



Richland County Council
Renaissance Ad Hoc Committee
November 12, 2020 – 1:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Dickerson, Chair and Yvonne McBride, Jim Manning, Dalhi Myers, and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Paul Livingston, Michelle Onley, Leonardo Brown, Tamar Black, Kyle Holsclaw, Clayton Viognier, John Thompson, James Hayes, Michael Byrd and Ashiya Myers

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Ms. Dickerson called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM.
2. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to adopt the agenda as published.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Manning, Newton

Not Present: Myers

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIR** – Ms. McBride moved, seconded by Ms. Newton, to nominate Ms. Dickerson for the position of Chair.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Manning, Newton

Not Present: Myers

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- 1 **ITEMS FOR ACTION** -

- a. I move to direct staff, by way of the County Administrator, to continue in its development of a proposal for the beautification of the Old Antique Mall site as an expansion of the Broad River Road Corridor Façade Grant Program. This beautification effort is intended to be an intermediary improvement until such a time that the highest and best use for the site is determined via community engagement as part of the Richland Renaissance Initiative. Staff should also work in concert with Richland county Sheriff's Department and the County [Dickerson] – Ms. Dickerson stated this location would be a good spot for the Magistrate's Office, as well as a substation for the Sherriff's Department as a deterrent to crime and to help beautify the community. She noted the existing Sheriff's substation and the Magistrate's Office is not ADA accessible and an eyesore. Chief Cowan and Judge Edmond sent out a letter endorsing a partnership.

Mr. Brown stated the Sheriff's Department, along with the Chief Magistrate, gave some cost estimates to turn that area into the Dutch Fork Magistrate's Office, which is on the list of facilities that need to be addressed. Council would ultimately determine if this is one of the facilities it would like to use the funding approved for Capital Improvement Plan. Council allocated approximately \$8M toward

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Magistrate facilities, so you do have the financial wherewithal to address this area.

Ms. Newton noted, in reviewing the information, she felt like she was missing information she would need to take action on these items. In addition, it felt like she was missing context, in terms of how this fits into the comprehensive plan for Renaissance. It would help her if she understood the process for finding locations for the magistrate offices, and the initial intent for the Old Antique Mall.

Mr. Brown responded, in terms of pulling this items out, the items on the agenda were moved by Council motions, so he cannot speak to intent. His understanding is the Chief Magistrate would identify areas they thought would be good for locating a magistrate facility. The Chief Magistrate would then engage with the property owner to reach an agreement. The agreement would then be presented to Council for approval.

Ms. Dickerson noted the Old Antique Mall was purchased with the intent of locating the magistrate office there.

Ms. McBride noted most of these matters have been vetted by the Renaissance Ad Hoc Committee, as well as the Property Management Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. Livingston stated he would recommend staff bring back recommendations on the location of the magistrate's offices and how to utilize the \$8M.

Ms. McBride stated it appears bringing this item to committee is a part of the process.

Judge Edmond stated the Old Antique Mall is an ideal location for the magistrate's office and Sheriff's Department. At the current location, there are many health and safety issues. They have had citizens sue the County because of these health and safety issues. In addition, it would be beneficial to have the Sheriff's Department co-located there to provide a safer environment for the predominately female staff of law clerks, and potentially deter criminal activity in the area.

Mr. Livingston stated, during the budget process, Mr. Brown noted it was not clear how the \$8M in bond funding was to be spent.

Ms. D. Myers stated she thought the Old Antique Mall was a site that had been selected to be put into the Renaissance Plan. She would not like to see us starting over from the ground up with vetting sites, and having staff bring back recommendations. She stated if Judge Edmond and the Sheriff's Department is happy with this site, and the funding is there, we should only look at reasons we should not consider this site. She requested an update on other matters that were put forward for discussion that are not on this agenda, as well as where staff is on their Renaissance Plan.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to forward this item to Council with a recommendation for approval.

Ms. Newton stated, for clarification, the motion is to approve the corridor façade grant program and locating the magistrate's office there. She noted the magistrate's office should provide a comprehensive proposal for Council consideration. She inquired if this is the #1 priority for the magistrate's office, and if the motion is approved does the item stays in committee until the comprehensive proposal is provided.

Judge Edmond responded this office has been a priority for a number of years. This office is a huge liability for the County.

Ms. Dickerson stated the comprehensive proposal should be forwarded to full Council.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Myers

Abstained: Manning and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. McBride inquired if the proposal has already been completed.

Ms. Dickerson responded Judge Edmond has already submitted the proposal.

- b. I move that Richland County build a new County Courthouse [Manning] – Mr. Manning stated there was a Courthouse Ad Hoc Committee that was working on this matter 10 years ago. The history of which can be found in the minutes.

Ms. D. Myers stated we are pulling “favorite children” out of the Renaissance Plan and moving on whatever a Council member decides to put in as a motion. That is the reason she made the motion to have the Renaissance Plan put forward, and have a third-party complete it. The courthouse is the centerpiece of the plan. It seems what we are doing is picking it apart because staff did not do what we asked them to do. She would like to see a more comprehensive look instead of piecemeal.

Ms. McBride stated there is confusion because of everything that has gone on with the Renaissance Plan. Many of the items in the Renaissance Plan were taken up in the Property Management Ad Hoc Committee. Within that committee, the use of the Sears and Burlington for DSS and the Call Center was discussed.

Ms. Newton noted Ms. D. Myers made a motion to reevaluate how we are going to move forward with the Richland Renaissance. It appears that motion went to D&S, instead of the Renaissance Ad Hoc Committee. She supports the items on the agenda, but it feels like we are pulling them out piecemeal. She was not on Council when these previous committees met; therefore, she does not have the visceral background other Council members have. She would like to understand how they fit into the greater whole.

Ms. Newton moved, seconded by Ms. D. Myers, to prioritize how we are going to move forward with Richland Renaissance, and how the projects fit together before we pull out individual items.

Mr. Manning stated, for clarification, the D&S Committee has an item on their agenda about the comprehensiveness of the Renaissance Plan.

Ms. A. Myers stated the item forwarded to the D&S Committee, per the instruction of the Chair, is related specifically to a facility for EOC and EMS, not for the comprehensive plan for the Renaissance.

POINT OF ORDER: Ms. D. Myers stated her motion was sent to D&S and was on the last agenda, and will roll forward to this month’s agenda.

Mr. Manning inquired if it will be on the agenda for action.

Ms. A. Myers responded the motion was specifically relative to a third-party consultant for the Renaissance, and will be an item for action on the D&S Committee agenda.

Ms. D. Myers clarified the intent of her motion, was rather than having the Renaissance to languish, to have Council vote on whether it wanted to hire a third-party consultant to move the Renaissance Plan, and items in the plan, forward.

Ms. McBride stated the majority of the issues we are discussing were under the Renaissance Plan, but the Renaissance Plan is huge. She does not think we intended the committee to look at the whole Renaissance Plan because there are so many different components.

Ms. Newton noted during the 2019 Retreat we discussed not focusing on the overall Renaissance Plan, but a scaled back version. The intent of her motion, is to have staff come back to us, and Council decide the priorities we want to pursue. Then address those items or decide they are standalone. It was her understanding was the plans fit together and had implications for other things we were doing, which is why she does not feel comfortable moving forward piecemeal basis.

Ms. McBride noted each of these items have had a comprehensive review, so she does not consider them piecemeal.

Mr. Brown stated there have been multiple questions about how these items got on the agenda. In terms of process, the items were sent to this committee by the Chair. As we put this agenda together, it was done so in concert with the Committee Chair. In terms of the discussion regarding Richland Renaissance, what he is hearing is what he has heard since coming to the County, and he still does not have clarity. When he looks back at the minutes from February 2019, they state, "Mr. Gomeau stated they are requesting Council to take 3 items out of deferment so they can either move forward..." It goes on to say, "Mr. Livingston inquired, if this is passed tonight, what are the next steps." Then, Mr. Gomeau states, "...to develop a program for each one of them by priority and timing, and bring them back one at a time, so they can be considered. The blight would be the first one, and then the 911 moving over to Columbia Place Mall. The Administration building would be the 3rd one." As we are having these discussions, and we are talking about Council needing to prioritize what order they want to go in, he agrees with that. What he is confused on, is when he hears different conversations about what has been approved, and what he can find in the minutes versus conversations that may have taken place that he cannot find a record of. The minutes reflect that Mr. Gomeau had a conversation with a P3 organization, but there is no indication that Council approved any particular vendor, organization or gave staff authority to engage a third-party.

Ms. D. Myers stated we gave specific guidance, and that guidance was ignored. That is not what is on the agenda today, and we have not been presented with information from staff on those 3 areas, which brings us back to her question on how we have pulled out the things that have been pulled out for today's agenda without looking at these 3 areas.

Ms. McBride requested clarification on the Ms. Newton's motion.

Ms. Newton stated the intent of her motion is to direct staff to come to us with strategic and comprehensive recommendations for how we will address the whole of Renaissance. In terms of what the priorities are we want to focus on first, and what, if any, recommendations there are for items we want to leave out, so we can move forward comprehensively.

Ms. D. Myers withdrew her second on Ms. Newton's motion.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Ms. Dickerson, that Richland County to build a new County Courthouse.

Ms. Newton noted that she supports a new Courthouse, DSS facility and Emergency Call Center, but she will be voting in opposition because she needs to understand how this fits into our comprehensive plans for the Renaissance, and facilities as a whole.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Manning, Myers

Opposed: Newton

The vote was in favor.

- c. I move that Richland County provide a minimally adequate facility for the Richland County DSS [Manning] – Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Ms. Dickerson, that Richland County provide a minimally adequate facility for the Richland County DSS.

Ms. Myers requested to take out the word minimally.

Mr. Manning accepted the friendly amendment. He stated would be willing to take out the word “adequate” as well.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Manning, Myers

Abstained: Newton

The vote was in favor.

- d. I move that Richland County provide a suitable facility for the Emergency Call Center[Manning] – Mr. Manning stated this was taken up by Council in the Spring, and an RFP has been written. He suggested keeping it in committee for further information.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Ms. McBride, to hold this item in committee.

In Favor: Dickerson, McBride, Manning, Myers, Newton

The motion in favor was unanimous.

OTHER ITEMS

5.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00.

6.