

Work Session
City Hall
Fayette, Alabama
February 18, 2021

The City Council of the City of Fayette held a work session at 5:00 o'clock, p.m. on February 18, 2021, in the Council Chambers of the City Hall.

Upon roll call the following were found to be present: Mayor Rod Northam, Councilmembers Virettia L. Whiteside, Eddy Campbell, Tommy Williams and Jerry Nichols. Also present were City Clerk Dawn Clapp, City Attorney Dale Lawrence and Fire Chief Shannon Taylor. Councilmember Aliska Hughes-Monroe was absent for the first part of the meeting.

The opening prayer was given by Councilmember Eddy Campbell.

Mayor Rod Northam announced a quorum was present and the meeting was open for the transaction of business.

LOCAL FOODS/LOCAL PLACES

Mrs. Ronni Rena Brasher, the Fayette County Extension Coordinator, spoke to the Council concerning the Local Foods/Local Places program. She stated the Extension Service provides some support for the local Farmer's Market. She also stated there is a problem with citizens on the south side of town having access to a grocery store.

The Local Foods/Local Places program is a joint program between the EPA and USDA. This program strives to provide economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses and also access to healthy local food for those who are disadvantaged and have food insecurity problems.

The local Steering Committee is composed of Mrs. Ronni Rena Brasher, Mr. Jeff Crowley, Mr. Danny White, Mr. Ross Salters, Fire Chief Shannon Taylor, Mr. Willie Ivey and Mr. Zach Freeman.

Mrs. Brasher reported the Steering Committee had already received an assistance grant with a dollar value of \$21,000.00. She said they hoped to complement the Rails to Trails project. The USDA can provide technical support to the local committee on what type of facility was needed and provide help with the design. The Committee asked the Council to consider submitting the request for technical assistance. Mrs. Brasher said the City is the entity that would need to apply. The request does not commit the City to anything.

It was discussed about whether a "pop-up" farmers market should be planned to see how well it drew customers to the area and how many farmers participated.

There were questions about how the proposed facility would be managed, whether by the City or a board.

RAILS TO TRAILS PROJECT

Mr. Luke Porter spoke to the Council concerning the Rails to Trails Project. He reviewed with the Council his different estimates. He recommended a 1-½ inch layer of asphalt for the trail. He estimated each light would cost \$3,500.00. The estimates are as follows:

1. Estimate for Rails to Trails from Martin Luther King Drive to State Highway 171 with lighting and 12 foot trail -- \$444,846.00
2. Estimate for Rails to Trails from Martin Luther King Drive to State Highway 171 with lighting and 10 foot trail -- \$407,831.60
3. Estimate for Rails to Trails from Martin Luther King Drive to Temple Avenue with lighting and 12 foot trail -- \$350,837.60
4. Estimate for Rails to Trails from Martin Luther King Drive to Temple Avenue with lighting and 10 foot trail -- \$330,018.86
5. Estimate for Rails to Trails from Temple Avenue to State Highway 96 with lighting and 10 foot trail and no asphalt -- \$680,128.40

Councilmember Campbell stated he did not see how the trail could be 12 foot wide because the rail bed is only 10 foot wide. He also expressed concern about how to bury the wiring for the lights. Mr. Porter felt from Highway 171 to Martin Luther King Drive, the trail could be 12 foot wide.

Mr. Bill McCollum, who retired from a railroad company, said the City needed to be careful when excavating the rail bed. He stated once it is disturbed, then erosion can start occurring.

[Councilmember Aliska Hughes-Monroe came into the meeting at this point.]

Councilmember Campbell recommended only having a 10 foot trail. Councilmember Whiteside agreed. Councilmember Nichols stated he wanted the trail to go as far as the funds would allow.

Mr. Porter suggested paving the trail from State Highway 171 to Martin Luther King Drive and then doing some of the prep work for the trail from Martin Luther King Drive to Highway 96. The Council discussed how emergencies would be handled on the trail particularly between Martin Luther King Drive and Highway 96.

The consensus of the Council was the project would go from State Highway 171 to Martin Luther King Drive and would be a 10 foot wide paved trail with lighting.

BOND REFINANCE

Mr. Rick McCabe reviewed with the Council the steps for refinancing the City's bond. He stated the City is paying an interest rate of 3.35% now and the new rate may be around 1.5%. He stated before March 15, 2021, the Council would need to make a decision on which option they would pursue. The three options are as follows:

The first option would be to just refinance the current bond at the lower interest rate which would reduce the amount of the City's annual bond payment. Under this option, the bond payment would drop approximately \$22,000.00 per year resulting in a savings of \$370,000.00 over 17 years.

The second option would be to refinance the current bond at the lower interest rate but keep the City's bond payment amount the same as the current bond payment. Under this option, the bond payments and maturity date would remain the same as the current bond and the City would receive \$350,000.00 at closing.

The third option would be to refinance the current bond at the lower interest rate and extend the bond payments for an additional five years while keeping the new bond payment the same as the current bond payment. Under this option, the bond payment would remain the same as the current bond payment but the maturity date would be extended 5 years and the City would receive \$1,000,000.00 at closing.

Mr. McCabe stated the quicker the Council decides on which option to pursue, the quicker the interest rate on the bond would be locked in. The Council expressed concern about what the extra \$1,000,000.00 would be spent on. Mr. McCabe suggested one use was to leverage it to obtain more grants. Councilmembers Hughes-Monroe and Whiteside both stated that the Council needed to have a plan concerning where the additional funds were to be spent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, upon the motion to adjourn being made by Councilmember Nichols and seconded by Councilmember Whiteside, it was unanimously approved.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk