

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION  
OF THE NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
2400 WASHINGTON AVENUE**

**November 12, 2019**

**4:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Tina L. Vick; Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury; Sandra N. Cherry, D. Min.; Marcellus L. Harris III; David H. Jenkins; and McKinley L. Price, DDS -----6

**ABSENT:** Sharon P. Scott, MPA -----1

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Cynthia D. Rohlf; Collins L. Owens; Mabel Washington Jenkins; Joye Thompkins; Darlene Bradberry; Ted Henifin; Lauren Zuravnsky; Lisa Cipriano; Cory Cloud; Constantinos Velissarios; Police Chief Steve Drew; Fire Chief Jeffrey Johnson; Florence Kingston; Susan Goodwin; Karen Witherspoon; Elaine Johnson; Michael Poplawski; Venerria Thomas; Louis Martinez; Frank James; James McElheney; Craig Galant; Everett Skipper; Harold Roach; Bryan Stilley; Nyoka Hall; Alan Archer; Ralph Clayton; David Freeman; Kim Lee; Cleder Jones; LeeAnna Sorrell; Eoghan Miller; Jerri Wilson; Adrian Whitcomb; Zina Middleton and Josh Reyes

**I. Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) Wastewater Treatment Plant Presentation**

City Manager Rohlf introduced Mr. Ted Henifin, General Manager, Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD), to provide the HRSD Wastewater Treatment Plant presentation (a copy of the presentation, “James River Treatment Plan, Newport News, VA – November 12, 2019”, is attached and made a part of these minutes).

Mr. Henifin introduced Ms. Lauren Zuravnsky, Chief of Design and Construction – Sustainable Water Initiative for Tomorrow (SWIFT), Hampton Roads Sanitation District. He thanked City Council for the opportunity to present as HRSD had been provided services since the 1920’s. He shared that Newport News was one of the communities that pushed to get HRSD established. Newport News was a strong component, J. Clyde Morris was a Commissioner in the 1960’s and Delegate Lewis McMurrin, from Newport News, re-wrote legislation from the 1940’s. He indicated the HRSD owed its existence and governing structure to the City of Newport News.

Mr. Henifin noted there were three (3) treatment plants in Newport News:

1. North Shore Operations Center, G Avenue, Newport News 23602

2. James River Treatment Plant, 111 City Farm Road, Newport News 23602
3. Boat Harbor Treatment Plant, 300 Terminal Avenue, Newport News 23607

Mr. Henifin indicated that Newport News and HRSD had a long history of cooperation to protect local water quality with the following:

- Regional Wet Weather Planning, HRSD's Integrated Plan
- Microbial Source Tracking
- Nutrient Trading Agreement

Mr. Henifin indicated the Sustainable Water Initiative for Tomorrow (SWIFT) – treated our water to exact standard today, and in the case of Newport News, discharged into the James River where it's immediately taken in the Chesapeake Bay to the ocean with no downstream users. That water was very valuable and continued to get more and more requirements put on that water and take it to the level of drinking water. To treat water to meet drinking water standards and replenish the aquifer with clean water would:

- Reduce nutrient discharges to the Bay
- Provide a sustainable supply of groundwater
- Reduce the rate of land subsidence
- Protect the groundwater from saltwater contamination

Mr. Henifin advised that the Sustainable Water Initiative for Tomorrow (SWIFT) Research Center facility, located at HRSD's Nansemond Treatment Plant, began replenishing the Potomac Aquifer in May 2018, with up to one million gallons of drinking quality SWIFT Water daily. Tours were available to the public on Wednesdays and Thursdays, between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Councilwoman Woodbury questioned when HRSD refilled the aqua filter, what precautions were taken to ensure germs do not get into the aquifer. Mr. Henifin replied that HRSD had multi-barrier / multi-process treatment facilities that used a variety of treatment processes to make drinking water at the end of that process. Processes included adding ozone, used biologic activate carbon, and used granular activate carbon as a final polisher, which was an added absorption process that was state-of-the-art from a water treatment standpoint. HRSD also used a ultra-violet disinfection, once it met all drinking water standards, and recharged it into the aqua. Mr. Henifin advised that it was a very complex and advanced treatment process, with a number of oversight committees and safeguards in place.

Councilwoman Cherry inquired about the location of the HRSD Nansemond Treatment Plant. Mr. Henifin replied that the HRSD Nansemond Treatment Plant was located off of College Drive. City Manager Rohlf indicated a tour could be set-up for City Council upon request.

Mr. Henifin shared that the first full-scale facility was being proposed by the James River Treatment Plant (111 City Farm Road, Newport News) next to Riverview Farm Park. The proposed treatment plant to be built would be similar to what was at the James River Treatment Plant site. The proposed site would be a 17 million gallon treatment plant facility which consisted of large concrete tanks that looked like the existing treatment plants. Mr. Henifin stated that the SWIFT facility would be located on the vacant land, which was a complicated construction project that would use every inch of land available on the James River Treatment Plant site. HRSD wanted to build an expansion (see maps attached pages 7 – 14). He advised HRSD had been focused on partnerships with wet weather planning and nutrient trading. He shared HRSD's proposal would be the expansion of the facility, to deal with SWIFT, and would build a waterfront trail, and acquisition of property from the City of Norfolk. In the City of Virginia Beach, a large tank was needed, which would be built in a park and incorporate a skate park of which the community would benefit. In the City of Hampton, a new pump station was needed on Bridge Street. The investment in the City of Newport News would be \$300 million at the James River Treatment Plant. HRSD proposed a purchase of approximately ten (10) acres to relocate the administration building and dedicate some of the property as a conservation easement. The administration building would have a community room, exterior restrooms that could support the recreation facility, and long-term additional benefits while freeing up space to build additional treatment plant needs. He shared, in exchange for that land, HRSD would build a trail with shoreline stabilization, an elevated boardwalk, and a fence line around the treatment plant with a view of the James River. The other proposal was to exchange the G Avenue ten (10) acre parcel for the ten (10) acres at City Farm Park; however, the improvements were not great which was why HRSD moved from that location, and a cash payment. Mr. Henifin noted that the wetlands had to be 1000 feet apart, and each well would place two (2) million gallons of water into the ground per day. He advised, in order to make that happen, HRSD needed facilities that were spread out. Also as part of the existing site, install ten (10) recharge wells, which would be located outside of the former landfill. It would require a residential size building where recharge water piping would go to each of the wells on a daily basis. Mr. Henifin advised that 40-year easements would be needed.

Mr. Henifin shared that HRSD would like to make the proposed expansion of the James River Treatment Plant and summarized the direct benefits as follows:

- Public access to river views on new walking trail

- Administration building buffer to plant – parking, rest rooms and community use of meeting space
- Conservation easement on waterfront portion of buffer
- Cash payment
- Approximately 10-acre site on G Avenue

Mr. Henifin shared the HRSD schedule moving forward:

Nov/Dec 2019:	HRSD Hosted public meeting on concept
January 2020:	Terms and conditions for agreement between Newport News and HRSD are developed – presented to City Council
February 2020:	City Council holds public hearing on land disposition and takes action accordingly
Spring 2020:	HRSD issues RFQ for Design-Build Team
Late 2021/Early 2022:	Construction start at James River Treatment Plant
Fall 2025:	Recharge starts at James River

City Manager Rohlf advised, in addition to the public hearing on the land disposition, HRSD would need to obtain a conditional use permit.

Councilman Jenkins inquired about the conservation easement, and questioned what would happen to the visitor center and existing boardwalk. Mr. Henifin replied the new trail would tie into the existing boardwalk with some improvements; as it was not in great condition. City Manager Rohlf indicated that the trail would be maintained by the City upon completion. Mr. Henifin indicated the maintenance and repairs of the shoreline would be done by HRSD including the section in the conservation easement.

Councilman Harris inquired about the size of the recharge well structures. Mr. Henifin replied it would be a 20 x 40 small residential size structure. City Manager Rohlf indicated that the City would work with HRSD should City Council wish to move forward as to what the design and building would look like, to make the structure as unintrusive as HRSD has attempted to do at the landfill placement. Still unaware whether the recharge wells could be placed at the landfill site. Mr. Henifin replied that HRSD was pretty certain that the recharge well structure would be able to be placed at the landfill site. He shared that the process to seal down below the landfill area, not moving what was in the landfill in and out of the well. The consultant indicated it was possible.

Councilman Jenkins inquired whether any of HRSD construction would be on Riverview Farm Park. Mr. Henifin replied that HRSD would touch the road but not the property.

Councilwoman Woodbury inquired about how the dog park would be effected. Mr. Henifin replied HRSD would have to dig under the dog park to put in pipes and would redo the dog park, making the dogs happier.

Vice Mayor Vick inquired about the trail details. Mr. Henifin replied the trail would be paved in some sections and there would be seating to overlook the James River. HRSD would work with the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and citizen groups to design the area. City Manager Rohlf advised that there had been conversation at staff level because there may be an opportunity as Menchville Marina was adjacent and how to support what the marina was proposing and make the connection.

Councilwoman Woodbury questioned what community committee would be involved. She reminded that the City use to have a citizen advisory committee. City Manager Rohlf replied staff were working on a recommendation to bring back to City Council not necessarily in conjunction with the HRSD proposal. She indicated staff were working on establishing a committee and would be a mixture, of citizens, community representatives, the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, and Tourism Division to bring energy to the conversations with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. HRSD was looking to add a buffer which would provide an added value to the property.

Councilwoman Woodbury inquired whether the community room in the administration building would be used for community meetings. Mr. Henifin replied the administration building would be designed to have a conference room that could be used during the evening and after hours. City Manager Rohlf advised that the added value would be the additional parking and restrooms for people using the trail.

Mayor Price questioned whether transportation had approached HRSD on plans for the Boat Harbor Treatment Plant. Mr. Henifin replied that HRSD planned to close the Boat Harbor Treatment Plant facility in the 2025 timeframe. SWIFT could not be built at the Boat Harbor Treatment Plant because its facility was too small and could not get the wastewater upgrades needed. HRSD was on the move to push that flow under the river to the Nansemond Plant, at which time a pump station facility would be required. The Boat Harbor Treatment Plant would become vacant land and given to the City, it did not have a lot of great uses.

City Manager Rohlf advised that the G Avenue property was a ten (10) acre large open space, near the airport, and could store the Police and Fire Department equipment and Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism equipment in an effort to save money. The property had been reviewed to see the possibilities. Councilwoman Woodbury advised that the City leased other buildings for storage of equipment and inquired whether this site would work. City Manager

Rohlf replied that some of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism items stored had to be in a climate controlled environment. The Police and Fire Departments had big expensive equipment and had been seeking an opportunity to provide cover from the weather for a longer life.

City Manager Rohlf inquired whether City Council was agreeable that HRSD take the lead to conduct public meetings with City representatives present. HRSD would have people perform tests at the landfill site and needed to make City Council aware in the case the public inquired. Mr. Henifin advised that HRSD would not dig up anything at the landfill site, but would use ground-penetrating radar. Councilwoman Woodbury suggested that public meetings not be held in December because of the holidays. City Manager Rohlf suggested inviting HRSD to some of the community and town hall meetings. City Manager Rohlf advised that the City could assist with providing meeting information to the public via NNTV and/or Newport News Now.

City Manager Rohlf advised the final number, well easement and terms of agreement between HRSD and the City would come back to City Council for consideration.

## **II. Holiday Event Series**

City Manager Rohlf advised of the Holiday Event Series that would take place city-wide. She introduced Ms. LeeAnna Sorrell, Communications Specialist, Department of Communications, to provide the presentation (a copy of the presentation, "Bayport Credit Union NlightN Holiday Event Series, November 12, 2019," is attached and made a part of these minutes).

Ms. Sorrell shared that this would be the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Celebration in Lights, which was a two-mile drive through animated holiday and fanciful decorations with over one million lights. The event details were as follows:

***Celebration of Lights***  
Newport News Park  
November 28, 2019 – January 1, 2020  
5:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.  
\$15 per car, \$75 per bus

Ms. Sorrell advised that Lights at the Fountain consisted of light shows, snow machines and holiday decorations. The event details were as follow:

***Lights at the Fountain***  
City Center at Oyster Point

December 7 – December 31, 2019  
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
Free Admission

Ms. Sorrell advised that the Fountain Side Festivals at Lights at the Fountain would be held on December 7<sup>th</sup> and December 14<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. with the following events:

- USO Show Troupe main stage entertainment from 5:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
- Tree lighting ceremony from 6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. (*December 7<sup>th</sup> only*)
- Premier of new 10-minute light show
- Crowd sync bracelets
- Expanded snow machines
- Stage & strolling entertainment
- LiteZilla
- Food vendors
- Jingle & Mingle Specials
- Holiday market
- Trolley rides to Holiday Inn (*December 7<sup>th</sup> only*)
- Santa's Workshop
- Instagram-able Moments
- Christmas Karaoke
- Carnival Games & Children's Activities

#### **Wednesdays at the Gazebo**

- December 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>
  - 6:10 – 6:30 p.m.
  - 6:40 – 7:00 p.m.
  - 7:10 – 7:30 p.m.
  - 7:40 – 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Sorrell shared that ARTech Lights at Brooks Crossing was new this year and would feature a Double Helix animated lighted sculpture constructed by scientists from Jefferson Lab. The event details were as follow:

***ARTech Lights***  
Brooks Crossing  
December 13, 2019

3:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Free Admission, Food Vendors (\$)

Councilwoman Cherry questioned where the ARTech Lights would take place. Ms. Sorrell replied the ARTech Lights would be in front of Piggly Wiggly in the grassy area.

Ms. Sorrell advised of the activities that would take place at the ARTech Lights at Brooks Crossing were as follow:

- Double Helix Animated Lighted Sculpture (until January 1, 2020)
- Synthetic Skating Rink (40x40)
  - *\*Ice rink would operate December 14, 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and December 15, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.*
- Silent Disco
- DJs
- Fire Performers
- Bonfire
- Food & Beverage Vendors
- “Techtivities” by the Innovation Lab, Jefferson Lab and the Newport News Shipyard
- Building lighting (local area & City Hall)

Councilwoman Cherry inquired about where the ice skating rink would be located. Ms. Sorrell replied the ice skating rink would be in the Piggly Wiggly parking lot. City Manager Rohlf stated that City Council would be provided with a map.

Ms. Sorrell shared that ARTech Lights had been purposely planned in conjunction with Downing-Gross Cultural Arts *“Holiday Frost”* which would be held on December 13, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. with free admission. A trolley would run between the two events, in order for people to attend both events. This was the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Holiday-Frost event and the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center would be transformed into a winter wonderland with a theme “Nightmare Before Frozen”. There would be Frozen characters, Santa, participants would receive a special holiday gift, crafts, games and other activities for all young children to enjoy.

Councilwoman Cherry expressed concern that ARTech Lights would take away from the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Holiday Frost as a great deal of work went into that event.

Ms. Cleder Jones, Director, Department of Communication, advised that after talking to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and the Downing-Gross Cultural Arts



staff it was decided that ARTech Lights had teamed up with Downing-Gross Cultural Arts "*Holiday Frost*" which would be held on December 13, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. with free admission and the population that attended Holiday-Frost program were for school-age and the event that did not target the tweens and teenager. The ARTech Lights event would feature activities for tweens and teenagers (over 11 years of age and young adults) to participate in at Brooks Crossing such as the silent disco as Holiday-Frost did not offer and Downing-Gross Cultural Arts made the suggestion to team up.

Ms. Sorrell shared that "*Snowman's Wonderland*" would take place December 6 – 31, 2019 at the Denbigh Community Center with free admission with the following free activities:

- Center transformed into a living snow globe with murals, trees and reindeer
- Instagram-able moments
- Family Films on December 6<sup>th</sup> (Nightmare Before Christmas) and December 20<sup>th</sup> (The Grinch) from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. with a hot chocolate bar and popcorn
- Children's matinee films with crafts

### **III. Comments / Ideas / Suggestions**

City Clerk Jenkins reminded of a memo that City Attorney Owens sent to City Council that informed Council that effective July 1, 2019, it would be mandatory for local officials (City Council Members, School Board Members, and Constitutional Officers) to take the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) on-line training for one (1) hour every two (2) years with a deadline of December 31, 2019, and effective July 1, 2020, there would be other training made mandatory, and the Office of the City Clerk would maintain those records for five (5) years.

Councilwoman Cherry indicated she received a call from a constituent about pine tree roots causing the sidewalk to buckle in the 700 block of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. City Manager Rohlf replied that staff would look into the matter. Councilwoman Cherry indicated she had contact information.

Councilman Jenkins inquired about the letter from Mr. David Easter regarding rental property inspections which was mentioned at the October 22, 2019 City Council Work Session and whether City Manager Rohlf had an opportunity to look into the matter. City Manager Rohlf replied no expansion had been done to date. She advised that areas had been identified based on the rental properties, but nothing in addition until other potential areas are identified. Councilman Jenkins indicated there were a number of older communities in the City. He expressed

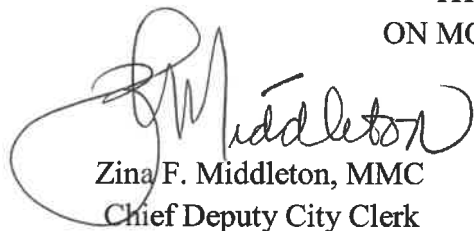
concern that older communities, such as Hidenwood, where properties starting to deteriorate and continued to be used as rentals, which were causing neighborhood and property values to decline. He would like to see the City extend the rental property inspections to older neighborhoods. City Manager Rohlf replied that the rental property inspection program could certainly be reviewed. Initially the City started in areas with the highest concentration of rental properties, but there were other areas of the City to be looked.

Vice Mayor Vick inquired about the holiday kick-off events. She questioned whether there would be a cost for the trolley that would run between Brooks Crossing and Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, and how the citizens would get that information. Ms. Jones replied that the trolley would be free of charge. She indicated there was a marketing plan in place, and there would be holiday event information going out on social media, NNTV, Newport News Now, etc. Councilwoman Cherry inquired about a schedule for the holiday events. Ms. Jones replied a package and calendar of holiday events would be provided to City Council. City Manager Rohlf advised, within the package and calendar of holiday events, a letter to indicate what holiday kick-off events required City Council attendance. Ms. Jones reiterated that Downing-Gross Cultural Arts made the suggestion to team up and have the Silent Disco and DJ as that had been a hit during one of their events, and targeted the tweens and teenagers.

City Manager Rohlf advised that there were technical issues in the City Council Conference Room and City Council Chambers, she would be planning to do have upgrades done after January 1, 2020. She would provide City Council with a timeline. She indicated there was some long overdue maintenance that needed to be done at both locations. Once work proceeded at both locations, City Council meetings may have to be relocated in different areas of the City.

Vice Mayor Vick thanked the Department of Communications and all City departments and staff that helped make the 2019 Newport News State of the City a success. She had heard nothing but great reviews and feedback.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS  
ON MOTION, COUNCIL ADJOURNED 5:36 P.M.



Zina F. Middleton, MMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

McKinley L. Price  
Mayor  
Presiding Officer

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk