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**Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**September 18, 2014**

The City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids held a retreat on the above date at 9:00 a.m. in the boardroom of the Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce Building in Littleton, North Carolina.

 Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

 Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

 Suetta S. Scarbrough)

 Ernest C. Bobbitt)

 Wayne Smith)

 Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

 Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, NCCMC, City Clerk

 Carol Cowen, Council Member

 Greg Godard, Executive Director of the UCPCOG

 Allen Purser, President/CEO of RV Chamber of Commerce

 Lance Martin, Editor & Publisher of rrspin.com

Mr. Greg Godard, Executive Director of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments and Retreat Facilitator, reviewed the ground rules for the retreat and asked Council members about their expectations for today’s retreat. The following responses were given:

* *Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated when he leaves today he wants the Council to be somewhat in one accord. He stated we may not always agree but we know what each one is thinking. He stated we need to look at the current and future issues and look at the City as a whole. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we need to make sure we are heading in the right direction and that we give the City Manager a clear cut direction on our thoughts and expectations.*
* *Councilman Bobbitt stated he agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee. He stated there are some things that Council, the City Manager and staff can improve on.*

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* *Councilwoman Scarbrough stated she agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee.*
* *Councilman Smith mentioned infrastructure and jobs. He stated we also need to make sure the City is run so that the citizens do not think we are trying to hide anything.*
* *Mayor Doughtie stated citizens should get more involved in local government. He stated it seems that no one wants to get involved until it affects them, and he would like to talk about that.*

 *Mayor Doughtie stated he has tried to put himself in City Manager Scherer’s position since he was hired. He stated we have all lived here in Roanoke Rapids for a long time and know the climate and culture. He stated coming from another area can be overwhelming and we need to be supportive and give him a clear direction. He stated what might work in Ohio, Texas or even Rocky Mount, may not work here. Mayor Doughtie stated he believes what Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee said is appropriate.*

Mr. Godard asked Chamber President/CEO Purser for comments.

Mr. Purser stated he obviously represents the business community and would like to say that he receives comments about the great service provided by the City’s Planning & Development Department. He stated that is not the case in a lot of places. Mr. Purser stated while there are some issues such as housing, he appreciates all that the City and the Council members do.

Mr. Godard asked about major challenges and opportunities.

Mayor Doughtie stated what Mr. Purser said about housing is real important. He stated we need to have affordable housing. He stated we do not want to have more than we need but we need to have good housing.

Councilman Bobbitt stated the key is to have good affordable housing so that young people can have a place to invest in and get involved in the community. He stated when you cannot find good affordable housing, you go elsewhere.

Councilman Smith stated we have a lot of dilapidated housing in Roanoke Rapids.

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City Manager Scherer stated we have had discussions with local bankers about contributing money to demolish dilapidated housing and then financing new homes.

Councilman Bobbitt stated several years ago, about five or six bankers got together and discussed redeveloping one big section at a time. He stated one problem is that a majority of the housing is in the historic district.

City Manager Scherer stated we have been told that there is no more money for Community Development Block Grants.

Mr. Godard stated this legislature did not see housing as a priority.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated several years ago there was redevelopment of the areas around Spring Street. He stated about 30 homes were torn down and CADA was to build homes. He stated they built about one or two but it stopped, probably because of funding. Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated houses were torn down on Piland Street and we need to consider building some of them back.

Councilman Bobbitt stated with the Spring Street Project, it was difficult to find people that could afford to purchase the homes.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated the way the program worked, once people got in the program, they were able to go anywhere and some moved out into the county.

Mayor Doughtie stated he spoke with Jim Gossip, Mayor of Jackson, about their efforts to work with property owners to demolish their dilapidated houses at no cost to them so that the property remains on the tax books. He stated he has been approached by a banker about doing this. Mayor Doughtie stated our problem is that we do not have a lot of unused space in town. He stated with the Henry Street CDBG Project, we originally thought we could have the houses torn down and sell the lots but that could not be done since the houses were in the historic district. He stated we have a huge amount of historical properties and it would be nice to downsize the district.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated her understanding of the historic district is that nothing can be done until it passes certain criteria set out by the State Historic Preservation Office. She stated we have several blocks in the mill village that are

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designated as historic properties but a number of the houses have been altered and they did not go through Raleigh.

