

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., with the following members present:

Tony Wood	Hank Guess	Anthony Freeman
Charlotte C. Williams	Aldermen	David P. Zagaroli
Danny Seaver		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were City Manager Warren Wood, Assistant City Manager Rick Beasley, Deputy City Attorney Arnita Dula, City Attorney Timothy Swanson, Deputy City Clerk Crystal B. Mundy, and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

- I. Mayor Guess called the meeting to order. All Council members were present.
- II. Invocation by Reverend Christy Lohr-Sapp, St. Andrews Lutheran Church
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Special Presentations
 - A. Mayor Guess mentioned the reception for Airport Manager Terry Clark prior to the meeting. He had been employed at the City for 42 years and announced earlier this year that after 42 years, he would be retiring at the end of this year. He noted Terry's family was in attendance. The youngest ones just turned three months old. He wanted to take the opportunity to tell Terry how much they appreciated him and his 42 years of dedicated service. He mentioned personally Terry had been a dear friend to him almost the entire time. Mayor Guess started in 1978 and Terry had been here for 42 years, and they had worked together and been friends. He had done a terrific job out at the airport. He was sure most of them had visited the airport from time to time and had seen all the activity and how it had grown under Terry's leadership at the airport. They especially wanted to take the time to recognize him and to thank him for his many years of dedicated service. He wanted to give Terry an opportunity to introduce his family members that were present. And of course, to say anything. On behalf of the entire City Council and staff, they could not tell him how much they appreciated all that he had done over 42 years. They could be here for the rest of the evening talking about all of his accomplishments. There continues to be growth and changes at the airport and Terry was responsible for a lot of the things that they had seen going on and things that they continue to see in the future out of the airport. He thanked Terry and asked him to recognize his family that were present.

Airport Manager Terry Clark introduced his wife Jennifer, his son, Zach, and his wife Emily, and their two children, (his two grandsons). Seated beside his wife was his other grandson Beckett. He introduced his son Ethan, and wife Madison, and their newest grandson Ashton, he was three months old. He was very proud of his family and was very thankful they were present. He was thankful for the reception and for the 42 years and he was humbled. He thanked Council because they had always been behind him supporting him and supporting the airport. He always said he tried not to look at me but us, it was always us trying to do this. He felt like from the past, the people behind him, until now he had done a little bit and that it was a stair step. Now, they were going to go on and it was going to be great. There was going to be so much going on, the closure of the runway and all that they had going on with the museum. So many things, but he was not going to go into that. From the bottom of his heart for 42 years, he thanked them all. He commented he was their poster boy and he loved it. He was very thankful for the City of Hickory who had provided for him, and his family and he had done very well. He talked to Steve Miller and Shawn Pennell, they started out here a few years ago, they sort of started out mowing grass and weed eating and all. They were all proud of that. It was great. He thanked Council, staff, the airport staff, City Management Warren Wood, Rodney Miller, and Rick Beasley. His goal was just to see it go on. He was here to serve whoever came in. He would be a call away. Again, it had just been great, and he thanked God for it, and he thanked all of them. A standing ovation was given.

Mayor Guess commented as soon as that Aviation Museum gets up, he would have to get those boys back out there.

City Manager Warren Wood commented Terry had been at the City through four City Managers, five Mayors, and had overseen tens of millions of dollars' worth of airport improvements, runway extensions, etc. If they had been by the airport, they would have had a road project, and Terry said that was the third time since he had been there, they had moved that road. They took over the fixed base operations, and they built the fixed base operations building. There had been a tremendous amount that had been done under his leadership with the City. Terry was just a good guy. He was a quality individual. He had a beautiful young family. He told him to enjoy those grand babies now. He thanked him for all his service and for being a good friend.

Mayor Guess mentioned he was talking to one of Terry's grandchildren earlier, and he asked if he had seen his office. Mayor Guess commented yes, he had.

Airport Manager Terry Clark commented God bless and thank you so much.

City Council members thanked Terry.

Mayor Guess commented don't be a stranger, you're welcome here anytime. We can probably get you in at the airport too. That was very special to have someone employed for 42 years and to be able to accomplish everything that he had been able to accomplish during that time. They would miss Terry but knew that there would be someone behind him that would be just as passionate and just as dedicated as what he had been.

A. Western Piedmont Symphony Highlights, Presented by Kelly Swindell, Executive Director

Mayor Guess asked Executive Director Kelly Swindell to the podium to present Western Piedmont Symphony Highlights

Executive Director Kelly Swindell Western Piedmont Symphony introduced herself and Music Director Matthew Troy who was also present, as well as some esteemed members of their board and patrons in support of what they do. They were present, in this season of gratitude, to tell Council a little bit about what they were doing and to say thank you for some of the support, and what the City of Hickory had been offering and allowing them to do here in this great city. She gave a PowerPoint presentation and displayed a photo of Matthew Troy. Matthew Troy joined the Western Piedmont Symphony in 2019 to be the new Music Director and Conductor for the orchestra just in time for COVID to hit. Now he was really hitting his stride in some of their programming that they would discuss. She played a video of the symphony.

Ms. Swindell advised for 59 years, Western Piedmont Symphony had been the professional orchestra here in the western foothills of Western North Carolina, bringing excellent performance experiences to the communities here in the greater, what you would say, Catawba County. They were not just for Hickory, they were for the old school unfour and beyond. They serve a 60-mile radius as the only professional orchestra in the region. They have a belief that music is for everyone. The power of music was really about inspired storytelling. Music gives them access through education, conversation, and performance. World-class guest artists come here to perform with their orchestra, and then later on, they were hearing about them in Charlotte, Raleigh, and Atlanta. Oftentimes they were programmed and come to perform with them first. They bring diverse artists, musicians, and composers of classical and also new symphonic works. It was really a high-quality, excellent musical experience. Part of the impact here in the community was more than 10,000 people attend a Western Piedmont Symphony concert or event over the year with more than 17 of those events happening right here in Hickory. They also performed in the Broyhill Civic Center up the road in Lenoir, and often out on the road across the county and other places. They have a new relationship with the Schafer Center for Performing Arts in Boone, so they had also have been doing some performances there. That was great visibility for not just the symphony but for Hickory, their home.

Ms. Swindell discussed recent statistics that came out from a study with the Americans for the Arts in 2022 for Catawba County. The nonprofit's arts and culture audiences spent an average of \$56.20 per person per event. That was for the whole county. But when you think about the population and where things occur, a lot of that has probably happened here in Hickory. For Catawba County alone, the estimated annual spending by a nonprofit arts and culture organization was \$12 million. They spent it while they were here. And then the spending by arts and culture audiences local, and those coming here to attend a show, was \$41.6 million. That was some pretty cool information to share about the economic impact of the arts here in the community.

Ms. Swindell discussed what they do as a professional orchestra. They had a variety of different types of genres of music, including a Master Work Series, Foothills Pops, Crossroads, which was small ensembles of different genres such as jazz, and tango. It was a producing series where they bring other groups in. Discovery Family Concerts, Music Education and Enrichment Concerts. They had two youth orchestras, the debut strings, and the youth symphony as well as free community conversations and events. She turned the presentation over to Mr. Matthew Troy.

