into this plan and thought that they were really making a difference and when they see these things it all started with a plan and the Council saying they had to have a plan.

He stated that the tough thing was when you look at your community and you look at Lexington, there were a lot of similarities. Lexington lost their furniture industries and Eden recently got a dreadful hit with Miller. He pointed out that it was not a loss, it was an opportunity to redefine themselves and the direction they want to go.

He also pointed out that Eden has a little different dynamic than Lexington because they have the tri-cities so they already know that if they put a plan together involving citizens then they have to have someone from every one of those areas. They need to question how they can leverage those areas with each other to make it stronger. He pointed out that he would kill to have the Smith and Dan River running through his town, but he had 2 highways, 85 and 52 and Eden would kill for that. He explained that they have to look at what you have and how to leverage that. He noted that they have leveraged a lot of quality of life for economic development.

He explained that when he looked at the businesses who were thinking about coming to Lexington, they assume that they have parks, a recreation facility, a movie theater or restaurants so they are coming in and they are looking for things like amenities and quality of life. He stated that they never asked about the tax rate. They know they will be getting an incentive any way. He explained that what they wanted to know was what was there to do, what was their schools system like, what can their spouses do, so you have to look at those things and ask yourselves what you have to leverage and attract people there and not only that, what kind of quality of life does that give Eden's own citizens. He noted that the drive to Eden from Lexington was nothing. He could clearly see people living here and commuting to Greensboro or Winston-Salem.

Council Member Moore questioned that the citizens that come up with these recommendations and the city council puts priority one, two, three all the way down, how do they determine that, by what they think they need the most or does the citizen put input on that.

Mayor Clark replied that was a good point and he did not preference this when he mentioned it but they have 10 city council goals. They do not put any priority to any of the 10, they were all equally important.

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Council Member Carter stated so they were paying for this out of their current tax rate budget and borrowing money at a low interest rate. He asked if they ever have any private joint ventures.

Mayor Clark replied that they did.

Council Member Ellis stated that they only had one main street in their town and asked if that was correct to which Mayor Clark replied yes, Main Street. Council Member Ellis asked that if they had a tri-city such as Eden, how would he hypothetically do something with that.

Mayor Clark replied that he would first brand it as the tri-city and call it that, and then they take ownership into their communities. He would put signs up that this was the Draper neighborhood, entering Draper neighborhood, not town, not city but neighborhood. You are in the City of Eden but you can refer to it as the tri-cities of what was here. You do not want to take away from people's pride but enhance it. You rebrand as tri-cities, you recognize them, they were important and those were basic human needs.

Council Member Carter stated that he had also gone on the tour of Lexington and he had noticed that some of the buildings were being refurbished. He asked how they were getting people to come in and occupy those stores.

Mayor Clark explained that they have just put an ordinance in place for their Main Street. He pointed out that for the ground level on Main Street they have a less than 5% base. On the second level they have an entirely different second city that was not even being utilized. They had a lot of that boarded up, so when you walked down the City of Lexington, the Main Street looked great but you tilt your head back a little bit and you were like, oh. So, they put in a city ordinance for their uptown Main Street District that required the property owners to glaze or put windows, they could not board them. He explained that this had been put in place back in December so it has just started. However, the interesting thing was they have had business owners who went ahead and just started doing it because they knew it was coming. With that, business owners were already beginning to look at what they could put on the second level.

He asked them to look at Wilmington or Asheville and they will tell you not to put retail on the second level. Put office spaces, accounting or lawyers, they all work great on the second level, so leased office space would be a part of that.

They were requiring them to do that, but that was an investment that these property owners were making and they were saying that if they have to do that they were going to get some money back, they were starting to figure that out.

Council Member Carter asked if they had received any Brownfield money to which Mayor Clark replied that they had received a transportation grant, a lot of community development block grants and a lot of building re-use grants but they had not gotten a whole lot of Brownfield money.

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Mayor Pro Tem Burnette asked if there were any other questions.

Council Member Ellis asked who all was involved in the very first meetings, such as the Mayor or Council Members.

Mayor Clark explained that the Mayor and Council are not involved in the process. A facilitator was hired and a chairman was appointed. City staff was there to help the facilitator with information. He was adamant that the City Manager not be in there. Part of that was, Lexington at the time had a perception that the City Manager ran everything. So they needed to change that dynamic and the manager understood that. They needed it to be free flowing and for people to feel like they could say whatever they wanted to say.

As there was no more discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Burnette thanked Mayor Clark for his presentation.

Consideration and Discussion of Visioning & Strategic Plan Proposal for the City of Eden:

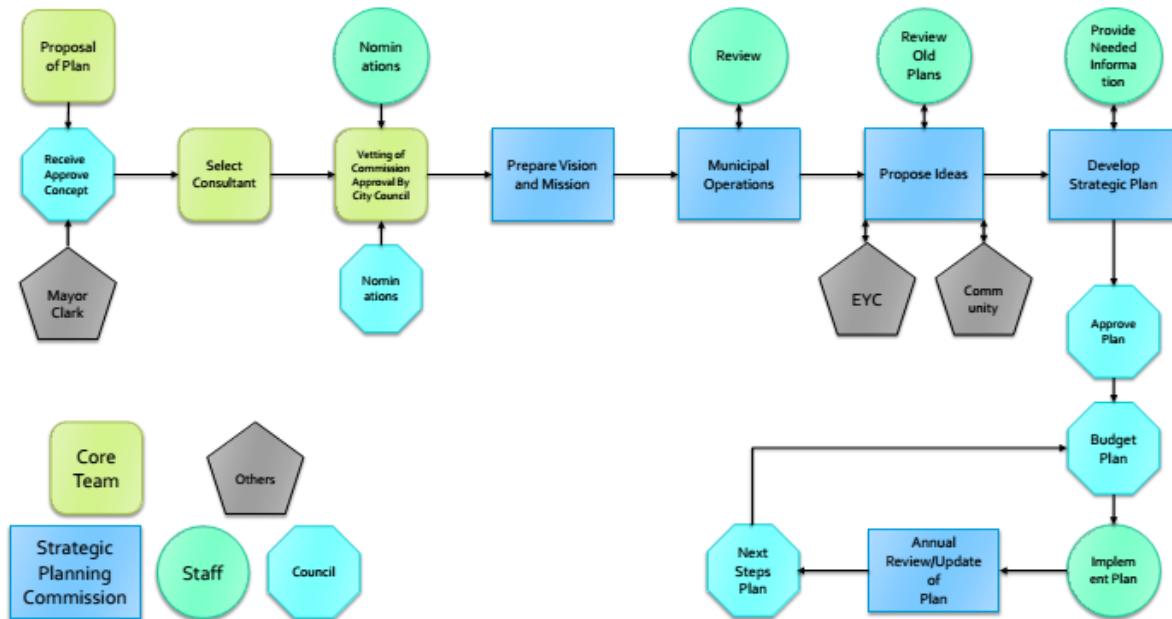
Mayor Pro Tem Burnette explained that he wanted to take a few minutes to tell them what this strategic plan proposal would be. He wanted to talk about what a vision was. He stated that it was basically a declaration of the city's objectives ideally based on economic foresight. It was intended to guide its internal decision making, here with Council as well as with the staff, to determine how the city will appear in a future successful state. That was the important key, it was that vision out there that was what you want it to be in the future to be successful. He explained that once you have that done, then you would be working on your mission. That mission basically explains what the city does and what the overall intention was.

Once you have those set, you would begin working on your strategic plan. A strategic plan was nothing more than a gathering, it is a systematic process for gathering information about what goes on, what you want to do, the interest and everything, the entire big picture if you will and you use that to establish a long term direction. He noted that direction was the key to it and specific goals and objectives and actions to get you in that direction to be successful.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette then pointed out that this was basically what the organization of a strategic plan could look like.

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Mayor Pro Tem Burnette explained that the first part of it would be a proposal, along with Mayor Clark's presentation. Later if the council decided this is what they need to do and how to go about it then they would approve going forward with the process of developing a strategic plan. If that was the case then they would probably put out an RFP to select a consultant. So once that RFP was put out then they would be selecting a professional consultant.

Then they would be setting up the commission that would be approved by the City Council, with input from city staff, City Council or anybody who wants to have some say-so as to who should be involved in that. There would be about 20 in that group who would be going out and collecting a lot more information from a lot more people.

Once this group was named and approved they would be learning about the municipal operations. Staff would be there to help with information. Then this group would be proposing ideas and to get these ideas they would be pulling information from old plans. He pointed out that there were plans out there that have been developed such as the Eden 2005 Plan and there were plans in place such as the transportation plan, greenway plan, and Mr. Farmer was getting ready to do a Parks & Recreation Master Plan, so all of that information would go into what they need to know.

He stated that Mayor Clark mentioned they set up a youth council. The City of Eden was fortunate in that they already have a youth council, so their input can be utilized along with any other leaders, community, focus groups, whatever information they would need.



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Council Member Carter asked about the people who had attended the past Citizens Academy.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette replied that he thought any of those people were possibilities. He added that he thought that you have to make sure that you are going to get the commitment to stay with the process. They would also need to appoint a couple of extra people because they would probably have a few people who will drop by the wayside to begin with. He explained that one thing about this, it was not your normal leaders within the city. There were people who may not have been involved before but want to be involved.

Council Member Ellis questioned if the only one who chose the commission was the mayor to which Mayor Pro Tem Burnette replied he thought that was correct. Council Member Ellis asked if the council offered any suggestions or if the mayor did it all.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette explained that was the way they did it, but that was not what he was proposing. He added that Mayor Clark was not mayor at that time.

He explained that basically they take all this information, gather whatever they need and then they start developing this strategic plan and again city staff was there to provide whatever information was needed but it was this commission that was developing this strategic plan with the guidance of a consultant. Once that was done, then it would need approval by the City Council.

Once the plan was approved, he talked about Lexington's 10 priorities, well they would have to have to start budgeting for aspects of this plan. Remember, the whole side of this was you had the whole community developing this plan. So you start budgeting parts of the plan. You certainly could not do it all in a year, you would set your priorities.

He added that he thought the strong part of this was once you budgeted of course you ask the staff to implement it and then what their group thinks would be great would be to have an annual review and update of this plan, hopefully by the same group if you can hopefully pull most of them back together. Once that was done, it was given back to the City Council to say here are the next priorities and things that need to be done within budgeting this plan the following year.

Ms. Kelly Stultz, Director of Planning & Inspections stated that she thought that would be something that would be perfect for the council retreat. It was a look at what they have done and where they might want to go.

Why you should not approve the process:

- Cost-Estimated cost of process and plan is \$65,000 to \$90,000.
- We cannot afford to spend that amount of money
- It is the wrong time to do this.
- We do not need a Strategic Plan

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- You will not support a budgeting \$ each year for the Plan recommendations.
- We can get the same information without going through this process.

Why you should approve the process:

- We can get the same information without going through this process.
- A strategic plan gives direction for success
- Improved effectiveness by:
- Connection to the budget
- Involves certain aspects of planning process
- Extent of stakeholder involvement
- All successful organizations have a strategic plan
- The Lexington Experience
- We will have what the community wants for Eden
- Research has shown that even if best practices in strategic planning are followed, to be truly accountable to the community, citizens MUST participate
- “It is equally important that policymakers and professionals formulate the visions, goals, and objectives of their strategic plans with the benefit of public input. To do otherwise invites the criticisms that even the most efficiently performing local governments lack relevance in the eyes of their citizens/customers and reinforces perceptions of the citizen’s inefficacy.”
- We will have specific budget items each year desired by the community
- The strategic plan should be updated annually to ensure it is a living working document
- The strategic plan should be integrated with the annual budget
- All departments should align their budget requests to department and City goals and objectives.
- We are involving more citizens for total understanding and input
- This not only is the RIGHT time, it is a MUST time. It is more needed now than ever before
- The entire process is expected to take 18-24 months
- Payment for this process can be over a three year period
- There is already \$30,000 budgeted for this process in the 2015-2016 budget
- There can be another \$30,000 budgeted in 2016-2017 year and the remainder in 2017-2018

Council Member Epps stated that they were actually doing this on a smaller scale now. They have presented their 3 to 5 year outlook to the City Manager and that was from constituents, so that just needed to be enlarged.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette replied that it would have to be enlarged. He added that they needed to keep in mind that they were all talking to different people (constituents), and he may be getting input from someone that maybe Councilman Ellis or Carter would not be getting. They would be getting input from different people so they did not have a total direction.

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Council Member Epps suggested they need to brainstorm all the stuff that they have been told to come down to a strategic plan to which Mayor Pro Tem Burnette replied that if they decided not to go this route then that was another option as well, but that was basically what you do, it was a strategic plan and you brainstorm all these things.

Council Member Moore pointed out that unless you tie in the citizens you have to get them on board, that was going to be the key to it to which Mayor Pro Tem Burnette agreed.

Council Member Ellis stated that they had to be successful with the ones who were going to make that commitment for a 3 year period for 36 months. You could get a broad base.

Council Member Epps asked how they selected those 30 people to which Ms. Stultz replied that she had heard from various consultants at planning conferences that sometimes the Council just pick the people or sometimes there was a notice put out for volunteers. They really did need to make sure that the demographic of this group was as close to the demographic of Eden and also they need people who did not grow up here as well.

Council Member Ellis stated that he had heard they could not get people to participate at the Chamber of Commerce and here they were asking people to make a 36 month commitment.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette pointed out that it was not that much to which Council Member Ellis replied that it was a broad range, but it was monthly.

Ms. Stultz stated that some communities have done it in a more streamlined manner.

Council Member Ellis stated that the people were not going to make money doing it and Council Member Moore commented that you have to look at the big picture.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette stated that they did not need to get bogged down in the details. He thought they have to understand that the details would have to be worked out.

Ms. Stultz added that would come after a consultant was hired.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette agreed and it did have to match the demographics, there has to be a commitment so all those things have to be in place.

Council Member Moore added that it was not going to happen overnight.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette stated that he had shared his thoughts on this and now he had asked Ms. Stultz, Cindy Adams (Tourism & Event) and Mike Dougherty (Business & Economic Development) to also share their perspectives on doing this as well.

Ms. Adams stated that her perspective was kind of unique because she had worked at the Chamber of Commerce and the city and her job has been nothing but one big plan. So she

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did believe in planning. She pointed out that they were all dealing with strategic planning whether they knew it or not. You plan vacations, weddings, send kids to college, you do not just go out and do it, you plan it. You know what your outcome was going to be and you figure out how to get there. All these require both short and long term planning. It was a roadmap to successfully move from where they were now to where they want to be. They personally see planning as being proactive. She believed the process was as strong as the team that was in place. She believed that they have the team in place to make it work.

She stated that as a tourism and event coordinator who promotes all the outdoor amenities their community has to offer planning even in the best of times can be stressful but if you are not organized it can be an overwhelming disaster.

She then presented a selection of all the events and explained that they plan all these things that they see here, they plan, they implement, they review, they critique and then they adjust. She explained that they do that every single time. Some things have dropped by the wayside because of this process that does not work, it does not fit anymore, some things have been added because of this process but it entails hundreds of hours, lots of moving parts and lots of stakeholders just as any strategic plan does. She stated that she thought that if their city decided to move forward with this vital process they have an opportunity to instill pride back in their community to generate exciting new ideas to get their community both intellectually and emotionally vested in their future to find their unique fit and be responsive to their citizens. Just as Mayor Pro Tem Burnette said, a successful plan includes realistic priorities important for citizens. They narrow that communication and enhance efficiency and effectiveness and that helps to define their community and she believed all of that was possible.

She closed by stating that one of her favorite quotes, and it kind of tied into all this, “tell them they forget, show them they remember, involve them they finally understand”.

Ms. Stultz explained that she would really like to hear what people say. She asked them to recall a comment that she made last year at the council retreat and they were talking about spending money on code enforcement that had to do with aesthetics and she said all of that was dependent on a political wheel of their elected officials and the staff to take the heat, to do the right things in the right order. She explained that a lot of the sewer problems that the present City Council was faced with came from the fact that a failure to plan and identify what the needs were from back several years ago. They really cannot wait anymore. Their resources were limited and their failures in the past were just that. So she believed that what they really need to do was be more proactive rather than reactive. She pointed out that if they could not commit to the process and move forward with it, then they should not do it. She added that she had come to the conclusion that waiting to do it was not going to help them at all.

Council Member Moore agreed that something probably should have been done 20 years ago.

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Mayor Pro Tem Burnette pointed out that success breeds success.

Mr. Dougherty presented some events and plans that had been done in the past. He explained that none were accepted by the City Council and some had no input by staff so they really did not go anywhere. He noted that when Mr. Corcoran came in he started addressing the water and sewer issues but by then it was a little too late because of the situation the city was in now. So, that shows that not planning does not help matters. He pointed out some of the time frames that other communities have. The Research Triangle Park started in 1955. Greenville, South Carolina started with their downtown in 1977. The Danville Regional Foundation began doing some fantastic things with their river district and Winston-Salem was becoming the new Asheville and has just landed Mast General Store. Other communities are looking out 10, 20, 30 or 40 years with plans. He explained that it was not going to solve their problems but really no one does it well without having some type of plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Burnette stated that they all have heard a lot of information so think about it and if they have questions just let them know, they will try to finalize this at their budget retreat to give them time to think about it and decide what they want to do. As there were no other questions Mayor Pro Tem Burnette turned the meeting over to Mayor Tuggle.

Council Member Ellis thanked Mayor Pro Tem Burnette for presenting this plan.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Council Member Carter seconded by Council Member Epps to adjourn. All Council Members present voted in favor of this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sheralene S. Thompson City Clerk

ATTEST:

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Wayne Tuggle, Sr., Mayor