

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
AND PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 6, 2020**

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular Council Meeting and Public Hearing on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Buena Vista Municipal Building (2039 Sycamore Avenue).

Council Members Present:

Melvin Henson

Danny Staton

Stanley Coffey

Cheryl Hickman

Tyson Cooper

Vice-Mayor Lisa Clark

Members Absent: Mayor Bill Fitzgerald

ADG#1 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER:

Vice-Mayor Clark opened the meeting by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilman Cooper delivered the prayer.

ADG #2

Vice-Mayor Clark read the following:

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PUBLIC HEARING

CITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2204 and the City of Buena Vista Land Development Regulations, notice is given that the City Council will hold a public hearing to receive comment on the following matters.

- 1) Conditional Use Permit for first-floor residential use at 2275 Beech Avenue, LKH Enterprises Inc.

The Public Hearing will be held in the City Council Chambers located in the Municipal Building located at 2039 Sycamore Avenue in Buena Vista during the regular City Council meeting at approximately **6:00 PM on Thursday, February 6th, 2020**. Staff reports for each matter, and a copy of the Comprehensive Plan, are available from the Director of Community and Economic Development, Thomas Roberts, 2039 Sycamore Avenue, Buena Vista VA 24416 or (540) 261-8607 or troberts@bvcity.org or bvcity.org/planning.

Mr. Tom Roberts opened the Public Hearing by stating the Planning Commission had looked at this request last month. Mr. Hamilton is converting the old movie theater into commercial space at the front and apartments at the rear. He is also adding a second level. He will have apartments on 2 levels. In the mixed-use district, you can have apartments on the upper floors, by rights, but if you want apartments on the first floor you would need a conditional use permit. He opined as a country we are overbuilt on retail space as well as our City is overbuilt on retail space. He said when you add residential units in our downtown area you are creating customers and demands for other businesses that are already there. He opined this is a great opportunity to see something move forward.

Mr. Brent Styler, 2104 Walnut Avenue was the next to speak. He said this is an excellent situation where we can use viable vacant space to fill needs of the community. He opined that you should not have to get a conditional use permit that it should be something that just happens.

Vice-Mayor Clark closed the public hearing.

ADG #3 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion was made by Councilman Cooper to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilman Coffey, carried by Council.

ADG #4 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 16, 2020:

Motion was made by Councilman Henson to approve the above minutes, seconded by Councilman Cooper, carried by Council.

ADG #5 RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS:
Citizens who desire to speak on matters not listed on the agenda below will be heard at this time. Citizens who desire to speak on an item listed on the agenda, open for public comment, will be heard when that item is considered.

Mr. Jamie Goodin, 202 North Main Street, Lexington was the first to speak. He said he wanted to give Council an update on the GOBV project. They have finished installing a roof on the Camelot building. The building at 2161 Magnolia Avenue will be torn down soon. They have started developing plans for that space. They will add new roofs to the adjacent buildings plus punching out some windows and doors. This will make the space between the 2 buildings a nice courtyard. On Saturday they will have a public meeting to share what they have been exploring in terms of a new library. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. at 2076 Magnolia Avenue. For years now they have been working with the library to figure out what their needs are in terms of space, etc. Since he has been on the job since last summer, he has been conducting interviews with citizens to figure out what they want for a library. He opined that public libraries are a vital part of the downtown experience. They want to build a brand-new library exactly the way the citizens want it done. They have gone through a number of plans over the months and they will be sharing their current plan on Saturday. The fund-raising process has already begun. They are currently not asking for any funding from the City. The new place is larger than their current space and the folks that work at the library are very excited about the project. He will send out a recap of their meeting next week.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to know who would be taking the building down on Magnolia Avenue

Mr. Goodin said that Copeland Excavating will be taking the building down.

Vice-Mayor Clark wanted to make sure they have communicated with Public Works about taking the building down.

Mr. Larry Floyd, 245 Ridge Avenue spoke next. He advised he is the Buena Vista representative for RARO. He handed out the report from the RARO Board of Directors meeting held on February 5, 2020 (see in minute book).

