

EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE

April 21, 2009

4:00 P.M.

Councilwoman Robinson, Chairman, called the meeting of the Education, Arts & Culture Committee to order, with Councilmen Rico, Benson, Berz, Gilbert, Scott, McGary, Ladd and Murphy present. City Attorneys Michael McMahan and Phil Noblett and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

Others present included Dan Johnson, Sandy Coulter, Linda Rugina, Missy Crutchfield, Melissa Turner, David Johnson, Richard Beeland, Daisy Madison, Clarence Williams, Dorothea Richardson, and Carla Johnson.

UPDATE ON DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

Ms. Crutchfield thanked the Council for giving her this opportunity to speak, stating that she appreciated it and wanted to share what her Department does and has done for the past four years. She noted that Mayor Littlefield had created this department and took them out of the Parks and Recreation Dept. so that the Arts could be protected because no one wants to cut the Arts because they are so economically viable. She stated that the Arts is one of the reasons that Volkswagen chose Chattanooga and making their announcement at the Hunter Museum was a huge statement. She went on to say that all great cities have Artists and Arts and that there would be a very special announcement at the end of her presentation. She stated that she would begin with Melissa Turner, who was a coordinator in her department and works with their publications. She noted that they coordinate, also, with the Mayor's Office. While waiting for the power point presentation, Councilman Gilbert asked her to talk about the Senior Citizens' centers. She called on Clarence Williams.

Mr. Williams stated that he was the manager of the Eastgate Senior Center for the 50 year olds and over; that they do day trips and have aerobic classes, and he invited the Council members to come visit them. They also have computer classes and are looking for volunteers. He stated that the computer class was a wonderful program. Ms. Crutchfield interjected that it had expanded three times.

Councilwoman Berz stated that Senior Citizens was a misnomer; that this was a very "swinging" place; that a lot of people had retired early and were looking for other careers; that this was a big success story and was fabulous! She reiterated that it was not "old" people but people of all ages who were having a ball and going on trips—that they were dancing and singing.

Mr. Williams confirmed that it was **not** a Senior Center. Ms. Crutchfield added that the people there love Clarence and also Linda Rugina. She asked Ms. Rugina to talk about the North River Senior Center.

Ms. Rugina stated that the North River Senior Center opened in February of 2004 and is for seniors, adults and youth, as well. She mentioned a quilting program that would be followed with an art exhibition of the quilts. She mentioned their Art Center. Ms. Crutchfield asked her to speak to how it had grown in 2005. Ms. Rugina responded that they had tripled; that they were with the Parks and Recreation Dept. but that their programs had changed and participation had grown—that people were all around. Ms. Crutchfield mentioned that they had two grants for quilting—one for the North River Center and one for Heritage, which is in Councilman Benson’s district. She stated that Allied Arts was working on these two grants.

Dorothea Richardson talked about the Heritage House. She also mentioned a traveling art exhibit, noting that they had a good show this morning at the Eastgate Center that depicted the history of Brainerd on the Mission Site. She stated that different pieces would reflect the history.

Ms. Crutchfield went on to say that they worked with the newspaper and Chattanooga.com; that Dorothea was an artist, as was Linda Rugina; that they were working with teen girls, and they would draw the quilt squares; that when Mayor Littlefield created this department, he put Education first, adding that after school is as important as being in school and is a critical time, and we need to leverage our resources to build programs to get these kids engaged and excited about arts. She mentioned their Newsletter, which could be received electronically and no tax dollars were used—that this celebrated their partners. She mentioned a Literary Program and books and grants and their working with at-risk communities. She mentioned a grant through Commissioner Coppinger for books in the Library to enhance the Library inventory. She mentioned that the Memorial Auditorium “Community Theatre” was in dire need of renovation to bring it up to ADA compliance. She mentioned the Tivoli as being “The Jewel of the South” and the campaign for plaques to pay for more seats. She stated that the Tivoli still needed some work and mentioned the renovation of the bathrooms, which was exciting. She stated that these buildings were not cheap, but they belonged to the people.

She went on to talk about the Pottery Studio that is in Councilwoman Scott’s district, mentioning several of their programs that dealt with domestic violence and sexual assaults, stating that we needed to do more things like this. She continued that pottery was a good medium to work through these issues and stated that she would like to get the Councilpersons’ ideas on this.

Ms. Crutchfield next mentioned the Heritage House that Councilman Benson is so excited about. She stated that they had been successful using one-half of this house and had three grants from the State and the County. She thanked Councilman Benson for his encouragement, stating that they were bursting at the seams. Councilman Benson noted that they had weddings there just about every weekend.

Ms. Crutchfield went on to talk about their “Connect the Dots” Program and the donation of computers from TVA. She stated that they had done a wonderful job with the Recreation Centers, noting that a Civic Center was different from a Recreation Center, and they had flourished in her department. She noted that the computers had been put in, and they were working with Daisy Madison to get clients. She mentioned the computer labs in the recreation centers and how kids today have to know how to use computers—that we were getting to these kids’ needs in technical areas. She stated that in East Chattanooga, people were waiting in line and that we were a victim of our own success. She talked about virtual classrooms for kids that are behind; that with this program, they had 100% who passed and graduated, and this gives them hope for the future. She added that Mayor Littlefield was excited about this because it was part of his vision for the “City of Compassion”. Councilman Gilbert added that senior citizens were also using the computers.

Ms. Crutchfield next talked about the “Unbroken” Program, which was designed for at-risk communities and latch-key kids who are not connected; that they focused on communities and partnered with CHA and faith-based organizations. She mentioned a Library for the East Lake Courts, noting that they were looking at other CHA sites such as East Lake and East Chattanooga and also Hill City was calling them to provide services and connect with this community.

Councilman Murphy asked if they had developed a Reading Center? Ms. Crutchfield responded there was one in the East Lake Courts and no tax dollars were used. She stated that money would not stop her; that donations will come in.

Councilman Murphy asked if she acted as coordinator? Mr. Crutchfield responded that they sat at the table and spot organizations who want to help; that these organizations could have a key to the community centers; that they communicate with publications; that this was all about being a “City of Compassion”. Councilman Murphy asked her if there would be other Reading Centers and where they would be located? Ms. Crutchfield responded that United Way wants to partner with the “Unbroken” Program and would help build these libraries in the recreation centers and put books into the hands of people who need them; that these people would invest their time and dollars. Councilman Murphy asked about Carver? Dorothea Richardson answered that they had to find people willing to donate books—that some of the recreation centers were not large enough. Councilman Murphy asked if they would move out from there? Dorothea Richardson responded “if they could find the centers”. He asked if they would be adding Reading Centers and was told “yes”. Ms. Crutchfield added that they got \$200,000 annually for all that they were doing.

Councilwoman Berz asked if they had any data on the number of kids being served? Ms. Crutchfield responded that she did not but would like to get more of this; that they were trying to get partners for “Unbroken” and trying to get UTC involved.

At this point, Ms. Crutchfield stated that she would like to brag about Sandy Coulter and David Johnson. She asked Ms. Coulter to say a few words.

Ms. Coulter mentioned that we are known as an Arts Community, mentioning traveling Broadway shows and the opera and other community events. She went on to say that ten (10) graduations were scheduled for the Memorial Auditorium and also lots of arts events. She mentioned their “sold out” shows and mid-size entertainment.

Ms. Crutchfield stated that this was some of their works in progress; that they were a small department with lots of energy; that they had a big vision, along with Mayor Littlefield and his “City of Compassion”; that United Way and Allied Arts were not partners, but they were trying to pull them together with a Summit. She stated that things were going well and they were partnering with “Who Quest” with a great outcome. She mentioned, also, the Radio Talk Shows. She mentioned the “Think, Draw and Talk About It Program”, which goes on billboards and builds confidence and is a wonderful opportunity and acts as a guide for parents. She went on to talk about “Teen Scene”, which cost no money and kids are using our resources. She mentioned that Melissa Turner was editor of this magazine, and it is a big success, and we are learning from the kids. She stated that this was a wonderful opportunity for parents, especially parents of teenagers, which she was about to become; that we as adults can learn how to connect with them.

She next talked about the City Employees’ Art Show; that the art was displayed in City Hall and other non-traditional places; that this was a wonderful place to start, and the arts needs to be accessible. She stated that we had some amazing artists who were part of our family; that the works of our artists were very professional and shows the softer side of our city employees. In closing, she stated that City Hall, itself, was a work of art and showed a picture of Mayor Littlefield delivering their message. The sound was not connected and unfortunately, Ms. Crutchfield noted, the message could not be heard. (It was noted that most in the room had already heard the message). Lastly, Ms. Crutchfield paid tribute to Councilwoman Robinson, noting that every department has a Councilmember who works with them and is Chairman of the Committee; that Councilwoman Robinson had guided her through all of this.

Lastly, for the special ending, Ms. Crutchfield called on **Peggy Petrey** to tell her unbelievable story.

