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A Budget Hearing by the City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina, was held on Monday, June 11, 1973, at 2:00 o'clock p.m., in the Council Chamber, City Hall, with Mayor John M. Belk presiding, and Councilmembers Fred D. Alexander, Sandy R. Jordan, James D. McDuffie, Milton Short, James B. Whittington and Joe D. Withrow present.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Ruth M. Easterling.

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PURPOSE OF MEETING.

Mayor Belk called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of today's meeting is for a hearing on the 1973-74 City of Charlotte Budget. That the new revisions in the North Carolina State Fiscal Control Act requires that all cities prior to the adoption of the budget, hold a public hearing. That today's meeting is to carry out this requirement.

Mr. David Burkhalter, City Manager, advised that a number of people have requested to be heard today on various items contained in the proposed budget and each will be allowed ten minutes for their presentation. That their names are listed on the agenda in the same order they were received in the Clerk's Office.

COMMENTS AND PETITION RELATIVE TO STARBROOK BRIDGE.

Mrs. Joyce Mulford, 2715 Starbrook Drive, stated she would like to thank Council for the opportunity to speak today. That she is speaking as a concerned resident, a concerned homeowner and a concerned parent. She stated she is also speaking on behalf of 1,336 property owners, residents, tenants and teachers in the community of Starmount, Huntingtowne Farms and Beverly Woods.

Mrs. Mulford stated as they have indicated previously in other presentations to Council, they are acting as a single, spontaneously organized group of citizens who want to preserve the character and quietness of their neighborhoods. But they also want to work within the system to see that Charlotte maintains its growth in an orderly fashion. They appreciate and thank Council for requesting the engineers and planners to restudy the 1960 City Master Thoroughfare Plan.

She stated she hopes in their past presentations they have made it clear to the Council and citizens of Charlotte that they are not concerned with just selfish neighborhood desires. That they would like to express a few more unselfish concerns.

Mrs. Mulford stated the following quote is by Mrs. Susanne L. May, a first grade teacher at Starmount Elementary School: "The Starbrook Bridge would benefit me greatly in time and gasoline. I live in Huntingtowne Farms and teach at Starmount Elementary School. I could be at work quicker each day, however, I strongly oppose this project. As a Starmount teacher, I am proud of our excellent safety record. Due to pairing of schools, our oldest children are nine year old fourth graders. These young people act as safety patrols at intersections. So far they have been able to keep the little ones safe. Our adjoining school district has not been so fortunate, as one child was killed crossing Archdale on his way to the Montclair School. One school, Hoskins, was forced to close due to the danger of crossing for children. Please consider the lives of these children. I really don't mind driving the extra miles if it will help save just one of my Starmount pupils."

Mrs. Mulford stated the next comment is made by a manager of a business located on Starbrook Drive: "My first thought about this bridge coming was that it would be great. It would increase my business. After thinking about it, however, I decided I did not want this bridge because it would ruin the neighborhood and just get some kids killed. I also prefer to keep just my local customers and do without the extra business this bridge, or thoroughfare, would bring."

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She stated the next quote is by Julie Thurrell, age eight, of 2301 Starbrook Drive, after hearing her parents talk about the bridge, came to her mother and said: "I hope they don't build that bridge, I won't be able to cross that street and play with my best friend, Amy Matufcah."

Mrs. Mulford stated they recognize that Council's decision in their favor would be difficult in view of the fact that some may call it favoritism. That in order to show that it is not only the local citizens that are against the bridge, she would like to quote two paragraphs from the recent Board of Education resolution:

"WHEREAS, in the opinion of the Board of Education, the proposed construction of the bridge and widening of Starbrook Drive into a four-lane thoroughfare would create additional and hazardous conditions affecting the safety of the children to and from school;

NOW, THEREFORE, may it be resolved that the Board of Education express its opposition to the proposed construction of the bridge and further widening, etc."

She stated the real issue is whether the Starbrook Bridge and thoroughfare is absolutely necessary with Sharon Road West being widened and extended to tie into I-77, Arrowood Boulevard and Arrowood Road. They feel this issue cannot reasonably be answered until the new long range Mass Transit and Road Plans has been published and debated this summer.

Mrs. Mulford stated they are requesting that the \$45,000 for planning and design of the Starbrook Bridge be removed from the 1973-74 Capital Improvement Budget and no decision be made until the new Comprehensive Development Plan has been adopted by the Council and County Commissioners. They care about their community and about the future of Charlotte; they know Council also cares or they would not be serving as their Council. They hope Council will act to preserve the Starmount-Huntingtowne Farms and Beverly Woods Communities as well as other established neighborhoods all over Charlotte.

She stated she would also like to take this time to recognize the honors that have been bestowed upon the city administrators this past week. Congratulations, they are proud and confident that their request is in good hands.

