

City Council
WORK SESSION
February 25, 2016
6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Dull, Vice Mayor Kier, Council Members Curren, Harrington, Oakes and Obenschain

Absent: Council Member Holmes

The Mayor called the meeting to order and the invocation/moment of silence was given by Dr. Curren.

1. Discussion of the City's Employment Application

Mr. Owen called on Josh Didawick, Director of Human Resources. Mr. Didawick stated that this matter has been placed on Council's work session agenda for an update and further discussion regarding any inquiry concerning an employment applicant's criminal history. When Council last considered this matter at its work session on June 25, 2016, it was the consensus of Council that no changes should be made to the City's employment application. Since that time, the City has hired 33 individuals. Eight of those individuals indicated a conviction on their employment application.

Mr. Didawick indicated that these statistics exhibit hiring managers' attention to detail when making important decisions. The goal is to hire and retain the best and most qualified staff to serve the City, and in doing so, managers carefully review employment applications and do not disqualify candidates based solely on their response to a single question.

Mr. Didawick stated that, given the foregoing, staff continues to recommend the use of the City's employment application in its current form.

Mr. Didawick further stated that, if, however, Council wished to limit questions about past criminal history from the City's employment application, the following were potential alternative treatments of the issue:

- Continue to pose the question, but revise the language to be more welcoming, reassuring and encouraging to those with past convictions, so that they might apply.
- Seek only information about criminal convictions over the last 10 years.
- Remove the question from the employment application for positions other than several public safety positions and other sensitive positions of public trust and have all interviewed candidates complete a criminal conviction disclosure form subsequent to the interview.

Discussion ensued. It was the consensus of Council that the City remove the question from the employment application for positions other than several public safety positions and other

sensitive positions of public trust and have all interviewed candidates complete a criminal conviction disclosure form subsequent to the interview.

2. Solar Power America by Recognizing Communities (SPARC) Program Presentation

Mr. Owen called on Dr. Curren. Dr. Curren stated that Virginia has everything needed to have solar, except for the public policy from Richmond encouraging people to get solar. He noted that the state has not taken a leadership position on solar. Dr. Curren stated that he learned about a program from the Department of Energy called Solar Powering America by Recognizing Communities (SPARC) which is meant to help cities and towns get around the roadblocks that are preventing their citizens from having solar power. Dr. Curren further noted that the Department of Energy has technical assistance available to city staff to help streamline applications, inspections and paperwork in order to make a city as efficient as possible in helping the local solar industry to do as much work as they can do.

Dr. Curren introduced Joe Moore of Altenergy, Jeff Nicholson of Sigora Solar, and Tony Smith of Secure Futures Solar, representatives of three local solar companies. Each spoke about their company and how SPARC might help.

Dr. Curren concluded by stating that this is not about the City putting up solar panels. He stated that this is about the City making it easier for the private sector to sell solar. He noted that there is an opportunity to become an early adopter community, if the decision can be made within the next couple of weeks and a commitment letter is signed.

It was the consensus of Council for staff to look into this program.

3. Discussion of FY17 Holiday Schedule

Mr. Rosenberg made a suggestion that if Mr. Didawick was available to stay for the Regular Meeting, this item could be discussed at that time, in order to give Mr. Guynn time to discuss his topic in the closed session.

4. Closed Meeting for Consultation with Legal Counsel to Receive and Discuss Legal Advice Regarding Recent Potential Claim that Involves Property Interests in the City of Staunton Pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7)

Ms. Oakes moved that Council enter a closed meeting, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7), to receive and discuss specific, required legal advice as to the existence, extent and possible implications of a recent potential claim that involves property interests in the City of Staunton.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Harrington and carried unanimously as follows:

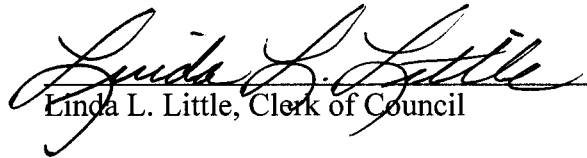
Dr. Harrington	Aye	Mayor Dull	Aye
Mr. Obenschain	Aye	Ms. Oakes	Aye
Vice Mayor Kier	Aye	Dr. Curren	Aye

Ms. Oakes moved that Council reconvene in an open meeting and certify to the best of each member’s knowledge that only lawfully exempted public business matters were discussed and that only public business matters as identified in the closed meeting motion were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Harrington and carried unanimously as follows:

Dr. Curren	Aye	Vice Mayor Kier	Aye
Ms. Oakes	Aye	Mr. Obenschain	Aye
Mayor Dull	Aye	Dr. Harrington	Aye

The work session adjourned at 7:23 p.m.


Linda L. Little, Clerk of Council