

Walterboro City Council
Rescheduled Regular Meeting
August 20, 2013

MINUTES

A Rescheduled Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 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 and James Broderick. City Manager Jeff Lord, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. There were approximately 38 persons present in the audience. Note for the record: **Council Member Randy Peters passed away on August 12, 2013, at which time his seat became vacant on City Council.**

There being a quorum present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. Council Member Lohr led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were public comments received on the "Closing of Dogwood Hills Country Club," by the following persons:

Former City Council Member Dwayne Buckner spoke in support of Dogwood Hills Country Club. Mr. Buckner told Council that he felt this was a good opportunity for the City and County to work together to be able to pull the funds and resources necessary to keep that facility going. Also, there is a swimming pool there which would help to meet the needs of the community in terms of having a place to swim. This is a great opportunity and I would encourage the County and the City to look at trying to save that facility for the residents of the County and the City of Walterboro.

Mr. William Proctor also spoke in favor of the Dogwood Hills Country Club. He told Council that he is the post commander for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) here in Walterboro, Post 12102. He said, I understand that the Country Club has gone out of business, and we would like support from Council to keep it going. Mr. Proctor then passed out a list containing 56 businesses and organizations in the area that have supported the tournaments by the VFW at the Country Club. He said that we are not the only tournament in the area. There is a VFW golf tournament, a Rice Festival Golf tournament, and a March of Dimes tournament. He pointed out that all these businesses support our tournaments. This means also that the people will come to Walterboro and support the Walterboro area. He then asked the City to see if there is any way to help the golf course and that the VFW and members would surely appreciate it.

Mr. Bob Smith, a city resident, also spoke in support of the Dogwood Hills project. He said, having spent 12 years on the Colleton County Resource and Development Board, as well as two terms on the City Economic Development Commission, I have seen first hand as to what it means to economic development in both our city and our county from the point of view for affording business management people that may locate here. It is an essential component of that, in addition to other recreational things we have had. I think when Asten Hill was here, relatively to the golf tournament, they had their own week for the tournament. I really think that this is an excellent opportunity, as Mr. Buckner has mentioned, for the City and County to partner on something that would really truly be of benefit to all citizens of Colleton County.

Mr. Proctor also pointed out that two of the schools in Colleton County also have golf teams. He said that this would also help to support the school system.

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REQUESTS FOR APPEARANCE:

1. **Closing of Dogwood Hills Country Club - Mr. William F. Steadman, Steadman Agency**

Mr. Bill Steadman appeared before Council and made the following points concerning the closing of the Dogwood Hills Country Club.

1. Mr. Steadman stated that he had secured 303 signatures on a petition that he passed around to the citizens. The citizens of Walterboro do have a concern about the closing of the club. A copy of the signed petition is attached as part of these minutes.
2. Dogwood Hills provides our community a unique amenity for quality recreation along with a modern meeting and banquet facility.
3. We believe that it's not only an asset to the citizens of our community, but it is also an important tool in attracting prospective industries and new residents to Colleton County.
4. In the mid 1930's when Dogwood Hills was organized, it was founded by a group of prominent Walterboro businessmen.
5. The modern Dogwood Hills golf course and clubhouse sit on 81 acres. There is an additional 138 acres of mostly low land. The club house, which includes more than 10,500 sq. feet, was completely renovated in 2011. The restaurant has over 2,650 sq. feet and has been completely renovated. It has dinning space for 81 and a bar area that seats an additional 52 persons. It has a 3,300 sq. foot banquet hall, with restrooms and seating for an additional 141 people, and standing areas for 302. There is a 2,600 sq. ft. Pro-Shop and snack bar, locker rooms and seating. There is also an additional 3,200 sq. ft. open deck. There is a 600 sq. ft. park/storage barn and a 2,880 sq. ft. brand-new maintenance building completely fenced. There are also two additional storage buildings for storage of chemicals and fertilizer.

