

**MINUTES
BREVARD CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
February 11, 2011 – 8:00 AM**

Annual City Council Retreat – Day Two

The City Council of the City of Brevard recessed the annual Council Retreat on Thursday, February 10th at 7:14 PM, and reconvened the Retreat on Friday, February 11, 2011 at 8:00 AM in the Counseling Center at Schenck Job Corps with Mayor Jimmy Harris presiding.

The following elected officials were present: Mayor Jimmy Harris, Mayor Pro-Tem Mac Morrow, Council Members Larry Canady, Rodney Locks, Mack McKeller and Dee Dee Perkins.

Staff Present: City Manager Joe Moore, Fire Chief Craig Budzinski, Planning Director Josh Freeman, Water Plant Operator Buck Egerton, Bldg & Grounds Director Lynn Goldsmith, Police Chief Phil Harris, Human Resource Director LeAnn McCraw, Executive Assistant Jeanette Owen, Finance Director Terry Scruggs, and City Clerk Desiree Perry.

Press: Derek McKissock, Transylvania Times

Others Present: Retreat Facilitator Angela Owen, Heart of Brevard Executive Director Madrid Zimmerman, County Economic Development Dir. Mark Burrows, Chamber of Commerce Director Libby Freeman, and several members of the Branding Task Force.

Retreat Called to Order – Mayor Harris called the retreat to order and welcomed all present.

Bond Ratings – Terry Scruggs and Mr. Jeremy E. Fisher, Director, RBC Public and Institutional Banking, and Mr. Doug Sentura, RBC Bank.

Described and discussed bonds and the borrowing process. Bonds mean debt that is privately placed by a bank or that is issued in the public market. The type of financing depends upon the type of project as there are different types of bonds. Example: Water/Sewer would be a Revenue Bond or Public Bond. Many municipalities are finding themselves with the need to obtain loans or bonds in order to replace their infrastructure that was installed in mid to late 70's and are now out of date and in need of repair or replacement. North Carolina has one of the highest ratings in the USA and NC municipal markets are doing well. Brevard also has things going for it as the City has cash, low debt and a good rating of "A". Described the costs associated with the bond process, and, that the associated fees may be rolled into the bond.

Follow-up Workshop: Council interested in knowing what the cost to take a bond referendum to vote for a community of our size. Will hold a future workshop to further discuss bonds and Debt Policy.

Economic Development Strategic Plan 2010-2012 – Mark Burrows

Mr. Burrows presented Transylvania County's Economic Development Strategic Plan which has been adopted by the County. Provided information on population, growth, age distribution and employment data. Described challenges: (1) Available land; (2) Infrastructure needs (water and sewer); (3) Changing demographics; (4) Financing; and (5) Requirements (local, state and national).

Council briefly discussed the value of having a Community Coordinator, a single point office for citizens and visitors to contact, as there is much going on in both the City and County.

Home Grown Economic Development – Leslie Scott, Director, Institute for Rural Entrepreneurship, NC Rural Economic Development Center

Ms. Scott shared self employment is the gateway to entrepreneurship and that Transylvania County's figures for self employed and small businesses are higher than the State average. Her role (in part) is to help communities to know how to attract entrepreneurs – who are most frequently interactive and creative people, and, to assist entrepreneurs in a variety of ways, such as sharing “start up screw ups” – things that did or almost did destroy small businesses. Often people come to the area and desire to move here, and in order to do so they seek to discover what kind of business that is needed, sustainable, and would thrive. She shared a few success stories of communities like Valdese NC who are teaching entrepreneurship in the Middle Schools and Valdosta Georgia's “Economic Gardening”.

Mr. Locks stated frequently during the retreat Economic Profile figures presented have been for Transylvania County, and expressed it would be more helpful to receive figures specific to the City of Brevard.

Branding Task Force – Mr. Gordon Murray, Mr. Skip Hirsch, Ms. Tammy Hopkins and Mr. Kevin Howell, members of the Task Force.

