

## **MINUTES**

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, 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. Twenty-three (23) persons were present in the audience.

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 Bonds led the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

### **PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

Ms. Marsha Johnson, a city resident, raised concerned on the Tree Protection Committee Ruling related to the IGA Store on Wichman Street. This agenda item was listed under the Executive Session, Item No. 2 (a) Appeal of Tree Protection Committee Ruling. She asked when this item would appear on the agenda for the open meeting. Mayor responded that he did not know. Ms. Johnson stated that she hoped that Council would not think of devaluing the trees in that area. That area has been a renaissance and I hope we can create something that will be permanent, she said.

### **PUBLIC HEARING:**

The Mayor then opened a public hearing, duly advertised to receive public comments on a CDBG Grant Application for North Lemacks Street Village Renaissance Project, Phase III, for approximately \$500,000. A copy of the sign-in sheet is attached as part of these minutes.

The Mayor then recognized Ms. Michelle Knight of Lowcountry Council of Governments to conduct the hearing. The Mayor stated that Ms. Knight has done an outstanding job in the grant process, and we appreciate all her hard work.

Ms. Knight then gave the following highlights of the CDBG Grant Application:

- 1) We are here tonight basically to get comments pro or con on an application that will be turned in this Friday to the South Carolina Department of Commerce. It is for our third and final phase of the North Lemacks Village Renaissance Project.
- 2) We are applying for \$500,000, but the total project is \$598,089 and the City will be asked to pass a resolution to give more money for that project.
- 3) Ms. Knight pointed out that the activities that are going to be completed for North Lemacks Street includes: demolition of 31 structures in the North Lemacks Street neighborhood, clearing and grubbing of some vacant lots, exterior housing rehab on approximately 8 to 10 housing structures that are owner-occupied within the neighborhood, finishing some phase II activities and the construction of a trail that feeds to the park in the neighborhood, as well as lighting and security cameras for that trail. Also, we are looking at providing gateway signs at the beginning and end of North Lemacks Street for the neighborhood and doing a small community orchard.
- 4) The neighborhood is over 51% low-to-moderate income, and this will benefit approximately 1,100 residents in that neighborhood.

Ms Knight then opened up the floor to receive any questions or comments.

**MINUTES/Page II**

**Ms. Marsha Johnson**, a citizen, asked if the structures that are being demolished, are they all vacant? Ms. Knight answered that they are all vacant and all are identified as condemnable structures or structures that if property owners don't do something with them, they will need to be taken down.

**Clarence Albright**, a resident of Colleton County, informed Ms. Knight that there are a lot of vacant lots on that street. He asked if all of the debris on those lots would be cleared? Ms. Knight responded that this is part of the clearing that is going to take place - to clear some of those lots. Overgrowth would be removed from those lots so that they will look a little better. Mr. Albright then asked if any of those lots would be for sale in the future if the people don't maintain them? Mayor Young responded, I don't think we would know the answer to that at this time.

**Ms. Paula Todd**, a citizen of Walterboro, told Council that she was concerned about the structures that have people living in them, but were not maintained well. There are some people living in homes and they are trying to maintain them and bring back? Ms. Knight stated, the activities as far as the grant application are to demolish the vacant structures. So, the structures that we will tear down have to be structures that no one is living in. As far as structures that are being lived in, I don't know if they are rental - obviously the ones we are looking at are owner-occupied. There is a reason for this, basically because as part of the grant, the owner has to put up some of that money, too. Hopefully, this will encourage people to do some other things too, and maybe the City can continue forward with monies they already have in place. There are other resources such as the Home Consortium Program.

**Mr. Charlie Sweat**, former Mayor and citizen, then said, I would like to speak to the fact, having been on Council for many years, and gone through that with the North Lemacks Street area. I think that is a well-defined area that has been a blight to this community. However, it is coming out of that blight now, and coming into a much better situation community wide. It's better now so that people can start being proud of being from there, because at one time, I can't tell you some of the things we faced with the liquor stores and the pool joints from that particular area. It's really coming around, and I would like to commend Michelle and the City on the job they have done. I think Phase III will be the next continuous step in trying to get that whole area revitalized.