There is also a junior Olympic swimming pool. It does need some repair, since it has not been used in several years. It basically needs a handicap upgrade. There are also four tennis courts.

6. The golf course operates with 2 full time employees and 7 part-time seasonal employees. There is also a fleet of leased golf carts.

Mr. Steadman said, I think it is important to mention that for more than 40 years, Dogwood Hills has allowed Colleton County Schools to house golf teams and use the golf course and clubhouse free for practice and school matches. Its restaurant has hosted and provided meeting space for most of Walterboro's civic clubs for over 40 years. It has provided wildlife banquets, wedding receptions, Christmas parties, etc. In 2012, over \$19,000 in banquet rental income was received and that was without any advertising or marketing efforts.

Mr. Steadman also mentioned a success story in Goose Creek, where they made a decision to purchase the former Crowfield Plantation golf course. He encouraged Council to contact Dennis Harmon, the City Administrator, or Jeffrey Molinari, the Assistant Administrator. They will be glad to go over the details of how they turned a struggling private golf course into a profitable municipal golf course.

Mr. Steadman also told Council there is another component of this whole picture. There is an organization called the "First Tee Initiative." The First Tee is a 501(C)3

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youth development program which operates out of 200 chapters around the United States. Its mission is to impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs to build character, instill life enhancing values and promotes healthy choices through playing golf. It is designed for school age children ages 8-18. The First Tee of Greater Charleston offers its core program at 3 municipal golf facilities - one on James Island, one in Mt. Pleasant and one in Summerville. Its in-school program is offered to 23 Charleston County elementary schools and groups of more than 6,000 students this year. The program has improved graduation rates. Mr. Steadman said, I mentioned this because this program is available to Colleton County as part of the Greater Charleston Area Outreach Program for its students. They would provide instruction, equipment and volunteers and we would have to provide a golf course.

In conclusion, Mr. Steadman stated, I am not here just for the benefit of the 21 home owners at Dogwood Hills. They are concerned with the closure of the golf course and the values of their property out there which might decline. Also, I am not here for the group of golfers who play out there on a regular basis, but I think we need to look at it as a bigger part of Walterboro - what it provides for children. The game of golf teaches children so much more than just how to play golf. I ask you to please consider that when you look at this. I am here tonight because we believe that Dogwood Hills provides a site to expose all children in Colleton County to the life benefits that golf teaches, the core values of honesty, respect, courtesy, responsibility and sportsmanship. We have an opportunity to leverage this modern, totally updated club house for the business and industrial benefits of Walterboro.

We are here to just respectfully ask you to look closely at Dogwood Hills as a potential revenue producing asset for our community. We believe it provides a unique experience for the young and old alike to experience, learn and enjoy the game of golf. I do know that this golf course is being sold, and I would hope that Council would be a part of that sale, that you would take the time to research it and see if there are any opportunities to purchase and run the former Dogwood Hills.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Upon motion by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Lohr, the following minutes were approved unanimously as submitted:

1. Minutes of the June 25, 2013 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting.
2. Minutes of the July, 9, 2013 Regular Meeting.
3. Minutes of the July 23, 2013 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business before Council.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Consideration of a Motion to Order a Special Election to Fill the Vacant Council Member Seat, in Accordance with the Provisions of SC Code 7-13-190 and SC Code 5-15-70, to be Held on November 5, 2013, and Approval of the Special Election Schedule**

City Manager Lord explained that the State Code cited here sets the Special Election Day as being the 13th Tuesday (November 5) to fill the vacancy that occurred on City Council due to the death of Council Member Randy Peters.

A motion was made by Council Member Siegel, seconded by Council Member Broderick to order a Special Election on November 5, 2013 to fill the vacant City Council seat, in accordance with the provisions of SC Code 7-13-190 and SC Code 5-

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15-70 and to approve the Special Election Schedule as submitted. The motion passed with all members voting in favor. (A copy of the Election Schedule is attached as part of these minutes).

2. **Ordinance # 2013-08**, An Ordinance to Change the Zoning on Two Parcels of Land on Wichman Street and Neyle Street, Tax Map No. 163-12-00-161 from General Commercial District (GCD) and 163-12-00-166 from Single Family Residential (SFR) to Commercial Business District (CBD), **First Reading**.

Planning Director David Dodd explained that the County owns the three parcels adjacent to the current Museum and Farmer's Market property. One is the old Brown Hardware building, which will be the new commercial kitchen facility. Both those properties are zoned Central Business District. They also own a vacant parcel adjacent to that on Neyle Street and a vacant parcel adjacent to it on Wichman Street. The Wichman Street property is zoned General Commercial and the Neyle Street property is zoned Single Family Residential. For them (the County) to develop the whole thing as one use with improved parking, landscaping, buffers, etc., it would all have to be zoned the same, and it will combine the parcels of property. So, the County requested and came before the Planning Commission and got the recommendation from the Planning Commission to rezone the properties to Central Business District.

Mr. Dodd reported that he had spoken with both of the adjacent property owners to those parcels and none of the owners had any objections. The properties have been posted and advertised for the rezoning.

A motion was made by Council Member Broderick giving **First Reading Approval** to Ordinance # 2013-08, as submitted. Council Member Siegel seconded the motion. In discussing the motion, Council Member Bonds asked for further clarification of the adjacent property owners' tax map numbers. Mr. Dodd pointed out that the adjacent property owners for parcels 167, 160 and 159 had been notified. The motion then passed with all members voting in favor.

3. **Resolution No. 2013-R-06**, A Resolution of the City of Walterboro Supporting the Research, Development, and Focus Group Activities, of the Airport in the Preparation of a Recommendation that We Establish August 19-23, 2013 as Aviation Week, was approved unanimously as submitted. The motion for approval was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Lohr. A copy of said Resolution is attached as part of these minutes.

4. **Request to Hang Banner for Life Insurance Awareness Month September 1-8, 2013**

A motion to approve the request to hang the banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing Life Insurance Awareness Month as submitted was made by Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Broderick and passed unanimously.

5. **Request by Walterboro Rotary Club to Close Washington Street Bridge and Forest Hills Bridge on September 5, 2013 for the First Annual Ireland Creek Bridge Run from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.**

A motion granting this request as submitted was made by Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Siegel, and passed with a vote of 5/0 with Mayor Young and Council Members Lohr, Syfrett, Siegel and Broderick voting in favor. Council Member Bonds recused himself from voting on this matter, since he is a member of the Walterboro Rotary Club.

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6. **Request by Lowcountry International Society to Use the City Parking Lot on October 5, 2013 for the Annual Lowcountry Foods and Arts Festival from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**

A motion was made by Council Member Siegel to approve the request by Lowcountry International Society, Inc. as submitted. Council Member Lohr seconded the motion. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

No committee reports were given.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session. Council Member Bonds So Moved to enter an Executive Session. Council Member Siegel seconded the motion that passed unanimously. The Mayor announced that the meeting would enter an Executive Session for a discussion of negotiations related to proposed contractual arrangements, for a discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline or release of an employee, a student or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body and for receipt of legal advice.

The meeting then convened into an Executive Session at approximately 6:50 P.M.

At approximately 8:40 P.M. Council returned to Open Session and voted to extend the Council Meeting until 10:00 p.m. The motion to extend the meeting was made by Council Member Lohr and seconded by Council Member Syfrett. City Code prohibits a council meeting adjourning later than 8:45 P.M. without a vote. The vote was unanimous. A motion was made by Council Member Siegel that the meeting return to an Executive Session. Council Member Lohr seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous. The meeting then returned to Executive Session.

The meeting returned to Open Session at approximately 9:29 P.M., and no action was taken as a result of Executive Session.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Siegel and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9:30 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: August 27, 2013