Mr. Godard stated he is not sure how well the State enforces their regulations.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated they enforced their regulations on the Henry Street Project. She stated two or three members came from Raleigh and told us what had to be done such as the roof lines having to be the same, etc.

Mayor Doughtie stated there might be some legal issues involved to remove some of the areas from the historic district.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he has read the lengthy statutes and it can be done.

Mayor Doughtie stated we are fighting a losing battle with the houses in the mill village. He indicated that he had an opportunity while out with the Police Department to go into one of the houses where they were doing some painting. He stated the halls and stairways are narrow, the floors are crooked and the rooms are tiny. He stated there is not much you can do with them. Mayor Doughtie stated people can buy them at a low price and rent them for a much higher price. He stated there is not a lot of incentive to improve the structures.

City Manager referred to the following list of items from the agenda that have been mentioned to him by Council over the past two years:

* *Affordable and Safe Housing*
* *Clean and Green Environment*
* *Fiscally Conservative Finances*
* *Increased Employment*
* *Infrastructure to Support Growth*
* *Livable and Well Maintained Neighborhoods*
* *Nurturing and Family Friendly City*
* *Physically and Culturally Engaged Citizens*
* *Safe and Secure Community*
* *Well Maintained Streets*

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Councilman Bobbitt stated a majority of these items relate back to housing.

Mr. Godard suggested City Manager Scherer contact the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency about possible help with the blighted areas.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated Roanoke Rapids is a designated Main Street community. She stated we have been told that we have the largest number of Sears’ Aladdin Kit homes in the state. She stated this could be a tremendous tourist attraction if marketed correctly.

Councilman Smith stated he would like to see us work with Cathy Scott of Halifax Development Commission to let industries know that we would be willing to reduce the tax rate to bring them here. He stated they could pay 30% for four or five years and each year increase until they pay the full amount. He stated we have a nice place for an industry to locate.

Mr. Godard stated other cities are doing some type of incentive program.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that we could not give them any money upfront but they could get a rebate on the backend.

Mayor Doughtie stated last year, we approved the Main Street/Development Director as a City position. He stated she is also working on economic development for the City.

City Manager Scherer stated the Main Street/Development Director is working in coordination with Cathy Scott.

Mr. Godard asked if the City is doing any type of incentive program.

City Manager Scherer stated no.

Mr. Godard asked if Council had any interest in having such a program.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we work with the County on economic development but they are not focused solely on Roanoke Rapids.

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Councilman Bobbitt stated it would be nice to have a tax incentive program in place if the County had a company interested in Roanoke Rapids.

Mr. Godard stated Wilson and Rocky Mount put money into the County economic development funding.

City Manager Scherer stated we pay into Halifax Horizons, a public-private economic development partnership.

Mr. Godard asked if that group provides incentives.

Mr. Purser stated it is not really incentives but they are a tool to help with earnest money, etc.

Mr. Godard stated it is a good idea that the City Manager and Main Street/Development Director work with Cathy Scott. He stated at some point the City may want to come up with some type of incentive program. Mr. Godard asked if the City has a strategic plan for the old mill property.

City Manager Scherer indicated that Cathy Scott and the owner of the property have entered into a public-private partnership to allow us to market the property and do some EPA assessments.

Mr. Godard asked about the Main Street area.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated it is beginning to show improvement. She stated quite a few façade improvements have been made.

Councilman Smith stated there is still a lot to do in the downtown area.

Mayor Doughtie stated one problem with the downtown area is that the mill village is adjacent to it. He stated it would be nice to have a block down there with nice rental units. He stated it would also be nice to get some people to reside on the upper floors of the buildings in the area.

Mr. Godard stated they are beginning to see this in Rocky Mount and Wilson. He asked if there is a plan showing the properties in the district.

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City Manager Scherer stated the Main Street/Development Director has started a database of the properties.

Mr. Godard stated the City needs to think about what it wants the area to look like and how to get there.

Mr. Purser stated some buildings in the business district have been condemned.

City Manager Scherer stated there is one building in the 1000 block that needs to be taken out since the roof is starting to collapse. He stated we could try to get another building put up or make it a breezeway to the municipal parking lot.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated she would like to see it taken down.

Councilman Bobbitt stated it would be nice to have the breezeway until something is built there.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated a building was taken down in Halifax and the area is now a small park.

