

**City Council of the City of Greenville  
Work Session**

**Monday, August 23, 2021  
4:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Location:  
Greenville Convention Center  
1 Exposition Drive, Room 102**

**Virtual Meeting Viewing  
<https://www.greenvillesc.gov/meeting>**

**MINUTES**

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Knox White; Councilmember John M. DeWorken, Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming, Councilmember Kenneth C. Gibson, Councilmember Wil Brasington; Councilmember Russell H. Stall; and Councilmember Dorothy H. Dowe

CITY STAFF: City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Michael S. Pitts;  
City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor White called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

**Conference Center Update**

Brian Tennyson, LMN Architects, and his team members John Edwards with LS3P and John Kaatz with CSL provided a presentation on the proposed downtown conference center on River Street in downtown Greenville. Mr. Tennyson shared the presentation agenda which included the purpose of a downtown conference center, economic benefits, program components, and site configurations and cost.

Mr. Edwards provided a brief look of the consideration given to date, referring to the 2015 Hunden Report, momentum in the downtown area, an increase in financial support, and conducting a due diligence exercise to evaluate and analyze the potential opportunities.

Mr. Kaatz provided steps taken by CSL in performing research and presented a list of analysis tasks, such as market conditions and industry trends, as well as an overview of event space and the economic impact of event activities in the area and around the region. Mr. Kaatz recognized the need to size the building and set expectations in terms of events relative to the hotel room inventory that exists today and in the future. Mr. Kaatz shared a conceptual based program that included 25,000 square feet for main event space, 10,000 square feet for secondary event space, and 8,000 square feet for flexible meeting rooms for a total of 43,000 square feet of sellable space. Mr. Kaatz stated the 25,000 square feet could potentially provide an economic impact of approximately \$30 million.

Mr. Tennyson commented on the program components of the event spaces including the size, characteristics, and anticipated activities. In summary, Mr. Tennyson presented a recommendation of 43,000 square feet net rentable, 60,000 square feet support spaces, 60,000 square feet museum and gallery, and 20,000 square feet Greenville County Museum of Art, for a total of 103,000 square feet conference center and 80,000 square feet museums. Mr. Tennyson

also presented a total estimated project cost of \$111,509,468.69 with approximately \$70 million for the actual conference center.

Councilmember Stall asked for a report from last Monday's community discussions. Mr. Tennyson responded the mid-day session was well attended by the business and hotel communities with a recommendation to build it bigger, and the afternoon session included more residents with questions related to parking and traffic. Mr. Tennyson advised that comments were mostly positive and that a synopsis report will be forthcoming within the next few weeks.

Councilmember Brasington asked which space Council should be focused on, and Mr. Kaatz responded the largest contiguous space. Mayor White asked how Council should evaluate and determine the appropriate size for the ball room or main event room. Mr. Kaatz responded that 25,000 square feet is a minimum threshold to determine if the market is being captured. Mr. Tennyson commented on the ability to manipulate space to enlarge the contiguous room. Councilmember Gibson commented on and questioned the impact of the room size and reconfiguration to capture the largest percentages. Councilmember Gibson asked if we are looking at the same costs with the reconfiguration. Mr. Tennyson responded when you get a bigger, contiguous room, you are going to need more meeting space and that the next step will be an exercise to determine how much additional space is needed.

Councilmember Stall shared his support for the north location stating the center must be located next to the river. Councilmember Stall asked about input from the hotels, VisitGreenville, and the residents and requested that a strategic analysis of those responses be included in the report. Mayor White responded that he believes the report will be the next phase in order to take the information out to the stakeholders.

Councilmember Dowe asked about the 60,000 square feet provided for the museum, and Mr. Tennyson responded the size was provided as a programmed target. Councilmember Dowe stated while this is an economic development project, she is hearing the need for a return of group travel and conventions. Councilmember Dowe expressed the importance in building the right project at the right size that the City can grow into.

Councilmember Flemming asked if anyone has considered developing on both sides of the river, and Mr. Tennyson responded they have not, that the proposal has to do with available space. Mayor White commented on the current trends where conferences are utilizing area hotels and available event space in the area as well as the conference centers. Councilmember Gibson requested the team ask event planners how consideration of a mix of hotels and the proposed convention center would affect their decision to come to Greenville. Mr. Kaatz responded that those options are factored into the analysis. Councilmember Flemming asked that consideration also be given to the availability of travel in the downtown area.

Councilmember DeWorken stated he is excited about the project because it will assist in sustaining hometown businesses along with a mixture of local chains. Mr. Kaatz responded they have included retail, entertainment, restaurants, hotels, and the like in the analysis. Mayor White recommended the City begin vetting the governance issue to determine the best options.

### **United Community Bank**

Assistant City Manager Shannon Lavrin provided a presentation on improvements to East Camperdown Way and the development involving the United Community Bank as located in Council's Agenda packet. Ms. Lavrin recognized Robert Poppleton in attendance to answer any questions.

Ms. Lavrin commented on the proposed design of the headquarters building and stated the design will be presented to the Design Review Board in September. Ms. Lavrin provided proposals in the public/private partnership including improvements to streetscape, public areas, and sidewalks, among other items, and stated it will improve walkability and pedestrian safety along the corridor into the downtown. Ms. Lavrin also stated the item is anticipated to be on the September 13 Formal Meeting Agenda. Councilmember Stall asked about parking, and Ms. Lavrin responded they will have some available parking as well as overflow parking across the street. Councilmember Dowe requested to not shut down the sidewalk and asked when it goes before the Design Review Board that renderings of the river view be provided. Councilmember DeWorken requested the guardrail along the Church Street Bridge be fixed.

### **Village of West Greenville**

Deputy City Manager Eden Freeman provided a presentation on the proposed acquisition of property for parking in the Village of West Greenville as located in Council's Agenda packet. Ms. Freeman pointed out the designated parcels between Perry Avenue, Irvine Street, and Branwood Street and advised the design includes 48 parking spaces. Ms. Freeman stated the acquisition cost is \$850,000 with estimated construction cost of \$300,000, for a total of \$1,150,000. Ms. Freeman advised the parking spaces next to Pace Jewelers will be closing for construction in the next few weeks. Ms. Freeman also advised the item is on this evening's Formal Agenda.

### **Motion - Executive Session**

During the open Work Session, Mayor White asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Mike Pitts recommended going into executive session under S.C. Code §30-4-70 (a)(2) to receive legal advice regarding emergency power including the mask requirements.

Councilmember Flemming moved, seconded by Councilmember Dowe, to go into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Stall moved, seconded by Councilmember Gibson, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS  
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on August 20, 2021