

Aberdeen City Council Work Session
February 25, 2008

- Roll Call:** The Aberdeen City Council Roll was called with the following results:
- Present:** Mayor Bennett, Council President Elliott, Councilwoman Young, Councilmen Kupferman, and Hiob
- Also Present:** Douglas Miller, City Manager
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development
Opiribo Jack, Director of Finance
Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works
Randy Rudy, Chief of Police
Monica Correll, City Clerk
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

The Aberdeen City Council Work Session was called to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers by Mayor Bennett.

1. Old Philadelphia Road

Mr. Miller stated that the presentation tonight would be to state the facts as presented by the Staff; and any additions, deletions, or corrections would be coming from the Council. The portion of Old Philadelphia Road from Rt. 715 to Rt. 40 is in disrepair and needs upgrades.

The past proposal was to improve 1,123 ft. of Old Philadelphia Road starting at station 1+02.80 (near Townhouse Restaurant) and ending at station 12+26.16 (just past Ferrell Fuel). This proposal is to increase the width to 24 ft. substandard (non-code compliant) roadway with a mountable curb and install a storm drain system.

Old Philadelphia Road is designated as a collector road by the Aberdeen Maryland Subdivision Regulations. This designation requires an 80 ft. right of way with a 48 ft. paving width (arterial 100 ROW and 48 ft. paving width). This designation is required for the following developments: WalMart (conveyed right of way/made improvements), Aberdeen Mini Storage (conveyed right of way/no improvements), Beaver Auto Body (conveyed right of way/no improvements), and VFW Post 10028 (conveyed right of way/made improvements). The following have conveyed the right of way and made improvements from Rt. 715 to Rt. 159: Cranberry Run Business Park, Price Trucking, T.I.P., Tool & Die Specialties, Inc., Horne Concrete (escrowed money), Pier I, C & S Wholesale Groceries, and Fowler Distribution Co. Inc.

Mr. Lapinsky reviewed the previous proposal and noted that BRAC work was needed at the interchange because the right in and out was not favored. Businesses may pay \$50,000 and the City may pay the remaining \$250,000.

Ms. Grover said this is a collector road, i.e. a principle traffic artery, with high volumes of traffic.

The Staff recommends the following:

1. Design the entire road from Rt. 40 to the City limits to reflect the City of Aberdeen Subdivision Regulations.
2. Prepare a budget and funding plan for the project. A front footage assessment would likely be the best option.
3. Obtain right of ways and easements as necessary.
4. Relocate utilities.
5. Construct.

Councilman Kupferman wants the common sense approach used because of the burden being placed on businesses in the area. Currently, an 80 ft. width is not needed. He would like to see a walking trail/bike path installed on the northwest side of the road. Businesses in the area have a burden with water runoff. The ultimate cure and Staff suggestions are good government and can be done at a later date.

Council President Elliott agrees with the past proposal but is unsure of the bike path because of safety.

Councilman Hiob agrees with both colleagues, widening can come at a later time. Photographs were passed around from the February 1, 2008, storm showing the drainage problems. He would like to see only the necessary changes be made because of the lack of funding.

Mr. Lapinsky noted that the original design only included, 1,123 ft. The Staff proposal includes the entire length to Rt. 159.

Mr. Miller said the Council would have to direct the Staff to build a non-compliant road and determine how to fund it.

Council President Elliott asked if this extended from WalMart to Rt. 40 only. She was told it did.

Mr. Lapinsky said storm water management was designed from Rt. 40 to Rt. 715 initially.

Councilman Kupferman asked what if the storm water only extended to WalMart. Mr. Lapinsky said it may not be designed to work properly. Councilman Hiob indicated that it could be possible but should be evaluated.

Councilman Kupferman asked for pricing both ways and the Council will review the proposal.

Councilwoman Young noted that these businesses are in a flood plain and Rt. 715 will be a major intersection and is very important. A decision should be made for the future. She favors a frontage assessment.

Mayor Bennett asked if the non-conforming road is approved, what will happen in the future. Mr. Miller said 24 ft. is narrow for the area.