Mayor Doughtie pointed out that we do not own the property.

City Manager Scherer stated that is correct. He stated we have a lien on the property.

Mr. Godard stated maybe the property could be donated to the City.

Mayor Doughtie stated we need to contact the owner. Discussion followed about talking with the mother of the deceased property owner.

City Manager Scherer stated this is the same problem we are having with the old People’s Theater. He stated the property owner lives in Arizona.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee suggested working with the City Attorney to see what we could do with these properties. He stated if we spend money on them, we need some type of return.

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Councilman Smith stated we have an executed judgment against the properties.

Mr. Godard stated the strategy that he has seen used successfully is when the City obtains the property and gives it to Habitat for Humanity. He stated Habitat repairs the property and turns it over to a person that becomes a taxpayer.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how we can get title to the property.

Mr. Godard stated in most cases, the property owner is willing to donate it to the City so they do not have to continue to pay taxes on it.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated in regards to the item “clean and green environment”, she has always wanted the town to look better—no trash, no high grass, no junk on porches. She stated she does not know how we can control that.

Mr. Godard stated some of that can be controlled by ordinance. He asked if the City has a Code Enforcement Officer.

City Manager Scherer stated yes but it all comes back to resources.

Mayor Doughtie stated he totally agrees. He stated we are already doing more with fewer employees. He stated there are some areas of town that look better than others. He stated we need to figure out some other ways to get this done.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked about outsourcing it.

Mayor Doughtie stated that would cost money. He suggested getting volunteers.

Councilman Smith stated the prisoners are doing this type of work.

Mayor Doughtie stated litter is a problem. He stated we need someone to pick up paper every day.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked about collaborating with the Beautification Committee. He stated we need to make sure our main thoroughfares—Roanoke Avenue, 10th Street, US Highway 158—are clean.

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Councilman Bobbitt stated two years ago the Beautification Committee sponsored an event to collect litter.

Mayor Doughtie stated we had the clean sweep campaign which was very successful.

Councilwoman Scarborough suggested the Boy Scouts or the Key Club at Roanoke Rapids High School.

Councilman Smith stated we have a problem with contractors blowing grass in the streets.

Mr. Godard stated you see that everywhere. He asked if the City has an “Adopt-A-Street” Program.

Councilman Bobbitt stated yes.

Mayor Doughtie stated if people do not care about aesthetics, it is hard to get them to do anything. He stated renters typically do not keep property up.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated we need a campaign to promote pride in the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated maybe landlords need to charge more to take care of their properties.

Mr. Godard asked about the homeowner versus renter ratio.

City Manager Scherer stated it is 70/30.

Mr. Purser stated we do have more homeowners. He stated we lack apartments and townhomes for middle income folks.

Mayor Doughtie stated he is bothered by the buildings in the business district that are being used for storage instead of retail. He stated some of them have paper on the windows. He asked about passing an ordinance to control the appearance of these properties.

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Mr. Godard stated you cannot adopt ordinances to regulate aesthetics.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated some homeowner associations have rules about certain things. He stated the retail areas in Cary and Raleigh are required to look a certain way.

Mr. Purser stated the stronger the Main Street program gets, the more it will be able to control certain things such as color. He stated legislating pride is hard. He stated landlords do not like minimum housing code regulations.

Mr. Godard stated one way this is controlled in larger cities is through fire inspections. He stated Rocky Mount and Wilson are pushing people to clean out certain things in the commercial district.

Councilman Smith stated we need to go to businesses and talk with them. He stated we need to be nice.

Councilwoman Scarbrough asked if that would fall under the Main Street/Development Manager.

Councilman Smith stated it could be the City Manager or a Council member.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he agrees with Councilman Smith. He stated we need to talk to them and show them what needs to be done but also let them know what will happen if they do not comply.

Mr. Purser stated the façade grant program is an incentive the Main Street program is doing.

Mr. Godard stated the façade grant program is very popular in larger cities. He stated a lot of these cities have a municipal tax district.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated in regards to the item “fiscally conservative finances”, we are conservative whether or not we want to be and the one thing contributing to that is the theatre. He stated the City Manager is planning to meet with a group about marketing the property.

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City Manager Scherer stated he is in the process of securing a commercial real estate firm to see if they can give us an idea on whether to sell the venue or find someone to help the City develop it as it was originally intended.