The Task Force representatives presented a power point describing the Task Force members are people from the entire community, the expected deliverables to City Council, some branding themes, goals, objectives, strategies, tactics, and the Task Force members offer of continued support. Following is the **Task Force Report** provided to Council:

GOALS

1. Create a greater awareness of outdoor recreation, arts and music as vital economic engines for Brevard and Transylvania County.
2. Identify opportunities in outdoor recreation, arts and music to drive economic development and job creation to our community.
3. Define, organize and unify our outdoor recreation, arts and music communities in order to better leverage our assets.
4. Promote the rich diversity of the outdoor recreation, arts and music experiences in Brevard and Transylvania County to visitors and residents alike.

OBJECTIVES

1. Create a clear, concise, and compelling identity for our community (branding.)
2. Create significant new job and business opportunities in Brevard and Transylvania County.
3. Increase outside investment in the community.
4. Increase overnight visitation to the city and county.
5. Increase small meeting and group visitation to the area.

STRATEGIES and TACTICS

Strategy No. 1

Establish a mechanism for collaboration and consensus-building among key stakeholders on a community-wide basis.

Tactic

Create a Community Coordinator position. This individual would be responsible for gathering and disseminating information about all outdoor recreation, arts and music events throughout the city and county.

Action steps: Work with the city, county, TDA and other stakeholders to identify funding for community coordinator position; develop a job description and identify scope of work; establish accountability and oversight of this position.

Tactic

Develop a private, web-based “draft” calendar shared by community stakeholders that helps local organizations plan and coordinate their events, pool resources and work together more synergistically.

Tactic

Develop a public, comprehensive web-based calendar to promote all local events and community activities.

Strategy No. 2

Pursue key legislative and funding initiatives that will boost the economic benefits of outdoor recreation, art and music to the community through collaboration with city, county and state governments.

Tactic

Prioritize and fast-track the Bracken Mountain Project; complete a multi-use path from downtown to the Brevard Music Center; and resolve associated connectivity issues.

Action steps: Identify additional resources, grants and volunteer expertise that could assist in expediting these projects and overcoming obstacles.

Tactic

Equip the City of Brevard and Transylvania County with the statistical research that demonstrates why outdoor recreation, arts and music are vital components of their economic development plans.

Action steps: Share the results of the survey currently being conducted that measures the economic impact of music/arts and culture in Brevard and Transylvania County; partner with a university to conduct a comprehensive survey of the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Brevard and Transylvania County.

Tactic

Work with Transylvania County and TDA to identify feasible incentive packages that will help attract a wider variety of quality accommodations to the city and county.

Tactic

Revise specific alcohol consumption laws and ordinances in order to allow events and new cultural venues to become more economically viable, boost local tax revenue, and improve the participant experience while maintaining public safety.

Tactic

Make the two task force committees (Outdoor Recreation, Arts & Music) a standing advisory board that meets on a regular basis and collaborates with the City of Brevard and Transylvania County to refine and implement the strategies and tactics identified in this report.

Strategy No. 3

Showcase existing and potential economic opportunities supported by our outdoor recreation, arts and music resources to visitors, residents, businesses and investors.

Tactic

Maintain an inventory of outdoor recreation, arts and music assets and make it available in a central database as a resource for economic development. (In progress)

Tactic

Create an inventory of facilities (summer camps, vacant storefronts, available buildings, etc.) throughout the area that could be utilized as venues or sites for small conference, group meetings and conventions.

Tactic

Prioritize the completion of the signage and way finding program as a way to promote downtown Brevard, outdoor recreation, arts and music.

Action steps: Create banners to promote outdoor recreation, arts and music.

Tactic

Explore the feasibility of a satellite visitor's center in Pisgah Forest at the intersection of US 64 and NC 280.

Strategy No. 4

Identify new opportunities to increase the area's economic return on outdoor recreation, arts and music.

Tactic

Promote the establishment of a performance/event venue similar to Asheville's TheGrey Eagle or Greenville's The Handlebar.

Tactic

Develop and prioritize a program that provides a forum for experts in outdoor recreation, arts and music to share insights for individuals who work in the hospitality industry.

Action steps: Charge the proposed advisory board to initiate, develop and lead this program.

Tactic

Explore the viability of additional special-interest camps for children and adults. Categories could include a wide range of outdoor recreation activities, plus various specialties and disciplines in arts and music.

Tactic

Promote the sustainability of the environment through stewardship of our outdoor recreation, arts and music resources.

Action steps: Bring together stakeholders in the outdoor recreation community to develop a sustainability alliance focusing on rail and waterway preservation; create a "clean team" for outdoor recreation, arts and music events.

Tactic

Identify communities similar to ours that have been successful in capitalizing on their arts, music and outdoor assets; organize inter-city visits to these communities to learn from their successes and mistakes.

Action steps: Task the proposed advisory board to reach out to leaders in successfully branded communities to see if they would be willing to entertain a contingent from Brevard and share their successes and challenges.

Strategy No. 5

Showcase and enhance our community as a viable location for small businesses, light manufacturing especially goods and services relevant to outdoor recreation, arts and

music), and solo-preneur, and location independent professions (reference *Live First. Work Second.* By Rebecca Ryan)

Tactic

Acknowledge and embrace the reality that the immediate jobs will be in the hospitality and tourism industry and focus that job creation within our core strengths and market position.

Tactic

Promote Brevard and the Certified Entrepreneurial Community status (second certified in the state) and School of Excellence distinction through strategic marketing and public relations.

Tactic

Develop business friendly policies and incentive packages to attract retail and light manufacturing to be competitive with surrounding counties.

Action steps: Identify and emulate successful communities and their strategies for successful businesses; interview businesses that considered locating here and chose to go elsewhere to understand top reasons for locating outside our community; simplify and streamline current business policies; develop and implement a business mentoring program.

Tactic

Invest in and leverage the talents of residents who want to both create jobs AND protect the natural and cultural landscape of our community.

Action steps: Encourage curriculum development and expansion at Brevard College, Blue Ridge Community College, and high school that supports outdoor recreation, arts and music, and entrepreneurship; strongly support and publicize business development/mentorship programs such as Blue Ridge Community College, Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center, Transylvania's Business Incubator, Senior Resource Network, SCOLRE; expand mentoring programs for future business prospects to include outdoor recreation, arts and music fields.

In conclusion, the Task Force members shared their desire and willingness to continue to serve on an advisory board and to take the presentation out into the community to share in order to gain support.

Ms. Perkins asked if the Task force identified anything missing.

Mr. Hirsch shared "night life" things to do after dark and a lack of some nice quality places to stay were identified. And, as previously mentioned, a community coordinator who can assist citizens of all that is available to them, and, who can help coordinate events to help prevent event overlap.

~~ Lunch Break from 12:35PM to 1:35 PM. ~~

Discussion / Comments:

- Council expressed support for a community coordinator and to create an advisory board (as recommended).
- The Economic Strategy for the City of Brevard needs to be decided upon. The City needs a plan and a mechanism for all that's been discussed. If we (City) are going to attract and promote business we must structure it to make it a long-term sustainable Plan – a Plan that will guide City staff and elected officials for years, a Plan going beyond the time frame the current elected officials will serve.
- Don't foresee a community coordinator position growing up for any other group other than the City of Brevard.