Music Director Matthew Troy thanked Council for their time. He shared a very quick top line view of the different series that they offered. He referred to the PowerPoint and advised as Kelly referred to, this was their Master Work Series, five classical music concerts. This was where they brought in world-class guest artists as Kelly mentioned, frequently, not only in years into the future, sometimes just the next week, they would be going and soloing with the Chicago Symphony or something. They do bring world class talent to this area. They would see a stage full of professional musicians where they get to really play the bread and butter of the great symphonic repertoire. This was a very key part of what they do. Again, featuring composers' names like you know, Beethoven and Mozart, but also a very diverse array of other composers as well. When he first moved to Hickory after receiving the job here with the Western Piedmont Symphony, one of his first plans was, after surveying the area, was they need a proper pop series. They need music that was

popular music that reaches people and would revolutionize the orchestra, bring it into the 21st century. They started the Foothills Pop series. They were now 2.5 years into the series. It had been a wonderful addition for what they do. They had done concerts that were film music, Disney in Concert, Led Zeppelin, Elton John, Billy Joel, music of the eighties coming up this year. They also had been building a great tradition of a holiday pops concert. This series had done very, very well for them and he encouraged them if they had never seen the orchestra before this was a great entry point to come check out some of the cool things, they were doing on the pop series.

Mr. Troy discussed phase two of his goal to create more family programming. He had experience with the prior 15 years in his career, conducting orchestras all over the country. He had done many, many programs such as these programs here. This was reaching an amazing audience that they typically don't reach, young families, young students. They partnered up with the Catawba Science Center for these events because there was just a natural synergy there. These were really fun, entertaining, engaging concerts where they take on whatever was a really cool and interesting theme for a child. That was his starting point, then they build out. They had this wonderful Halloween concert, he referred to photos on the PowerPoint. This was the first time they had ever had a concert like this in Catawba County in Hickory. They had nearly 600 students at that first concert. This was a huge success for them. They were really proud. In the spring of the year, they would do another one of these sports and music with lots of wonderful partner organizations as well coming up in the spring. That was their Discovery Series new this year.

Mr. Troy advised they had two youth orchestras. This spoke to the importance that education and music education play for them on a deeper philosophical level. Many of their professional musicians were teachers in the schools, teachers privately, they teach at different universities, four-year colleges, or community colleges in the region. Some of their musicians, a lot of them, education was a key part of what they do. When he started, they also expanded out the youth orchestra program, which was in years past the Youth Symphony, they had now added debut strings, which was a group of young beginner string players. They have a wonderful pipeline and have seen growth. Every week they reach about 80 students, every single week. Through this, they get great leadership from their professional conductors. He referred to the PowerPoint and pointed out Jaquan Wiley and Angela Allen, two dynamite educators. They draw from quite a large region. They have students that come from almost a 100-mile radius that drive to Hickory every week to participate in their youth orchestra program. This was another part of the things that make their professional orchestra a crown jewel for this community. That was their youth orchestra.

Mr. Troy mentioned they also reach every year, more than 4,000, 4th and 5th graders from the broader area, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, and Hickory schools, attend a program called Explore the Orchestra. This was frequently the first time ever that a young student heard a live symphony orchestra. This was really an impactful experience. If they talked to some of their board members, and other symphony patrons, they could remember the first time that they ever heard a symphony orchestra. They teach them about the different families of instruments in the 4th and 5th grade, that primes them for 6th grade when they get to decide whether they would like to personally join the band, join the orchestra, join the chorus. Hickory City Schools was actually the only school district in the region that had a strings program. It had been around for nearly 60 years. There had been transitions recently, but this was something that they needed to maintain. They were very hopeful that the Hickory High school orchestra job would eventually be turned into a full-time position, but the middle school position was full-time at this point. They were really doing a great job to reach a lot of students in the area. Let's Explore the Orchestra was free concerts for students. He turned the presentation over to Kelly Swindell to discuss the reason that they were present to say thank you tonight for their support for the symphony. He thanked Council.

Ms. Swindell thanked the City of Hickory. In 2019-2020, things kind of shut down. In the past, the City had supported some of the free programming they do on the square. She referred to a photo on the PowerPoint. Then COVID really did a number on how ensembles could behave and work together. Matthew Troy and the previous Executive Director came up with how they could reinvigorate the City and reinvigorate what was meaningful for the orchestra. With the support of Dana Kaminske and the Communications Department working with them for funding that they receive every year, and they were super, super thankful and grateful for it, it enabled them to do a program called Sideshow, which they do every fall in partnership with the Downtown Hickory Association at their Art Crawl. It brings about 1,000 people downtown to different locations. They do little pop ups concerts on the square, the art galleries, the Wine Shop, et cetera, and it was different genres of music. The funding enabled them to make this free and open to the public as well as get a little visibility for what was coming up for their season with the symphony. Every year they do these pop ups and people go, "I didn't know there was a professional orchestra". This was the power of funding and collaboration to be able to kind of raise the visibility of what they have right here in their backyard. It brought about 1,000 people or more

downtown and it was a lot of fun. They were super grateful that they could have that continuous support. They had done it since 2020, 4 years now, they had done sideshows. They were present to say thank you for this because it makes it so they could do these fun, different, out of the box programming events. They have other partners as well. They wanted to be grateful and say thank you, and they appreciated the time.

Mayor Guess commented that they wanted to say thank you also. He did not know how many times, and he was sure he spoke for Council as well, that people would come up to him, especially people that were new to Hickory, and they were just wowed by the arts and all that they have to offer here in Hickory. They specifically mention the Western Piedmont Symphony and everything they had got going on at the SALT Block. They were really amazed, and even some folks that had been here for a while once they learned what was going on. The relationships and the partnerships worked both ways and they greatly appreciated all that both of them did in their leadership and the experience that they bring. They were looking forward to the future and continuing the partnership and the relationships. He was looking for an encore of the Led Zeppelin concert.

Ms. Swindell thanked Council and appreciated the time.

Council members thanked Ms. Swindell and Mr. Troy.

V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard

- A. Mr. Ben Fite, 845 2nd Street NW, Hickory, North Carolina, right beside the YMCA mentioned this was really small in the grand scheme of things, but he was told this was his only option to have any outcome of being able to do this. He gave a quick background, his name was Ben Fite, an Eastern North Carolina boy, moved to Hickory, wife was from here. They have a small business as an entrepreneur family, flipping houses and they have bought, renovated, and sold now five homes here in the area. His reason for being present was they were looking to start a used car dealership here in town, Down East Auto. It would be Down East Auto Hickory. His business partner had two successful locations, one in Mint Hill, North Carolina, and one in Wilson, North Carolina. They have successful locations already up and running. His reason to come and make the request tonight was, they found a lease and they had been looking for a couple of months. They found a spot. They had an owner who was willing to give them a long-term lease. The situation was it was right across from the racetrack on Highway 70, directly across from it. There were two houses there and it had a nice big fat driveway. He called the City to confirm the zoning as commercial, it was. It was ready for a dealership, but obviously limited parking. The City code was asphalt, or solid surface. His reason to come to request tonight was to see if there was any possibility to get the backyard, at 6,900 square foot, it was off the street, it had a nice big asphalt driveway that was recently done, but have that graveled out aesthetically pleasing, no weeds coming up. His main reason for requesting that, and not just give a specific name, but 0.3 miles down the road, there was a dealership all gravel right to the front of the street. That was his request as an entrepreneur to see if there was any opportunity there to get into this spot that they had been looking for a couple of months now. It was a great price, a good owner, and gravel was obviously a lot cheaper than the asphalt. They were \$30,000 plus, probably for that asphalt, gravel would be around four or five. He thanked them for any consideration of that. He understood if it was a no. They would be continually looking obviously, but they thought they could bring some good revenue to the City. He thanked Council for their time.

City Manager Warren Wood suggested that either Planning Director Brian Frazier or Business and Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti work with him.

