



**Municipal Building**

**Minutes of the Burlington  
City Council Work Session**  
425 S. Lexington Avenue, Burlington, NC  
5:00pm - Monday, March 6, 2023

Mayor Jim Butler presided.

**Council Members Present:**

Mayor Jim Butler  
Mayor Pro Tem Harold Owen  
Council Member Robert Ward  
Council Member Kathy Hykes  
Council Member Ronnie Wall

**Council Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:**

City Manager, Craig Honeycutt  
City Attorney, David Huffman  
City Clerk, Beverly Smith

Alan Balog, Scott Bibler, Michael Blair (PTRC), Peter Bishop, Sherri Hamlett, Isabella De La Garza, Rachel Kelly, Nolan Kirkman, Jamie Lawson, Todd Lambert, Morgan Lasater, Tony Laws, Brian Long, Amanda Lloyd, Chris Marland, Jay Mebane, Mike Nunn, Bob Patterson, Peggy Reece, Paige Shepard, Gary Smith, and John Vernon

**Media:** Alamance News, Tomas Murawski and Burlington Times News, Robby Nelms

Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

**A) Resolution Approving the Creation of a New HOME Housing Consortium**

PTRC, Community Development Director, Michael Blair presented on the City's plans to create a new HOME Consortium since consortium with Greensboro dissolved as of October 1, 2022. He explained how a new HOME Consortium can be created to continue to provide housing services to low-income residents of Burlington and Alamance County. He reported the HOME Program has a minimum threshold of population and other metrics that combined must exceed \$750,000 in potential annual allocations in order to start a new Consortium. He noted Alamance County (including Burlington's population) alone, and even when adding Caswell combined, does not meet that threshold which led to Burlington being a CDBG grantee, as the best candidate to be the participating jurisdiction or grantee, adding Caswell, Davidson, Randolph, and Rockingham, to make the new Consortium eligible for approximately \$2.3 million dollars annually for eligible HOME activities; Homeowner rehabilitation, rental development and rehabilitation, tenant based rental assistance or TBRA, and new homeowner housing development (i.e. habitats). He reported on the following steps for the process;

- The City of Burlington submits to HUD a letter, signed by the proposed consortium authorized official (can be Manager or Mayor), announcing the intent to form the consortium on March 1, 2023. This step has been completed.

- Individual members resolutions should be sent along with the fully executed HOME consortium agreement by June 30, 2023
- These items must also be submitted prior to June 30, 2023
  - State Certification (Required for all new consortia).
  - Consortium Agreement.
  - Legal opinion. i.e., allowed to do this.

City Council and staff discussed the consortium. City Council was asked to consider approving the City of Burlington as the lead entity for the new consortium in 2024 and adoption of the recommended Resolution supporting the creation of the Eastern Piedmont NC HOME Consortium.

Following discussion, City Council consensus was to place an addition to the March 7, 2023, City Council Meeting consent agenda to adopt the recommended Resolution and support Burlington as the lead entity.

**B) Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) Action Plan (Rainey Street Area)**

Chief Code Enforcement Officer Chris Marland provided a status update and summary of the City’s Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) Action Plan for the Rainey Street, Grace Avenue, and Ireland Street area. He reported on a multi-departmental approach involving staff group that collaboratively works together to assess and address areas of concern as requested by City Council. He shared feedback on areas addressed include areas such as abandoned/disabled vehicles, criminal activity/trespassing/loitering, boarded-up houses, property maintenance, litter, infrastructure, and lighting concerns.

Mr. Marland presented on the following action steps by Code Enforcement and Planning Department;

- Coordinate the overall efforts with all departments in this area.
- Make contact with the individual that Mayor Butler referenced at 2/6 work session and further explore those concerns
- Address any minimum housing or code enforcement efforts in the area and will continue to respond to others in the area.
- Code Enforcement Subsequent Action:
  - 6 trash and debris cases
  - 1 front yard parking case
  - 3 inoperable vehicle cases
  - 2 dilapidated outbuilding cases
  - 3 minimum housing cases
  - 2 abandoned house cases
  - 3 projects without permit cases
- Continue to monitor the area proactively looking for violations.
- Engage Inspections as needed for any building code related issues

Staff from various departments including Burlington Police Department, Community Engagement, Public Works, and Transportation reported on action plans and areas addressed in their areas of expertise.

Assistant Chief Alan Balog presented on the following action steps by the Burlington Police Department:

- Surveyed door-to-door on Rainey Street

- Concerns included dark lighting, people asking for money, revving engines and stop sign violations.
- Officer canvass of neighborhood
  - Many residents said it is a good neighborhood.
  - Code violations (and suspected violations) were referred to Code Enforcement
- Speed Survey in 1000 block of Rainey Street
  - Westbound: 4,466 total cars – less than 1% over speed limit (max 49 mph)
  - Eastbound: 4,275 total cars – 4% over speed limit (max 51 mph)
- Increased strategic patrol to prevent crime and increase confidence in public safety.
- Revitalize Neighborhood Watch Group
  - Group is not currently active
  - Follow-up to our first door-to-door survey will ask residents to join a neighborhood watch group and attend a meeting.
- Expansion of Public Safety Cameras (ongoing 8+ year program)
  - 2 cameras planned for Ireland Street
  - Working with Duke Energy
- Gunshot Detection
  - Preliminary evaluation complete
  - Identifying funding sources and implementation
- “If you see something, say something!” – Burlington Police Department is ready to help!

