



## CAMDEN CITY COUNCIL

### WORK SESSION MINUTES

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Tuesday, July 22, 2014

4:00 P.M.

Council Chambers-City Hall

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#### **PRESENT**

Mayor Anthony P. Scully  
Mayor Pro-Tem Laurel M. Parks  
Councilmember Walter M. Long, Jr.  
Councilmember Alfred Mae Drakeford  
Councilmember X. Willard Polk

City Clerk Brenda Davis  
City Manager Mel Pearson  
Finance Director Debra Courtney  
Chronicle-Independent Editor Martin Cahn  
and interested Citizens

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Anthony P. Scully called the Camden City Council Work Session to order at 4:00 p.m.

**WELCOME** – City Manager Mel Pearson welcomed Council to the July 22, 2014, Camden City Council Work Session.

#### **AMTRAK STATION – Todd Stennis and JaVor Williams**

Todd Stennis and JaVor Williams - accompanied by other colleagues from across the Amtrak spectrum were in attendance at the Camden City Council work session.

Todd Stennis, Amtrak Director of Government Affairs and JaVor Williams, an Amtrak construction engineer spoke during Council’s Work Session detailing plans to renovate and make repairs to the Amtrak facility to become compliant with the American Disabilities Act.

JaVor Williams announced that several projects will take place at the Amtrak facility beginning on August 4, 2014. The first project at the facility will be the roof and canopy project: The roof and canopy project consist of a brand new canopy, decking, replacing the roof as well as replacing windows and doors to meet the Amtrak station’s historical aspects. The second phase of projects consists of interior renovations with the goal of making the station ADA compliant. Mr. Williams noted that the first phase of the project is estimated to be completed by September 30, 2014, with work to transition into the second phase if the same company is awarded the second project bid. If not, the second phase would begin on or after September 30, once the contact has been awarded. Prior to completion of the projects, Mr. Williams noted that a small patch of the station’s area needs to be paved (the accessibility from the parking lot...) but was not included in either phase; Amtrak “will have it completed” once the entire project is finished.

After Mr. William’s presentation, Council expressed their concerns and appreciation for Amtrak’s willingness to move forward with their investment on the property.



Todd Stennis suggested the city take advantage of Amtrak’s wayfinding and other signage – free of charge – signage that can be used to point to the fact that Camden has an Amtrak station and how to locate the station. Mr. Stennis noted that Camden has the opportunity to partner with Amtrak on its Great American Stations website. Mr. Stennis also informed Council that in an effort to turn around declining ridership numbers, Amtrak is making changes to include: adding 125 new single-level, long distance passenger cars, new baggage-dormitory cars and new dining cars. During Mr. Stennis’ presentation, he provided Council and City Manager with leaflets of information on the Amtrak wayfinding and signage usage, Amtrak’s schedule and other materials.

Mr. Stennis completed his presentation by stating Camden’s ridership may increase due to the reinvestment in the train station. Mr. Stennis also referenced that “although it doesn’t happen everywhere, reinvestments in stations have spawned economic development”.

**NEW EXHIBIT AT CAMDEN ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM (“In the Heart of the Pines”) – Katherine Richardson**

Director of the Camden Archives and Museum, Katherine Richardson presented information on the new exhibit at the Camden Archives and Museum (“In the Heart of the Pines”). Mrs. Richardson invited Council and the public to visit the new exhibit at Camden Archives and Museum. The new exhibit will be on display from July 7, 2014 until January 9, 2015.

**FRIENDS OF THE ARCHIVES –Steve VanHorn**

Steve VanHorn presented a brief presentation on behalf of the Archives and the Friends of the Archives. Mr. VanHorn informed Council that the Friends of the Archives board felt it was time to expand the footprint of the Archives through a fundraising campaign. Council voiced some concerns on this matter and express desire to work with the Friends of the Archives on this project in the future.

**KIRKOVER HILL SUBDIVISION (Roads) – Mel Pearson**

City Manager Mel Pearson reported that the roads at Kirkover Hill Subdivision are in need of repair however they are state owned. In a previous work session Council expressed concern on the condition of the roads and cars speeding in Kirkover Hill Subdivision. Staff has addressed Council concerns regarding cars speeding in that area by increasing more patrol. Staff will continue to follow-up with the State on road repairs and also continue monitor speeding in that area.

**RHAME ARENA – Wade Luther**

Economic Development Director, Wade Luther presented a proposal for the ‘adaptive reuse’ of the Rhame Arena. The redevelopment concept staff has explored are as follows: a dual open-air/closed arena configuration. This redevelopment concept is based on sketch drawn by



Elizabeth Ancrum Jones. The upgraded building would maintain its ability to host recreational, community, and special events, while opening the door for uses suitable for an open-air configuration.

Mr. Luther stated that a project such as this has an initial cost estimate in the price range of \$650,000 to \$1 Million, but that city staff has identified several available grant funding sources. Council voiced some concerns and agreed to have staff move forward with the preliminary redevelopment concept plans.

For additional information please refer to Memo dated July 16, 2014 **RE:** Rhame Arena Adaptive Reuse and the sketch provided by Elizabeth Ancrum Jones.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**COUNCILMEMBER DRAKEFORD** presented information she received while in attendance at the National League of Cities conference. Mrs. Drakeford would like to see the City of Camden organize and implement a mayor's youth council, develop a scholarship fund with the help of other organizations for students who are willing to attend local colleges; and upon completion- reside and contribute locally and also work on developing an emergency disaster plan.

**COUNCILMEMBER POLK** spoke regarding his concerns on the report from the recent S.C. Supreme Court's ruling; concluding that " FOIA's notice statute does not require an agenda to be issued for a regularly scheduled meeting, and FOIA contains no prohibition on the amendment of an agenda for a regularly scheduled meeting." Mr. Polk said this would not be a wise thing to do.

Councilmember Polk also said he would like to see the City of Camden explore a sister-city program. Mr. Polk suggested partnering with Camden, Maine on the sister-city program. Mr. Polk would also like for the city work on developing a disaster plan and perform emergency practice drills.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council, on motion by Councilmember Parks, seconded by Councilmember Long, voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 5:34 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter.

#### **REGULAR SESSION**

Council, on motion by Councilmember Long, seconded by Councilmember Parks, unanimously agreed to re-enter Regular Session at 5:55 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.



**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Council on motion by Councilmember Parks, seconded by Councilmember Long, voted unanimously to adjourn the Work Session at 6:00 p.m.

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Mayor Anthony P. Scully

Attest:

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Brenda Davis, City Clerk