Mayor Guess advised they could get him in touch with appropriate staff that could walk him through it.

City Manager Warren Wood advised Planning Director Brian Frazier could work with him and see if something could be worked out.

Mayor Guess asked if anyone else wished to be heard. No one else appeared.

VI. Approval of Minutes

- A. Regular Meeting of November 7, 2023.

Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderwoman Williams that the Minutes of November 7, 2023 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

- VII. Reaffirmation and Ratification of Second Readings. Votes recorded on first reading will be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading unless Council Members change their votes and so indicate on second reading.

Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderman Zagaroli that the following be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading. The motion carried unanimously.

- A. Budget Revision Number 8. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
- B. Consideration of Rezoning Text Amendment 23-02 to the Hickory Land Development Code. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)

VIII. Consent Agenda: All items below will be enacted by vote of City Council. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member so requests. In which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered under Item IX.

Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderwoman Williams approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

- A. Approved the Citizens' Advisory Committee's Recommendations for Assistance through the City of Hickory's Housing Programs.

The mission of the City of Hickory's Community Development Division is to preserve the existing housing base, enhance ownership opportunities for all of its citizens to obtain decent housing, and provide a quality environment conducive to the safe and healthy growth of its citizenry. The seven-member Citizens' Advisory Committee was formed to provide for citizen input in the facilitation of the City's CDBG program, as well as any other similar community enhancement funding the City may receive. The following requests were considered by the Citizens' Advisory Committee at their regular meeting on November 2, 2023:

- Anthony & Fonda Foust located at 886 F Avenue SE, Hickory was recommended for approval of up to \$12,000 under the City of Hickory's 2023 Urgent Repair Program.
- Sebrina Wilfong, 140 7th Avenue SW Hickory, was recommended for approval of a Housing Rehabilitation Loan. The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends approval for assistance not to exceed \$25,000 for repairs to her house. Assistance would be in the form of a 0% interest deferred loan.
- Priscilla Hoyle, 1174 2nd Street PI SE, Hickory, was recommended for approval of a Housing Rehabilitation Loan. The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends approval for assistance not to exceed \$25,000 for repairs to her house. Assistance would be in the form of a 0% interest deferred loan.
- Patricia Sullivan, 1014 16th Street SE, Hickory, was recommended for approval of a Housing Rehabilitation Loan. The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends approval for assistance not to exceed \$20,000 for repairs to her house. Assistance would be in the form of a 0% interest deferred loan.

The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends approval of the aforementioned request for assistance through the City of Hickory's housing assistance programs.

- B. Accepted the 2023 Bulletproof Vest Grant in the Amount of \$24,210 to Assist in Funding the Purchase of Bulletproof Vests for Police Officers.

Hickory Police Department requests permission to accept the grant to assist in funding the purchase of bulletproof vests for police officers. The City of Hickory will receive up to 50% reimbursement for each vest purchased. Since 1999, the Bulletproof Vest Grant program has provided an opportunity for law enforcement agencies to apply for a grant to receive up to 50% funding on the purchase of ballistic vests. In order to be eligible, the agency must have a policy in effect making it mandatory for uniformed officers to wear the vests while on duty. Hickory Police Department has the mandatory wear policy in effect and has been a recipient of this grant for numerous years. Monies are placed in the police department budget uniform line item annually to purchase vests for police officers. Life expectancy of each vest is approximately five years. The Police Department recommends the acceptance of this grant to receive up to 50% funding to purchase bulletproof vests for police officers.

- C. Approved Change Order 2 with TranSystems for Additional Professional Services related to the City Walk Project in the Total Amount of \$80,022.30.

Staff requests Council's approval of Change Order 2 with TranSystems Corporation (successor by merger to SEPI Construction Engineering and Construction Inc.) for additional professional services related to the City Walk Project in the amount of \$80,022.30. In September 2022, TranSystems Corporation purchased SEPI Engineering & Construction, Inc. The City Walk project is partially funded by United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) funding that is passed down through North Carolina

Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The funding for this project is appointed to predominately 80% NCDOT and 20% City of Hickory respectively. The change order is due to unforeseen design issues that resulted in project time being extended and extended workload. Fees are eligible for reimbursement with NCDOT funds at the same ration of 80% NCDOT and 20% City of Hickory. Staff recommends Council's approval of Change Order 2 with TranSystems Corporation in the amount not to exceed \$80,022.30.

- D. Approved Applying for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant in the Amount of \$50,000 for Improvements to Samuel William Davis Field.

Staff requests Council's approval to apply for a T-Mobile Hometown Grant to renovate Samuel Davis Field. The City-owned Samuel William Davis Field, located at 730 3rd Street SW, is part of the larger Ridgeview Recreation Area and Taft Broome Park. This field is the historic ground where the undefeated and unscored-upon 1964 Ridgeview Panthers, also known as the Untouchables, played football. This field is currently in need of renovations to make it more useable to the Ridgeview Community and the City as a whole. Several years ago, a new arched entrance and murals were added to Samuel William Davis Field to honor the story of the Untouchables and their record 1964 shut-out season. Staff would like to continue updating this location by renovating Samuel William Davis Field to increase its functionality for the citizens of Ridgeview and Hickory. To fund this renovation, staff wish to apply for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant for \$50,000. This grant will fund the renovations, including a new clay infield, netting and fencing, updated lighting systems, and an updated PA system. With the recent updates to Taft Broome Park and the future Historic Ridgeview Walk, renovations to Samuel Davis Field will be an essential element of improvements to the Ridgeview Recreation Center and Taft Broome Park. Staff recommends Council's approval of the City's application for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant for \$50,000 for improvements to Samuel William Davis Field.

- E. Called for a Public Hearing to Consider the Voluntary Contiguous Annexation of 62.873-Acres Located at 2239 Robinson Road, PINs 3711-10-45-2075; 3711-14-34-4769, 3711-14-34-8055; 3711-14-44-2597. (Authorized Public Hearing for December 5, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building).

RESOLUTION NO. 23-68
RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE CLERK TO INVESTIGATE A PETITION RECEIVED
UNDER G.S. 160A-31 AND/OR 160A-58.1, AS AMENDED

WHEREAS, a petition from Michael Pollard and wife, Kem Pollard requesting annexation of an area described in a petition was received on November 9, 2023, by the City Council of the City of Hickory; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 160A-31 and G.S. 160A-58.1 provide that the sufficiency of the petition shall be investigated by the Clerk before further annexation proceedings may take place; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Hickory deems it advisable to proceed in response to this request for annexation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HICKORY:

THAT, the Clerk is hereby directed to investigate the sufficiency of the above-described petition and to certify as soon as possible to the City Council the result of her investigation.

CERTIFICATE OF SUFFICIENCY

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA:

I, Debbie D. Miller, City Clerk, do hereby certify that I have investigated the petition attached hereto and have found as a fact that said petition is signed by all owners of real property lying in the area described therein, in accordance with G.S. 160A-31 and/or G.S. 160A-58.1, as amended:

Property of Michael Pollard, and wife, Kem Pollard, containing 62.873-acres more or less, located at 2239 Robinson Road, identified as PINs 3711-10-45-2075; 3711-14-34-4769; 3711-14-34-8055; and 3711-14-44-2597.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the City of Hickory this 9th day of November, 2023.

/s/ Debbie D. Miller, City Clerk

RESOLUTION 23-69
RESOLUTION FIXING DATE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON QUESTION OF ANNEXATION,
PURSUANT TO G.S. 160A-31 OR G.S. 160A-58.1, AS AMENDED

WHEREAS, a petition requesting annexation of the area described herein has been received; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Hickory has, by Resolution, directed the clerk to investigate the sufficiency thereof; and

WHEREAS, certification by the Clerk as to the sufficiency of said petition has been made.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HICKORY:

Section 1: That a public hearing on the question of annexation of the area described herein will be held at 6:00 p.m. on December 5, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building, located at 76 North Center Street, Hickory, North Carolina.

Section 2: The area proposed for annexation is described as follows:

Property of Michael Pollard, and wife, Kem Pollard, containing 62.873-acres more or less, located at 2239 Robinson Road, identified as PINs 3711-10-45-2075; 3711-14-34-4769; 3711-14-34-8055; and 3711-14-44-2597.

Section 3: Notice of said public hearing shall be published in The Hickory Daily Record, a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Hickory, at least ten (10) days prior to the date of said public hearing.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-70
A RESOLUTION DETERMINING THE INTENT TO ANNEX INTO THE CORPORATE
LIMITS OF THE CITY OF HICKORY CERTAIN PROPERTY OWNED BY
MICHAEL POLLARD AND WIFE, KEM POLLARD AND CALLING FOR
A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SAME

WHEREAS, Michael Pollard and wife, Kem Pollard are the owners of certain real property as described herein, which property is located at 2239 Robinson Road, and identified as PINs 3711-10-45-2075; 3711-14-34-4769; 3711-14-34-8055; and 3711-14-44-2597, containing 62.873-acres more or less; and

WHEREAS, such property is currently located in the City's extra-territorial jurisdictional (ETJ); and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and well-being of the residents of the City of Hickory to annex such property into the corporate limits of the City of Hickory as authorized by N.C.G.S. Section 160A-31; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Hickory City Council, sitting in open session this 21st day of November, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body of said Council, duly called and posted in accordance with the statutes of the State of North Carolina, as follows:

Section 1: That the Hickory City Council does determine that it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and well-being of the residents of the City of Hickory to annex the property described hereinafter into the corporate limits of the City of Hickory.

Section 2: That a public hearing on the question of annexation of the area described herein will be held at 6:00 p.m. on December 5, 2023, in the Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building, located at 76 North Center Street, Hickory, North Carolina.

Section 3: The same being that property reflected on map entitled Michael and Kem Pollard, Voluntary Non-Contiguous Annexation Map 1 Current City Boundary, subject property outlined in red; Michael and Kem Pollard, Voluntary Non-Contiguous Annexation Map 2, Current Zoning, subject property outlined in red; Michael and Kem Pollard, Map 3, Land Use, subject property outlined in red.

Section 4: Notice of said public hearing shall be published in The Hickory Daily Record, a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Hickory, at least ten (10) days prior to the date of said public hearing.

- F. Approved a Vacant Building Revitalization Performance Agreement for Bumbarger Investments of Forest City, LLC in the Amount of \$20,000 for Renovations of the Vacant Building Located at 1421 2nd Street NE.

Staff requests approval of the Vacant Building Revitalization Performance Agreement for Bumbarger Investments of Forest City, LLC. City Council established the Vacant Building Revitalization and Demolition Grant program on September 16, 2008. The program provides forgivable loan funding up to \$20,000 for projects to renovate and rehabilitate vacant buildings within the Urban Revitalization Area and targeted industrial buildings in other areas of the City. Bumbarger Investments of Forest City, LLC has applied for a Vacant Building Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to assist in the renovation of the vacant building at 1421 2nd Street NE. The applicant plans to renovate the facility for multi-tenant neighborhood commercial use. The applicant plans to invest at least \$245,747 in real property improvements to rehabilitate the building. This makes the project eligible for a \$20,000 grant. The applicant plans to improve the parking lot and make interior improvements. No payments will be required on the loan provided that the building remains occupied for at least three years. The Business Development Committee reviewed the application and recommended approval. Staff recommends City Council approve the Vacant Building Performance Agreement with Bumbarger Investments of Forest City, LLC.

- G. Approved on First Reading Budget Revision Number 9.

**ORDINANCE NO. 23-34
BUDGET REVISION NUMBER 9**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Board of the City of Hickory that, pursuant to N.C. General Statutes 159.15 and 159.13.2, the following revision be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and for the duration of the Project Ordinance noted herein.

SECTION 1. To amend the General Fund within the FY 2023-24 Budget Ordinance, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Culture & Recreation	4,808	-
Public Safety	11,658	24,210
Other Financing Uses	24,210	-
TOTAL	40,676	24,210

To provide funding for the above, the General Fund revenues will be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Other Financing Sources	4,308	-
Miscellaneous	5,734	-
Sales and Services	6,424	-
TOTAL	16,466	-

SECTION 2. To establish the Bulletproof Vest Partnership 2023 (#G51109) Grant Project shall be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Public Safety	48,420	-
TOTAL	48,420	-

To provide funding for the above, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership 2023 (#G51109) revenues will be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Other Financing Sources	24,210	-
Restricted Intergovernmental	24,210	-
TOTAL	48,420	-

SECTION 3. Copies of the budget revision shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Governing Board, and to the City Manager (Budget Officer) and the Finance Officer for their direction.

- IX. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None
- X. Informational Item
- XI. New Business

A. Public Hearings

1. Approved the Voluntary Contiguous Annexation of .543 Acres Located at 908 30th Avenue Drive NW, PIN 3704-11-55-2101 - Presentation by Planning Director Brian Frazier.

Consideration of the voluntary contiguous annexation of 0.543 acres property located at 908 30th Avenue Drive NW. This property is identified as PIN 3704-11-55-2101. The property is currently vacant and located within the City's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The property is zoned R-2, which permits residential development at 4 dwelling units per acre. Given its size, a property division could create two building lots; however, the owner intends to build a single home on the property. The property owner desires to connect the new home to City sewer service, which requires annexation. Surrounding properties are zoned R-2 Residential and occupied by single family homes or are vacant. The current tax value of the property is \$29,700. If annexed, the vacant property would generate \$135.14 in additional tax revenues. Upon analysis, staff has determined the petition meets the statutory requirements for voluntary contiguous annexation, and adequate public services are available. Staff finds the petition to be in conformity with applicable statutes and recommends approval of the petition.

The public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on November 11, 2023.

Mayor Guess asked City Manager Warren Wood to introduce the public hearing.

City Manager Warren Wood asked Planning Director Brian Frazier to the podium to present Council with the voluntary contiguous annexation of .543-acres of property located at 908 30th Avenue Drive NW.

Planning Director Brian Frazier gave a PowerPoint presentation. He advised the applicant was Pride Design Construction Inc. The current state of development on the parcel was a vacant lot. The owners were looking to construct a single-family residence there. Annexation was being sought to gain access to public utilities. In this case, sanitary sewer. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map. He pointed out the Hickory City limits, the parcel in question, and the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), it was a contiguous annexation as City Manager Warren Wood described. He displayed an aerial ortho map and pointed out the property in question, there was already an existing residential development pattern within the area. The annexation petition complied with all applicable annexation statutes. Public services were available to serve the one single-family residence. It was not going to cause public services to fall below acceptable levels. Based on the findings staff recommended approval of said annexation.

Mayor Guess asked for any questions. He explained the rules for conducting the public hearing. He declared the public hearing open and asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition to the proposal. No one appeared. Mayor Guess asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the proposal. No one appeared. Mayor Guess closed the public hearing.