Councilman Bobbitt stated everywhere he goes he sees new buildings being built. He stated it comes down to getting the right person or group handling it. He stated there is a lot of vacant space in the entertainment district. He stated the hotel out there stays busy.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we need a list of the property owners in the district and we need to target them with some type of incentive. He stated we need to be proactive. He stated we may need to squeeze some dollars to make it happen in order to create more dollars.

City Manager Scherer stated he feels talking with a commercial real estate firm would be more effective.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated he agrees but at the same time, we need to have a focus group. He stated in the beginning of the entertainment district project, we had a focus group.

Councilman Smith asked if Mr. Dunlow and Mr. Moncure own the majority of the land in the district.

City Manager Scherer stated yes, especially the land around the theatre.

Councilman Smith stated we need to talk with them. He stated they are good citizens as far as he is concerned.

Mr. Godard stated it would behoove the City to have a market analysis done. He stated if it looks like there is something positive out there, let them go talk to a Great Wolf Lodge. He stated the City needs someone professional that is in the market bidding for it. He suggested Carolantic Realty in Raleigh.

City Manager Scherer stated he already has a meeting scheduled with a firm. He stated he contacted the City Manager’s Office in Raleigh and asked for a recommendation.

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Councilwoman Scarbrough asked when that meeting would be.

City Manager Scherer stated next Thursday.

Mr. Purser stated getting the property owners in the entertainment district together would be smart. He stated sometimes the value increases when there is interest, and everyone knows that the property owners want to sell what is out there. He stated there is no reason why there is no convenience store or gas station in the district. Mr. Purser stated he wanted to commend the City Council for discussing other topics. He stated at one time the only topic around the table was the theatre. He stated the City Council has managed things to where they can have discussions about other things.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked City Manager Scherer’s thoughts on the “nurturing and family friendly city” topic on the list.

City Manager Scherer stated he was referring to parks and recreation. He asked if we have the right programs, do we have enough or too much. He stated we cannot be everything to everyone. He stated he wishes he knew someone that would purchase the bowling alley. He stated people are saying there is nothing to do here.

Mr. Godard asked how big ball tournaments are here.

City Manager Scherer stated it has gotten better in the last several years. He stated we get the overflow from Rocky Mount.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we have made improvements to our parks. He stated we hosted the State Games for about three or four years. He stated we have a CycleNC event coming here next month.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated something that has generated a lot of excitement is the proposed skateboard park.

Councilman Smith stated our Parks & Recreation Department does a great job. He stated he is on the board of the Little League and one of the reasons some of the tournaments are not here is because either the restrooms were filthy or out of date. He stated last year they were running over but the Parks & Recreation Director and

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his staff cleared up the pipes. He stated parents want clean facilities. He stated our ball fields are better than anywhere else.

Mr. Godard asked the last time the Capital Improvement Plan was reviewed. He stated that is something that needs to be given consideration.

Mayor Doughtie stated we can get a lot of volunteers to help with the restrooms.

Councilman Bobbitt stated Rocky Mount has someone there all day to clean and stock the restrooms.

Councilman Smith stated our Parks & Recreation Department does an excellent job. He stated we have hosted a couple of ball tournaments here this year.

Mayor Doughtie stated we need to get the Aquatic Center back up to speed. He stated the idea was to engage help from the School System and the Hospital.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated she received a call last evening from someone about the Aquatic Center.

Mr. Godard asked if the City has walking tracks.

Councilman Bobbitt stated yes.

City Manager Scherer stated we have done a nice job improving our kiddie parks.

Councilman Bobbitt stated we need some type of tree for shade near the new park at Ledgerwood.

Mr. Godard asked about the condition of the City’s buildings, i.e. Fire Department and Police Department.

Councilman Smith stated they are in good shape.

Mayor Doughtie stated if in the next year or two we are able to market the theatre and restructure the debt so that we do not have a variable rate, we could spend money on capital improvements. He stated our departments are in relatively good

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condition considering the amount we have available to spend on them.

City Manager Scherer stated if we had a surplus fund, we could have an economic development incentive plan.

Mayor Doughtie stated we could also move forward with the blighted houses. He stated he still has not given up on the sales tax referendum to pay off the debt. He stated with the anticipated changes coming in the November County Commissioners election, it might be a good time to talk with the County about the matter. Mayor Doughtie stated he feels it would be advantageous for the whole county.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated timing was the issue.

Mayor Doughtie stated if people come together as a whole county, it could help us move people at the state level. He stated it is difficult for it to happen with a municipality. He stated we did not have any luck getting the County Commissioners on board the first time. Mayor Doughtie stated it is possible the dynamics of the County Commissioners will change after November

Mr. Godard asked about the Aquatic Center that was mentioned earlier.

City Manager Scherer explained that the dehumidifier system is not working and it is located on the roof. He stated we need a new unit in another location.

Mayor Doughtie stated we are improving the HVAC systems at the Andrews Building and the Jo Story Senior Center. He stated if we are unsuccessful in selling the theatre, we will have some huge maintenance costs with that building.

Mr. Godard asked about the current maintenance.

City Manager Scherer stated our Public Works Department does the major work and the tenant does the minor work. He stated at some point in time the HVAC system will be a problem.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee stated we need to be putting money in a reserve fund.

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Mr. Godard asked if the City has a CIP reserve fund.

City Manager Scherer stated we use our undesignated fund balance.

Mr. Godard asked if that is where it needs to be.

Councilman Smith stated no.

Mr. Godard suggested alternative sources of revenue such as fire inspection fees.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated we are very careful about protecting our fund balance. She stated when she and Mayor Doughtie were elected, it was down to 9%. She stated it is now about 25%.

Mayor Doughtie stated we are in a Tier 1 county. He stated we do not have electricity and water and sewer to sell. He stated we really need a referendum on the sales tax increase.

Mr. Godard stated the challenge is to get it on the ballot.

Councilman Smith stated the County Commissioners are against it.

Mr. Godard asked about increasing fees. He suggested a storm water management fee.

Councilman Bobbitt stated we just recently increased some of our fees.

Mayor Doughtie stated we just lost the privilege license fees.

There was some discussion about sidewalks and the requirement for sidewalks in new subdivisions.

Mr. Godard stated several years ago, the COG worked with the City on a pedestrian plan. He stated this all goes back to thinking about a Capital Improvement Plan—how you want your community to look and the health and wellness issues.

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Councilman Bobbitt stated we need to get some of the dilapidated mill houses out of the historic district and put in medium income houses. He stated we could then get tax monies to help with other goals.

Mr. Godard discussed with Council the importance of wellness plans. He then asked about broad ban cable.

City Manager Scherer stated we have a franchise with Charter until 2016.

Mr. Godard stated the City needs to negotiate for faster speeds. He stated with some companies looking to locate, technology is more important than access to highways.

Mr. Godard asked if Council had any further priorities.

Councilman Bobbitt stated housing. He stated we have the largest historic district in the state. Discussion followed regarding the process of having properties removed from the historic district.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated we need to work on the appearance of the town. She stated that is multi-faceted and will involve different departments. She stated it is better than it has been but it still has a way to go.

Mr. Godard stated the Beautification Committee needs to be involved with the City taking a leadership role.

Mayor Doughtie stated there are a lot of paper bags and beer cans near stop signs and convenience stores.

Mr. Godard asked if the City is actively promoting recycling.

City Manager Scherer stated the City is moving forward with this. He stated we have one container and plan to add another. He stated we are also getting ready to implement a curbside program for businesses. He stated due to limited funds, this is all we can do at this time.

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Councilwoman Scarbrough stated we tried residential curbside recycling a number of years ago and it did not work.

Councilman Smith stated people in this area are not conscious about recycling. He stated the County has been recycling for a while and half of the people put trash in the recycling containers.

Mr. Godard stated it is an educational process. He stated you have to start promoting in the schools.

Mayor Doughtie stated we have talked about a wide array of things that are all very important and could be addressed if we were able to modify our finances. He stated our department heads do an exceptional job with our finances. He stated one thing that bothers him is that when we called on the General Assembly to rid ourselves of this debt, they would not let us help ourselves. Mayor Doughtie stated in the beginning stages of the Carolina Crossroads development, the legislature was involved in making it move forward but now they will not let us do what we think is the best means of ridding ourselves of this obstacle.

Mr. Godard stated he thinks this conversation needs to be happening with the City and County Commissioners after the election. He asked how often the City and County meet.

City Manager Scherer stated the Halifax County Intergovernmental Association (HCIA) meets every other month.

