

City of Harrington
MINUTES
City Council Workshop
February 3, 2014

A workshop with the Harrington City Council was held at Harrington City Hall, 106 Dorman Street, on February 3, 2014 and was attended by the following: Mayor Anthony R. Moyer; Vice Mayor Cheryl Lahman; Council Member Duane E. Bivans; Council Member Amy Minner; Council Member Charles W. Porter; Council Member Kenneth Stubbs; Norman Barlow, Chief of Police; William Pepper, City Solicitor; Teresa Tieman, City Manager; Dean Gary, Accountant; and Kelly Blanchies, Clerk of Council.

Also present: Debbie Pfeil, City Planner; Marie Gannon; Joe Gannon; Sandy Holloway; Richard Stombaugh; Rimal Patel; Jen Shaner; Jason Dean; Logan Anderson; Rob Rider; and Phillip White.

Council Member Fonda Coleman was absent.

Mayor Moyer called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Economic development activity update

The City Manager stated that there is a lot of good news to share from 2013. Some people have said that Harrington is not good for business, but for the most part, businesses experiences have been positive.

The City Planner presented commercial projects that occurred in 2013: The Clutter Box relocated within the City; Harrington Florist and Cakery expanded; The Bower's Group, OMG Collage, Mattlind Square, 17629 South DuPont Highway, and Amber Kaye's Thrift Store were redevelopments of vacant buildings; A2B Auto Group, Hoagie Time, Pizza King, Week's Service, and Salty Wave were new commercial rentals; Super 8, Baymont Inn and Suites, Agrolab, and O.A. Newton were new commercial owners; and Richelle Homes was a new residential development. The businesses gave feedback on why they located in Harrington and the development process. Many stated that Harrington is centrally located with potential for growth and that the City can help businesses with marketing, ribbon cuttings, and events.

The City Planner asked Rob Rider from O.A. Newton to discuss his experience with the development process. Mr. Rider stated that over a year was spent working through the environmental issues on the property with the State. When meeting with the City, it was a very good process, informational, and welcoming.

The City Planner stated that the only business in this presentation that will have to pay impact fees is Richelle Homes, because the project is new residences on undeveloped land. It is often said to waive impact fees to attract new businesses. There are currently two nearby municipalities waiving impact fees: one is using the impact fees from a large piece of municipally owned land to support downtown revitalization, and the other is waiving impact fees based on the number of jobs created.

The City Planner stated that the development process has been streamlined since 2007. Work that has been completed included the subdivision code was rewritten, fees were evaluated and justified, and a new Comprehensive Land Use Plan has been written. Rewriting of the Zoning Code will begin soon and has been budgeted for.

The City Planner stated that everyone needs to get involved. Positive comments and recommendations would be useful when rewriting the Zoning Code.

The City Planner stated that the City can promote businesses by organizing ribbon cuttings, advertising on the City's website, and making a presentation to the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce. Positive impressions of City activity leads to positive outcomes for all City of Harrington businesses.

Council Member Porter stated that the presentation was excellent, and people often hear the negative and not the positive.

Application for USDA funding

The City Manager stated that a proposal was received from Remington, Vernick, and Beach to prepare the preliminary engineering report and environmental report to complete the application for USDA funding for capital projects and refinancing. The total amount is twenty-two thousand one hundred seventy-six dollars (\$22,176).

Council Member Stubbs asked if this work was already done. The City Manager stated that it is not quite the same application process as was done before.

Council Member Porter stated that the referendum last year got voted down and some of the members of Council worked against it. Some of the inflow and infiltration could have been fixed with the money saved from refinancing. The City Manager stated that the last USDA loan was under two percent interest, and the current rate is about two and a quarter percent. Council Member Porter asked how this idea will pass when it did not a year ago. The City Manager stated that the City Council authorized Remington, Vernick, and Beach to begin discussions with the USDA, and to go forward, the City has to make applications. The City Council has to get behind it in order to sell it to the public. Hopefully the idea of refinancing so the debt service will not go up is a selling point. Council Member

Porter stated that about nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) was spent on paperwork for the last loan that did not pass the referendum. The work has to be done though, and this keeps coming up. The City Manager stated that the USDA money has to be spent within five years, so if a referendum does not pass immediately then there are another couple years to do it.

Council Member Porter stated that sewer rate increases will be discussed soon too. The City Manager stated that there is more in operating and debt service that has to be paid for. About forty percent of what is pumped to Kent County for treatment is not metered, which means it is unbillable and due to inflow and infiltration.

Council Member Porter stated that another municipality received loan forgiveness from the State Revolving Loan Fund, and Harrington could have been part of that. The City Manager stated that was because it was a health issue and because of the low income of the area.

Vice Mayor Lahman asked if both reports have to be completed. The City Manager replied yes.

Council Member Minner asked how much a resident's bill would increase. The City Manager stated that the preliminary calculation was fifteen dollars (\$15), but that is not definite, because some of it will be grants, and the City will not know anything unless it applies.

Mayor Moyer stated that some of the maps already exist. The City Manager stated that there is a lot more involved in the reports than just producing the maps.

Mayor Moyer stated that based on a phrase included in the proposal, he is concerned about the extent to which Remington, Vernick, and Beach will defend the reports they produce.

Mayor Moyer asked what delaying the decision to approve the proposal would do. Council Member Bivans stated that it should be delayed to get it right rather than do it incorrectly. The City Manager stated that there is a window of time to apply for the fiscal year, and it is running short.

Council Member Minner asked the City Manager to follow up with Tom Wilkes from Remington, Vernick, and Beach and let the City Council know what he says.

The City Manager stated that the engineering report is about what the project does, and the environmental report talks about the impact to the environment.

There being no further business, the City Council Workshop adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Blanchies
Clerk of Council