Mrs. Ada Branham, 2646 Edgewood Road was the next to approach Council. She said that she hopes that what was just said about the library is not a done deal. Mrs. Branham said she saw the ad in the News Gazette last week for the meeting scheduled for Saturday and was shocked. The Rockbridge Advocate explained what was supposed to happen at the Saturday meeting. Mr. Ed Walker has bought the majority of the building's downtown and one of these buildings is what he wants to use for the new library. Mrs. Branham said that all Mr. Walker has done on the buildings is clean them out and hung signs for sale or lease and nothing has gone in them. She opined that Mr. Walker wants to purchase the beautiful old historical building and put a boutique hotel in it. She said she was saddened and then she got mad. She said the building has been a shining star in Buena Vista and that she uses the library all the time and the staff is wonderful. She wanted to know if Council knew how many people use the library in a days' time. Her husband, Don Branham, who was plant manager at Modine and asked for and received \$75,000.00 from Modine to refurbish the library in 1990. That is why it is called the A.B. Modine Library. She said that over \$250,000.00 has been spent by the City on the library. She opined it is a small library, but it serves the citizens well. She said she does not know why anyone would support this deal. Mrs. Branham said that corner, the library and that building belongs to all the citizens of Buena Vista and should not be let go. The City uses her taxes to keep the golf course going, the park going and the Senior Center going. She said that she understands we now have a Town Square. She said she does not use the golf course, the park or the Senior Center but she does use the library. She said she is asking all of Council and the citizens to keep the A.B. Modine Library in the same place and say absolutely no to Mr. Walker's decision on the library. She suggested that Mr. Walker lower his lease prices on the buildings downtown and maybe we could get our downtown to come alive again. Mrs. Branham said she would like to keep our dollars in Buena Vista and not agree with Mr. Walker.

Mr. Dave Walsh, Turkey Hill Road, Lexington was the next to speak. He said he is a member of the Friends of the Chessie Trail. When the organization was founded, they put some trail counters out and almost 85% of the use was on the Lexington end. Over the past few years a lot of work has been done on the Buena Vista side and the usage has gone up a remarkable amount.

Mr. Todd Jones, 905 East 25th Street was the next to speak. He also has an office at 150 West 20th Street in Buena Vista. He said he wanted to point out a

public safety issue involving a crosswalk on Sycamore Avenue. He has to cross Sycamore at least twice a day and he feels it is a dangerous place to cross. There is a crosswalk warning sign farther on down Sycamore that was put there for the workshop. The workshop has been gone for several years but the warning lights continue to flash. He would like for the crosswalk at 20th Street moved up to the middle of Sycamore Avenue right in front of the courthouse and the warning sign moved up to 19th Street.

Vice-Mayor Clark pointed out that we do not currently have a crosswalk in front of the courthouse.

Mr. Barry Slagle, 1905 Hawthorne Avenue was the next to address Council about his concern for the deer kill at GMP on Saturday. His number one issue was safety. He agreed that we do have a problem with deer not only in the park but also in the City. According to what he read on face book; the Police Department was supposed to let Council know when the kill was going to take place. He opined the safety and time was bad. The deer have just gone through rut season. Mr. Slagle said it should have been done in October, November or December. He said he does not really blame the Police Department but blames Council. He opined that Council should have investigated the cull before approving it. Mr. Slagle said he felt it was not a job for the Police Department but should have been done by a professional.

Lt. Mitchell Harrison was the next to approach Council concerning the deer cull at Glen Maury Park. He advised that everything fell into place very quickly: the permits were issued on January 30, 2020 and the Hunters for the Hungry were able to get a trailer to the park on January 31, 2020. They conducted the culling operation on Saturday, February 1, 2020. They were permitted to kill 25 deer. They killed 16 deer: 14 went to the Hunters for the Hungry; 1 was taken for personal use; 1 could not be used at all. The meat will be processed and returned to Buena Vista to be given to needy families. Once everything has been processed, he will return to Council with a final report.

Ms. Skye Lowry, 1925 Forest Avenue was next to speak. She voiced her concern on the City's web site not being updated. She said it is very unprofessional.

Mr. Tom Roberts said there are parts of the web site that are broken. We have had issues with it over the last several months. Within the next week or two we should be launching our new web site.

Ms. Lisa Mann, 1905 Hawthorne Avenue spoke concerning the deer kill at the park over the weekend. She referred to Lt. Harrison stating there is still an open

permit. She opined if they do it again, she hopes they would go a different route this time. She suggested they shut down the bottom of the park to keep people safe and out of the range of the shooting. Ms. Mann opined the whole operation was planned very poorly: unprofessional and very unsafe.

Chief Hartman started by saying he was not sure how to address the issue. The 5 or 6 officers that worked this assignment did it for free. They did it with their own guns and ammunition. They thought they were doing the right thing based on the direction from City Council. Chief Hartman said they got beat up on something that they did not cause but they caught the brunt of. He opined if they had told everyone they were doing the kill between 9:00 to noon on Saturday, nothing would have been accomplished. He would have appreciated some support from Council who did approve this plan. It was embarrassing to them to read the posts on face book that some of Council posted saying they did not know when the cull was going to be. It is in the minutes and in the newspaper and he is disappointed in that as well. He said he did not think the Police Department would be doing this again for the City because the feedback and pushback was way too bad and not fair to the officers that did the cull.

Councilman Coffey stated that he saw on face book that Chief Hartman was not really for what they were doing, and the City Manager was not for the cull. He opined if they had issues with the cull, they should have come forth to Council so they could have made the decision with those issues.

Chief Hartman said that is only his opinion. He said that he does not hunt, and he purchases his meat from the grocery store. There was a mission to be accomplished.

Councilman Coffey said he stands behind the fact that Council okayed the cull.

Council Member Hickman said she also stands behind the decision that Council made but they did ask to be told.

Chief Hartman said Council did not ask to be told when the cull was going to take place.

Vice-Mayor Clark said during the discussion she did say that Council would like to know when the cull was going to be.

Council Member Hickman opined it was a public nightmare for Council also. The reason she responded on face book was she was disappointed as well. She said she would stand behind any decision Council makes. She opined that everything was handled beautifully until the communication part.

Chief Hartman said it really distresses him about opinions that one or two people put on face book, whether right or wrong, it does not really matter. Then everyone else is up in arms with their opinion on it. He said he reluctantly tried to answer this on Sunday morning knowing he was going to get beat up about it because it was a no-win situation for him and the department. Chief Hartman said they did what they were asked to do and then they got beat up about it.

Ms. Wheeler asked for permission to speak. She said in the tape Vice-Mayor Clark did ask for a date. Lt. Harrison replied to her by saying it was going to be done very quickly while it is cold, and it may be done before the next Council meeting.

Chief Hartman said it was important to him to voice his opinion about the way the officers feel about what they did.

Vice-Mayor Clark stated the bottom line is we do have a deer problem in this City, and she supports what the Police Department did. She opined that anything that happens within our City there will be some people that like it, and some will not. All we can do is to continue to do the best we can. She said their role as Council members is not to micromanage how the Police Department decide how to cull deer at the park. Vice-Mayor Clark said that Council must put their trust in the people that work for the City to do their jobs. She trusts that they are the professionals and know what they are doing.

Chief Hartman said they went through all the proper channels and did what they were supposed to do for the deer cull.

Council Member Hickman said we should have had a public notice about the cull since it is a public park. She opined we failed on that part of the cull but the rest of it she did agree with. She said she supports the Police Department but because of the lack of communication it turned into a bad thing.

Chief Hartman said the golf course was notified early in the morning before they got started and then they notified the park. They knew about the event and the best safety was provided.

Councilman Coffey wanted to know if the Chief knew it was happening on Saturday morning.

Chief Hartman said he did know the event was happening on Saturday morning.

Councilman Coffey said the City Manager did not know until around 9:30 on Friday night when Sheriff Hamilton told him.

Chief Hartman said the City Manager did know about it because the Sheriff told him on Friday night. He explained that 5 police officers did the cull who are highly trained, and he felt totally confident in all 5 of them to get the job done. He said if the Police Department ever does it again, it would be done differently.

ADG #6 REPORTS:

1.) Mayor:

Mayor Fitzgerald was not in attendance due to illness. Vice-Mayor Clark and Ms. Wheeler handed out the pictures of the current Mayor and the former Mayors that were in attendance. They were thanked for their years of service.

2.) City Manager:

Mr. Scudder started his report by advising there will be a regional census meeting scheduled for February 12 at Vista Links. There will be some key members from the community, the schools, some faith organizations and businesses. They will try to have some key people involved in getting the word out on a total count for the census. We are trying to get a ribbon cutting scheduled for Columbia Gas and the new Industrial Park.

3.) City Attorney:

None.

4.) Council Committee/Representative:

Councilman Henson said that Council should recall Officer David Ramsey being recognized by the American Legion as an outstanding police officer for the State of Virginia. At the Firemen's banquet he had the pleasure of presenting Richie Smith with Firefighter of the year and EMT of the year for the State of Virginia. RANA is in the process of having everything ready for Gavin Fox at the Hematite building when he is ready to move in. He advised the Career Fest is coming up the 18th of February at the Horse Center. He said there will be 125 students from the High School and 125 students from the Middle School in attendance. Councilman Henson said the Labor Day Committee had a meeting and asked Ms. Wheeler if she would update Council on Labor Day events.

Ms. Wheeler said the Committee met on Tuesday consisting of the following: Councilman Henson

Councilman Staton

Millie Sizer

Susan Beverly

Mary Huffman

Ms. Wheeler said we are going to have a 3-day Labor Day event. On Saturday afternoon we will have events for children and later in the evening we will have a band. We may be able to keep the pool open late that day so that families can take advantage of that if they don't want to stay and listen to the band. On Sunday we are going to try to have an Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Supper. She met with the area ministers today and they have not yet said if they would be willing to lead this event. We also plan to have gospel music during the supper. On Monday, Council Member Hickman has agreed to do the Baby Contest. We are also going to try to bring back the river race. There will be a flea market across the street at the soccer field and we will have arts and crafts. It is our 50th year so we want to make it special. We are working on a lot of fun and good things for the park those 3 days.

Councilman Cooper said the planning for the 4th of July has started. We will be hosting the fireworks this year. There will be other activities later in the afternoon and throughout the evening. On March 7th the Healthy Buena Vista Group is hosting a community summit trying to bring together representatives from community organizations operating in our community. The whole idea is to get them together and begin connecting everyone with each other. There are a lot of good things going on and often we are not informed about them. We are also going to try to build some kind of inventory assets. This meeting will be held at the Ramsey Center.

Mr. Tom Roberts said they are inviting representatives of all community groups so this will not be a general public meeting. It will be a time to focus on different community groups.

Vice-Mayor Clark said it is her understanding that the library is governed by the Library Board and the Library Board makes all the decisions about the library. The Council's role is to appropriate funding. Council does not make any decisions concerning the library such as their location, who they hire or what their building looks like. Anyone with specific concerns about those things should talk to the Library Board.

Mr. Kearney told Vice-Mayor Clark she is absolutely correct in her statements concerning the library.

**CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO VARIOUS BOARDS,
COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES:**

ADG #7 BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS:

Mr. Casey Crookston has resigned from the Board of Zoning Appeals. His term will expire on December 31, 2021. This is the 17th time this item has appeared on the agenda. **CHRISTINA HIMES - ADVERTISED NEWS GAZETTE MAY 15, 2019; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 MAY 13, 2019**

Councilman Cooper motioned to appoint Ms. Christina Himes to the Board of Zoning Appeals, seconded by Councilman Henson, carried by Council.

**ADG #8 BUENA VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY:**

Mrs. Elizabeth Braddy's term will expire on March 31, 2020. This is a 4-year term and the first time it has appeared on the agenda. Mrs. Braddy is willing to serve again if re-appointed. **NO APPLICANTS – ADVERTISED THE NEWS GAZETTE FEBRUARY 5, 2020; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 JANUARY 29, 2020**

Motion was made by Councilman Henson to reappoint Mrs. Braddy to the Buena Vista Economic Development Authority, seconded by Councilman Staton, carried by Council.

**ADG #9 BUENA VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY:**

Ms. Marolyn Cash's term will expire on March 31, 2020. This is a 4-year term and the first time it has appeared on the agenda. Ms. Cash is willing to serve again if re-appointed. **NO APPLICANTS – ADVERTISED THE NEWS GAZETTE FEBRUARY 5, 2020; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 JANUARY 29, 2020**

Motion was made by Councilman Cooper to reappoint Mrs. Cash to the Buena Vista Economic Development Authority, seconded by Councilman Coffey, carried by Council.

ADG #10 BUENA VISTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AUTHORITY:

Mr. Peter Trotman has resigned. His term will expire on January 31, 2023. This is the first time it has appeared on the agenda. **NO APPLICANTS – ADVERTISED THE NEWS GAZETTE FEBRUARY 5, 2020; WEB SITE AND CHANNEL 18 JANUARY 30, 2020**

This item will be carried over to the next scheduled Council meeting.

ADG #11 RANA (ROCKBRIDGE AREA NETWORK

AUTHORITY):

Mr. Melvin Henson's term on RANA has expired and he is not eligible for re-appointment. This is a 4-year term and the first time it has appeared on the agenda. ****THIS VACANCY HAS TO BE FILLED BY AN ELECTED OFFICIAL****

Councilman Henson explained that he had been given some incorrect information about the above appointment. Since RANA was formed only elected officials have served. However, anyone can serve on the board. Councilman Henson said he was told he could still attend the meetings until we find a replacement for him. He said they meet on the first Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

This item will be carried over to the next Council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

NB #1 MARY HUFFMAN TO DISCUSS THE SPCA:

Mrs. Mary Huffman, 73 Deer Haven Drive, Buena Vista handed out a report from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services concerning our local SPCA. She told Council that she would like to clarify some of the report. All though the report is not difficult to understand, it has been presented in different light. In 2019 a total of 737 cats were taken in by the local SPCA. Only 84 cats were adopted out: 18 were reclaimed by owners; 320 were transferred out to other rescue agencies in Virginia. After contacting each of the Virginia agencies she could only account for 141 out of the 320 cats that were

transferred. Sixty-five were transferred out of State to animal agencies yet no out of State agencies are listed in the report. Twenty-one died while in custody which is pretty normal. Two hundred and seven were killed by our local SPCA. As of December 31, 2019, only 32 were still available for adoption. By January 8, 2020, there were only 2 cats at the shelter. In 2018 they only adopted out 79 cats. If some of the cats were not shipped out to other agencies, the majority of their cats would have been killed. The Rockbridge County SPCA is a private entity that we commission as a City. For each area budgeted amount for the SPCA is based on the number of animals from each jurisdiction. Lexington has the least number, Buena Vista next and then Rockbridge County. The amount given from Buena Vista in 2019 was \$44,101.00 and the amount budgeted for 2020 is \$39,825.00. In 2019, Cats Unlimited, a 501C non-profit organization dedicated to spaying and neutering of cats in our area, spayed or neutered over 700 cats. In 2018, Furever Friends, which consists of 3 ladies, with the help of Cats Unlimited, adopted out 71 cats and in 2019 they adopted out 103 cats. She feels with more community involvement the lives of many cats and dogs could be saved. She opined that the local SPCA fights against low costs spay and neuter groups. She stated that T&R does work. When she started with T&R, with the help of Cats Unlimited, she documented and took out of GMP in a year and a half, 178 cats. After much more discussion concerning how the SPCA handles cats, Mrs. Huffman suggested that a bid be put out to contract with an agency that will take the best care of the animals.

Mrs. Huffman also submitted the following letter:

I am writing to you to voice my extreme displeasure with the 2019 numbers that the Rockbridge SPCA reported to VDACS. The SPCA is partially funded by taxpayer money and this letter is an official request for my elected officials to review these statistics. There are other shelters around the commonwealth that have less resources and better statistics,

After several years of making significant efforts to lower the historically high cat euthanasia rates, 2019 saw a significant increase in cat euthanasia with only a modest increase of 26 additional cats over the 2018 cat intake. In 2018, the euthanasia percentage for cats was 14% and the SPCA rightfully celebrated this percentage, as did the community. In 2019, that percentage doubled for cats to 28%. This is certainly a dramatic increase and should be explained.

I'm extremely concerned that my tax dollars are being used to support an animal shelter that euthanizes so many healthy animals. This is unacceptable and I'm asking you to contact the SPCA and find out what their plan is to decrease their number of healthy animals that are being needlessly euthanized

Only 12 percent of the cats were adopted, and 50 percent of the cats were shipped to other shelters and rescues. What is their plan to increase adoptions? Are they reaching out to other shelters for advice and consultation? They continuously say that they are "doing everything they can" but are they? It just doesn't seem so, but I do think that we deserve to have a full report on how their shelter is being operated and what their plans are to improve. Every business should have goals and a plan to improve and the SPCA is no different.

I would like a response within a week of receipt of this letter. Time is of the essence because each day that this is not made a top priority, more healthy cats are being euthanized. The numbers are very troubling and don't represent what I and others believe we as a community are capable of. The numbers are certainly not what our community animals deserve.

Between the years from 2004 to 2015, our SPCA killed approximately 10,000 cats, well over 70 percent of the cats taken in each year. In 2016, local cat advocates banded together to shine a public light on the horrifying cat euthanasia numbers. Advocate contact was made with the national organization of Alley Cat Allies. They were alarmed at the rates and offered their assistance. Alice Burton, who was at that time their Director of Animal Control and Animal Shelter Engagement, came to Lexington numerous times to meet with the advocates, the SPCA and eventually the Animal Control Officers. She spent the next year coming back and forth to help our community. Through her efforts and the work of the shelter, cat euthanasia rates started dropping.

We cannot accept the SPCA going backwards and, more importantly, the SPCA and their Board of Directors should not accept it. This is totally unacceptable and would not be tolerated with any other contracted business that is being even partially funded by taxes. It is important to also make you aware of numerous attempts by the public to help the SPCA, but we have been turned away. There are many programs that can be implemented and used to create a more successful shelter. These include but are not limited to fostering, managed intake, spay and neutering before pets leave for their adoptive home, and a robust volunteer program.

Next month, as you begin your 2021 Budget process, you will be hearing from the various agencies and entities that receive taxpayer funding. I know that you will give prudent and careful consideration of those requests to ensure that the taxpayers receive value AND in the coming months as the current contract is up for renewal you will remember my requests.

**NB #2 FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR A
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR FIRST FLOOR RESIDENTIAL
USE AT 2275 BEECH AVENUE, LKH ENTERPRISES INC.**

Clerk of Council, Dawn Wheeler, read the following Ordinance:

Conditional Use Permit
Tax map 27-1-5-18-B, 2275 Beech Avenue
Ordinance – ORD 20-04
3 February 2020

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that after a duly called public hearing, in accordance with the general welfare of the citizens of Buena Vista and in accordance with good zoning practices, a Conditional Use Permit shall be granted to the building at 2275 Beech Avenue, known as the former movie theater, for the purpose of allowing multifamily homes, apartments, or efficiencies located on the story of a building closest to the street level pursuant to Section 614.04-8 of the City of Buena Vista Land Development Regulations.

This ordinance shall be effective 30 days following adoption by City Council.

William Fitzgerald, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dawn Wheeler, Clerk of Council

Date

NB #3 DISCUSS THE PROCESS FOR HIRING A NEW CITY MANAGER:

Vice-Mayor Clark opened the discussion by saying that she and the Mayor talked earlier this week and shared some ideas that she wants to share with the rest of Council. Mr. Kearney also has a sample of an advertisement and a job description that he will present to Council for review. As soon as Council agrees on the advertisement, it will be sent out for publication. Then we will begin to accept applications and have a committee set up of 3 Council members to do an initial screen of the applications. From that initial screening, Council will conduct interviews of the top 5 applicants as a whole Council.

Council Member Hickman said that she wants to be involved in the whole process.

Councilman Cooper wanted to know who we are hiring; he said he was not talking about a person but traits and attributes.

Mr. Kearney said he has a draft advertisement for Council to look at.

Vice-Mayor Clark opined if they look at the advertisement, they will get some ideas and then they can start generating a list of those attributes and the things they are looking for in a new City Manager.

Councilman Cooper wanted to know if there is a formal job description.

Mr. Scudder said he would look for a formal job description and let him know.

Mr. Kearney advised that he looked at the web page at advertisements for managers across the country.

After much discussion from Council members about what they are looking for in a new City Manager and a timeline for advertising and hiring one, Lew Hamilton approached Council. Mr. Hamilton wanted to know what Council sees for our future.

Council Member Hickman opined that we have a lot of assets. She said the park is beautiful and there is a lot we could build on over there. She said there is a lot going on here right now. The problem with the City right now is money and the shape we are in. With budget time coming up there will be some hard decisions that have to be made. She feels the City can come out of this and it will take some time to do so. She feels if Council is forthcoming with the citizens about the things we need to do, they will understand. She feels we are on a good path and it is just a matter of time before we take off.

Councilman Cooper said Mr. Hamilton's question is exactly the right question. There is some time set aside on Saturday at the retreat to talk about this. He opined that is one of the things the Council does not have. As a City Council there is no vision for the future. We have a ton of great things going on.

Mr. Hamilton said you must pick a direction in which to go. He said we have the Blue Ridge Parkway, Glen Maury Park, Mountain Bike Trails, hiking, canoeing, etc. He opined that we have everything that someone that lives in DC or Richmond wants to come here on the weekend and experience these things. We have to start speaking positive about our City. Mr. Hamilton said that Council needs to pick a line and follow it.

Vice-Mayor Clark said one of the things with our finances and our budget is the budget that we create, we have managed very well. We have done really good things with the money that we have appropriated in trying to build our community and to provide for the agencies who need our help. She opined it is the things that we don't have control over that continue to hurt us and surprise us. We have talked about the impact on families in this community and how so much of that drives our CSA costs. One of goals should be creating resources in the community or supporting resources in the community that supports the families. It gives them things to do together that keep our children safe and provide employment opportunities for people that are unemployed. Whenever we are making those tough budget decisions, we say we need to build a strong family community and that is our focus, then it becomes a little clearer where to start distributing your funds.

Mr. Hamilton said he looks at Buena Vista and he has lived here all his life as well as most of Council. He opined that Council needs to educate the citizens when a cost goes from \$250,000.00 to \$750,000.00. Council does not need to just say we are raising taxes; they need to educate the citizens as to why the taxes are being raised. He said we must figure out how to make Buena Vista a destination.

Vice-Mayor Clark opined that the retail businesses that have done well are really destination places.

Councilman Coffey said he thinks the revitalization of downtown and getting people downtown and bringing the park into it will really be great once it takes off.

Mr. Hamilton said we have 3 colleges we could tap into right now. Everybody must do their part in order for the town to succeed. If that happens the next thing you know we will have a great place. He is excited to hear we are going to do more for Labor Day this year. He said he heard someone say that we do not want to be like everybody else. He said that is fine but if you are not going to be like everybody else, you had better find something that will separate you from everybody else.

Councilman Coffey said he agrees with Mr. Hamilton that Buena Vista needs to be a destination and that will bring money into the City.

Council Member Hickman said you have to attract people with things to do. We have a beautiful place, but we need to put some things to do here. We don't have a lot of funding to do things right now, but a lot can be done without a lot of funding.

Mr. Hamilton said if the park cannot make money, find people that can make it happen. He said we need to find people that will challenge us everyday and support each other. He said you see so much negativity about Ed Walker who invested over a million dollars in our town.

Council Member Hickman said she agrees we need to be positive about anyone wanting to come and help us build the town up. She feels that a lot of times people do not know, or they think that Council is doing things behind their backs. She said she has also been negative at times and has heard a lot about the golf course and rightly so since it is one of the reasons, we are in the financial distress we are in. Council has not been involved with Ed Walker about moving the library. She is supportive about people coming into Buena Vista and doing different things, but we are going to have to change the face of the town. She opined there is a lot of negativity sticking around. She wants to be transparent and have accountability not only for herself but for every department we have in the City.

Mr. Hamilton opined we have every resource right here to tap into. He suggested that a committee of 3 to 5 people be formed to go around to successful businesspeople and ask them to volunteer to put on events at the park. We need to put things here to make it thrive.

Vice-Mayor Clark said the timeline for hiring a new City Manager should be to advertise by March 9.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know what will happen if Mr. Scudder decides to leave and why we are waiting so long to advertise.

Councilman Cooper said he does not want to make a hasty decision on hiring a new City Manager.

Vice-Mayor Clark said that after the advertisement is finalized Council will have a lot of work to do in formulating questions and setting up their own internal timelines after that.

Councilman Henson said if we advertise by the first of March it will give everyone time to review what they are talking about and make sure they are all on the same page.

Council Member Hickman wanted to know if they could not talk about it on February 20. Her concern is that Mr. Scudder is serving as our interim City Manager. At this point if Mr. Scudder decides to leave, what would we do for a City Manager?

Vice-Mayor Clark said we would have to appoint an interim.

Council Member Hickman asked Mr. Scudder if he was willing to give any input on how long he thinks he will be here. She is concerned that it might take Council a year to get a new City Manager. She wants to set a timeline for keeping Jay and perhaps getting another interim.

Mr. Scudder said he is hanging loose for now and really cannot give an answer at this time.

Councilman Cooper said we are trying to establish a timeline and hope we will not have to have another interim. He said the nice thing about Jay staying on as the interim City Manager is at least there is continuity.

Mr. Kearney said if Jay is willing to stay, we should be ok. If not, we could call VML and get a list of interims to choose from.

Councilman Cooper said we could have an interim here by tomorrow.

After more discussion about timelines, the decision was made to put the item on the agenda for our next Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor

Dawn M. Wheeler, Clerk of Council