



AGENDA

INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD MEETING

**Trinity City Hall Annex
6703 NC Highway 62
Monday, June 1, 2015
6:00 pm**

Members Present: Vice Chairman, Andrew Davis; **Committee members:** Deborah George-Thompson, James Kirkman, and Ambrose Rush.

Absent: Council Liaison, Debbie Frazier

Others Present: Mayor, Jesse Hill; Council member, Jerry Daniels; Stormwater Administrator / Public Works and Utilities Director, Rich Baker; Debbie Hinson, City Manager, Annette de Ruyter, Assistant City Clerk; Randy McNeill, Engineer, DMP; Deputy; Eric Wilson and other interested parties.

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Davis called the Meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chairman Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Invocation

Mayor Jesse Hill led the invocation at the request of Vice Chairman Davis and members of the Infrastructure Committee.

4. Review, Amend if needed, and Approve Agenda.

Vice Chairman Davis called for any changes to the proposed June 01, 2015 Meeting Agenda. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the June 01, 2015 Meeting Agenda.

Member Rush made a motion to approve the June 01, 2015 Meeting Agenda as written. The motion was seconded by member Thompson and approved unanimously by a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays.

New Business

5. Approve March 2, 2015 Minutes

Vice Chairman Davis opened this item and called for changes to the March 2, 2015 Minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Member Rush made a motion to approve the March 2, 2015 minutes as written. The motion was seconded by member Kirkman and approved unanimously by a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays.

6. Discussion on the Streetlight moratorium:

Mr. Baker asked members if after reviewing the Streetlight Policy enclosed in their packet if there were any questions or proposed changes they would like to discuss to the policy itself.

Member Deborah George Thompson asked if this was the original Streetlight Policy or if there was a previous version adopted. If so, are we able to see that policy, any minutes relating to a previous policy, or has there been an amendment to the original policy.

Mr. Baker said this policy was adopted in 2001 and to his knowledge there have been no amendments to the policy.

Member Deborah George Thompson replied that she was under the impression streetlights were to be installed on main thoroughfares within the city.

Mr. Baker discussed the order of installation and the three (3) key design pieces to this policy. The order of installation was the main thoroughfares first, collector roads (side roads) second, and the neighborhoods third.

Mr. Baker asked members if there were any changes they would like to see made to the policy itself.

Member Deborah George Thompson was concerned about losing franchise tax and how the City would pay for streetlights should the Franchise Tax be discontinued. It was her understanding that should this tax be discontinued the funding for streetlights would be paid for by General Fund revenues.

Mr. Baker replied that the City currently pays \$ 6,629/monthly for streetlights located in the City. In 2014-2015 the revenues collected from Franchise Tax was \$218,763.13.

It was her understanding that should this tax be discontinued the funding for streetlights would be paid for by General Fund revenues.

Mr. Baker replied that should this happen this item would need to be revisited to find another funding source. It would be Council's decision how they would like to handle this situation should it occur.

Member Deborah George Thompson discussed her opinion concerning how the General Fund would have to sustain funding in the amount of approximately \$72,000.00 annually should the state decide to withhold these revenues without a property tax increase. The Franchise Tax is not a sure thing.

Mr. Baker commented that it would be his suggestion that a moratorium be placed on this policy should the tax be eliminated.

Member Deborah George Thompson commented that currently the electric bills for the streetlights are currently paid by the Franchise Tax. "Currently, there is discussion out there that we could possible lose the Franchise Tax."

Member Kirkman stated “that anything was a possibility that something would go away.” What we are discussing is what we would like to do now. Do you want to make this a contingency in the recommendation or discuss it now?

Member Deborah George Thompson stated “it was my understanding that the original policy, streetlights were for main thoroughfares, and places like the post office and the I-85 corridors.”

Mr. Baker referred members to the bottom of page 2 and the top of page 3 in the policy (attached at the end of this document). The original policy included the arterials, the collectors, and the locals in that order. All three of these were approved at that time.

Manager Hinson continued the discussion by confirming that the city has tried to complete streetlights on some of the larger main thoroughfares and this was some the reason for the streetlight costs. She discussed the criteria set in this policy. In order for a petition to move forward there must be a 75% majority that agrees to petition for the streetlight installation. No single person may submit a petition.

There was discussion between Member Deborah George Thompson and other members concerning the 75% criteria established. Member Deborah George Thompson felt that 75% is not a true majority while Member Kirkman replied that 51% was considered a majority. She agreed with the summation concerning the 51% but asked what about the desires of 25% that did not want streetlights. She was concerned whether 75% was a large enough majority and asked if maybe the committee should consider increasing the majority.

Council member Kirkman felt this was a super majority since only 68% majority qualified for a veto.

Member Deborah George Thompson also discussed the streetlights in the Steeplegate development. She asked how it came about that the City installed streetlights at every other house in this community and pays the costs associated with the electricity to operate these lights. She felt this opened the door for every subdivision to request streetlights and would like for the City to pay the bill.

Manager Hinson discussed the question concerning the streetlights in the Steeplegate development. The decision concerning streetlights in Steeplegate was determined by prior Council. This request was considered more than once. The Steeplegate development has decorative lighting that was installed as the subdivision was developed. The City does not request nor pay for decorative lighting. In order for the City to assume streetlight costs for this subdivision, the Homeowners Association paid in excess of \$80,000.00 to Duke Energy to compensate for the difference in normal streetlight costs compared to decorative streetlight installation costs. Council approved the standard rate of payment for this development.

Mr. Baker discussed the current requirement in the City’s Subdivision Ordinance that makes installation of streetlights mandatory. To change this would require a change in the Ordinance. That is why some subdivision such as Mr. Davis’s has streetlights.

Member Deborah George Thompson discussed the fact that not every subdivision in the City had streetlights paid for by the City.

Member Kirkman reiterated this was due to Council action. I live in the City of Trinity and don’t have sewer and some people have sewer. I don’t like it but I can either move or learn to love it.

Member Deborah George Thompson felt this seemed that a fair precedent was not being set. If you are going to give some people streetlights then you should give everyone streetlights or people are not going to like it if their property taxes go up.

Member Kirkman stated “unless the Council changes it and they meet the criteria, then they are eligible for streetlights.” He asked Mr. Baker for confirmation of 75% criteria.

Mr. Baker confirmed the 75% criteria and said Council is still going to have to release the moratorium prior to any additional streetlights.

Member Deborah George Thompson felt until the city grew with additional businesses that are paying the higher tax rate we probably should have never taken on the sewer. We have a 20 or 30 million dollar bill or more than that we must pay. Mr. Baker discussed the number of property owners that had failing septic systems at the time sewer was undertaken. They had no way to expand their septic system and that is why the sewer came about.

Member Kirkman felt that providing amenities was one way to grow a city. Chairman Davis felt this discussion represented a growing pain for the City and was the general consensus of the members.

After this discussion, Mr. Baker advised members that if there was not anything that they wanted to change in the policy he would be presenting the other half of this proposal. Changes to the policy if any will be part of the decision that you will make tonight.

After discussion concerning changes to the policy and none were suggested, Chairman Davis asked Mr. Baker to present the remainder of the request.

Mr. Baker began the next section of the review by asking members to look at the prioritized projects as provided in the packet. Numbers 1 thru 4 are already completed. The Darr Lake Road Project is not listed but should have been. This order is not exact as to who came in first. We originally prioritized the listing by when we received approved projects. The other projects listed are verified not approved. Due to the moratorium placed on this item we have not been able to go any further with them. With that being said the City is lucky to get 2 project per year completed. It takes a considerable amount of time to have the plans completed and approved by Duke Energy, the State, and then the final approval and installation by Duke Energy.

He asked for any changes or recommendations that the committee would like to make to the order as shown. Currently the order is Trinity Road (entire length), Merle and Collins, Lakewood Subdivision, Ronniedale Road (entire length), and Darr Lake Area.

Chairman Davis asked if this was the last order of installation.

Mr. Baker stated "this was the last order approved by Council" before the moratorium which stopped any further progress. You may make recommendations to change this order.

This list has been tweaked a little bit. The I-85 Finch Farm Road and I-85 and Hopewell Church Road were moved up because they were located at the interchanges. Manager Hinson shared that there were also complaints concerning these two areas from residents. They could not see to make the turn from these areas onto I-85.

Mr. Baker asked if anyone had any other ideas on changes to the order or to recommend some other sub-division ahead of another one.

Mr. Baker confirmed to members that revenues verses costs had already been reviewed and called for any questions regarding this item.

Member Kirkman asked if there is a contingency on Franchise Tax.

Manager Hinson informed members there was no contingency on this item. This revenue is generated by the State. She explained that these funds were paid to the state by utility companies and the state determines the amount shared to the individual municipalities. As with any State generated revenues they may take this away at any time.

She gave some examples such as limiting the amount of streetlights to be installed annually, or staggered years, or you could set a limit on additional expenditures allowed within a set time period.

She discussed how the general public not involved in government may perceive the amount of revenue received from this source and compare it to the amount of expenditures made to this program. They may turn the tables on the municipality by comparison of this scenario and ask since this money is being spent for other expenditures in the General Fund are you being fair to us to deny us this amenity.

She reiterated other alternatives such as limiting the amount spent, or change the criteria.

Member Deborah George Thompson reiterated her feelings concerning the City assuming more debt that may cause property taxes to increase in a few years.

Mr. Baker reviewed the direction staff was seeking from this committee tonight. We need a recommendation positive or negative to forward to the City Council.

Chairman Davis asked how many homes were served, the number of lights installed, and the costs to provide this service if continued.

Mr. Baker advised members that he did not have that information broken down by subdivision.

Member Kirkman asked if there was a moratorium was in place why this is being considered.

Mr. Baker advised members that the subject was brought up to lift the moratorium by Council and referred to this committee for input. Does this committee want to recommend to the Council that this moratorium be lifted or stay as it is. I will need that recommendation to provide to Council at the next meeting.

After a brief discussion why and when the moratorium was put in place, *Chairman Davis made a motion to recommend lifting the moratorium with our approval and that Rich come up with some costs to finish the projects to be presented to Council at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by member Rush, and approved by a vote of 3 ayes to 1 nay cast by member Deborah George Thompson.*

After the motion there was further discussion between Mr. Baker, Chairman Davis, and members, concerning the information they would like to have presented to Council along with their recommendation. Mr. Baker was asked to investigate the costs to complete the remaining projects as well as the number of homes served in the various areas of these proposed projects along with their recommendation.

There were no recommended changes from the Committee made to the Streetlight Policy or to the Order of the Projects as presented

Old Business

None

Closing Comments

7. Comments from the Board

None

8. Comments from Staff

None

9. Adjournment

With no other business to discuss, *Member Kirkman made a motion to adjourn the June 01, 2015 Infrastructure Meeting at 6:32 pm. The motion was seconded by member Rush and approved unanimously by a vote of 4 ayes and 0 nays.*