

MINUTES

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge. City Manager Jeff Molinari, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were approximately 90 persons present in the audience. Many members of the Band of Blue, along with their directors and parents, were present.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated, it is great to have a big crowd here tonight. Council Member Syfrett gave the invocation and Council Member Broderick led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

With no objection from Council, Mayor Young then changed the order of the agenda to be as follows:

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no public comments or questions on agenda items.

RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS & AWARDS:

1. **Resolution No. 2015-R-03, Designating April 2015 as Fair Housing Month, and Approval of Annual Nondiscrimination Policy**

City Manager Molinari told Council that this Resolution requirement is from the Community Development Program. He asked for City Council's favorable consideration.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 2015-R-03 and the Annual Nondiscrimination Policy was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Siegel and passed unanimously. A copy of the resolution and annual nondiscrimination policy are attached as part of these minutes.

2. **Proclamation No. 2015-02, to Recognize the Colleton County High School Band of Blue Winter Percussion Ensemble**

A motion was made by Council Member Bridge to approve Proclamation No. 2015-02, proclaiming April 15 as "Winter Percussion Ensemble Day" in the City of Walterboro. Council Member Lohr seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

This proclamation recognized that the Band of Blue "Winter Percussion Ensemble" competed and won the 2015 State Championship and the 2015 Regional Championship. The Mayor then asked Band Director Tom Finigan and Guard Instructor Gary Stroupe to come to the podium along with some of the section leaders of the Percussion Ensemble. The Mayor then read the proclamation in its entirety into the record. The Mayor congratulated the members of the Band of Blue for their huge accomplishment. He said, we are certainly proud of you and it speaks to the talent in our community as to what our young people can accomplish.

A copy of this proclamation is attached as part of these minutes.

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3. Recognition of Certificate of Awards Received by the City of Walterboro Finance Department and Director Bill Floyd

City Manager Molinari stated it is a pleasure to recognize Bill Floyd, Finance Director, Amy Risher, Finance Office Manager, and the entire Finance Department staff for being recognized for the 3rd consecutive year by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). We are recognized for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report ending June 30, 2014. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by the City and its management. Mr. Molinari further stated that this is reflective of the quality of the staff we have in that area. Mr. Molinari then recognized Mr. Bill Floyd for his outstanding work. Mr. Floyd said that he could not overemphasize the quality of staff that we have. He said, without them, this would not happen.

Mayor Young then said, I know that our financial reporting goes beyond what is required of us, and that's why we received this award, because we do report in much more detail than required. We are lucky to have a good staff and to have you, Bill and Amy, and we appreciate all that you do for us.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Dr. Yvonne Commodore, First Choice Academy Charter School

Dr. Commodore thanked Council for the opportunity to speak on behalf of First Choice Academy. She said, I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a member of the Colleton County Community, and we are very excited about the prospect of bringing First Choice and to have a choice school here in Colleton County. Dr. Commodore then said, I am not here to recruit, I am not here to be in competition, we are here simply to exercise my gift as a principal and school leader to help level the playing field in education. So, I do want to say we have with us 200 or more signatures of parents who are willing to attend our charter school. We have 120 parents already signed up and we have about 15 businesses that have already committed their pledge to help us. Therefore, we are here just to give recognition and just to help the leaders of our town know exactly what our intentions are and to give you the respect to have input as well. So, I am going to share with you why we are doing this:

- A. Dr. Commodore told Council, we did not call ourselves to Walterboro, South Carolina. We were assigned by God. Actually, I have never been to Walterboro before, but we are here because of God's calling to lead a church and an amazing group of people that we have been in fellowship with. We have been here a year now, and I believe the hand of God is with us. We now have an address here in Walterboro. I work for the Charleston County School District as a principal, and I am pleased to say that I was awarded "Principal of the Year for Charleston County". Dr. Commodore pointed out that she comes with a lot of experience. She also stated that she was born and raised in poverty in Jamaica, West Indies. She said, my father and mother never went to school, so for me I am breaking generational curses to be in the business of education. I came from poverty, raised in a one room house, in a very remote area, where still today all they have is chalk and chalkboard.
- B. Dr. Commodore stated that she now holds four degrees, has been a principal for over 14 years and has been in education longer than that. She has 30 years of pastoral ministry, and has worked with people a very long time. What I know about education is that there is a possibility. There are some great things happening in Colleton County. We did not come here to say that we have the answer. To bring businesses into this region, we understand that we have to have a top notch educational system. So, basically, what I want to do is to

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contribute and to give my skills. I want to give back to this community that I am now in love with. We are emphatic about education and about kids. We know that kids today have so many things that we have to fix as educators. What we are saying is that we have developed a school where every child will be on their own personal tract. It's called personalized learning, and that simply means "wherever the child is, we will meet them right there and we will take them forward on their own tract, based on their own interests and what they are good at doing".

Dr. Commodore stated that there is a disconnect in education, because we are in the industrialized age, we are teaching children the way we were taught. In today's society, they want to experience education. They want to be a part of it. So, this model that we are proposing is to allow students to engage in their own destiny.

We are pledging to serve students in grades 6-9th grade upon opening, because we want to incubate and teach them before we test them in the 11th grade. So, we are opening with grades 6 thru 9th and will offer personalized learning. They will have one on one I-pads. We will also have an extended year. We want to take some kids off the streets and allow them to enjoy and see the world. We are in a global economy and the world is very large.

In conclusion, Dr. Commodore stated, we have an opportunity to help kids personalize their education, how they learn best and not how we want to teach them. That to me is the key to unlocking the potential in every child in helping them grow as a person, not only to navigate education, but obtain 21st century skills. These include public speaking, standing properly in front an audience and projecting your voice. Those are the kinds of things we will be teaching, soft skills.

So, this school is going to be about preparing that total child for the 21st century and not just a teacher standing in front of class lecturing, because after 10 minutes the child disengages and that's when behavior problems come in. But when a child is taught how to be in charge of their own destiny, we believe and the research shows that is an extremely productive educational model to go by. You know and I know that we have graduated children, according to the statistics locally, where 48% of students here in our county are below their grade level in reading and 38% in math. That is alarming, but yet we are graduating them. With this new charter school, we are going to do competency based education. That simply means the students must master the standards before they move on. It's not about mastering a grade, because we have children in the 12th grade reading at the 4th grade level. We will have competency based education, because that is what works with kids.

No comments or questions were raised and Dr. Commodore's presentation was accepted as information.

2. Mr. Philip Slayter, Colleton County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Mr. Philip Slayter of Colleton County told Council he wanted to briefly present a planning effort that he is very proud of. He stated, I know I have appeared before you previously as the County Planning Director, and in fact tonight I come to you not only as the Planning Director, but as a board member of Eat Smart, Move More, Colleton County. This document is an outgrowth of an effort that organization undertook with the goal of trying to promote more physical activity among our citizens. The genesis behind Eat Smart, Move More, Colleton County was concern over the health and welfare of the youth in our jurisdiction, and particularly obesity. It is a national issue and it comes down to the state as well as the local level. When we started about 4 or 5 years ago, many of you, including the Mayor, participated in an overall planning process by which we undertook a series of steps to get that organization up and running. Over the last couple of years, we have been able to focus on certain

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programmatic aspects, of which one was the development of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This has been a long-term goal. We were lucky, in that, we received some funding from DHEC and the County. We ended up getting a consultant for the planning, which was a national firm that had a certain amount of expertise in trails and bikeway development. So, we were thrilled that they could come in and undertake the planning process to do the plan.

Mr. Slayter noted that copies of the plan had been distributed to all Council Members for the meeting tonight. He then said, tonight is not about asking you to adopt the plan, I simply wanted to introduce it to you, give you some frame of reference, so that as you explore the document, if you have any questions, I could respond to them over the next couple of weeks. Then, when I return to you, we can hopefully move forward with its adoption.

With the help of an overhead projection, Mr. Slayter gave a brief introduction of the plan as follows:

- 1) When the consultant came in, we recognized that we had no base information about Colleton County in terms of its walking and bicycling. So, we undertook a series of surveys. We developed an advisory group made up of citizens of the County, and we began a process to try to identify opportunities and constraints for construction of bikeways and/or sidewalks, which is primarily its focus. What we did was to identify through this long process where connections really could be made.
- 2) We held a series of public meetings, where we invited the public to explain to folks and give them options of where connections could be made, not only inside the City limits, but outside the City and in some of the smaller municipalities in the county.
- 3) We noticed that trails and greenways were a preference among all the people that participated in the planning process. That clearly demonstrated in our minds where our charge should be focused.
- 4) New sidewalks scored pretty good and pedestrian intersection improvements scored pretty high.
- 5) The notion of what you see a lot of is just having a paved shoulder, a 4 foot or 6 foot paved shoulder on the side of a road where someone could ride their bike or possibly walk.
- 6) Cycle tracks are a little more advanced in design. There is an actual buffer between the road and the cycle track. That's recommended in the plan in a few spots.
- 7) In the bicycle boulevards, what we are talking about is primarily signage. We have a lot of areas, particularly in the suburban sections of the town, where it is perfectly safe to ride your bike. Traffic volume is very low. So, there is nothing wrong with identifying that particular route as appropriate to ride your bike. So, the recommendations in the plan for where that occurs is designated as bicycle boulevards.

Mr. Slayter pointed out that some of the recommendations had a high cost. He said, when you see these numbers, they are quite high. Well, I don't want you to be intimidated by that. First of all, even if you adopt the plan, it is a policy document. It does not commit the City or the County to actually build any of it. Obviously, we would like to build as much as we could, but we know as a practical matter, we don't have a blank check. I want you to recognize that any action taken by the City to adopt this document is simply agreeing that the blueprint that is identified in the plan is something where we would try to follow where we could, either where a road gets resurfaced and we want to put in a bike lane. Maybe, we could get a grant and put in some sidewalks. Probably, the most noteworthy project that we are looking at now is the Capital Sales Tax Project, where the City's No. 1 choice, where actually some of

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those recommendations in that project fulfill the intent of this plan. So, whether you like it or not, you are already implementing elements of it. Particularly, as you do redevelopment in some of the other parts of the City, I know you have been active with the CDBG program for Lemacks Street and similar other areas to repair some of those sidewalks or making connections where those sidewalks ought to be. This actually has gone a long way into fulfilling some of the objectives already identified in the plan.

Mr. Slayter briefly went over the low end and high end estimates of the costs identified in the plan for the recommended phases of improvements. He said, as a total project area, it is about 82 miles worth of bicycle lanes. In identifying how the projects would be paid for, Mr. Slayter stated, we are looking at a combination of public and private funding. The most traditional ways of financing for something like this is either through bonds from the municipal government and county government. Some of you are familiar with "C" funds, which actually helps fund this plan. That could be done. SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism oftentimes funds projects. DOT has monies set aside for the funding of projects, the Center for Disease Control, and the National Park Service. So, there is a whole series of public entities that we might be able to go after to undertake some of this work. On the private side, we have individual fund-raising efforts which we are hoping to get something going in that direction, corporate giving and charitable foundations.

As we move forward with this plan, we are not going to constantly try to get money out of the City or the County. There is going to be a more diverse, more collaborative effort. We do have high hopes that we will be able to undertake some of these things fairly soon as a result of a diverse range of funding sources.

Mr. Slayter then briefly went over the maps associated with the project. He stated, what we are going to start looking at, and I will spend time with the City Administrator to do that, is to identify appropriate funding sources to undertake some of the initial work. Some of the projects are in 5 year increments, and it is going to take well over 20 years to complete the project.

Questions regarding the survey were made by Council Member Broderick and answered by Mr. Slayter. The presentation was accepted by Council as information.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Upon the motion of Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Bridge, the Minutes of the March 24, 2015 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved as submitted with all members voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consideration of Contributing \$60,000 to Colleton County for the Reopening of Dogwood Hills Golf Course

A motion was made by Council Member Broderick to approve the contribution of \$60,000 to Colleton County for the Dogwood Hills Golf Course. Council Member Siegel seconded the motion. In discussing the motion, Council Member Bonds asked if the motion was contingent upon the County's closing on the property? City Manager Molinari responded, yes, pursuant to the corrected memorandum. The motion then passed with all members voting in favor.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports given.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

There was no City Manager's Report given.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session. Council Member Lohr So Moved and Council Member Syfrett seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried. The Mayor announced that the meeting will convene into an Executive Session for:

- 1) A discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements - Wrecker Rotation, and
- 2) A personnel matter - on Boards and Commissions Appointments.

At approximately 7:38 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Lohr to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session. Council Member Bonds seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Lohr to appoint Gail Reardon to the Economic Development Commission and Monroe Rhodes to the Municipal Election Commission. All in favor, None opposed. Motion carried.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:41 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City's website and the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson
City Clerk

APPROVED: May 12, 2015