**Mr. Clarence Albright** then asked, what type of activities will you have for the children in that area when the project is completed?

Ms. Knight responded, I can't speak for what activities will be planned for the children in that area, what I can speak to is one of the things that we have to do when we are writing a grant application is to discuss the Public Safety component, telling what the Public Safety Department is going to do in getting ready for programs in that area, which I think you already have, like the neighborhood watch, other things, and whether there is concern to help with crime prevention. As far as what kind of after-school or recreational programs would be held, I think that is something you'd have to discuss with the City and the County under the recreation program.

Mayor Young noted that the City recently renovated a park near that neighborhood on Gruber Street, which is pretty close to all areas of North Lemacks Street. It's a pretty nice park.

Mr. Clarence Albright emphasized that the children need something in the neighborhood for them to do.

**MINUTES/Page III**

**Mr. Horace Simmons**, a citizen and founder of Community Action Line Against Violence, told Council that the area where he lives does not have a park. There never was one. He stated that there were many children who live in his neighborhood and that he looks after them, trying to keep them out the roads. He also tries to make sure that people don't drive through his neighborhood so fast because of the children. We really need something over there for them to do, he said.

Mayor Young responded, but that is something we can look at in the future, and we have just spent a million dollars in your neighborhood, Mr. Simmons. So, we are trying to take care of things as we can get to it, and that will be something for us to look at in the future. We probably spent more over there in the last 3 or 4 years than we have spent anywhere else. But we will keep working on it.

Mr. Simmons, said yes, well, I live over there and I see things you know. To me, I don't see where a million dollars went over there. I know what I am talking about because I see things. I think I spoke to Ms. Knight about that sidewalk matter. I know my sidewalk work. That sidewalk is not really finished yet, not like it should be done, and I will challenge anybody in here on that.

Ms. Knight responded, the only thing I would say on this is that we've got to finish this phase of the project. The City can only apply for so many grants at a time. This type of project which you are talking about in that neighborhood, and that neighborhood had a similar type project, we could only focus on one neighborhood at a time. So, we've got to finish the last phase of this neighborhood, and if the City wants to go back and look at other neighborhoods and do a plan, they could certainly do that or if they feel like there's more that needs to be done, they could go back and look at your neighborhood again. But, we can only do grant projects for one particular neighborhood at a time. We can't have more than one neighborhood project at a time.

Mr. Simmons then stated, everybody knows that I look out for children and senior citizens, and you know why, because I am a senior citizen myself. I look out for the kids and that's why I am concerned about this. I am not here to rough anybody up, but the truth must be told.

No further comments or questions were raised and the public hearing was closed.

**PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS:**

1. Proclamation No. 2014-07, to recognize the Colleton Preparatory Academy 2014 SCISA State Championship Girls Basketball Team, was approved on the motion of Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Broderick and passed unanimously. A copy of said proclamation is attached as part of these minutes.

Mayor Young recognized that the Colleton Prep Girls Basketball Team was present in the audience. He then asked them to come to the podium, and the Mayor read the proclamation in its entirety into the record. Present on behalf of the basketball team were: Madeline Hill, Laura Reynolds, Kennedy Crosby, Shelley McDonald, Ashlyn Polk, Jaime McLane, Haley Pye, Lauren Smyly, Brianna Tyler, Molly Warren, Lexie Murray, Taylor Marsh, and Madelyne Warren.

2. Recognition of Certificate of Awards

Mayor Young then recognized the City of Walterboro Finance Department and the Director of the Finance Department, Mr. Bill Floyd. He announced that the City of Walterboro received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada, for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). He informed everyone that the certificate of achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of

**MINUTES/Page IV**

governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Mayor Young also announced that an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement has been awarded to Bill Floyd, Director of Finance and Administration. Mr. Floyd is primarily responsible for preparing the award winning CAFR. The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive spirit of disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR. The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals, with offices in Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Finance Director Bill Floyd was then recognized by the Mayor. Mr. Floyd also recognized his co-worker, Finance Office Manager Amy Risher, who was also present in the audience. He stated that Ms. Risher is the primary person for that department. She is really responsible for this and I want to see her get full credit for it.

**PRESENTATION:**

Mr. Jerry Fowler, of Fowler Land Surveying, was present. He briefly addressed Council by making the following remarks:

- 1) First, I am very thankful for all the work that I have gotten from the City of Walterboro, however, the amount of work I have done for the City is minuscule in comparison to the contract they let out for the survey work for the Interstate 95 Project through downtown and back to the interstate.
- 2) Davis and Floyd is a large engineering firm with offices in Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenwood, Greenville and in North Carolina. They intercepted the contract with Wood and Partners in the amount of \$141,203.87 to perform the location surveys for 7 miles of roadway in 11 intersections from downtown Walterboro to I-95.
- 3) MA Engineering Consultants, Inc. has a subcontract in the amount of \$7,085.
- 4) He stated that his local land surveying firm has gross income from the last 3 years average of \$150,000.

Mr. Fowler told Council, I am here to express my disappointment in our City's leaders for not better informing local engineers, architects and surveyors about projected work. At no time in 2012, did a single representative, Council Member or employee of the City of Walterboro inform me or any other local surveyor that the project was about to bid. There was no local advertising on the project. The only advertisement was in the publication, the South Carolina Business Opportunities. Mr. Fowler also pointed out that the Mayor has consistently through various media outlets, asked local businesses to "keep your bucks in the boro." In my conversations with other local businesses, it seems that the City wants us to spend our money here, but the City has promised to spend our tax monies and grant monies elsewhere.

Mr. Fowler pointed out that the aforementioned \$148,000 using a spending multiplier of 5.2, would have created an income of \$781,000 in Colleton County. The \$781,000 compared to the 660,000 people in the Greater Charleston area is not as significant to the 40,000 people here in Colleton County and the City of Walterboro. The local 1% sales tax alone on the \$781,000, would bring in \$7,800 for the City and the County. With the money going outside the local area, we may have sold a few hot dogs to the survey crew, and a tank of gas every now and then. These figures do not reflect additional work in the contact to locate facilities at intersections.

Mr. Fowler stated that senators and representatives look after our national interests, state senators and representatives look after our state affairs. Our local

**MINUTES/Page V**

Council is encumbered to keep the best interest of its citizens to the forefront. Anything less is inadequate. When local government agencies spend our taxes elsewhere, it takes away income from all.

Mr. Fowler told Council that he called the Mayor shortly after Davis and Floyd started work. No one from the City has talked to me about a solution, and that was back in December. The contract amount would have created employment for 4 more people in Colleton County for a year with my firm. The Davis and Floyd firm has high overhead, whereas the local firm has small office space and overhead. He also stated that the hourly rate by the survey crew was \$145.00. For a large project like this, our fee would have been \$115.00 per hour, which is 21% less. A local crew would give the client an additional 2 hours a day work, because outside consultants would have to travel to and from Charleston. That's another 25% saved.

In conclusion, Mr. Fowler said, as long as our government and their agencies spend our taxes and grant monies elsewhere, the county will not prosper. We don't ask for preferred treatment, just fairness. I hope that you can collectively sit down and find ways for our local small firms to prosper as the firms of other areas prosper with our taxes. Mr. Fowler then concluded his presentation and thanked Council for the opportunity.

No action was taken on this agenda item and was accepted by Council as Information.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the May 13, 2014 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved as submitted upon the motion of Council Member Bridge, seconded by Council Member Broderick, with all members voting in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no Old Business before Council.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Ordinance # 2014-03, An Ordinance Adopting the City Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and Matters Relating Thereto, First Reading.

The Mayor recognized Mayor Pro-Tem Tom Lohr, Chairman of the Budget Committee, to bring the budget summary information.

Council Member Lohr began by thanking everyone for their attendance at the Budget Committee Meetings. Council Members Jimmy Syfrett and Tom Broderick are also members of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Lohr gave the following highlights of the budget summary for fiscal year 2014-2015:

- 1) The total City budget for the coming year will be \$10,466,641. Out of that amount the General Fund Budget will be \$7,034,797.
- 2) There will be no ad valorem property tax increase.
- 3) There will be no water or sewer increase.
- 4) There will be no business license increase.
- 5) There will be a 2% cost of living adjustment for City employees.

Council Member Lohr said, we know that the insurance for employees has gone up. That's about all we could help them with last year. So, I

**MINUTES/Page VI**

think 2% is not enough, but you can't give what you don't have. Again, I am delighted that this group saw fit with the City Manager's help to give a 2% cost of living adjustment for our City employees.

- 6) We will be purchasing one new sanitation vehicle. Mr. Lohr commended the employees who pick up the garbage do a good job and they do it punctually.
- 7) We will also be purchasing 3 new patrol cars.

A motion was then made by Council Member Lohr giving First Reading approval to Ordinance # 2014-03; being: An Ordinance Adopting the City Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and Matters Relating Thereto. Council Member Siegel seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

2. Ordinance # 2014-04, An Ordinance Adopting the City Enterprise Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and Matters Relating Thereto, First Reading.

Mayor Young stated that the Enterprise Budget is the part of the City budget that makes money, like the water system and the sewer system.

On the request of Council Member Lohr, City Manager Molinari gave a brief explanation of the salary changes in this ordinance. Mr. Molinari announced that there was a handful of positions in the Public Works Department that was being paid for out of the General Fund. In this budget cycle, we took five total positions out of the General Fund and are now paying for them out of the Enterprise Fund. The reason why we are paying for them out of the Enterprise Fund would be because a significant amount of their duties are spent maintaining the City sewer system. We thought it would be more appropriate to compensate those individuals out of the Enterprise Fund than out of the General Fund. What that helps to do is, it relieves some pressure from the General Fund, but also we are accurately categorizing their work and having it paid for out of the Enterprise Fund.

As an added reference to clarify this action, Council Member Lohr noted that when he worked with the school district, the salaries of people working in the Special Services Department were not paid from the General Fund, but were paid from "Special Services Funds," as well as Title I teachers were paid from "Title I Funds."

A motion was made by Council Member Lohr giving First Reading Approval to Ordinance # 2014-04, being: An Ordinance Adopting the City Enterprise Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and Matters Relating Thereto. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Mayor Young thanked all Council Members, with special thanks to the committee members for their hard work on the budget.

3. Resolution # 2014-R-05, A Resolution Authorizing Submission of the CDBG Grant Application for the Lemacks Street Village Renaissance Project, Phase III, in the Amount of Approximately \$500,000 and Committing a 10% (approximately \$50,000) Match in Local Funds, and an Additional \$48,089 in Order to Meet the Costs as Outlined in the Cost Estimate dated May 23, 2014.

The Mayor announced that Council Member Siegel is the City's liaison member for the North Lemacks Street Revitalization Committee.

A motion was made by Council Member Siegel to approve Resolution # 2014-R-05 as submitted. Council Member Broderick seconded the motion that passed with all members voting in favor. A copy of this resolution is attached as part of these minutes.

**MINUTES/Page VII**

4. Consideration of a Request to Use Pinckney Park for Back Yard Bible Club Meet on July 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2014 by First Baptist Church and St. Peters A.M. E. Church

A motion to approve this request as submitted was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Broderick, and passed unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

No Committee reports were given.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

No report was presented.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter into an Executive Session. A motion to enter an Executive Session was made by Council Member Bonds, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously. The Mayor then announced that the meeting would enter into an Executive Session for personnel matters related to the Public Safety Department, Park Maintenance Director Search Update, a discussion of Boards and Commissions appointments and for receipt of legal advice related to the Appeal of the Tree Protection Committee Ruling - IGA Store, and School Board Reapportionment.

The meeting then entered into Executive Session.

The meeting returned to Open Session at 8:34 P.M. upon motion of Council Member Lohr, seconded by Council Member Broderick and passed with all members voting in favor.

A motion was then made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Syfrett, to bring a resolution before Council at the next meeting to begin transition from Public Safety to separate the fire and police departments. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Siegel and passed with all members voting in favor. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:36 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: June 24, 2014**