Alderman Seaver moved, seconded by Alderman Zagaroli approval of the voluntary contiguous annexation of the property located at 908 30th Avenue Drive NW. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNEXATION ORDINANCE NO. 495

VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION ORDINANCE (CONTIGUOUS)
Pride Design Construction, Inc.

AN ORDINANCE TO EXTEND THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE
CITY OF HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA, PURSUANT TO
GENERAL STATUTES 160A-58.1, AS AMENDED (CONTIGUOUS)

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Hickory desires to annex the area described herein, under G.S. 160A-58.1, as amended; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has by resolution directed the City Clerk to investigate the sufficiency of said annexation; and

WHEREAS, the City Clerk has certified to the sufficiency of said request, and a public hearing on the question of this annexation was held in the Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building, located at 76 North Center Street, Hickory, North Carolina, at 6:00 p.m. on the 21st day of November, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Hickory further finds that the area described therein meets the standards of G.S. 160A-58.1(b), to wit:

- a. The nearest point on the proposed satellite corporate limits is not more than three miles from the corporate limits of the City of Hickory.
- b. No point on the proposed satellite corporate limits is closer to another city than to the City of Hickory.
- c. The areas described are so situated that the City will be able to provide services on the same basis within the proposed satellite corporate limits that it provides within the primary corporate limits.
- d. No subdivision, as defined in G.S. 160A-376, will be fragmented by this proposed annexation.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Hickory does hereby find as a fact that said petition has been signed by all the owners of real property in the area who are required by law to sign and all other requirements of G.S. 160A-58.1 as amended, have been complied with; and

WHEREAS, the City Council further finds that the annexation is otherwise valid, and that the public health, safety, and welfare of the City of Hickory and of the areas proposed for annexation will be best served by annexing the area herein described.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA:

Section 1. By virtue of the authority granted by G.S. 160A-58.2, as amended, the following-described contiguous territory is hereby annexed and made a part of the City of Hickory as of the 30th day of November, 2023:

Contiguous Annexation
by the City of Hickory
known as the
Pride Design Construction Inc. Property

That certain parcel or tract of land lying and being about 2.9 miles north northwest of the center of the City of Hickory. Bounded on the north by the lands of Laura V. Austin-Lockhart as described in Deed Book 3544 at Page 1 and Patricia J. Meredith as described in Deed Book 3702 at Page 1882; on the east and south by the right-of-way of 30th Avenue Drive NW and the existing City of Hickory city limits as shown in Plat Book 43 at Page 18; on the west by the lands of Pride Design Construction, Inc. as described in Deed Book 3746 at Page 1045 and more particularly described as follows, to wit.

Beginning at a ¾" pipe, the southwest corner of the lands of Laura V. Austin-Lockhart as described in Deed Book 3544 at Page 1, said pipe being located, a N.C. grid bearing (NAD 83/2011) and a horizontal distance of, South 23 degrees 44 minutes 13 seconds East 946.94 feet from NCGS Monument "Myrtle", said monument having N.C. grid coordinates (NAD 83/2011) of N 746,072.24, E 1,304,751.09 and running thence, as new City of Hickory city limits lines and with the south line of Austin-Lockhart and the south line of the lands of Patricia J. Meredith as described in Deed Book 3702 at Page 1882, South 78 degrees 48 minutes 13 seconds East 204.38 feet to a #3 rebar, the southeast corner of Meredith on the west right-of-way of 30th Avenue Drive NW and in existing City of Hickory city limits as shown in Plat Book 43 at Page 18; thence, with the west right-of-way of 30th Avenue Drive NW and existing City of Hickory city limits the following calls: South 15 degrees 32 minutes 33 seconds West 79.14 feet to a ½" pipe; thence, with a convex curve to the right, said curve having a radius of 30.00 feet, an arc length of 47.12 feet and a chord bearing and distance of South 60 degrees 32 minutes 33 seconds West 42.43 feet to a point; thence, with a concave curve to the left, said curve having a radius of 50.00 feet, an arc length of 55.58 feet and a chord bearing and distance of South 73 degrees 56 minutes 26 seconds West 52.76 feet to a ½" rebar; thence South 89 degrees 10 minutes 16 seconds West 58.26 feet to a point; thence, with a concave curve to the left, said curve having a radius of 1847.50 feet, an arc length of 34.40 feet and a chord bearing and distance of South 88 degrees 22 minutes 35 seconds West 34.40 feet to a ½" pipe, the southeast corner of the lands of Pride Design Construction, Inc. as described in Deed Book 3746 at Page 1045; thence, leaving the right-of-way of 30th Avenue Drive NW and the existing City of Hickory city limits as new City of Hickory city limits and with the east line of Pride Design Construction, Inc., North 00 degrees

22 minutes 35 seconds East 153.21 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 0.543 acres more or less.

This description is drawn from a plat by Marcus H. Miller, PLS L-3481 entitled "Contiguous Annexation by the City of Hickory known as the Pride Design Construction, Inc. property" and dated October 13, 2023.

Section 2. Upon and after the 30th day of November 2023, the above-described territory and its citizens and property shall be subject to all debts, laws, ordinances, and regulations in force in the City of Hickory and shall be entitled to the same privileges and benefits as other parts of the City of Hickory. Said territory shall be subject to municipal taxes according to G.S. 160A-58.10, as amended.

Section 3. The newly annexed territory described herein shall become part of Ward No. 6 of the City of Hickory.

Section 4. The Mayor of the City of Hickory shall cause to be recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Catawba County, and in the Office of the Secretary of State at Raleigh, North Carolina, an accurate map of the annexed territory, described in Section 1 hereof, together with duly certified copy of this Ordinance. Such a map shall also be delivered to the County Board of Elections, as required by G.S. 163-288.1.

B. Departmental Reports

1. Approved the Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Comprehensive Master Plan – Presented by Parks Recreation and Sports Tourism Director Mark Seaman and Special Projects Manager for the City Manager Natalie Jackson.

The City of Hickory has completed the development of the Recreation Well Crafted 2023-2033 Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan. This plan replaces the 1997 Park and Recreation Master Plan and its subsequent 2010 Recreation Needs Assessment. Informed by extensive public input and analysis, the master plan will assist the City of Hickory with meeting the current and projected park, recreation, and sports tourism needs of its citizens for the next ten years. Adoption of this plan will also significantly increase the City's competitiveness for alternate sources of funding such as North Carolina Trust Fund PARTF Grants. Staff recommends Council's approval and adoption of the Recreation Well Crafted 2023-2033 Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan.

Mayor Guess asked City Manager Warren Wood to introduce the Departmental Report.

City Manager Warren Wood advised the presentation was the Parks Recreation and Sports Tourism Comprehensive Master Plan and would be presented by Parks Recreation and Sports Tourism Director, Mark Seaman and Special Projects Manager, Natalie Jackson.

Parks Recreation and Sports Tourism Director Mark Seaman thanked Council for the opportunity to present their Comprehensive Master Plan tonight. He mentioned that almost five years ago all field maintenance, park maintenance, maintenance for the recreation centers, as well as landscaping for the centers was shifted to public services. He brought this up because, obviously this plan has a big impact on parks, recreation, and sports tourism department. It also had a big impact on public services. He thanked Public Works Director Steve Miller and all his staff for all their hard work and input in this plan as well because that does get forgotten a lot. People saw them doing all the programming, but they were the ones behind the scenes doing all the maintenance and the mowing and all that. and they wanted to make sure that folks are aware that this master plan very much affects them as well. On behalf of both departments, he thanked Special Projects Manager Natalie Jackson for the tremendous job she had done. All of her hard work had resulted in a master plan that was 450 pages in length.