Councilman Short asked the name of the specific street the School Board had in mind when they closed Hoskins School and Mrs. Mulford replied she did not know.

Mrs. Mulford filed a petition from the faculty of Huntingtowne Farms Elementary School, containing 12 signatures, with the Clerk. The petition requested the Council to remove from the 1973-74 Capital Improvement Budget the requested funds for the design and land acquisition for the Starbrook Bridge and further recommended that the Starbrook Drive-Chandworth Road portion be removed from the proposed thoroughfare and that an alternate plan to the thoroughfare be considered.

COMMENTS RELATIVE TO FIRE DEPARTMENT INPUT INTO PROPOSED BUDGET, PAY INCREASE AND FIREFIGHTER/FIREFIGHTER ENGINEER RANKS.

Mr. R. L. Middleton, President of Local 660 International Association of Firefighters, stated Council has adopted a policy which lays down a format by which the city employees could get together and talk with representatives of the City Manager to have some input into the budgeting process of the City of Charlotte.

He stated they have attempted to do this on numerous occasions and this year they met in a preliminary meeting with Mr. Earle, Personnel Director, and Mr. Horton. They had a nice, cordial meeting with them and explained exactly what they proposed to the Council for their consideration. They also sent a copy of their recommendations to City Council.

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Mr. Middleton stated they anticipated further meetings to discuss their proposals and a meeting came several weeks ago, on Friday morning at 10:00 o'clock. They met some two hours and at the end of that meeting, were given a copy of the preliminary budget and then at 3:00 o'clock the same day, Council met and was given copies of this same budget, which was already drawn. That they had no input, or conversation, other than to tell the City what they meant by the proposals they had submitted.

He stated they feel this is engaging in a game of charades and ask that Council make provisions whereby they can have more meaningful input and thereby do away with the immeasurable mistrust that has existed and shown between the employees and the City. That this need not be - it should not be. Mr. Middleton stated their proposals included meaningful items - most of them not even budgeted items, or items which would cost money.

One of the most expensive items they had was for an emergency rescue service which would give the citizens very meaningful service. He stated they also asked that a Labor Management Committee be established within the department. This was also passed over.

He stated they requested a Safety Committee to be established in the Fire Department - this too was passed over. So now, it is the Local's responsibility to establish a committee for Labor Management and another committee on Safety. This should not be - they should have an avenue by which they can come to Council to talk.

That on the issue of salaries, which is always a very touchy subject, not only to Council, but to the public at large, they would like to say that firefighting, according to the United States Government Statistics, is the most hazardous job in the United States today. They are not asking for Council to give them any special favors or special attention because they have this job - all of them have this job because they wanted to make firefighting their career. But they do need meaningful discussions on salaries because, as of August 1972, they were 3% behind on the last three years cost of living increases alone.

Mr. Middleton stated the 5.5% increase in this budget does not maintain the cost of living as it has risen because it costs just as much at the grocery store for the firefighters to buy meat as it does any other citizen in this city. They ask Council to consider this and to think about it and consider whether or not they think the 5.5% raise is sufficient. He stated they would like to ask Council to consider that it would take approximately \$160,000 to provide an additional 5.5% raise for the Fire Department.

Mr. Bill Brawley, of the Firefighter's Association, stated his concern is with the Firefighter and the Firefighter Engineers. That this rank somehow got lost in the priorities. These are the men who fight fires; these are the men who hang over the raging infernos on the ladders; these are the men who do all the firefighting and do what their jobs are associated with.

He stated almost every department in the fire service has been reclassified and given pay raises except the firefighter and the firefighter engineer rank and this is grossly inadequate.

Mr. Brawley stated these men are the ones the public associates with firefighting and they have just been left behind. Everyone of these men now ride on the back of the fire truck and if they ask for a transfer into any other division, automatically are granted a one step pay raise if they go into fire prevention, communications or any other classification. That these other people are not out at night when all hell breaks loose, when bottles are being thrown; they do not have to crawl through the dirt to get to a burning building; walls do not fall on them. They are at home, safe in bed, when these things are happening. That he feels these men deserve some consideration.

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DISCUSSION OF FUNDING FOR THE GIRL SCOUTS SPECIAL PROJECT.

Mrs. Lula Moore, 8321 Seigle Avenue, stated she would like to approach Council on behalf of the Special Project Liaison Committee which was appointed by the Board of Directors of the Hornet's Nest Girl Scout Council. That for the last few years, they have been involved in what they call the Girl Scouts Special Project.

She stated this is a project that has been designed to include the girls in the inner city and other hard-to-reach areas in a very meaningful Girl Scout Program. In connection with this program, they have organized troops made up of girls who have never before had the opportunity to become involved in the program. Mrs. Moore presented Council with copies of the Special Project Proposal in the form of a progress report for Council's consideration.

