

MINUTES

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 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 19 persons present in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

SWEARING-IN OF NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Next, Council Member Re-Elect Bobby Bonds was officially sworn into office by the City Attorney George Cone. Council Member Bonds was then seated on Council.

Next, Council Member Re-Elect Judy Bridge was officially sworn into office by the City Attorney George Cone. Her husband, Jack Bridge, stood by holding the Bible during the swearing in. Council Member Bridge was then seated on Council.

Next, Council Member Re-Elect Paul Siegel was officially sworn into office by the City Attorney George Cone. Council Member Siegel was then seated on Council.

Mayor Young congratulated all Council Members on their swearing in for another four years. He said, we look forward to working with you again.

The Mayor announced that he had some surgery the day before the last meeting, was recovering and unable to be here. He thanked Mayor Pro-Tem Lohr for chairing the meeting in his absence.

Comments by the Mayor

At this point, the Mayor made a few comments on the progress being made by the City. He stated that the City of Walterboro is in excellent shape moving forward. City Council is working well together, and with our Manager and our City Staff, we make a good team. He then gave the following remarks:

1. The City is in sound financial shape. We received an "unqualified opinion" from Baird and Company at our last meeting and it is worth noting that we do a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), and we received a Certificate in Excellence in Financial Reporting for the last three years.
2. Over the last several years, you have seen projects that have changed the appearance of our City. The renovation of our parks, the downtown arborscape and the landscaping of the interstate interchanges have been significant improvements.
3. One travel writer called our interstate interchanges, the "one bright spot on I-95 in South Carolina." We are continuing this work with the I-95 Business Loop Project. Work has begun on South Jefferies Boulevard and then will move toward Washington and Benson Streets. Construction plans are being drawn for the rest of the project approved in the Capital

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Projects Sales Tax Referendum. This project will extend from Bells Highway, through town on South Jefferies to Exit 53.

4. We need the cooperation of citizens and businesses as we improve and beautify the roadways near their properties and transform the appearance of our City. Future plans will extend the loop from Jefferies Boulevard down Bells Highway to Exit 57.
5. In February, DOT will finally begin work on the Mt. Carmel/Bells Highway Intersection. Improvements being made here will incorporate some aspects of the Loop Project.
6. We are continuing our work in the North Lemacks Street area. A walking trail will be installed around the Gruber Street Park, decorative lighting and security cameras will be installed and overgrown brush will be removed.
7. We are in the planning stages for the Walterboro Wildlife Sanctuary Discovery Center, which will be located in the Old Glover Motors Building. We are also looking at the possibility of constructing an amphitheater on the property, which could be used for public performances, movies under the moonlight in the summer, Rice Festival performances, Discovery Center demonstrations, and a variety of other things.
8. The Sanctuary Committee, or the FROGS Committee as they are called, is working hard with City Council to make the Discovery Center and the Amphitheater a reality.
9. The City has purchased the First Federal Bank Building, enlarging our campus, giving us much needed additional space and utilizing what might otherwise have been an unoccupied property. City Finance, Court Administration, permitting and business licensing will be housed there. Citizens will also have the ability to make drive-thru payments to the Water Department at this location. Plans for the renovations are being designed.
10. The City has recently received a \$500,000 Rural Infrastructure Grant and a \$2,040,000 EDA Grant for improvements to our Wastewater Treatment Plant. The upgrading of the plant is vital to economic development and will move forward.
11. The single stream recycling program is important. We will continue to look for a contractor to receive our recyclables so that we can get that program up and running again.
12. Our crime statistics for 2015 show that we are making a headway. Violent crimes were less than half what they were in 2010 and property crimes were down substantially. When compared to last year, we had an 8% reduction in violent crime and a 30% reduction in property crime. Even though we are making progress in this area, we know that keeping our citizens safe is a responsibility we must meet every day.
13. The City is cooperating with the County to provide soil ready sites for prospective industries. County Council, the County Administrator and Heyward Horton are all working hard and are having continued success in recruiting businesses and industries. The City provides infrastructure in the form of water, sewer and wastewater treatment.

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Industries are coming to Walterboro and Colleton County from all over the world, with Sarlaflex from India, Buscot from Italy, Crescent Dairy from the Dominican Republic and Meter Bearing from Italy. Other enterprises, including Palmetto Aero, are locating at our airport.

14. The City and County jointly own the Lowcountry Regional Airport. The Airport terminal expansion design is underway, and when completed, we will have a unique and outstanding facility to go along with the largest general aviation airport in South Carolina.

Concluding, the Mayor said that most of the things I have said tonight have been widely publicized, but I wanted to recap some of our progress as we begin a new year. City Council will establish new goals and set priorities for this year at our annual retreat. He then thanked our City Council Members, our City Manager, Department Heads and all our City employees who do such an outstanding job serving the citizens of Walterboro. The Mayor also thanked all those who volunteer in so many ways to make Walterboro a better place - from those who serve on Boards and Commissions to those who volunteer at our many special events. You have our sincere thanks and are greatly appreciated.

PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Former Mayor Charlie Sweat stated that under the City Retreat, he noticed that the City is moving its retreat out of the City of Walterboro for the first time in many years. He said, may I ask why?

Mayor Young responded that at the recommendation of our City Manager, we are going to the Wampee Conference Center. Mr. Molinari added that this is a Santee Cooper facility at Lake Moultrie. It is a wonderful facility and it is very reasonable to stay there and use their meeting facilities. At my previous job, we had many retreats there, and I found it very beneficial to have City Council get out of their environment for a couple of days and be in a comfortable setting where they can have good discussion, as we set out goals for the next year.

Former Mayor Sweat said he had no problem with this and that he had fought this from the general public for several years before it was concluded to have the retreat here in Walterboro.

Mayor Young said, it does not mean that we will do it this way, but this is the way we are going to do it this year.

Next, Dr. Gail Rearden, a city resident, then stated that she has some questions regarding the I-95 Business Loop. She said, I came before the board less than a year ago and asked about how these changes would affect my business. It has come to my attention that some of the modifications that are being proposed seem to be pretty significant. I had difficulty getting in contact with the landscape architecture firm that has been chosen for this project. I did receive an e-mail to contact the City Manager about this yesterday, and I got an e-mail today.

Dr. Rearden then asked if there would be another public hearing regarding the changes that are proposed for the next phase of this project? Responding, Mayor Young stated that the design for the things under construction now, those construction documents are done. For the most part, everything falls within the right-of-ways and where things do not fall within the right-of-way, then we would be talking to individual property owners about those instances.

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Dr. Rearden said, well I am one of those people, and I have not been contacted. Mayor Young then said, we probably just haven't gotten that far, but I know that the City Manager will help you with it. Is your property the part that is under construction now? Dr. Rearden responded, it's not. The Mayor then said, this really is not on the agenda, but since I brought it up in my talk, I'll go ahead and do this.

Dr. Rearden then said, I was just coming to City Council because I am under the assumption that this is the ultimate body that would okay these decisions or entertain any concerns, and I have a significant concern, because the modifications that are being proposed to my property are not minor.

Mayor Young then asked, where is your property? Dr. Rearden said, it is right across from the courthouse, my mother's old florist store. So, when I got the e-mail, the sketch looked really elementary and I tried to contact the architect who did not respond and I contacted the senior partner, Mr. Baker. I am just bringing this to the board, because I don't want this to become more than it needs to be. I don't have any plans to be adversarial, but I also have an obligation to my family who owns the property to make certain to look into this issue, because what was sent to me was a significant change, and it is really one that would be considered adverse to the welfare of my business. So, that's why I wanted to come to the City Council.

Mayor Young then said, I think that the best thing to do is to continue to work with the City Manager and look at the designs. I don't know all the details of it, and I don't think anybody else does. City Manager Molinari, then explained. He said, this is part of Phase 1B, and what Wood + Partners is proposing is to plant a tree in front of that property. There is a limited amount of right-of-way there and they were exploring the possibility of securing an easement from the property owner to accommodate the tree. As I have indicated to Dr. Rearden, Charlie Johnson with Wood + Partners is out of the office this week. He will be coming back on Thursday, and we will talk about it in a little more detail. The sketch that Charlie had provided me was fairly basic, because he was really just fleshing out the idea. But I will work with Dr. Rearden. Dr. Rearden then emphasized that her main concern was that the sketch lack any dimensions. So, it's hard for me to understand what exactly was decided.

Mayor Young then said, we will get you some information. That would be one of those cases where we would be talking with the property owner.

No further questions were raised.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Young then opened a public hearing, duly advertised, to receive public comments or questions on the City's CDBG Needs Assessment. He then introduced Ms. Kimberly Mullinax of Lowcountry Council of Governments, who was present to conduct the hearing.

Ms. Mullinax stated that she is here tonight on behalf of Lowcountry Council of Governments. LCOG helps the City with grant funding for some of its projects. She then asked everyone to sign the sign-in sheet that she has passed around.

Ms. Mullinax stated that the 2016 Block Grant Program is designed to provide assistance to local governments for improving the economic opportunities of meeting the community's revitalization needs, especially for persons of low-to-moderate income. It's funded through the State of South Carolina and through HUD, under Title 1 of the Housing Community Development Act of 1974 as amended. It is administered by the SC Department of Commerce, Division of Grants Administration.

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Ms. Mullinax gave the following highlights of the CDBG Program for 2016:

A. This year, South Carolina has been given approximately \$18.5 million in grant funds that have been divided among the programs as follows:

1. **Community Development Programs:** Total **\$15,386,624**
 - a. Community Infrastructure (water, sewer & drainage) \$10.2 million
 - b. Community Enrichment (include streetscapes) \$ 3 million
 - c. Neighborhood Revitalization (go in neighborhoods and add the sidewalks & lighting, security cameras) \$ 1.2 million
 - d. Special Projects \$300,000
 - e. "Ready to Go" Public Facilities \$600,000
2. **Business Development Program:** Total **\$2,000,000**
 - Regional Planning Program \$ 500,000
 - State Technical Assistance (1%) \$ 185,429
 - State Administration (2% of allocation + \$100,000) \$ 470,858

B. Ms. Mullinax explained all projects must meet a national objective, meaning:

- a) Benefit low-to-moderate income (LMI) people.
- b) Aid in the prevention of elimination of slums or blight.
- c) Meet other urgent community needs posing a serious threat to the health or welfare of the community, where other financial resources are not available to meet such need.

Ms. Mullinax explained that low-to-moderate income in Colleton County would be a family of 4, making less than \$37,750 income. That is generally with two people working and 2 children. That number goes up or down based on the number of people in your household.

C. Ms. Mullinax pointed out that under the Fair Housing Law, the localities are expected to undertake the activities to promote fair housing with the aid of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which stipulates we have the right to be treated fairly regardless of race, color, religion, sex, family status or national origin when buying or selling a house, renting a house, or any real estate transactions or provision of brokerage services. If anyone has questions or would like to file a complaint, they can call Lowcountry Council of Governments.

D. Application Request Deadlines:

For Community Infrastructure, the application request deadline is March 14, 2016. The application itself is due on April 15.

For everything else: the Community Enrichment, Neighborhood Revitalization and Special Projects, the application request is due on August 15. The application is due on September 16.

The Ready-to-Go is a program that can be funded any time. Once you put in a request, you have 30 days to get the grant written and put in the application.

E. Funding amounts that can be applied for:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Community Infrastructure	\$50,000	\$750,000
Community Enrichment	\$50,000	\$500,000

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Special Projects	\$50,000	\$150,000
Neighborhood Revitalization	\$50,000	\$500,000
"Ready to Go"	\$50,000	\$500,000
Business Development	\$50,000	\$500,000
Job Creation/Retention	\$50,000	\$10,000 per job

F. Match Requirements:

The matching fund requirement for all projects is 10%. Any additional leveraging that you can put in would make your project more competitive.

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Mullinax told Council that last year the City ranked its priorities as follows: Also, this year what we need to do is to take off or add to or change this list. I believe Council has decided to listen to information tonight and come back next month and rank your priorities for the coming year.

Last year, the City's priorities were ranked as follows:

1. Public infrastructure and facilities, which would improve the Waste Water Treatment Plant, upgrade the water and sewer lines and other projects as needed.
2. Community Enrichment Projects for I-95 Business Loop, and the adaptive reuse of existing structures and demolition of properties that are attracting nuisances, and others as identified.
3. Multiple activity neighborhood improvement projects, such as North Lemacks Street and others as identified.
4. Special Projects as identified.
5. Economic Development as identified.

Mayor Young then opened the floor to receive public input on the CDBG needs assessment.

