

Walterboro City Council

Regular Meeting

City Hall

January 7, 2025

Minutes

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

Present: Joined in the meeting were: Mayor Bill Young. Councilmembers, Judy Bridge, Paul Siegel, James Broderick, Greg Pryor, and Ladson Fishburne. City Manager Jeff Molinari, Assistant City Manager Ryan McLeod, City Clerk Adrienne Nettles, Tourism Director Patricia Utsey, Chief Wade Marvin, City Attorney Brown McLeod, members of the Walterboro Police Department, and members of the community. Councilmember Carl Brown was not in attendance.

Call to Order:

With the above-mentioned Councilmembers Present, Mayor Young called the meeting to order and invited everyone to join in as he gave the invocation. Councilmember Paul Siegel led the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

Public Input on Agenda Items:

There was no public input on agenda items.

Public Hearings:

1. **Ordinance # 2024-16**, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND ESTABLISHING A FAÇADE GRANT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT AREA OF THE CITY OF WALTERBORO; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (Second and Final Reading).

City Manager Jeff Molinari stated Mr. Mayor and members of City Council this ordinance would establish a Façade Improvement Grant Program for the city beginning in the Historic District. We would allocate \$10,000 from the City's Economic Development Corporation. In the beginning we would keep it very simple, the money would be used for signage, awnings, and canopies. The application would be capped up to \$1,500 and the grants would provide up to 50% reimbursement of the cost. Depending on what type of response we get, this funding for the program will be extended into the next fiscal year. We ask for Council's favorable consideration.

2. **Ordinance # 2024-17**, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF WALTERBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO PROVIDE FOR CHANGES IN THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF ONE PARCEL OF LAND DESIGNATED AS TMS # 147-14-00-088 FROM HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (HCD) TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR) (Second and final reading).

City Manager Jeff Molinari stated Mr. Mayor and members of City Council we have a piece of property that fronts Peachtree Road that is currently zoned Highway Commercial District. The Planning Commission has reviewed this and made a recommendation to change the zoning to Medium Density Residential, which is more consistent with the future possible use of the property.

Presentations:

1. Blakely Williams and Westy Westmoreland, Dominion Energy – EV Charging Stations.
2. Dana Cheney, Keep Walterboro Beautiful – Christmas Contest Winners.
3. John “Barrett” Ulm – Neighborhood Concerns.
4. Juanita Harvey – Neighborhood Concerns.
5. Carol Black – Code Enforcement.

1. Blakely Williams and Westy Westmoreland, Dominion Energy - EV Charging Stations.

Mr. Westmoreland stated we are here today to talk about a new program that we are offering with EV Charging Stations. There are three different levels of charging. We do the level 2 charging. With the level 2 charging you get a 45-mile range per charge. With this new program that we are offering, we are trying to take the hassle out of you when it comes to charging. What we do is connect to a grid, we build the meter panels, and we put the charges on the network as paid per use. With this program we also take care of the operations and maintenance. The revenue is generated through the charging stations and that goes back to the city. The city would set the pricing for each charging station. I think the city would definitely benefit from the charging stations and it would bring more people into the downtown area.

2. Dana Cheney, Keep Walterboro Beautiful – Christmas Contest Winners

Mr. Cheney stated Mr. Mayor and members of City Council we are here tonight to announce the winners of the Christmas Decorating Contest. My Chairman Crystal Herrington is going to read the names of the winners.

Mrs. Herrington stated the following are the winners of the contest:

1st place goes to 127 Chestnut Road.

2nd place goes to 129 Robert E. Lee Drive.

3rd place goes to 700 Hampton Street.

Mrs. Herrington stated we had a lot of participants this year and we had a lot of donations from our local businesses. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated.

3. John “Barrett” Ulm - Neighborhood Concerns

Mr. Ulm stated Mr. Mayor and members of City Council thank you for allowing me to address you all tonight about the concerns I have. Gun violence is my biggest concern and all the shootings that are taking place in our town. It seems that more and more shootings are taking place, and nothing is being done about it. We, the citizens of this community would like something done about this. We do not feel safe. We are more than happy to help in any way possible to combat these issues. We just want to be heard and something to be done.

4. Juanita Harvey – Neighborhood Concerns

Ms. Harvey stated good afternoon I am not going to be speaking tonight. Ms. Helen Rigley and Ms. Carolyn Robinson will be speaking on our behalf. We would like to help you guys make our community safer.

Ms. Rigley stated because things are getting worse with the gun violence, and we are not being heard. We are very concerned about the growing violence in the neighborhoods. All I want is to feel heard and no one seems to want to listen to us. The lack of response has left us feeling abandoned and that our safety is not important. As city leaders we need you all to reclaim our neighborhoods and invest in our city to make it safe for everyone. We are not going to stop until the violence is under control.

Ms. Carolyn Robinson stated I am here to also speak about the gun violence that is taking place in our community. The gun violence is getting worse, and nothing is being done about it. I, along with my neighbors, do not feel safe anymore. This is an ongoing issue, and we need something done about it. All we are asking for is help with this serious issue that is taking place in our town.

Mayor Young stated we share your concerns, and we see what is going on. I called a meeting to discuss the many things you all spoke about tonight on December 4th. I met with Chief Wade Marvin, our City Manager Jeff Molinari, our Sheriff Buddy Hill, our Solicitor, Duffy Stone, Gene Johnson with the Sheriff Department and Kevin Martin with the Walterboro Police Department. We talked about looking at the things we can control. There are so many things that are going on with these crimes. I wanted to get everyone together to see if there are more ordinances that we can pass and different ways that we can address things. The safety of the community is a priority of City Council. We are hoping that a bill gets introduced into the House this term that deals with gang violence. I can assure you that City Council is going to work harder to handle these issues.

4. Carol Black – Code Enforcement

Ms. Black stated I am here tonight to talk about code enforcement, as I have concerns about code enforcement in this town. There are ordinances that are very vague as to what can be done. To put a fence up you have to get a fence permit. That needs to be published because people do not know that. I had two contractors who had to deal with the Code Enforcement officer who is a Policeman. The Code Enforcement office will make you stop working if you do not have a permit. The fence permit is only \$5, no one is trying to cheat the city out of money. It is very off putting if this is your first experience with Walterboro, and the Code Enforcement officer comes up to you and tells you to stop working. Also, in 2016 there were 35 photos of different fences that you could choose from that were most like the fence you would want to put up. As of 2022 there are only 13 fences to choose from. What I am doing looks like nothing I am trying to build. Thankfully Ryan McLeod helped me figure out what I could do that will not constitute a fence, so I do not have to have a permit or go through the Historical Preservation Commission if you live in the Historic District. Please try to do something to make this clear to people. A fence is nowhere defined in the city code or anywhere. I went through the City Commissions, and I focused on the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Planning Commission, the Tree Protection Committee, and the Historic Preservation Committee. Mr. Ulm is on the Tree Protection Committee. I grew up in the Historic District and I am not sure if people know that if you purchase a house in the Historic District, they must get permission from the Historic Preservation Commission to change the exterior of the house. All I am asking is that this information be published so everyone knows the rules.

Approval of Minutes:

Upon motion of Councilmember Broderick, Seconded by Councilmember Pryor, the following minutes were unanimously approved.

1. Regular Meeting – December 7, 2024.

Old Business:

1. **Ordinance # 2024-16**, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND ESTABLISHING A FAÇADE GRANT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT AREA OF THE CITY OF WALTERBORO; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (Second and Final Reading).

Motion: Councilmember Pryor; Seconded by Councilmember Bridge

Discussion: None

Carried: All ayes

2. **Ordinance # 2024-17**, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF WALTERBORO, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO PROVIDE FOR CHANGES IN THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF ONE PARCEL OF LAND DESIGNATED AS TMS # 147-14-00-088 FROM HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (HCD) TO MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR) (Second and final reading).

Motion: Councilmember Bridge; Seconded by Councilmember Broderick

Discussion: None

Carried: All ayes

New Business:

1. **Ordinance # 2025-01**, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AN APPLICATION FOR PRELIMINARY CERTIFICATION FOR HISTORIC REHABILITATION; AND TO OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (Introduction and First Reading).

Motion: Councilmember Broderick; Seconded by Councilmember Pryor

Discussion: None

Carried: All ayes

2. Consideration of a request from Clarence Wiggins to close North Walter Street from East Washington Street to Hampton Street from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM on Saturday, January 18, 2025, for the Annual NAACP Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at the Colleton County Courthouse.

Motion: Councilmember Bridge; Seconded by Councilmember Fishburne

Discussion: None

Carried: All ayes

City Manager's Report:

1. Recognition of Walterboro Police Department and Walterboro Fire Department – Lance Corporal Robert Cook, Lance Corporal Jesse Moon, Lance Corporal Jamie Bloodworth, Patrolman William Stanley, Fire Captain Jeffrey Shuman and Driver/operator Gerald Fraser for the Ireland Creek Vehicle Submersion Rescue on December 16, 2024.

City Manager Jeff Molinari stated Mr. Mayor and members of City Council we would like to recognize Lance Corporal Robert Cook, Lance Corporal Jesse Moon, Lance Corporal Jamie Bloodworth, Patrolman Stanley Williams, Fire Captain Jeffrey Shuman and Driver/Operator Gerald Fraser for the Ireland Creek vehicle Submersion Rescue. As City Council is aware on December 16, 2024, we had a vehicle that was submerged in Ireland Creek. Both departments acted courageously to rescue the gentleman in the vehicle. We would like to recognize them for their efforts.

Chief Wade Marvin stated that it is hard to express how much the Police and Fire Department do for us day to day, and this is a chance to thank them. Their day-to-day heroism is not thanked enough. Thank you all for what you all did that day.

A motion was made to go into Executive Session by Councilmember Pryor, seconded by Councilmember Broderick. Mayor Young explained that City Council would be going into Executive Session to discuss Contractual Matters: City Vehicles, Walterboro Wildlife Center, and Walterboro Welcome Center. As well as Personnel Matter: Appointment to Keep Walterboro Beautiful Board and Building Board.

Executive Session:

1. Contractual Matters:
 - a. City Vehicles
 - b. Walterboro Wildlife Center
 - c. Walterboro Welcome Center

2. Personnel Matter – Appointment to Keep Walterboro Beautiful Board and Building Board.

A motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Councilmember Broderick, seconded by Councilmember Bridge, all in favor, motion carries.

Open Session:

A motion to appoint Michelle Strader to the Keep Walterboro Beautiful Board to fill an unexpired 4-year term end January 1, 2027 and to appoint Daniel Rubenstein to the Building Board for a 4-year term ending

January 1, 2029, was made by Councilmember Broderick, seconded by Councilmember Pryor, all in favor motion carries.

There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Bridge, seconded by Councilmember Broderick, and passed unanimously. Mayor Young adjourned the meeting at 8:04 P.M. Notice of the meeting was distributed with the agenda packets, to all local media, posted on City Hall bulletin board, and posted on the City's website at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

Respectfully,

Adrienne Nettles
City Clerk