Mrs. Moore stated this report shows the progress they have made over the years. They have had an intensified summer program that has included both boys and girls of the inner city. That this summer they have a very well structured program, but as it stands, at the end of December, their program will no longer be in effect.

She stated they have attempted to give the girls a program with badge work and other material that should help them to bridge the gap. That to extend a hand and then to withdraw it, with no further support, is very harmful. That the Board of Directors asked the Special Project Committee to make a study, or survey, of the real needs in the inner city and other hard-to-reach areas.

Mrs. Moore stated the study was made and a proposal made to the Board and the Board has committed itself to finding whatever funds it possibly can to keep this worthwhile project operating. In a recent memorandum from the Director of Financial Development of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., it was suggested that the Girl Scout Council would be in the ideal position to take the lead and initiate action by arranging for and participating in meetings concerning community organizations by studying plans and making various requests.

She stated she is delighted that Council has given them this opportunity to talk about this project. That currently they have 509 girls involved and can involve more girls but knowing that this was to be their last year, they have simply tried to speed up the program which they have now to really get these girls involved and hopefully to involve others.

Mrs. Moore stated as of December 31, 1973, no more federal funds will be available for this project through Model Cities and Council has looked into means of acquiring funds to support it as adequately as it possibly can. They have approached various other groups for help in carrying on this worthwhile project.

She stated they would certainly like to be considered as Council plans their budget so that the girls they are serving and the girls they can serve can have an opportunity to become worthwhile citizens, to enjoy themselves as they plan and struggle in this life for acceptance and for whatever things of value that they may attain.

Councilman Alexander asked if any arrangements are being made where the Girl Scout Organization will continue this project and Mrs. Moore replied yes, along with the Special Project Committee Report there was a proposal made to the Board and the Board has committed itself to seeking funds as far as they possibly can to continue this program. That it would be impossible to continue it under the present setup with the funds that they have available. There is some plan underway now to continue a part of it, but they would like to continue the full program.

Councilman Jordan asked if the report contains the amount of money they have received in the last year and Mrs. Moore replied it does. Councilman Short stated Mrs. Moore is asking that the Girl Scout Program be supported in some way apart from Model Cities and he is sure everyone admires the Girl Scouts but wonders if Council can fund this sort of thing.

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Councilman Alexander stated what Mrs. Moore is asking is to continue the present program as it is now funded so this Special Project can be continued, not to subsidize the Girl Scout Program, but only this Special Project which has been going on under the Model Cities Program. Mrs. Moore replied this is correct.

Mr. Burkhalter asked if Model Cities has told Mrs. Moore they will not include them in the first six months of next year and Mrs. Moore replied yes, in last year's budgeting they were a part of some excess funds but would be discontinued at the end of this year.

Mrs. Moore stated she would certainly appreciate anything Council could do for them concerning this worthwhile project.

COMMENTS ON HEZEKIAH ALEXANDER HOME RESTORATION.

Mrs. Hugh Houser, 615 Westbury Road, stated she is here today to advise Council that within a period of thirty more days the main house restoration will be completed and it is hard to believe that we have a house with so much beauty within our city.

She stated there is an additional 4.85 acre tract of ground that the Methodist Home Board has given to the Hezekiah Alexander Foundation. On this land they are proposing a reception center to accommodate a museum, five school buses and 35 cars at one given time.

That they feel at the present time they are not in business until they can have this reception center and museum. She stated an offer has again been made of free labor to build this reception center museum.

Mrs. Houser stated she is asking for \$105,000 from the city and \$105,000 from the county and with this amount of money and with the materials that have already been given by the public, they can build this reception center museum where they can accommodate the children of this city and county.

Mrs. Houser read the following letter from Dr. Chris Folk, of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools:

"Dear Sara:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools have a very keen interest in the reception center museum which we hope will be a part of the Hezekiah Alexander House when it is completed. We feel that the museum can be utilized in many ways by the school system. In particular, we recognize the value of having lectures, films and artifacts available to supplement the curriculum being offered by the schools. In this way our students will have a first hand experience with local history and will have opportunities which would not have otherwise been provided. In 1969, over 4,000 students visited the Hezekiah Alexander House and we would hope with the restoration and the museum there would be an even greater number of students having similar experiences.

We look forward to the day when the Hezekiah Alexander House and the reception center museum will become a reality."

Mrs. Houser stated the following letter is from Dr. William Greenfield, President of Johnson C. Smith University:

"Dear Mrs. Houser:

Johnson C. Smith University is pleased to express an interest in, and play an active role, in the Hezekiah Alexander Restoration Project. This facility will provide an opportunity for our students to acquire information on certain topics in history that would not be available otherwise. It will also provide an excellent opportunity for the community to have access to this type of continuing educational material.

