

MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at approximately 6:10 P.M., with Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr. presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr., Council Members: Randy Peters, Charles Lucas, Bill Young, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls and Mary Anne Cannady. Public Works Director Charlie Chewning representing the City Manager, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. City Manager Tuck McConnell was absent.

There being a quorum present, the Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Council Member Smalls for the invocation and Council Member Lucas to lead the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

The Mayor then opened a public hearing, duly advertised, to hear comments on proposed Ordinance # 2007-09, A Joint Ordinance of the County of Colleton and the City of Walterboro . . . , Expanding the Membership Thereof to Provide for Two New Members, Providing for Terms of Service of Newly Authorized Members and Other Matters Relating Thereto. Approximately 20 persons were present during the hearing. The Mayor asked if there were any comments from the public. No comments were received, and the hearing was closed.

The Minutes of the August 14, 2007 Regular Meeting were approved as submitted on the motion of Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Lucas, with all members voting in favor.

Ms. Mim Kelly, on behalf of DWDC, appeared before Council to request support for an application to be submitted to Main Street South Carolina. Ms. Kelly gave the following reasons why the concept of the Main Street program is important:

- 1) Main Street is usually the most visible educator of economic and social health for the downtown area. It creates pride and commitment and a sense of well-being by the people who live there and visit.
- 2) The historic buildings are a physical expression of our history. We have so many wonderful, charming buildings downtown.
- 3) It is an ideal location for independent businesses. Downtown should have its own unique signature and should not feel the need to compete with large discount chains.
- 4) It's a destination for tourists and day trippers. Lots of visitors are pulling off I-95 to visit.
- 5) We hope that it will keep residents local and give them the opportunity to shop and have a unique dining experience to keep our tax dollars local.
- 6) It protects property values. We are fortunate enough that our downtown area is nested between two lovely historic neighborhoods. In preparing for this application, I counted 174 historic properties that are key to contributing to the historic district.
- 7) Main Street is an important artery for local government. We have the post office, city hall, court house and the police station all in walking distance of downtown.

Ms. Kelly then asked Council for its support and for DWDC to apply to the Main Street South Carolina Program for membership. There is an October 1st deadline. Main Street

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South Carolina is under the Municipal Association of South Carolina and it's also part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Currently South Carolina has 12 communities they support. There are currently, no communities in Colleton County. The Main Street SC Program is set to select two new additional communities this fall. They asked for a 3-year commitment from a community that is selected. This allows the community to maximize success over that 3-year period. Main Street SC also requires City Council written and financial support. They believe and have shown through decades of sponsoring this program that without local government support and other elected officials that communities have a very difficult time succeeding.

The program will, in relationship to membership, provide ongoing training and technical assistance over a 3-year period.

Ms. Kelly told Council if our plans are successful, we plan to change our tax status from 501C6 to 501C3, which will allow us to be more than just a membership organization - we will be a tax deductible organization. DWDC would elect new board members, both from our current board and other key leaders in the community. We would work to change our bylaws to reflect the goals of Main Street. We would also work to sponsor artist groups, and work with Clemson Extension to manage a public market which would be under the umbrella of DWDC. We need to hire a part-time Main Street Director. We will need to fill up a 3-year work plan that would lay out the program in stages. Each year will caption on the successes of the previous year.

So, my request to City Council is to endorse the DWDC Application to the Main Street South Carolina. We will need a letter of support from each Council Member, and we are also asking for an approval of \$5,000 for our first year membership. City Council has been very generous in giving DWDC \$5,000 this year which we would apply to our membership. Unfortunately, our membership is 153 persons. Because of the guidelines between the under 5,000 and \$7,500 membership and the population, our membership fee will be \$10,000. It goes down every year thereafter. Also, if we are selected, DWDC would appreciate the appointment of a City Council Member being on the Main Street Board of Directors.

On a question raised by Council Member Cannady on the number of members in DWDC, Ms. Kelly responded that our current membership is probably around 50 to 60 individuals. Council Member Cannady then asked how many of those members are business owners on Washington Street. Ms. Kelly responded that she did not know that number, but increasing the membership is key, having all of the downtown merchants and property owners as members of DWDC is absolutely key.

Council Member Cannady then asked how many members were friends and how many were merchants? Ms. Kelly responded that the split is more merchants and fewer friends, maybe a 60/40 or 70/30 split.

Council Member Lucas then asked for clarification of the "support requirement" needed from City Council. Ms. Kelly explained that Main Street South Carolina will actually come in and meet with the Board of Directors and other community leaders to come up with an assessment and help shape a plan we need for our community. So, the letter of support that I would ask from City Council would be that you understand the program, that you endorse the program and that you endorse DWDC's application to be considered. They come in and work with us. They want to preserve the unique charm of each and every community in South Carolina. So, they will help us identify the things we think need to be improved. The other thing I would like to mention, is that there are unique grants and low-interest revolving loan programs that are available only to Main Street communities.

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Ms. Kelly further stated that DWDC's concept of Main Street would be more than Washington Street, and we should work with the community to define how broadly we want it to be. It includes alleyways and side streets. Council Member Lucas noted that the downtown overlay for main street goes from Hampton to Wichman, Jefferies to Washington and Memorial Street. Ms. Kelly added that there has also been some interest regarding the Depot area, which could be part of a longer term goal. It can be defined however you want it to be defined, but should not be limited in definition just to Washington Street.

Council Member Lucas then asked if the organization came in and made the proposal that we should have green awnings and yellow buildings, and I don't want to do that, do I have to participate with their suggestions? Ms. Kelly responded, absolutely not, you do not have to participate. They might come in and say, here are some things you might want to consider as a community. Ms. Kelly again emphasized the importance of a Council Member serving on the Board of Directors so there would be an outgoing dialogue.

Ms. Cannady then stated that the city had this program in the 80's, which specifies, only if you have the membership that is downtown that want to get involved. But you cannot run the show by yourself, you have to have workers. My only concern about the program is how many members you have who will help you get members. Ms. Kelly stated that her plan is to work with the director, along with other board members, to plan and grow the membership among all downtown merchants and property owners and to have sponsorships that might come in larger sums.

Mr. Gary Davis, a downtown business owner, then stated that none of the merchants downtown know about this program. It was his opinion that before anything is done that the merchants need to know what you are planning to do with our businesses. Ms. Kelly responded that she is not planning to do anything with their businesses. What I am hoping to do is to be able to work with a program. She added that Mr. David Evans is planning to have a meeting forthcoming with all the downtown merchants. Mr. Davis also questioned whether the \$10,000 membership fee would be returned if our town is not selected. Ms. Kelly noted that the \$10,000 fee is not paid until you are selected. Mr. Davis then pointed out in regard to historic buildings, that a lot of the insurance companies do not want to insure old buildings when you have to rebuild it the way it was. Ms. Kelly responded that this is true, and we do not have to put Main Street South Carolina on the Historic District. Mr. Davis noted that his research has shown that "it does have to be put on the Historic District." He added that he would like to know more about the program before I know where my \$10,000 is being spent and I want to know whether my insurance rates are going to go up. Ms. Kelly assured Mr. Davis that Mr. Evans is planning to hold a meeting with all the merchants.

Ms. Susan Smith, a downtown business owner, also felt that none of the downtown merchants understood the program.

The discussion was closed with no formal action taken by Council on the matter.

Under Old Business, a motion was made by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Lucas giving Second Reading and Adoption to Ordinance # 2007-09, being: A JOINT ORDINANCE OF THE COUNTY OF COLLETON AND THE CITY OF WALTERBORO ESTABLISHING THE WALTERBORO-COLLETON COUNTY AIRPORT COMMISSION AS A JOINT COMMISSION OF THE COUNTY OF COLLETON AND THE CITY OF WALTERBORO, ADOPTING THE LOCAL OR SPECIAL LEGISLATION WHICH ESTABLISHED THE WALTERBORO-COLLETON COUNTY AIRPORT COMMISSION, AMENDING PORTIONS THEREOF TO CONFORM TO THE PRESENT PRACTICES OF THE COMMISSION, EXPANDING THE MEMBERSHIP THEREOF TO PROVIDE FOR

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TWO NEW MEMBERS, PROVIDING FOR TERMS OF SERVICE OF NEWLY AUTHORIZED MEMBERS AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO. The motion passed with a vote of 6/1 with Mayor Sweat, Council Members Lucas, Young, Parker, Smalls and Cannady voting in favor, and Council Member Peters opposing the motion.