Councilman Kupferman said a quick fix would serve the area well now. The Rt. 715 loop will take traffic off of Rt. 7. Aberdeen should help the businesses now and involve the government later.

Councilman Hiob agrees with Councilman Kupferman in that improvements will help the water problems with a good design. A traffic control light at Rt. 40 could help if multi-modal takes place. This road could be grandfathered in at 24 ft.

Mr. Lapinsky said drainage goes across and under the railroad and needs to be addressed.

Council President Elliott asked that the best proposals be submitted for consideration.

Councilwoman Young noted that the water shown in the pictures does not drain.

Councilman Hiob said that currently there is no storm water management.

2. Ordinance No. 736-08, Annexation Procedures Incorporated into the Development Code

Mr. Miller said the Ordinance has been introduced and copies have been distributed of the recommended and adopted changes. The following have also been distributed: a letter from Mr. Curtis Coon, a letter from Mr. Charles J. Waldron, and a letter from Ms. Karen Heavey.

Ms. Grover reviewed proposed amendments to Ordinance No. 736-08 on a line by line basis for the City Council and residents in attendance.

Councilwoman Young thanked her for the clarification.

Mr. Miller said the existing document and recommended amendments will be submitted.

Ms. Grover said the Waldron letter was discussed before the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission and the Sub-Committee.

Council President Elliott asked if there will be time for additional suggestions. Mr. Miller said a memo will be distributed with the additional amendments. This issue was kept on the agenda so the public would know work was still being done.

3. FY 09 Budget

Mr. Miller said the FY 09 Budget will not be easy. He is asking for input on employee increases and other options.

Councilwoman Young asked if Council salaries would be compared with other municipalities. Mr. Miller said the County pay scales were used in the past. Mayor Bennett noted that the City was close to, or better than other municipalities in the area.

Councilman Kupferman would like to use the \$500,000 in the Rainy Day fund to reduce taxes by \$.05. If the City needs additional money, it can make a loan.

Council President Elliott said high salary increases cannot be sustained. She would also like to see the property tax decrease. The government should be responsible for those with low incomes. The City needs to live within its budget.

Councilwoman Young feels the \$500,000 should stay in the Rainy Day Fund. The City can't depend on wishful thinking. Previously, the City could not afford the stadium. She asked for further examination of the MATRIX in the near future.

Mr. Miller said tax cuts will certainly reduce the level of services available.

Councilman Hiob agrees with Council President Elliott and Councilman Kupferman. He would like to see taxes reduced only if the numbers are sustainable with proof (without borrowing) and retain parity for employees. The \$500,000 Rainy Day fund should remain and not be used to buy down taxes. Currently, there is very little new construction. The new water treatment plant requires a City contribution of 9.6 million dollars. The budget has gone down and debt has been going up for years. Don't borrow to balance the budget.

Councilman Kupferman said additional construction will generate money; the City must grow.

Mayor Bennett does not want the Rainy Day fund to buy down taxes. The Council needs to look hard at the Budget and not borrow if it is not needed. The water plans and other upgrades will require borrowing. Meetings have been held with the State to ask for a reduction in the City's share of the 9.6 million dollars.

Council President Elliott said the City always seems to find needed money. Businesses get tax credits and grants. Parity should be kept up and belts should be tightened. The taxpayer should be considered.

Councilman Hiob noted that the City parity was comparable with Harford County last year. Thus, a large amount may not be needed to maintain parity.

Councilman Kupferman does not want the \$500,000 used for the General Fund.

Councilwoman Young stated that the \$500,000 is sacred. The City needs to operate more economically.

4. Charter Review Committee

Mr. Miller recommended the formation of a 10 member group. Each Council member and the Mayor will have one appointee and the additional 5 will be determined by the entire Council. A facilitator will be used at meetings. Recommendations will be required by Labor Day with discussion through November and the Charter Amendments adopted in December-January.

5. Other

Mr. Miller said a property swap between COPT and the City for property along Rt. 22 and property near the Public Works facility is needed. This will take place on March 3, 2008.

The Workshop was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.