We endorse the Foundation's effort to provide these types of experiences from our institutions and communities."

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Mrs. Houser read the following from a letter from Dr. Colvard of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte:

"Dear Mrs. Houser:

I am delighted to learn of your interest and continued research in the historical background of the Hezekiah Alexander House and Museum, as well as other related historical matters. You have made an outstanding contribution to the understanding of early history of this area and have stimulated a great deal of interest among others who have worked with you and have shared your enthusiasm.

The full development of the Hezekiah Alexander House, almost in the shadows of this rapidly growing University, will serve not only to enhance the culture of the community but will also provide an excellent extension of the Halls of Learning. Without question, the Hezekiah Alexander House is one of the major historical landmarks of this whole entire area.

Those of us at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte have been honored and happy to participate in many events for which you have provided leadership in the past and we hope this fruitful relationship will continue."

Mrs. Houser read the following from a letter received from Dr. John Smiley of Queens College:

"Dear Sara:

I commend you and the Hezekiah Alexander Foundation on your achievements in the restoration of the rock house. Since much of our heritage has been tragically destroyed, it is of utmost importance that we protect and preserve those buildings and sites remaining.

Queens' own 116-year history has been noted by a historical marker placed on campus and we are keenly interested in preserving all the historic landmarks in the county and state. In spite of all the Foundation has accomplished, I realize there is still much work to be done, especially in research, and vigorous efforts are required to carry on this exacting work.

The Alexander Home and Museum will be of immeasurable interest and value to students at all levels of education as well as to all visitors. As an historian, I thank you for your untiring efforts to preserve our landmarks for the cultural and historical benefits of us all."

Mrs. Houser read the following from a letter from Dr. Samuel Spencer of Davidson College:

"Dear Mrs. Houser:

This is to express my interest and appreciation for the restoration of the Hezekiah Alexander rock house in Charlotte. Since my special field at Harvard was history, I am pretty well acquainted with the significance of this lone survivor of the pioneer history of this part of North Carolina.

The house itself has already been listed as worthy of preservation by the National Register of Historic Places, and the interest shown in it by hundreds of school children, patriotic organizations and visitors to Charlotte attest to the regard to which it is held and to its importance as an educational museum.

I am of the opinion that the restoration work already done has been of the highest quality and by persons well qualified for the undertaking. I trust that you will be able to obtain what additional funds are necessary for the completion of the plans for the benefit of the public."

Mrs. Houser stated we have a restoration that is the oldest in the city and in the county. It is the last remaining house with any historical significance. That they are not having to reach out and hunt for houses, we have the house; it is secure and they are asking Council's support and help to build this reception center museum in order to continue on with the education that is needed.

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Mayor Belk asked the original cost of the house and Mrs. Houser replied she would be unable to say since it was built in 1774. The theory at present is that it took about seven years to build the house, with walls two feet wide, and they have not been able to run down the research to determine exactly how long it took to build.

Mrs. Houser stated she would appreciate any support Council could give to the Foundation regarding this work.

DISCUSSION OF COLISEUM BUDGET.

Mr. Sidney Butz, 3918 Barclay Downs Drive, stated he is a traveler out of Charlotte, here occasionally where he resides as a taxpayer. That he is very interested in the news article which appeared about two weeks ago and mentioned that the new civic center was anticipating a deficit of some \$300,000 for the first year and there was a possibility that Council might approve a two-cent tax increase to take care of this deficit.

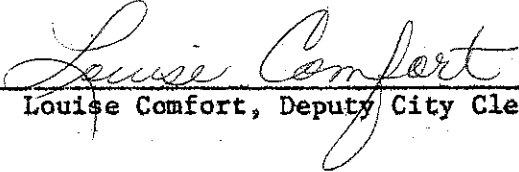
He stated he does not approve of this method of financing the deficit. It would seem to him the Coliseum Authority could borrow money on its own, in a business-like venture, instead of calling upon public citizens to take care of its original anticipated losses.

Mr. Butz stated he recognizes that a new venture has to have working capital but asks should the taxpayers of the city, who are not direct beneficiaries of this project, be asked to support it. That basically, that is his appeal. He may be in error on how far Council has gone since he is out of town most of the time and does not see every paper.

Councilman McDuffie asked whose duty is it to see that surplus funds are turned over to the City by the Coliseum Authority and Mr. Henry Underhill, City Attorney, replied the burden would be on the Authority to make an accounting each fiscal year to the City indicating if they had any surplus funds that they be applied to the reduction of the debt on the facility unless Council directed the funds be used in another fashion.

ADJOURNMENT.

Upon motion of Councilman Jordan, seconded by Councilman Alexander, the meeting was adjourned.


Louise Comfort, Deputy City Clerk