- Community Coordinator would also look at what is going on in the community and how to promote and make it bigger and better; opportunity to help businesses and governmental agencies to coordinate with one another.
- (Libby Freeman) TDA and Chamber of Commerce staff is presently working to get their website calendar of events to be more user friendly.
- Economic Summit – Support idea of partnerships (HOB, Chamber, Transylvania County, Music Center, Hospital, School & Colleges, etc.) in order to start chipping away to start seeing some of the things that have been discussed to come to fruition. Important to move in a unified direction.
- Task Force Report – Buy in from the community at large is important. Perhaps City could sponsor or initiate Task Force members to share the same presentation to HOB, TDA, Chamber, Transylvania County, etc., stakeholders, and citizens.
- Economic Development Strategy for Brevard. City-wide goals for economic development have not been decided upon; the County has their goals and objectives, but the City does not. Summit may be a way to get all together to discuss.
- Task Force recommendations are good and exciting and it is hoped as this gains momentum that it will not only be embraced by the City but by the County as well as it will be of benefit to all of our citizens and business owners.

Council expressed their appreciation to the Task Force members for their work and commitment to the project and for their recommendations.

Follow-up Workshop: Economic Development Goals.

Retreat Wrap Up Comments:

- Schenck Job Corp facilities were nice and it was a good setting for the retreat.
- Speakers were knowledgeable in their areas and provided Council and staff with lots to think about.
- Liked this year's retreat process as it was more comprehensive than past retreats.
- Appreciate that at this year's retreat Council was presented with the big concept, bigger picture – future.
- Council expressed appreciation to Mr. Moore for his leadership and for his and staff's interaction.
- Council and staff expressed their appreciation to Ms. Owen for facilitating the retreat and keeping everyone on track.

Facilitator Notes – The notes collected from participation comments received during the two day retreat and recorded upon the easel notepads by Retreat Facilitator, Angela Owen, are attached as Exhibit A.

Adjourn – There being no further business, Mr. Morrow moved, seconded by Mr. Canady, Council's annual retreat be adjourned. Motion carried unanimously. Retreat adjourned at 2:32 PM.

Desiree D. Perry
City Clerk

Jimmy Harris
Mayor

Minutes Approved: August 15, 2011

EXHIBIT A – Minutes, Brevard City Council Annual Retreat, February 10 and 11, 2011

City Council Retreat
February 10th and 11th, 2011
Schenck Job Corps

FACILITATOR NOTES

The following were collected from participation comments received during the two-day retreat and recorded upon the easel notepads by Retreat Facilitator, Angela Owen:

GROUND RULES (as decided upon by participants):

- Everyone participates.
- Don't be afraid to speak up.
- Full understanding at the close of each topic.
- Respect.
- Cell phones on vibrate.
- One speaker at a time.
- Must sing if you arrive late.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are the natural features that have historically and consistently served as the core to generate all variations of Brevard's marketplace?
2. What marketplace do we envision as the goal for this latest transition?
3. What services do we provide to support that marketplace and its participants?
4. How do we best structure the revenue stream from this new marketplace to not only re-invest into the marketplace, but to also support the health, education, and welfare of the community attracted to that marketplace?

PARKING LOT

- How do we respond to opportunities when they arise?
- Five (5) year budget plan

SUCCESS (How do we gauge success?)

1. Clarity – Answer to the question, clear direction, or direction to come back to it and finish.
2. Defined goals from Council to staff
 - Wrt 4 questions to consider
3. Full understanding of vision moving forward from all.

GENERAL OBLIGATION RATING FACTORS

Key Questions

1. Do we generate adequate financial resources?
2. Can we and have we weathered financial storms?
3. Important to have strong and stable management team.
 - How do we manage things out of our control?
4. Can our citizens absorb more debt burden?
 - What is the proportionate debt between city and county?
5. Do we adopt financial policies that speak to debt limits or itemize what we fund through debt and what we fund through pay as you go?
6. How does Baa rating compare with other municipalities across the state (possible distinction by population)? (staff)
7. How do we adopt financial policy that dedicates revenues to expenditures?
8. How do we respond to opportunities when they arise? - **Parking Lot**
9. What exact amount is expected as deficit for city if county reevaluates property tax?
10. To cover DTMP, calculate potential worth of options (occupancy tax, special tax district, etc.)
11. What is the cost to take a bond referendum to vote?

RECREATION

1. Do we need to increase the investment in recreation?
2. Natural resource backdrop – economic engine of opportunity – tie into Branding recommendation.
3. Need to partner with other entities for resources beyond what we directly own – took broader.
4. Make it easy for the citizen to understand, for the customer to buy.
5. Need a central informational/educational center and promote it.
6. Capture momentum and move it forward.
 - Get other stakeholders engaged and on board.
7. Who is target audience for recreation - local citizen, visitor, both?

IMPACT FEES

Options

1. Leave as they are
 - Eventually raise utility rates.
2. Increase impact fees to capture higher percentage.
3. Eliminate impact fees and let utility rates cover 100%.
 - Impact fees subsidize utility rates.
 - Increase impact fees to capture higher percentage.
 - Citizens and businesses share cost through impact fee increase and utility rate increase combination.
 - Follow the trends – in small bites at a time rather than one large increase.
 - Collaborate with other stakeholders (like county) to determine future position.
 - Developers should not pay full impact fee, 25% is realistic.
 - Revisit equity issue of utility fund/general fund.
 - Identify similar communities and compare fees and rates.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

1. Understand impact of county budget before adjusting city taxes – not realistic.
2. Don't be reactionary to the county – use fund balance.
3. City needs to do what is necessary to support city budget needs.
4. City can't afford to lose dollars based on what county does.
5. If county adjusts ad valorem, city would need to react.
6. Short term – city has room in fund balance to absorb deficit.
7. Long term – city needs to position itself with other options to prevent extensive depletion of fund balance.

DTMP

1. Integrate DTMP with recognition that it covers the entire economic hub of the city.
2. New special legislation on occupancy tax.

SEWER FEE DISCUSSION

1. Risk of additional fees being perceived as “nickel & diming” citizens.

PROBART STREET / BRACKEN MOUNTAIN

1. Recognize positive impacts of connecting community to the city.
 - Education
2. Use sewer line easement running through Holcomb's
3. Probart to Cashiers Valley to Nicholson Road to Rosman

FOLLOW-UP

1. Can county and city information (tax info) be separated? (Terry)
2. Summarize why sales tax percent to city is 12.8% (Terry)
3. How does the county use the dollars from sales tax contributed from the city? (Terry)
4. Excess tap fees over budget – how to handle?

5. At what point does it become cost effective to purchase new/different vehicles to offset rising fuel costs?
 - And infrastructure to support
6. Explore feasibility of standalone recreation department.
7. Specific work session for Council on recreation topic.
8. Ensure that transfers from utility fund to general fund are equitable.
9. Council have specific workshop day to discuss financial policy, bond referendum, etc.
10. Community sharing meetings of Outdoor Recreation, Arts & Music task force presentation.
11. Create an Advisory Board to meet regularly and continue the work.
12. What is the best strategy to engage and enroll county leadership and other stakeholders in the process within the task force presentation?
13. Community Coordinator position funding.
14. Establish partnerships with other stakeholders to move work forward for Branding Task Force presentation – especially to move against small things.
15. Brevardnccalendar – Create link to calendar (visitwaterfalls.com)
16. Task Force discussion with staff:
 - Policies to streamline
 - Alcohol policies to revisit
17. Summit with key stakeholders to review Task Force presentation.
18. Establish background/context for Task Force presentation:
 - Date
 - Vision
 - Goals

FEEDBACK

1. Facilities were wonderful.
2. Best retreat we've had.
3. Adequate information without overload.
4. Thanks to Joe Moore
5. Good interaction with staff
6. Good to be at Job Corps Center; excellent host.
7. Bathrooms – Only complaint about facilities.
8. Compliments to staff – dedicated, committed, capable, daily work ethic.
9. Staff – prepared Council well.
10. Big picture, long range planning.
11. Good direction from Council.
12. Speakers – knowledge experts
13. Good food and snacks