Next, Council Member Cannady stated that she had requested that the "Request by Habitat for Humanity for 2 Lots on North Lemacks Street" be placed on the agenda for tonight. In talking with Ms. Adams who made a presentation some months ago, she was informed that right now, they have an opportunity to get money to start four new homes in January, 2008. They (Habitat for Humanity) should have one home completed by July, 2008. This would end up with having 4 homes with tax dollars coming into the city. Council Member Cannady then suggested that the City donate lots 45 (which could probably get 2 homes on the lot). She also suggested that Council consider lots 171, 165 and also lot 44.

Ms. Cannady then made a motion to give the following lots to Habitat for Humanity for building new homes: Lots 44, 45 165 and 171. Council Member Lucas seconded the motion.

In discussing the motion, Ms. Lou Ann Adams, present on behalf of Habitat for Humanity, stated that in a meeting with the City Manager, she was informed that lots 171 and 165 could probably become 1 lot. Council Member Lucas noted that in order to get 4 houses in all, you will need all the lots with 1 house across the street on lots 171 and 165, 2 homes on lot 45 and 1 house on lots 43 and 44. A question was raised on the setback requirements.

Council Member Lucas stated he would like for the property to revert back to the city if no houses are built on the lots.

In further discussion, Public Works Director Charlie Chewing asked Ms. Adams if the present building on lot 45 would be a problem when the lot is split. Will you try to utilize any of the present building on lot 45? Ms. Adams stated that except for the water line, there will be no problem. We are trying to use those water lines that are already there, and we are planning to build all new buildings.

Concluding the discussion, Council Member Cannady restated her motion, with the approval of the second as follows: That the City convey lots 43, 44, 45, 165 and 171 to Habitat for Humanity to build 4 new homes with each lot having a minimum of 100 ft. of frontage, more or less, with a reverter clause. The motion then passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was a written request by Thomas F. Fennell, Jr., on behalf of the Walterboro Association of Life Underwriters, to hang an information banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing Life Insurance Awareness Month. Mayor Sweat stated that the request was to hang the banner for 2 weeks, but our policy has been for 1 week at a time. Council Member Lucas questioned whether this had been done for businesses and whether this is consistent with what has been done in the past. Council Member Cannady responded that the banner was approved last year and that this is just an "awareness" to make people understand the importance of life insurance. A motion was then made by Council Member Lucas to approve the information banner for one week. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion that passed with a vote of 6/0, with Council Member Cannady abstaining.

Lastly, under New Business, Council considered a request by the Colleton County Sheriff's Office to close Hampton Street and Jefferies Boulevard for the Court House Dedication Ceremony on September 28th from 12:30-2:30 P.M. It was also requested to close both lanes traveling north from Carn Street to Wichman and south from Wichman

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Street to Carn Street. A motion granting the request as submitted was made by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Parker, and passed unanimously. In discussing the motion, Council Member Young reminded staff of the requirement to notify the affected people of the street closings. Mayor Sweat stated that the county has done a magnificent job with the renovation of the courthouse building which is an attractive part of the downtown area.

The Mayor then opened the floor for public comments. Mr. Gary Davis then thanked Council for listening to the merchants on the Main Street South Carolina program. I don't know that much about it, I appreciate your listening to what we have to say as far as a public forum, because a lot of the merchants downtown do not know what this is about. We appreciate that courtesy for us to know what's going on beforehand. Mayor Sweat stated that this matter will probably end up on the agenda for the next meeting on September 11th.

A motion to enter an Executive Session to hear a contractual matter regarding Colleton County was made by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Cannady and passed unanimously.

The meeting returned to Open Session with no action taken as a result of the executive session. There being no further business to consider a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Cannady and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:11 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED September 25, 2007