City Manager Warren Wood noted this had been a process of about 18-months. The last time they had a Parks and Recreation Master Plan was 1997. It was really not an update it was a new plan.

Special Projects Manager for the City Manager Natalie Jackson gave a PowerPoint presentation. She discussed the Recreation, Well-Crafted Parks, Recreation, and Sports Tourism Comprehensive Master Plan for their consideration. She briefly talked about the building of the plan, and then some of the highlights of that plan. The building of the plan was a four-phase process. The four-phase process consisted of information gathering and public input as well as an inventory and analysis and then of course, plan development. Now they were at the last stage,

which would hopefully be adoption. They concentrated on robust public engagement and were able to engage approximately 1,230 plus people in the process. This was a combination of the master plan efforts itself and a project done in the previous year for individuals with disabilities. In a robust public engagement, they wanted to make sure they got out to all of the quadrants. They wanted to make sure they went to the citizens. If they did not come to a public input meeting, they went to them. They went to them at the parks, the library, City Hall, and they engaged the public. It was really a fun process. Also, they used a variety of engagement tools. That would include social media, a hotline for citizens to call in, and also grassroots efforts. They also focused on certain key groups in the community. They held focus groups as well. They wanted to hear from the senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and from the youth. They were able to engage the youth in a robust manner as well. In the process they also made sure they conducted a statistically valid and representative survey of the community. A recreation needs survey to make sure that they had that element in place. That was very successful and, was able to come to completion in a two-week period. The citizens of Hickory really responded quickly and well. What was wonderful about that too was that in the process, both from beginning to end, they found that the City of Hickory was on top of a lot of what the citizens want already. One of the cool things that they found out was there were four items, amenities that the citizens said they wanted and that they needed. Those would be nature trails and greenways, water access through an ability to canoe or kayak, picnic shelters, and shaded plain seating. All things the City was already well aware of and working on. The plan was a snapshot of existing conditions, and it included both the current inventory of what they have as well as additional inventories for niche interests. Within the plan, they would see things of interest to the citizens like water-based recreation inventory for example. Also, it accounted for core programming and special events in youth athletics. They did extensive analysis on not just the amenities and parks but also the administration, maintenance, operations, and finances. They looked at usage of parks and facilities, and a quadrant analysis to look at the equitable distribution of recreation opportunities in the City. They did a post pandemic analysis. How were some of their key parts affected by the pandemic? What does it look like then and now? And a walk ability and proximity analysis. Those were actually just some examples of the analysis within the plan. They looked at projections for the City. They looked at the 2020 census obviously, but they looked into the future and by 2035 over 52,000 citizens were projected. They had to account for that. They were looking at Hickory now and Hickory 10-years from now. They also looked at age projections. What were the growing age groups? The biggest age group, 0 to 9, 25 to 44, and 60 to 100 plus and 100 plus was really a category. They also wanted to see other elements as well such as key population concentration. The biggest growth areas, as far as their populations were concerned were going to be families with young children or mixed race or Hispanic. They wanted to also make sure they got their underserved citizens in there, especially their individuals with disabilities. The plan contained national peer comparisons as well as regional and statewide comparisons as well. They looked at the 2022 agency performance review put on by the National Recreation and Park Association. It is published every year. They compared themselves to their jurisdiction population range now, and at the end of the plan itself. They saw how they matched up and what they needed to plan. Also, their regional peers, they looked at the peers the City of Hickory normally looks at in order to compare themselves in other areas. Danville, Virginia, for example, or Roanoke, Virginia; Wilson, North Carolina, and so on. Statewide benchmarking. They also used the UNC School of Government benchmarking program that the City participates in just as a way to gain more insight. All in all, they found that they put together a tool. A planning tool and a resource both at the staff level and the leadership level. It was a resource. It was a plan meant to act in that manner versus a mandate. It presupposes obviously that without funding or staffing or those things at the time, decisions were made for various uses, those items would not happen. It gave them great flexibility to leadership and staff to plan for real-time needs. It encourages to a great deal of feasibility studies.

Ms. Jackson commented during the process, it was fun because the staff came up with a new mission and vision, it was a collaborative effort. She referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a new mission and vision statement for the parks, recreation, and sports tourism department. That was an update and also that boils down to their values of quality, and diversity, welcome innovation, and community, a mixture of public input, a look at their existing conditions, analysis, projections, national and regional peer comparisons, all of those were put together to come to their strategic priorities for the plan. She referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a summary of their strategic priorities. Their biggest need was for equitable distribution of recreation, revitalization of their existing assets, and the building of department capacity over the next 10 years. While the City was meeting the biggest needs, of course, they found some great needs that the City could consider addressing in years to come. She would consider this plan a prudential plan.

Ms. Jackson discussed each of the strategic priorities and highlighted some of the associated goals in the master plan. The first was to improve and maximize. Throughout the plan's needs assessment, citizens, stakeholders, staff, clearly articulated their support for investing in their existing assets. To improve and maximize meant to harness Hickory's recreation potential by focusing on its existing strengths and assets. How can they do this? Some of their goals included updating and reflecting park classifications. Some of their parks, for example, were designated as neighborhood parks, but they may not contain all the elements that were normal of a neighborhood park. The City had an opportunity just through their regular updates through the five-year CIP, for example, to make updates that better reflect park classifications. Neill Clark Recreation Park would be an example, adding a little bit more of neighborhood elements to reflect the classification even with its new partnership with Hickory Christian. The plan suggested meaningful adjustments to parks versus changing in classifications. The plan suggested striving for universal design and simply put universal design was when they plan a park or a recreation facility, it keeps everyone in mind from day one. There was no retrofitting involved. Anyone with any ability, anytime any age could go and enjoy that facility. There were some really wonderful universal design principles that were included in the master plan. Also revitalizing underutilized parks. The northwest quadrant, for example, through a usage analysis had six of the most underutilized parks in the City. Those were assets that could help the parks that were widely used. They could even out the usage. Revitalization of their underutilized parks may be slightly changing their mission if necessary was suggested. Dovetailing with that was balancing use. They have some parks like Kiwanis Park, they were on fire, and they were really, really busy and they have West Hickory Park, which might be on the opposite end of the spectrum. Balancing usage of their existing assets was very key because it was not always about building new parks, it was about maximizing what they already have. Optimizing existing partnerships. Hickory was awesome at partnerships especially with regard to parks and recreation. They knew in sports tourism, for example, their partnership with the Metro Convention Center was going to maximize in the next 10 years. Something that was really nice though, was during their stakeholder meetings, 100% of those stakeholders that she interviewed said they would love to partner with the City of Hickory. That was a pretty cool thing to keep in mind and it may open up a lot of doors in the next 10 years.

