

Wilmington City Council, 2/6/2018, Observer Corp

League members might be especially interested in activities during the Girls and Women in Sports Day (2/9/18); that the WPD has used Naloxone to reverse drug overdoses 117 times (and that this kit/unit is far less expensive than I expected); info about the median construction project on Market Street that will start in October 2020; and that the City Council and Planning Commission will schedule a joint working session, open to the public, in the near future to discuss short-term rentals in Wilmington,

The Rev. Rick Hudson, Pastor of Pilgrim Rest Missionary Church, provided the invocation, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

In the presentation section of the meeting, Mayor Saffo presented a proclamation naming 2/9/2018 as Girls and Women in Sports Day. Karen Barefoot, coach of the UNCW women's basketball team, accepted the proclamation and spoke about activities that will occur on 2/9: girls and young women from 1st to 8th grades will come to UNCW to learn about all of the university's sports programs for women; they will be able to talk with athletes, coaches, and cheerleaders connected with these programs. A presentation for CALEA accreditation to the WPD was delayed until the 2/20 council meeting.

Two people spoke in the public information portion of the meeting: 1) Elizabeth Gordon spoke against expanding the use of horse-drawn carriages in the downtown area, saying that they were outmoded in the current environment of concern for the appropriate use of animals, and that safety issues should be a serious concern, noting that accidents involving horse-drawn carriages in San Antonio and Milwaukie had resulted in injuries and fatalities to passengers and pedestrians. 2) Paul James presented a petition from residents of West Airlie Road, asking that the speed limit on their street be decreased to 15 mph, saying that their street is narrow and winding, which makes the current 25 mph limit too fast and unsafe for their street.

The single ordinance on the agenda was passed, for a supplemental appropriation of \$4,553 (from the NC Drug Tax Revenue) to the WPD to purchase 100 additional units of Naloxone and nasal atomization devices to reverse drug overdoses. Chief Ralph Evangelous explained that these additional units would replace units that had expired use-by dates. Chief Evangelous said that the WPD had saved 117 lives by using these units to reverse drug overdoses in Wilmington.

Six resolutions were approved or delayed to a future meeting. The first one, which concerned plans for a new median on Market Street, was approved after a discussion of safety and maintenance concerns related to the median's combination of plain turf and trees/ground cover (crepe myrtle, holly, jasmine). Council members noted that eventual tree growth might interfere with sight lines when drivers are looking for something on the

other side of Market. The new medium will go from the CSX rail lines to Station Road (near Gordon Road). This project will start in October 2020. A potential future project was also noted: to make Market a two-lane street, with a tree-lined medium and bike lanes on either side, going at first from 17th Street to about 29th Street; however, any future projects on Market will not occur until the widening of Independence/Covil Ave. up to MLK Drive has been done.

The resolution to change the plan for participation of eligible city employees in the City Employee Health Plan after retirement was delayed until the Council's 2/20 meeting. Proposed change in plan would let eligible employees add dependents to the city health plan with no waiting period before retirement (currently requires a one-year wait). Council members were concerned about the additive, long-term effect on the city budget of this change. A total of 464 employees who were hired before 1/2007 and will retire after 3/1/2018 are eligible for this change. City staff will bring data to the next Council meeting on the range of costs to the city if some/all of the 464 eligible employees take advantage of this policy change.

Another resolution was discussed but then delayed until the 2/20 meeting: authorization for the NC Azalea Festival to use various city parking lots and Park space. This is generally an annual resolution that does represent some lost revenue to the city. While the Council was very supportive of the resolution and the festival, they requested more data on the cost of all non-reimbursed city services that are related to hosting the NC Azalea Festival. Those data will be provided for the 2/20 Council meeting.

Three resolutions to acquire additional easements for water and sewer work in the back parts of three properties that adjoin the Water Street Parking Deck were approved.

Finally, Mayor Saffo brought forward a recommendation to schedule a joint working session of the City Council and the Planning Commission, to discuss short-term rentals in Wilmington. The recommendation was approved, and City staff was instructed to plan a date/time for this joint working session, which will be open to the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm. Minutes submitted by Lynn Whitmore.