

CONCORD CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 8, 2025

The City Council for the City of Concord, North Carolina, held special meeting to conduct a one-day retreat in the Executive Boardroom at The Embassy Suites and Convention Center, Concord, NC, on March 8, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. with Mayor William C. Dusch presiding.

Council members were present as follows:

Members Present:

Mayor Pro-Tem Andy Langford
Council Member Lori A. Clay
Council Member Betty M. Stocks
Council Member JC McKenzie
Council Member Terry L. Crawford
Council Member Jennifer Hubbard
Council Member John A. Sweat, Jr.

Others Present:

City Manager, Lloyd Payne
City Attorney, Valerie Kolczynski
City Clerk, Kim J. Deason

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Mayor Dusch called the meeting to order.

Mayor Pro-Tem Langford explained why he wanted to the Council to conduct the one-day retreat. He stated he wanted to ensure Council Members trusted each other and trusted staff to accomplish the goals established by the Council. He stated it is his goal to avoid political drama and for the Council to work together and make non-partisan decisions.

Council Member Crawford stated he agreed that decisions should be non-partisan.

Discussion was held regarding partisan and non-partisan voting. Mayor Dusch stated that he held discussions with Representative Echevarria. He stated Representative Echevarria has now pulled the proposed partisan voting bill from consideration.

Council Member Hubbard stated, in her opinion, it is critical to build relationships with the new legislators.

Council Member Clay stated she feels she makes her decision based first on her faith and second on her partisan party affiliation. She stated, in her opinion, partisan is not a “bad” word as long as a person is a reasonable type person that can adjust their opinions if need be. She stated she liked knowing what party an elected official or candidate is affiliated with.

Council Member Stocks stated she has enjoyed her time on the Council. She stated the Council is charged to deliver the best possible service to the citizens of Concord.

Council Member McKenzie stated it is important the Council work together and have consensus on items that are voted on.

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Following the discussion, the following items were discussed:

Review the Strategic Plan

The City Manager stated the work inclusion may have to be replaced in the Vision Statement. He stated an update on the Strategic Plan would be presented to the Council at the April 8th budget workshop.

He stated in regards to Goal 6, the City uses multiple avenues to keep citizens informed. He stated staff is always discussing ways to improve communication efforts.

Council Member Hubbard stated the Council needs to determine goals and give clear direction to the City Manager.

Council Member Clay stated the Council should view the Plan in the past tense to evaluate themselves not just the City Manager.

Council Member Stocks stated the Plan is not yet a year old and feels the Council should allow more time for accomplishing the goals.

HB171

The City Attorney explained Executive Order 14173 and how that would impact HB171. She stated the Executive Order is to eliminate DEI in all public and private agencies. She stated there is a Preliminary Injunction in the District Court of Maryland regarding this Order so the Order is currently on hold.

She explained how, if passed, the Executive Order would affect the City's federal grant funding. She stated she wanted Council to be aware of this order. She stated it is her opinion that, if Order is put into effect, using minority based businesses, women owned businesses, etc. would be in violation.

The City Attorney ensured Council that she and the City Manager would take any and all steps to protect the City.

The City Manager explained the DEI Coordinator position was reclassified last budget year to HR analyst. He further stated that any reference to DEI has been removed from the job description and from the City's website and intranet.

The City Attorney explained HB171 was introduced in February. She stated it was just introduced so the language is subject to change. If passed, the word inclusion will have to be removed from everything in the City, no funding for any DEI program, would allow any person to be able to sue the City on grounds of violating the Bill, and every year the City Manager would have to create an annual report and post on the City's website.

The City Attorney stated, it is her legal opinion, that the Concord United Committee (CUC) will have to be eliminated as the City would not be able to spend funds for DEI. She also stated, it is her legal opinion, the Logan Economic Development would be allowed because it is improving an area of the City.

Council Member McKenzie asked if it would effect WeBuild. The City Attorney stated she did know the impact at this time.

Following the discussion, Council agree to watch for further development of HB171 and Executive Order 14173. The City Attorney and City Manager will keep Council informed on any progress on this.

Council Member Stocks stated she is concerned with how this could impact employment and hiring.

Discussion was held regarding the CUC.

SB382

The City Attorney stated this Bill states that all permit approvals for the development of land or for the provision of water or wastewater services that were valid as of January 1, 2024 are still valid and remain valid until the end of 2027. She further explained the sewer

allocations that will be granted at the March 25th meeting will not expire until June 2029. She stated City staff is treating the date of approval as when the permit is issued.

Discussion was held regarding the Council allocation sewer to residential projects.

Tax Rate discussion

Mayor Pro-Tem Langford asked the City Manager about the status of the budget process. The City Manager stated it is on-going. He stated the budget is currently in the negative due to personnel requests and increased costs for supplies and contracted services. He stated he is working with Budget staff to balance the budget prior to the April 8th budget workshop. He stated he is hopeful to present the budget with the no property tax increase.

Public Art Commission (PAC)

The consensus of the Council is no increase in funding for the Public Art Commission. Mayor Pro-Tem Langford and Council Member Stocks will discuss this with PAC Chair, Doyle Bussey.

Streetscape

The City Manager provided a list of events scheduled for 2025.

Council Members felt the amended time of 12pm-8pm for the Streetscape Grand Opening event on May 3rd was good.

Council Member Clay stated Troy Taylor, Basement Arcade owner, would like to have food trucks in the downtown every Friday and Saturday evening to bring more folks downtown in the evening hours.

Council Member McKenzie stated, in his opinion, it would be more beneficial to have restaurants open in the evenings instead of food trucks.

The City Manager stated he would like to have time to discuss food trucks and permitting such with staff. He also stated staff would need time to development an ordinance amendment based on Council's direction.

Council Member Hubbard stated she would like to get feedback from the downtown businesses regarding food trucks downtown.

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There being no further business to be discussed, a motion was made by Council Member Crawford and seconded by Council Member McKenzie to adjourn—the vote: all aye.

William C. Dusch, Mayor

Kim J. Deason, City Clerk