Ms. Jackson advised communication was very important as well and was something that came through, tried and true throughout the entire process. It was like the citizens of Hickory do not know the treasure they hold because when they were engaging the citizens, they actually educated them a lot and what was available to them. There was a strong component of communication within the plan to ensure that they were aware of what they have available to them. How they could do that was through the development of a park's recreation sports tourism specific communication plan. They found what would be very helpful was to market to niche interests. Niche interest as an example would be a pickleball player who wants to know only where all the pickleball courts were. That individual may be able to go to the website, click on that button and find out every place they could go. That was a strategy that was very doable, very easy and very impactful. Just orienting individuals to existing assets. They had a lot of folks that said they wanted access to water based recreation. They could use the master plan to communicate where they could access. There were actually a lot more options than people realized. Focus on hard-to-reach groups. Their teens let them know they really loved to see them engage them more on how they like to communicate. Also, they had other individuals in the community who do not use social media. What are those hard-to-reach groups and how could they expand their communication efforts to reach those groups? That was addressed in the plan as well. The plan talked about growth and that was very important because that plan sunset, the potential to go over 50,000 citizens. They want to ensure that the parks and recreation opportunities are going to meet the needs of a growing population. They were focusing on that in some keyways. First, they were focusing on park amenities in the eastern quadrant. The northeast had the largest current population and projected population at planned sunset. The manager's office had already been talking about potential improvements and maybe even partnership opportunities that could garner such as with St. Stephen's Park, for example. They were looking at how they could serve the eastern quadrants northeastern in particular. There were some keyways they could do that. Could they potentially complete the remaining phases of Bruce Meisner? Those were considerations for leadership to dig into, and this plan would help to make a data driven decision. They want to revitalize the western quadrants. They have a lot of opportunity to take their parks that were less used and transform them into greater recreation assets in the future. Six out of 10 of the least visited parks were in the western quadrant. The southwest quadrant had the greatest promise for revitalization. They have parks in that area that the City could consider using.

Ms. Jackson discussed recruiting private investors to expand key amenities. As she mentioned at the beginning, the plan was written in a prudential manner. There was a lot of foundational work and administrative framework suggested in the plan. Private investors were always key to bringing some of the amenities to citizens that the City could not prioritize in the time that the plan was enacted. There was an encouragement of that. Also, maintaining proper levels of service. They did a proper level of service analysis to determine the proper amounts of amenities, proper park acreage, and trail mileage for their citizens. This plan updated those areas so that the City could stay on course. The City was doing very well in those areas overall. They had elevated sports tourism in this plan. In previous plans, it was not yet a formal element of the department. The plan speaks to growing sports tourism, how to maximize their existing inventory, how to make sure that they prioritize their partnership with the Convention Center, and it was encouraged to discover its niche. There were some niches in the region that the sports tourism element could dig into. One would be perhaps women's sports, that niche does not seem to be a priority for other communities. It might be one for the City of Hickory to look into.

Ms. Jackson mentioned the plan also considered a focus on nature. They were encouraging an environmental stewardship in this plan. A more formalized version of environmental stewardship from the Hickory by Choice 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The citizens voiced environmental education as a medium priority, but there was a national conversation on environmental stewardship. Their citizens also told them, through 89% of their households, that they need more environmental education. That was something that they would like to see more of that they currently do not see. They wanted to create an environmental stewardship program through this plan and then encourage a partnership with groups. They knew that the City has partnered with the CVCC bio club in the past and they may have an opportunity to expand to the North Carolina Conservation Corps, which actually could serve three roles, programming education, and actually supplement to public services efforts. Just the introduction of nature-based programming. Staff had done some of that. There was opportunity for greater growth. Lastly leveraging their beautiful native plants for conservation and maintenance.

Ms. Jackson discussed equitable inclusive access as another key point of the plan. They wanted to strive for equitable access to recreation through the distribution of opportunities, connectivity, synergy of assets, communication, and inclusion. They wanted to do that in a few keyways. First, they wanted to strive for the equal distribution of parks, trails, and amenities. The usage analysis helps to bring about again what she said earlier that their eastern quadrants really needed to be a focus in the next 10 years. The plan encouraged and gave some resources on how to use census tracts in order to identify population concentrations to customize programming and amenities at the parks that they have. An example would be that Winkler Park was actually near the census tract that had the highest concentration of individuals with cognitive, vision, and independent living disabilities. Knowing things like that, they could customize some of the things that were available, or make sure those were accounted for at that park. The plan really draws from the great work the City has already done. There was a large encouragement to focus on the projects of walk/bike Hickory. In particular, in walk/bike Hickory, 8 out of 12 projected connectivity projects actually increased the equitable access and walkability of parks and recreation facilities and parks themselves. That was awesome. There was an emphasis on staying with that and prioritizing those projects for that connectivity access. There was encouragement to explore inclusion policy and staff training. There were some great resources out there already through the National Recreation and Park Association, as well as some communities such as Rock Hill, South Carolina that had formalized inclusion policies and staff training to ensure that their staff were increasing their level of service to the citizens. One example would be the formation of a local government network for adaptive sports. The communities of High Point, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro had gotten together and said, alone they could not provide a robust adaptive sports program, but together they could provide an adaptive sports network. That was the best practice that was in the plan. Then also create synergistic offerings for seniors and people with disabilities. Far and away the seniors were going to be the age group that grows the most in the next 10 years for the City of Hickory. People with disabilities were represented in all protected classes. There were many, many amenities that they could put in their parks and at their facilities that serve both populations. There was a synergy, one purchase but a large population served. There was a large encouragement of implementing nationally recognized practices. This plan sets a framework for the parks, recreation, sports tourism department to build capacity and a foundation for future accreditation if the City so chooses. Accreditation would mean that the City was displaying the use of best practices in a daily basis in parks, recreation, and sports tourism. Some of the goals that came out of that were to create a plan and invest in staff credentialing. There were certifications that could be acquired

for parks and recreation professionals, as well as professional education for public services staff to bridge between the two departments and their common mission. The use of the accreditation standards of CAPRA would allow the staff to build administrative operational financial policies that will help them to use best practices and again lay that framework for future accreditation. Obviously, that in turn serves the citizens even better. The leveraging of software that the departments were currently investing in, RecDesk just came online in the department. That leveraging was going to be very important for the community and for the department as the community grows.

Ms. Jackson discussed the developments of standard guidelines for program development and evaluation. As was mentioned before, 1997 was their last master plan and they did have a 2010 needs assessment done. The plan brings up to date the opportunity for the department to develop those guidelines and evaluation elements. Then it has the tool built in for trends nationally and locally to plug in essentially.

Ms. Jackson discussed the plan implementation. The staff with this plan would be encouraged to use the plan at the departmental level. It had a great amount of data for data driven decisions. When they were trying to determine the next program that comes online, they were going to know where the greatest needs were, where the greatest interests were, and also where the trends were. A great department level tool. It was not just something from the top down, but it was also from the ground up. Again, data driven decisions were enabled a lot by this plan. A big element of this plan was that the plan enables the City to compete for alternate funding, in particular the PARTF grant. This updated plan opens wide that capacity for the City to find alternate funding that would enable the City to do some of the projects that were suggested. The plan contained a pretty big resource in the appendix that helped with that as well. It was encouraged that if the plan was adopted that progress be tracked regularly to continue the momentum of that plan. That was the best practice that was encouraged in master plans. Also, making the community and stakeholders part of the journey. They asked for a lot of information from them. It would be very good to check in with them on a regular basis and even dig further into other groups that they were not able to reach during the time of the plan in order to see what their needs were, and desires were, and how they fit with the overall picture. The plan will be managed by the park's recreation and sports tourism department. There was also an encouragement to celebrate the successes that came out of that plan. She asked for any questions.

Mayor Guess asked for questions for Natalie.

Alderman Wood knew they did not track this, and she was not going to have specific numbers for this, but through this process, did she get a sense of the extent to which their parks and facilities were bringing people from outside the City limits; that was where the utilization was coming from. Did she get a sense of that through this process?

Ms. Jackson definitely thought that was a strong factor based on the awareness of citizens of what was available to them, and also just through engaging people at the parks. One example would be Lowe's Food City Park. She remembered being there specifically talking and many, many of the individuals that she spoke with were from out of town.

City Manager Warren Wood speculated with the Placer data that might be something they could fine tune.

Ms. Jackson advised Placer was definitely an asset to this process. She was very grateful the City had that tool in place, it was super.

Alderman Wood thanked Ms. Jackson for the presentation it was fantastic, and she had done a great job.

Ms. Jackson thanked Alderman Wood.

Alderman Freeman thought City Manager Warren Wood was joking about 450 pages.

City Manager Warren Wood commented they had to whittle it down to 450. There was a lot of survey data, and a lot of citizen input data.

Alderman Freeman offered his condolence and prayers to Parks Recreation and Sports Tourism Director Mark Seaman and his family as well. He commented it was a job well done. He asked Ms. Jackson to explain a little bit further, in simple terms, maybe the challenge here in Hickory, where they could compare where she

mentioned the challenge of equitable distribution. Also, as she dealt with measuring the outcome or the barometer that would be used to kind of show what was going on. He asked if there was a timeframe as it relates to, two months, three months, they wanted to see where they were in this process. He asked her to explain that.

Ms. Jackson advised as far as the equitable distribution, simply looking at the quadrants and projections, they were very, very heavy in the northwest quadrant, but their largest population was in the northeast, and it was the largest projected population too. They have a number of underutilized parks in the northwest as well. The citizens that were in the northeast were really starting to love Bruce Meisner a lot. That was going to serve them well. However, with the projections, they would need to have more amenities in that region just to balance out usage because they were so heavy in the northwest.

City Manager Warren Wood commented that focuses on population and access to parks being equally distributed and it was not. The northeast and some degree of southeast were at a deficit particularly compared to the west side of town.

Alderwoman Williams commented it was a wonderful comprehensive plan that was much needed. She thought things were changing and they had people that really wanted to be more active, and it dovetailed so well with their trail system and some of the other things they were going to do. She asked how much she tracked, or did she see? She felt like Ms. Jackson was talking in very compartmentalized terms. The northeast was more heavily populated, but the northwest has the parks. When her kids were growing up and everything, she often went to different parts of the City, given their interests or whatever. She asked if she had seen that happening, and how could they maybe encourage more of that comprehensive use of all their facilities versus those that want to stay here.

Ms. Jackson advised one of the areas was the ability for people to walk to recreation. They looked at walkability as well as proximity to parks and trails. For those individuals who could not make it to a park or pick a park in the different portion of the City, they have to make neighborhood parks in particular available to them within a reasonable distance. That was kind of the catalyst for equitable access to it. Can a person get to that park? Fortunately walk/bike Hickory has a great handle on connectivity projects. Obviously, that takes a lot of time and development. So Placer.ai data also could help them track overtime. Back to Alderman Freeman's question earlier, she would encourage regular looks at the Placer or AI data to really continue to analyze that because the plan was very much a snapshot in time.

Alderwoman Williams asked how they tracked. This came up with the pickleball courts where some citizens just said they were just overwhelmed with people from out of town jumping in and so Hickory residents could not play. Was there any real evidence of that? How do they track?

Ms. Jackson advised that was very difficult to track.

Alderwoman Williams agreed. There were no signup sheets. A citizen tracked it himself because he did not recognize the people. That was his way.

Ms. Jackson commented that unless Mr. Seaman wanted to correct her, they could track numbers mainly. There were some communities that had additional rules regarding citizens and noncitizen use. There really was not any input from the citizens other than literally one person that said anything like that should be enacted here.

Alderman Wood commented he knew a master plan was serious business. It took a lot of work, a lot of effort to put something like that together, but in terms of implementation, and he did not want to sound overly simplistic about this, but he believed it was important because parks and recreation was near and dear to his heart. That was how he started getting involved in the City. Do not forget the word fun. He meant that was what this was for. Right? It was health and well-being, but do not forget the fun aspect of it in the implementation, because he truly believed that was an important part of why they do all of this. Whether for old, young, and everybody in between, it was all about fun. He hoped that was a concept that everybody keeps in mind during the implementation of this. He thanked her.

Mayor Guess asked for any other questions. He knew that Ms. Jackson had put a lot of time and effort in this, and he knew that along the way she had a lot of assistance and help from volunteers and the Parks and Recreation Commission and everyone that had been involved in this. He thanked everyone for their time

and their service. Obviously, this was a document that would be useful for many years to come. He imagined that hard copies would be available in the libraries and maybe on the website as well.

City Manager Warren Wood advised it would be online.

Mayor Guess commented there was a lot of information there and they appreciated all that she had done and all the resources now that they have available to see where they were going. He thanked Ms. Jackson.

City Manager Warren Wood asked Council for a motion to formally accept the plan.

Mayor Guess moved, seconded by Alderwoman Patton to accept the comprehensive parks, recreation, and sports tourism, master plan. The motion carried unanimously.

City Council members were very impressed with the master plan.

Mayor Guess advised the Council would not be having a closed session that was outlined in the agenda.

2. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
At-Large (Council Appoints) VACANT

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 1 (Wood Appoints) VACANT
At-Large (Outside City but within HRP) (Council Appoints) VACANT

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

(Term Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms With Unlimited Appointments) (Appointed by City Council)
Burke County Representative (Mayor Appoints with Recommendation from Burke County) VACANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Historic Properties Owner (Council Appoints) VACANT
At-Large (2) (Council Appoints) William Gardner Jr. Resigned 10-23-23 VACANT

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints) VACANT

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints) VACANT

RECYCLING ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 6 (Patton Appoints) VACANT
At-Large (Council Appoints) VACANT

C. Presentation of Petitions and Requests

XII. Matters Not on Agenda (requires majority vote of Council to consider)

XIII. General Comments by Members of Council, City Manager or City Attorney of a Non-Business Nature

Mayor Guess commended staff and everyone, particularly Kyle Mishler and all of those that put together another over the top, very successful Christmas parade and tree lighting. Every year, he thought that they would not be able to top that next year, and every year they top it. He knew that a lot of people, a lot of their staff, and a lot of people make that happen. He just wanted to thank everyone. He was always amazed that you go up there and within 24 hours after they had 10,000

plus people, it does not look like there was any litter or anything. It was just all cleaned up and all put back together like nothing ever happened. He knew that takes a lot of work and a lot of effort from a lot of people. Everyone that was involved in that they appreciated that, and it was tremendously successful. He heard people say they could not believe how great it was and everything. They had a lot of visitors here and he was just amazed at how well that goes every year. He heard nothing but praise about their Christmas parade and tree lighting. He thanked everyone.

Alderman Seaver commented that it also draws a lot of people from out of town to come to Hickory. He thought they had one of the first Christmas parades in this side of the State. He apologized, he did not get to come and ride on the float, he was running a popcorn machine. He mentioned that they had another State playoff game at Hickory High, Friday night, if they wanted to come and see a good football game. He was sure it would be good. He thought there was 8 teams left.

Mayor Guess commented Hickory High was in the playoffs, and Lenoir-Rhyne was in the playoffs. A lot of success.

Alderman Seaver mentioned those draw some people from out of town.

Mayor Guess commented as a matter of fact, he knew that there was a lot of people at the game, and they could not come to the parade because they were trying to decide if they were going to the game or the parade. That was a good problem to have.

Alderwoman Williams thought they should say Happy Thanksgiving to everybody.

Mayor Guess commented Happy Thanksgiving, he thought there was 30 some days till Christmas, and Thanksgiving was here on them. And the year was almost over. He just got used to writing 2023 and it was over.

Alderwoman Williams thanked all the staff and people who helped the City and their partners too.

Mayor Guess commented that their staff was tremendous. It was just amazing.

XIV. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk