

PLANNING MEETING  
ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL

JANUARY 19, 2016

The Ashland City Council met for a Planning Meeting at 5:30 P.M. on January 19, 2016 in the Ashland City Hall auditorium with Mayor Larry J. Fetner presiding. Council Members present were Billy Joe Smith, Gail Thompson, Rebecca G. Boddie, and Brad Wolfe (arrived at 5:40 P.M.). Also present were City Clerk Administrator Chelsey Wynn, Court Clerk/Assistant City Clerk Robin Catrett, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Jody Brown, Police Chief Joseph Stanford, Chaplin Cecil Chappell, Fire Chief Brett Thompson, Irving Thomson of East Central Alabama Gas, Dejarvis Leonard and Steven Corley of ALDOT, Bruce Willis, Terry Raughton, Donna Farrow, and Bobbie Fables of the Carey Baptist Association, Richard East, Tammy Andrews, and Ray Stansell of the Clay Times-Journal.

Council Member Bobbie J. Steed was absent.

Mayor Fetner called the meeting to order.

Mr. Bruce Willis of the Carey Baptist Association addressed the Council to request the City's blessing to purchase property from Bobbie Fables that is located in the City's Industrial Park on Highway 9. Mr. Willis advised the Council Carey Baptist Association would use this property to relocate the Christian Ministry Thrift Store that is operated by Carey Baptist Association and offers items to families in need at low costs and possibly relocate the Carey Baptist Association's offices at a later date. Mr. Terry Raughton addressed the Council and stated the Association wanted to make sure it would be ok to use this location for retail with the possibility of expansion at a later date. Mr. Raughton also advised the Council the Association has been looking for a location to relocate for a while and this is the only location that fits their needs. In the event the City Council approves Carey Baptist Association to use this property for retail Mr. Raughton requested a letter from the City of Ashland stating the Councils approval. Council Member Thompson asked the representatives of Carey Baptist Association about signage for the Christian Ministry Thrift Store if relocated to the Industrial Park. Mr. Raughton advised Council Member Thompson the Association would want to put signage at the road due to the fact the location off the road and possibly another drive. Mr. Raughton advised the Council the Association would want to make sure they are in compliance with the City of Ashland. Mayor Fetner advised the Association the Council will speak with the City of Ashland's attorney and give them an answer soon. Representatives of Carey Baptist Association advised Mayor Fetner they would like an answer as soon as possible.

Mr. Dejarvis Leonard from ALDOT addressed the Council about an Industrial Access Grant that would aide ALDOT in the relocation of Highway 77 for improvements to Wellborn Cabinet Inc. Mr. Leonard stated to the Council ALDOT has given the City of Ashland the application for the grant and the City has filled out the application but the Council has not approved the application to be submitted. Mr. Leonard advised the Council that the City of Ashland has no financial obligations pertaining to the Industrial Access Grant.

Council Member Brad Wolfe asked Mr. Leonard if the City of Ashland were to apply for the Industrial Access Grant would that limit the City from applying for other grants in reference to the utility relocation for the relocation of Wellbron Cabinet Inc.

Mr. Leonard stated to the Council he has spoken with Jim Byrd of ADECA who stated to Mr. Leonard that the Industrial Access Grant would not affect any grants that the City could apply for to aide in the relocation of utilities in connection with the improvements to Wellborn Cabinet Inc. Mr.

Leonard advised Mr. Byrd mentioned to him that there is a 20% match for that grant and the 20% match can be done in "in kind work".

Council Member Brad Wolfe advised Mr. Leonard that the City of Ashland has to think about the utilities of Ashland first and foremost and he is not willing to do anything that would put the utilities on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Council Member Brad Wolfe advised Mr. Leonard that if the Industrial Access Grant does that to the utilities he would be strongly against it.

Mayor Fetner asked Mr. Leonard who would apply for the utilities grant. Mr. Leonard advised it would have to be the City or County. Mr. Leonard also stated there are no guarantees the grant would be awarded.

Mr. Irving Thompson asked Mr. Leonard if he knows if East Central Gas or Ashland Waste Water and Sewer Board has been approved for pauper status.

Mr. Leonard advised gas and water did not get approved for pauper status. Mr. Leonard advised the Council the City of Ashland could apply for the grant and if something falls through and the City of Ashland decides it does not want to pursue the grant the City can send in a letter to resend the application up until March 1, 2016.

Mr. Leonard advised the City of Ashland has an application for a grant to relocate Highway 77 at an estimate of 6 million dollars. The plan is to add right turn lanes and a middle turn lane. ALDOT believes with these plans the project would qualify for an Industrial Access Grant of up to 1.3 million dollars.

Council Member Brad Wolfe expressed concerns about the grant due to previous issues pertaining to an ongoing project at the Highway 9 Industrial Park and stated it is hard to get a straight answer from ALDOT. Council Member Wolfe stated he would like something in writing stating that if the City of Ashland applies for the Industrial Access Grant for the Highway 77 project, it would not limit the City from applying for other grants.

Mr. Leonard apologized for the issues with the Highway 9 Industrial Park project and stated the permit for the Industrial Park has been issued. Mr. Leonard stated that ALDOT has always tried to work with the City of Ashland and one example is finding the funds to pave the square. Mr. Leonard stated again there is no obligation for the City on the Industrial Access Grant other than making the application.

Council Member Brad Wolfe stated to Mr. Leonard, if he can get the City something stating if the City of Ashland is made of aware that applying for the Industrial Access Grant will hinder any monies that the City may get to help utilities pay for the cost of moving Highway 77 he is ok but without having something in writing he is not willing to support applying for the Industrial Access Grant.

Mr. Leonard advised the Council that if at any time the City is not comfortable with the application for the Industrial Access Grant then the City can resined the application up until March 1, 2016.

Mr. Irving Thompson asked that if the City or County or whoever applies for the Industrial Access Grant does not go through would ALDOT require the utilities to relocate at a cost of 7 hundred to 8 hundred thousand dollars to East Central Gas.

Mr. Leonard advised Mr. Thompson he couldn't answer that question the director would have to answer it. Mr. Leonard feels the director would look negative on the project if ALDOT and the utilities can't work something out for the utilities where they won't have to spend their money. Mr. Leonard stated he may be able to give the City a more definite answer to Mr. Thompson's questions tomorrow. Mr. Leonard stated to the Council that the Industrial Access Grant and the utilities are 2 separate issues. The Industrial Access Grant is just an application for funding; it has nothing to do with the utility application for funding.

Mr. Thompson stated the 2 issues are a little related. East Central Gas' utility board, which is made up of the 3 Mayors have been real strong to say that if they can't get some assurance its going to pay for utilities the Mayors want to got to ALDOT, the Governor, or whoever to get the project dissolved.

Mayor Fetner asked the Council if they would feel better if they had something in writing from ALDOT stating that if no grants are available to help pay for the relocation of utilities the City wouldn't be obligated to follow through with the Industrial Access Grant.

Council Members agreed they would feel more comfortable with something in writing.

Council Member Wolfe stated that if there are no grants available to assist the utilities in relocating then in spite of 200 jobs being added at Wellborn Cabinets Inc., before the City of Ashland puts East Central Gas and Ashland Waste Water and Sewer Board on the hook for that kind of money, the City has to do what it can to stop the project from happening.

Mr. Leonard stated he will get a letter to the City stating that if they want to rescind the application for the Industrial Access Grant up until March 1, 2016 then the City of Ashland can do so. Mr. Leonard also stated he will try to get a letter from the director of ADECA to East Central Gas and Ashland Waste Water and Sewer board stating his position as it pertains to the utilities.

There was no business conducted at this meeting.

Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_