City Attorney George Cone asked where would any member of the public find a list of the priorities that she has set out tonight? Mayor Young replied, that was last year's list. That was the 2015 list that she just read. He then asked Ms. Mullinax if LCOG has a website with the list of priorities identified. Ms. Mullinax responded, they can notify me. She added that the public hearing was advertised for the meeting tonight. Anyone can send any comments to me, or either through the mail or call me or contact the City Manager. Mayor Young added that a person can also contact any City Council Member if you have something they feel should be considered for our needs assessment. The public can contact the City Manager, Council Members or Ms. Mullinax.

Dr. Gail Rearden then asked if the funds were renewed annually? Ms. Mullinax responded that these funds are given to a project that's been on line for two years. At the end of that two years, that project should be done. Some of them are done in phases, such as the I-95 Business Loop. It can't all be done at one time. This is usually when the money is given to you, it's spent, it's gone. That project is complete.

Ms. Hattie Bush, a citizen and member of the North Lemacks St. Revitalization Committee, suggested that when running the advertisement for the public hearing in the local paper that the contact information be bolder for easier reading by the public.

Dr. Gail Reader then asked, you mentioned that stronger consideration may be given to a city that is willing to match more funds. Do the funds have to come just from the City or can they come from the City as well as interested individuals who want to contribute? Mayor Young then said, I don't think we have ever had that question, but I believe if anybody wants to give us money to help that will be appreciated. Ms.

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Mullinax explained that most of the time the way it is designed is to help the unit of local government, which is the city or the county, and in some cases they do projects together. Dr. Rearden further explained, if a neighborhood is willing to say, we want to offer what the City is offering, can they do it in that manner, so that City's contribution would essentially be doubled? Mayor Young said, I think it would have to come through the City, but it could probably be done. Ms. Mullinax said, the more you put into the project, the more you are committing yourself, the better it's going to rank.

No further comments or questions were raised. The Mayor thanked everyone and stated that Council will address this matter at the Retreat and will bring back a list for consideration. The public hearing was then closed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Upon motion of Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Syfrett, the following minutes were unanimously approved:

1. Minutes of the November 10, 2015 Regular Meeting
2. Minutes of the November 24, 2015 Regular Meeting
3. Minutes of the December 8, 2015 Regular Meeting

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no Old Business before Council.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Nomination of Mayor Pro-Tem

The Mayor opened the floor to receive nominations for Mayor Pro-Tem.

Council Member Syfrett nominated Council Member Tom Lohr as Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Bonds seconded the motion. Council Member Bridge then moved to close the nominations and to elect Council Member Tom Lohr as Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed with a vote of 6/0, with Council Member Lohr abstaining. The Mayor then congratulated Mayor Pro-Tem Tom Lohr.

2. Council Internal/External Committee Appointment

Mayor Young then made the following Council Internal/External Committee appointment:

Council Member Jimmy Syfrett was appointed to the Airport & Finance Committee for a 2-year term.

3. Notice of 2016 City Council Retreat, Location and Time

Next, City Manager Jeff Molinari made the following announcement regarding Council's Annual Retreat:

"Walterboro City Council will conduct its 2016 City Council Planning Retreat beginning Friday, January 29, 2016 and running through Saturday, January 30, 2016 to be held at: Wampee Conference Center, 1190 Chicora Drive, Pinopolis, SC 29469. No formal action will be taken on any item at this retreat. Any action items will be brought back to a regular Council meeting for Council's consideration."

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COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no Committee Reports given.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session.

Council Member Siegel then made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

The Mayor announced that the meeting will convene into an Executive Session for receipt of legal advice - The Provision of Services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body and for a personnel matter - consideration of appointment to the Tree Protection Committee and resignation for the Economic Development Commission.

The meeting then convened into an Executive Session.

At approximately 7:41 P.M., a motion was made by Council Member Bridge to exit Executive Session and return to Open Session. Council Member Siegel seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting returned to Open Session and a motion was made by Council Member Siegel to appoint Sue Tilden to the Tree Protection Committee. Council Member Bonds seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried.

A second motion was made by Council Member Tom Lohr to accept Tony Hamilton's resignation from the Economic Development Commission with regret and to thank him for his service. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion. 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 7:46 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: February 9, 2016