Community Engagement Manager, Morgan Lasater presented on the following action steps by Community Engagement;

- Seek ways to further educate residents in this area about our Burlington Connected non-emergency reporting tool (Updates will be made to this system in the coming months – more information coming soon).
- Work with Police Department to identify ways to educate residents on how to report criminal activity and encourage them to do so.
- Work with PD to assess if there are any community watch groups or community leaders in the area that may be helpful with engaging the community.
- Will update council on recent efforts and changes to Burlington Connected reporting tool. There will be an educational campaign in the Spring.
- Working to design and mail targeted postcard mailers to the effected neighborhoods highlighting non-emergency reporting tool and Crime Stoppers.

Public Works Director Gary Smith reported on the following action steps by Public Works;

- Completed the right of way litter pickup on Rainey and Ireland Streets on 2/10.
- Continue litter collection efforts in the balance of the area over the next couple weeks.
- Assess street infrastructure to determine any maintenance needs.
- Assess the area for any potential solid waste issues that may need addressing (carts left at curb, banned landfill items, etc.).
- Cleaned the entire stretch of Ireland Street from Apple Street to Gilmer St. on 2/24/23. Several bags of trash were collected along with a tire and furniture.

Transportation Director Mike Nunn reported on the following action steps by BDOT;

- Assessed streetlights on Rainey and Ireland: all were working as of 2/16...will be assessing streetlights in the balance of the area to determine if any additional lighting may be warranted or beneficial for safety.
- Evaluating street name signs and accelerating scheduled replacements

- Started replacing all street name signs in the area with the new standard hi-visibility street name signs; it will take about a month to complete the installations.
- Replaced faded No Parking Signs on Rainey Street.
- Will work with PD to assess driver behavior that may warrant follow-up action.
- Updated bike route signage at 304 S. Ireland St. and 606 Rainey St.
- Deployed Radar Feedback signs to monitor and evaluate speeds at 1013 and 1116 Rainey Street on February 9, 2023, for two weeks (February 23, 2023).
- Previously evaluated Rainey Street between May 31 – June 15, 2022, where the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds did not exceed the posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The previous study was a speed complaint from a citizen by Piedmont Natural Gas (1116 Rainey Street).
- Deployed radar feedback signs for collecting speed data at 112 and 117 S. Ireland Street to check for speed compliance.

Mayor Butler recognized the phenomenal work performed by city staff over this period to address these significant concerns and the cross communication within the departments which helped expedite the response.

Council Member Wall recognized the great job and response from City staff.

Council Member Ward expressed appreciation to City staff and commented on the outstanding response and the difference it makes to the Burlington residents.

Council Member Hykes commented on the outstanding job by city staff and expressed hope that the residents will take additional responsibility in doing their part to keep these areas maintained.

### **C) Litter Collection Update**

Public Works Director Gary Smith reported on the following Public Works litter collection efforts throughout the community.

Mr. Smith explained that around the end of January, Public Works began seeing an increase in the number of calls about litter. Street Division crews alternate weeks on Friday to clean roadways for the entire day. Solid Waste has a two-person crew that is primarily assigned to servicing the Parks.

Mr. Smith reported on staff recommendations for a more proactive approach including continued monitoring of areas the City services and document concerns, work with local groups to assist in collection efforts, and organized collection days for clean up days locally.

### **D) Burlington Connected – Relunched as Fix It, Burlington!**

Public Information Specialist John Vernon joined by Finance Services Manager Amanda Lloyd presented on the City’s current resident service request program Burlington Connected and the software affiliated, reported on areas that need to be addressed with inefficiencies of the software, proposed new software to better service multiple departments, and the rebranding efforts associated with the relaunch.

Mr. Vernon explained the implementation of a more effective software program to allow residents to easily use the tools and address the challenges of the current system. He discussed proposed marketing, signage, and communication tools to notify the public of the program that the city hopes to launch in mid-April 2023.

Ms. Lloyd explained how the software will no longer require departments to duplicate entries in the newly integrated system which addresses significant work order issues in using the current program.

Mr. Vernon further explained that the work orders completed by staff would automatically respond to the requestor rather than the employees having to manually respond to the requestor after work is completed.

Following a brief discussion, City Council consensus was to proceed as proposed with relaunching the program for Fix It, Burlington!

### **E) Economic Development Incentive Policy & Grant Program Update**

Economic Development Director Peter Bishop joined by Economic Development Graduate Fellow, Isabella De La Garza presented on options to consider for updating, modernizing, and creating greater Council flexibility within the City's Economic Development Incentives policy. He shared background on the City of Burlington's first economic development incentive policy was created in 2003-04 and last updated in 2012. During extensive strategic planning and programming updates in 2020-21, Staff recommended, and City Council supported revisiting the economic development incentive policy to better meet the needs of existing industry and newly locating companies. Council also expressed interest in providing geographically targeted funding to support commercial corridors and struggling neighborhoods in Burlington. He explained options for Council to consider in reforming the City's official policies related to inducing new job creation and development in Burlington.