Mr. Godard stated representatives from each group need to get together and talk about what is important in the next five years. He stated once the school merger issue is resolved, other things can be discussed.

Mayor Doughtie stated he tries hard to be an advocate of the City. He stated we do not want the County to feel it is us against them but want them to feel like they can use us as a tool. He stated the way things are right now, retail is going to be around the interstate and at some point, that property will be developed. He stated it will go from being a liability to an asset and we need to use the interstate as a resource with the sales tax. Mayor Doughtie stated this would lessen the debt on our taxpayers.

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Mr. Godard stated Roanoke Rapids is the economic engine of Halifax County.

Councilman Bobbitt stated Premier Boulevard helps the Weldon School District.

Mr. Godard asked about a hotel and restaurant association and also about the occupancy tax rate.

Mayor Doughtie stated the County would benefit from this increase in sales tax. He stated we also proposed that when the debt is paid off that the tax would go away.

Mr. Godard stated the sunset provision.

Councilman Smith stated this topic was first brought up by the former Mayor and a committee that he appointed. He stated then was the time to ask for this but he let it go up under the rug.

Before breaking for lunch, Mr. Godard asked Council members to think during lunch of ways to grow the community and bring in business and industry.

Councilman Bobbitt stated he knows it would probably cost a lot of money but he would like to see at least one sign on I-95 advertising Roanoke Rapids—not a dog run.

Mr. Godard talked about the importance of branding. He asked Mr. Martin if he had any comments.

Mr. Martin stated he agrees with the branding. He stated the City needs signs for the historic district. He stated when you come off I-95 all you see are signs for Weldon.

City Manager Scherer pointed out that he and Planning & Development Director Lasky have talked about a way to fund more signage.

Councilman Bobbitt stated at one time it was brought up that we needed signs to direct people to the shopping district.

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Mr. Martin stated the City needs to honor its heritage—the textile mills. He stated he knows that this could be an unpopular subject with some because of the unions but it is part of the City’s history. He stated the City needs to have a textile museum.

Councilwoman Scarbrough stated she does not agree that it is an unpopular subject.

During the morning session, the following lists were composed:

|  |
| --- |
| **Priorities** |
| Housing |
| Business and Industry Incentives |
| Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Mill Village |
| Development of Capital Improvement Plan |
| Market Theatre & Carolina Crossroads Entertainment District |
| Improve City Appearance |
| Increase Sales Tax |
| Create Brand/Vision (signage) |

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| --- |
| **Challenges** |
| Affordable & Decent Housing (mill village houses) |
| Incentives for Business and Industry |
| Mill Site Development (former WestPoint Stevens property) |
| Downtown Development |
| Dilapidated Buildings |
| Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Mill Village and Surrounding Area |

|  |
| --- |
| **Opportunities** |
| Market Theatre |
| Capital Improvement Plan |
| Increase Sales Tax (Roanoke Rapids or Halifax County) |
| Historical Preservation Society |
| Market Theatre & Carolina Crossroads Entertainment District |
| Improve City Appearance |
| Increase Sales Tax |
| Create Brand/Vision (signage) |

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City Council took a break for lunch.

Returning from lunch, Mr. Godard asked Council to put the priorities in order by voting. The results were as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority****Ranking** | **Priority** | **Number of****Votes Cast** |
| 1 | Market Theatre & Carolina Crossroads Entertainment District | 8 |
| 2 | Housing | 7 |
| 3 | Improve City Appearance | 5 |
| 3 | Increase Sales Tax | 5 |
| 4 | Development of Capital Improvement Plan | 4 |
| 4 | Business and Industry Incentives | 4 |
| 5 | Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Mill Village | 2 |
|  | Create Brand/Vision (signage) | 0 |

There was discussion about business incubators.

Mr. Godard stated a proposal was made to the County Commissioners for a business incubator at Halifax Community College but the County was not interested at that time.

Mr. Godard stated he will have his staff research public financing from the NC Housing Finance Agency and send the information to City Manager Scherer.

City Manager Scherer stated there are several smaller tracts of land (e.g. park at Bolling Road & Cedar Street) that we could sell.

It was the consensus of Council to explore this.

Before adjourning, City Council discussed with City Manager Scherer his performance evaluation conducted at the September 2, 2014 Council meeting.

 

 10/7/14