

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

**Monday, November 23, 2020
3:00 p.m.**

Greenville City Hall is currently closed to the public.

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

**Telephone: 1-415-655-0002
WebEx Event Number: 173 256 4332**

**Remote Viewing Location:
Greenville Convention Center, 1 Exposition Drive**

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.

Greenlink Update

Transportation Director James Keel provided a 2020 Transit Update presentation as located in Council's Agenda packet. Mr. Keel commented on the successful launch of the CDL training program allowing for later hours of operation beginning December 1, trolley network upgrades, and ridership trends during COVID-19. Mr. Keel also commented on the status of the bench project to install benches, or a place to sit, at every ADA-compliant stop as feasible within the City over the next five years.

Regarding the PRISMA Infrastructure Project, Mr. Keel provided an update on the sidewalks and bus stop improvements on the Prisma campus for the coming year. Mr. Keel shared information regarding the Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign Grant as well as \$5.2 million awarded by the Federal Transportation Administration for six new Proterra buses.

Regarding the Million Dollar Investment match, Mr. Keel discussed how the money has been spent including a Gillig bus refurbishment, two Proterra Vehicles, seven new cutaways/vans, and three Gillig buses. Regarding the maintenance facility, Mr. Keel stated a firm has been selected with a kick off meeting anticipated for December, construction beginning in Quarter 3 of 2021, and occupying in Quarter 1 or 2 of 2023. Mr. Keel stated that Greenlink cannot take delivery of any more vehicles until there is more space and that his hope is to have a ribbon cutting and to receive 7six Proterra vehicles and four non-elective vehicles all on the same day in 2023.

Mr. Keel explained the reason for selecting Gillig buses and the purpose for purchasing diesel buses, including the costs and emission requirements. Mayor White asked if natural gas is still being considered, and Mr. Keel responded Greenlink is still in conversations with Piedmont Natural Gas. Mayor White referred to census data Prisma has been using and asked that the City Manager follow up with providing corrected information. Mayor White shared his appreciation for the bench program and reminded everyone that the trolley is covered by hospitality funds, encouraging the trolleys to ring the bell and be a part of the scene in downtown Greenville.

Councilmember Dowe thanked GTA for their involvement in the COVID-19 efforts and for their efforts in pursuing grant opportunities. Councilmember Dowe asked for the Communications Department to support proactive and positive communications in the adjacent neighborhoods to the new maintenance facility.

Defining Affordable Housing

Economic and Community Development Director Merle Johnson provided a presentation as located in Council's Agenda packet on defining affordable housing and clarifying confusion as it pertains to public/private partnerships and the City's goals. Mr. Johnson shared the difference between Affordable Housing and Affordable Workforce Housing and between Median Family Income (MFI) and Area Medium Income (AMI). Mr. Johnson provided the 2020 income limits per Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and income levels comparing Affordable Rent versus For Sale Price Points. Mr. Johnson presented rent limits including efficiency, 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedrooms for Fair Market Rent, HOME Rent Limit, and AMI Rent Limits. Mr. Johnson commented on the role the city of Greenville is playing with the affordable housing ecosystem.

Councilmember Gibson asked if the Greenville Housing Authority is included in the ecosystem slide, and Mr. Johnson responded it is from the interaction the City has with them. Councilmember Flemming shared her concern regarding the high amount of rental in the development report and recommended assistance with improving home ownership.

Councilmember Stall asked for clarification regarding information in the Comp Plan and what the City is doing when it comes to affordable housing and income levels. Councilmember Gibson stated his understanding on the minority population in Greenville is approximately \$17,000 a year and if that is the case, a majority of the minorities are taken out of contention as far as 60% and 80% percent. Councilmember Gibson also stated according to the chart, a single person must have an income of \$31,500 in order to qualify.

Mayor White stated it is always a moving target and complicated and that one way he hopes to address the matter is to focus on the front end on senior housing. Mayor White also stated another complication is there are a lot of minorities living outside the City who have a higher income level and they may want to come back into the City if given the opportunity.

Brian Brown with the Greenville Housing Fund shared that some of what they are working on is a strategy to offer additional units so that they can accept rental vouchers and can provide more opportunity and choice to those who use the Greenville Housing Authority voucher program. Mr. Brown stated as you go down the income ladder and you go to 30% percent or below, you are not talking just about supply, but you are also talking about support on the demand side. Mr. Brown referred to targeted work in special emphasis neighborhoods and stated some of the work they are doing is attempting to stimulate and encourage former city residents to return to the City.

Councilmember Stall asked if Mr. Brown could provide the percentage of people who fall into each of the 2020 income limits (HUD). Mr. Brown responded from the City's 2016 study, the gap was 2,500 units at 30% percent or below. Mr. Brown stated they are working with other partners to build a housing pipeline to allow individuals to move from assisted housing into the market as they become more self-sufficient. Mr. Johnson added he will have staff provide additional data regarding the AMI that has been offered. Councilmember Flemming stated there was a point and time where we did a better job of communicating information to the citizens, and she recommended spending more time reaching out to those individuals and bringing them back into the City.

Councilmember Dowe asked how a family of four qualifies for a voucher and how long is the wait list. Mr. Brown responded vouchers are based on income and eligibility as defined by the program. Mr. Brown stated it is his understanding there is a long wait list. Regarding rent limits, Councilmember Dowe questioned the increase in a one-year time frame. Mr. Johnson responded he has asked staff to review the calculations again and advise how they came up with the figures. Mr. Brown cautioned everyone regarding the figures and stated the fact that the amounts increase is good news in that it allows for the vouchers to be more competitive which provides for a more realistic scenario.

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)(1) to discuss appointments to the City's boards and commissions.

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

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Brasington 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 5:00 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on November 20, 2020