Mr. Bishop provided an overview of a proposed Priority Corridors program that would be funded using Council's economic development fund within the City General Fund. He reported staff is proposing a 3-year program with a total cost of \$1,000,000. The incentive guidelines costs are determined by City Council at individual incentive request approvals; there is no established line-item budget. He explained eligible applicants, available funds, grant determination, and proposed application process.

Mayor Butler inquired about who would be involved in the approval process if the target is to award a project with more than the max amount.

Mr. Bishop explained that for very large redevelopment projects, the City of Burlington Economic Development and Priority Corridor Grants Review Committee as well as the City Manager, reserve the right to consider a larger award on a case-by-case basis and availability of funding. He explained that due to the policy still being in draft format, if the council wished to be involved in this process as well, the policy could be revised to include that stipulation.

Ms. De La Garza commented on the research involved and conversations held with other economic development teams in the area, including the Charlotte area, and how this proposal applied the feedback including that collected in conversations with local business in the Burlington area.

Mr. Bishop and City Council discussed the proposed policy and grant program benefits, guiding principles, economic incentive goals, flexibility built in for City Council, and discussed examples of desired outcomes of economic incentives. He addressed qualifying businesses, incentive request approval process, and priority corridor grant program details.

Mr. Bishop displayed maps of the possible opportunity corridors and expressed that these zones are flexible and can be changed at the request of City Council.

Mayor Butler commented that although the corridors of Burlington are very important to the overall experience of the city, there are other geographical areas that would benefit as well. He emphasized the importance of investing in the city comprehensively.

Following discussion, City Council consensus was for staff to proceed with preparations and refinement of a finalized draft proposal for consideration of adoption at a future meeting.

#### **F) Utility Request – 308 MacArthur Lane (PID 118040)**

Planning Director Jamie Lawson presented a staff report on a commercial utility request initiated by the property owner at 308 MacArthur Lane for a water and sewer connection to serve a commercial use. According to City Code Section 40.40 and the City of Burlington Utility Connection Request Procedure such utility connection requests located outside the corporate limits must be considered by City Council and must accompany an annexation petition. She reported staff is recommending the utility request be approved, since the property is located with the City's ETJ, and there are zoning and development controls in place.

She requested City Council consider an addition to the March 7, 2023, Council Meeting for consideration to approve the utility connection for commercial purposes and execute the annexation agreement to file at the Alamance County Register of Deeds.

Following discussion, City Council consensus was to place an addition as recommended to the March 7, 2023, City Council Meeting agenda.

#### **G) Boards & Commissions Reports**

Planning Director Jamie Lawson presented a staff report on the following rezoning applications proposed for public hearings at the March 21, 2023, City Council Meeting;

ITEM 1: REZONING-23-001: Mr. Rob Sessoms, applicant, to present a request to rezone property from Light Industrial (LI) to General Business – Limited Use (GB-LU). The property is located on the north side of N. Mebane St., east of the intersection of S. Graham Hopedale Rd. and N. Mebane St., addressed as 2002 N. Mebane St. and consisting of Alamance County Tax Identification Number 171022.

She reported at its February 27, 2023, meeting, the Planning & Zoning Commission voted to recommend *approval* of this request (6 votes in favor and 0 votes against).

ITEM 2: REZONING-23-003: Mr. Richard Angino, applicant, to present a request to rezone property from Light Industrial (LI) to General Business – Limited Use (GB-LU). The property is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of S. Graham Hopedale Rd. and Hanover Rd., addressed as 804 S. Graham Hopedale Rd. and consisting of Alamance County Tax Identification Number 172001, excluding the existing area zoned Conditional Industrial (CI 784) and the portion located within the City of Graham's jurisdiction.

She reported at its February 27, 2023, meeting, the Planning & Zoning Commission voted to recommend *approval* of this request (5 votes in favor and 1 recusal).

#### **H) City Manager Report**

City Manager Honeycutt expressed appreciation to City staff and the public on input session for the Paramount Theater renovation project plans.

He expressed appreciation to Public Information Specialist John Vernon on the successful coordination organization of the groundbreaking event for the Burlington Athletic Stadium Entertainment Venue.

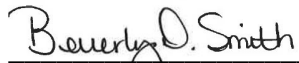
He recognized six students in attendance visiting from a class he's teaching at Elon University visiting from the class he's teaching on Local Government. The students gave introductions.

Mayor Butler commented on a report that was done by FOX8 on the vacancies of law enforcement in the area and the report referenced Burlington as the place for law enforcement officers to work. He asked that Chief Long update council and staff on the number of vacancies in his department.

Chief Long updated City Council on the current vacancies at Burlington Police Department, position on lateral hires including four in January 2023, on track to hire 4 more in March, and looking at application for similar hires in April 2023.

**I) Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.



Beverly D. Smith, CMC, NCCMC, City Clerk

March 6, 2023, Work Session