Ms. Petrey stated that she and her husband moved here in 2006 and were then in Councilman McGary's district; that in 2007 they moved into Councilman Rico's district; that one of the things they wanted to do was to give back to this community; that she was excited about the arts and had lived in Santa Fe and Southern California; that they came here for the Arts Festival—that lots of people come to Chattanooga for this. She stated that Chattanooga had gotten on the Arts Destination List. She presented a magazine to each Councilmember that mentions Chattanooga as being the #2 Mid-Size City in "Tops for Arts".

Ms. Crutchfield stated that everyone should be very proud of this and urged everyone to read this article; that Chattanooga had jumped into second place and just missed the number one spot, which is pretty amazing. She stated that this was all very exciting and everyone should take note; that it tells why people go to certain places and all of this can happen for us. She went on to say that when all of the new Councilmembers are settled that she would like to let them know that there is a "Tour of the Studios"—that there are more artists than doctors in Chattanooga. She mentioned the district off Main Street and 45 doors where they were hiring employees. She stated that she hoped everyone enjoyed their magazine.

Chairman Robinson thanked Education, Arts & Culture for reporting to the Council. She mentioned that she and Councilwoman Scott were talking about the Tivoli and how it should be used to greater benefit; that outside dollars could be brought in, and it could be a generator for economic development. At this time, she adjourned the meeting.

ATTORNEY MICHAEL MCMAHAN

Attorney McMahan noted that this would be first meeting of the new Council and tonight there would be the election of the Chairman of the Council and also the Vice Chairman. He noted that if the Mayor should become incapacitated that the Chairman of the Council would have to step in. He also added that the new members had asked him to do a presentation concerning the Sunshine Law, which he would do at the 5:00 p.m. dinner hour.

He went on to say that Councilman Benson had asked him about a zoning issue; that the Council had voted not to rezone a large tract, and this case could not be brought back for eight (8) months; that the only way around this, and it was not Roberts' Rules, was not simple—that the Council could instruct the Planning Commission to consider rezoning a smaller section.

Councilman Benson stated that he would like to have something put in place to keep the applicant from bringing this back every month. He explained that Dr. Philippose had asked that this be rezoned from R-1 to R-4; that he had met with Dr. Philippose, and the small part was all he was interested in getting rezoned to R-4—just on one side.

Councilman Benson went on to explain that there is a R-4 zone across the street, and he had thought that this would be “doable”; however Dr. Philippose had been encouraged to buy all of this property and to get it all rezoned; that the engineer presented this to the Council, and he (Councilman Benson) knew that all Dr. Philippose wanted to get rezoned was the portion for the doctor’s office—however he was talked into buying all of this property; that it was recommended for rezoning by the Planning Commission—however the Staff said to deny it. Councilman Benson stated that he had wanted to defer this and see if something could be worked out—that the doctor needed this to be rezoned; however the engineer who was representing him made the comment “that Government just cannot make up their minds”, and this comment hit the Council the wrong way, and Councilman Benson made the motion to deny this, and he knew now that he should not have been so reactive. Councilman Benson explained that he later realized what he had done and Dr. Philippose said he did not want all of this rezoned and that he had invested all of his assets and would be hurt if he had to wait another year to only get the small portion rezoned. He stated that he would hate to see Dr. Philippose have to wait because of the “tactless” remark made by the engineer.

Councilwoman Robinson asked if the Council could amend the request?

Councilman Benson reiterated that he would hate to have him wait another year.

Attorney McMahan explained that it would have to be the Council as a body of the whole to ask that this be taken back to Planning.

Councilman Benson again made mention of the fact that this man would have to wait a year for this small portion to be rezoned.

Councilman Gilbert stated that he would hope that Dr. Philippose would not bring back the man who made the “tactless” comment.

Councilwoman Ladd wanted to know if this would still be due process?

Councilman Benson noted that it would just make it sooner than 12 months.

Councilwoman Robinson suggested bringing this matter forward at the public meeting tonight.

Councilwoman Berz stated that we needed to follow some due diligence in allowing it to be considered sooner.

Attorney McMahan stated that it would just be the smaller portion.

Councilwoman Berz asked what would happen to the rest of the parcel? Councilman Benson stated that Dr. Philippose would be “stuck” with it because he bought it. Councilwoman Berz confirmed that we would just be taking one little piece, and he would not be asking for the rest to be rezoned. She questioned what would happen if you only do one piece. Attorney McMahan stated that it would still be contiguous.

Councilwoman Scott wanted to know if this would set a precedent? Attorney McMahan stated that it was an unusual request, but it has been done before. He again stated that he would talk about the Sunshine Law at 5:00 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 P.M.