



**March 27, 2013 Meeting Notes
11:30 AM – 1:05 PM
Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center**

At 11:35 AM the fifth meeting of the LRCent Committee was called to order by presiding Co-Chair Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton.

The following Committee Members were present during the meeting: Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton, Chrystal Gray, Dr. Anika Whitfield, Steve Strickland, Kyle Demilt, Mursheerah Tharpe, Donald Shellabarger, Charles Blake and Troy Laha

Members Not Present: Gary Smith, Peter McKinney O'Coner and Khayyam Eddings

Also present were: City Manager Bruce Moore, Mayor Mark Stodola and other City Staff

Dr. Hampton opened the meeting by introducing Finance Director Sara Lenehan to give a summary update of sales tax revenues and expenditures through February 28, 2013.

Revenue and Capital Projects as of August 31, 2012

Finance Director Sara Lenehan explained the details of a handout that was given to the committee. She highlighted that as of the end of February \$46,442,324 in revenue had been generated from the new sales tax and \$19,337,171 had been expended and encumbered.

Departmental Presentations:

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Steve Beck reported that the 2012 Street Resurfacing Program had been completed and that 99,471 linear feet had been resurfaced for a cost of \$3,195,661. 27,505 square feet of new sidewalks have been completed with the in-house sidewalk program for a cost of \$400,967. He also indicated that the next round of street and drainage improvements public meetings would begin in the next month to get public input on projects to be done over the next three years.

A questions was raised Mr. Shellabarger regarding who is responsible for repairs where City Streets and Highways intersect. Steve explained that the Arkansas Highway and Transportation

Department (AHTD) are responsible for those repairs and even if the City chooses to pay for such work the plans must be approved by AHTD.

Dr. Whitfield asked for more details on how successful the sidewalk program was. Mr. Moore responded that five (5) of the ten (10) individuals who enrolled in the program graduated and are now eligible for full-time employment with the City and have skills to seek jobs in the public sector as well. He stated that 150 individuals applied for the program and that are ten (10) slots that will be filled on a regular basis.

Mr. Strickland wanted to know why only five (5) completed the program and Mr. Moore explained that most of those individuals had personal issues to deal with that conflicted with them being able to come to work and that staff was continuing to help address those challenges.

Mayor Stodola had a question regarding how much the program cost versus the cost of hiring contractors to do the work. Jon Honeywell responded that the cost was comparable in that the workers were paid \$8.25 per hour, but that they were also used to help clear storm debris from the winter storm. Mr. Beck said they were all very good workers.

Mr. Demilt asked if there were plans to start such a program in the Parks Department. Mr. Moore indicated that there are plans to expand the program through the Department of Community Programs to deal with parolees. Dr. Hampton stressed the importance of keeping numbers and stats. On the progress of the program and success rates.

Little Rock Police Department

Assistant Police Chief Eric Higgins gave a brief update on the public safety radio system upgrades which was initiated with the passage of an ordinance on December 20, 2011 for \$8,725,905. A change order was done reducing the cost to \$8,505,756.48. The radio system upgrades are underway as planned and should be completed by the end of the year. He reported that a majority of the land had been acquired for the 12th Street Station and that the conceptual drawing had been approved and that a contract for a construction manager is being negotiated. The entire project should be completed by the summer of 2014.

Currently the Department is still actively evaluating properties along Cantrell west of Interstate 430 to have a police station located in West Little Rock. Thirty-One (31) recruit officers graduated December 7, 2012 and recruit school #75 is in progress with eighteen (18) recruits scheduled to graduate May 31, 2013. The department continues to recruit applicants to fill nineteen (19) 911/311 communication call taker positions.

Parks and Recreation

Parks Director Truman Tolefree reported that the old Adult Leisure Center now referred to as The Centre at University Park is well underway and that it should be completed in mid-July 2013. The total cost is \$3,220,000 and it will have a greater emphasis on communication technology and programs for those who will use this facility.

An architect has been selected to design the West Central Community Center and Pool which will be approximately 24,000 square feet with an investment of \$6 million. The department is now finalizing the construction manager selection process.

A contract for repair work on part of the Arkansas River Trail has been awarded and work should begin within the next 30 days.

Fleet Services

Fleet Director Wendell Jones reported that at least eighty-three (83) vehicles and equipment had been ordered using the 3/8 Capital Sales Tax and at least fifty-three (53) using the 5/8 Operational Sales Tax dollars. City Manager Bruce Moore further explained that there is \$9,250,000 on the Capital side for fleet replacement and \$800,000 on the Operational side. Mr. Jones also said that a new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Station would be opening in June.

Housing and Neighborhood Programs

Director Andre Bernard, reported that the department continues to hire additional staff. Six (6) new code officers and two (2) animal control officers will begin in April 2013. He also reported that the Little Rock Landbank continues to acquire properties and that they had completed the re-plat of 81 lots in the Rolling Pines subdivision.

Little Rock Fire Department

Fire Chief Greg Summers reported that one (1) Engine had been purchased and that the City Attorney's Office is in the process of negotiating the purchaser of land for a Southwest Little Rock Fire Station.

Information Technology

Director Randy Foshee reported that IT continues to work with every department to make upgrades across the City for network connectivity and reliability of systems. This has included the purchase of network switches for Central Fire and Fleet Services, the construction of a second data center in the Fire Training Building. The department also recently bought 1400 Microsoft Office 2013 Licenses and is purchasing 200 computer to replace old ones that cannot run Office 2013.

Little Rock Zoo

Little Rock Zoo Director Mike Blakely reported that the Zoo has filled six positions as recommended by the Association of Zoos and Aquarium to maintain accreditation and is in the process of filling nine additional needed positions. Current projects underway are the tiger habitat renovations for tiger breeding, bear habitat renovations, otter habitat renovations and amphitheater renovation.

Department of Community Programs

Community Programs Director Dorothy Nayles reported that the core programming was on schedule to go to the City Board for approval and implementation. She briefly highlighted the

programs that would be funded if approved and also indicated that the first phase of the sidewalk pilot program had been completed and it was successful.

Human Resources

Director Don Flegal reported that a presentation had been made to the City Board for improvements to the non-uniform pension plan and on March 19th the board voted for the City Manager to move forward with the defined benefit plan which will go into effect on January 1, 2014. Dr. Hampton Requested to see more information on the benefits of the plan.

Department of Planning and Development

Planning Manager, Walter Malone reported that his department has been able to fill several key position. They have hired a Building Inspector, Graphics/GIS Technician, Office Assistant, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Two Plans Examiners and a Senior GIS Analyst. He also indicated that they would now be able to take permits during the lunch hour.

Mr. Laha asked what the GIS positions were for. Walter explained that GIS stands for Geographic Information System and that the individuals hired would be working with the mapping of the City's zoning and planning technology which has to be maintained and updated.

Other Items

City Manager Bruce Moore briefly went over the schedule for the next round of Street and Drainage Public Input meetings and how that process would unfold. He explained that projects would be done in three year cycles over the next nine to ten years. Then he explained the process for issuing the bonds for infrastructure projects.

Dr. Whitfield commended Dorothy Nayles and others on a job well done for the handling of the sidewalk program.

Next Meeting:

The group was given a calendar for 2013. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, June 9th 2013.

There were no further questions or comments and the meeting was adjourned at 1:05pm.