

## NITRO COUNCIL APPROVES FEDERAL GRANT EFFORT

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**Nitro** City Council members agreed Tuesday night to pursue about \$220,000 in federal grant money for city planning to fund future growth and development.

R. Todd Schoolcraft and Patrick Fogarty from Michael Baker Jr. Inc., of Charleston have been preparing two grant applications but needed the approval of council members to proceed.

"The one grant would go to fund the city's Streetscape project, while the other grant would entirely fund the city's master plan for future growth and development," Schoolcraft said.

According to Schoolcraft, each grant requires matching funds of at least 20 percent from the city. If the grant is approved, **Nitro** would have to spend a total of \$56,250.

City Council members agreed to put up the matching funds.

Each grant carries a maximum limit of \$3 million and no minimum limit to be awarded to each city involved, though **Nitro** would not be asking for that much money, Schoolcraft said.

Councilman Jim McKay said pursuing the funds would open up many avenues for federal grants in the future.

"As we sit in these chairs, we're responsible for this city's future, as well as the present," McKay said.

The state requires local municipalities to create a community master plan by 2014 outlining future growth and annexations.

Receiving the grants would enable the city to fund the plans without spending money beyond its contribution to the matching grant.

According to Schoolcraft, failing to come up with the master plan could result in voiding the city's zoning ordinance and a possible loss of funding for additional city enhancement and repairs.

In other business, Roger Hughes from the state Treasurer's Office asked council members to consider providing matching funds for the city's 457 supplemental retirement plan, a federal tax-deferred retirement administered by the Treasurer's Office.

Hughes suggested the city could benefit its employees more in the long term by providing matching funds for those participating in the program than by giving annual raises.

U.S. Senate candidate Ken Hechler also made an appearance before Tuesday night's meeting to encourage the people of **Nitro** to vote for him as a contemporary of the late Robert C. Byrd.

"The man is a walking history book," Hughes said.