

Walterboro City Council
Rescheduled Regular Meeting
November 6, 2007

MINUTES

A Work Session and Rescheduled Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council were held at City Hall on Tuesday, November 6, 2007 with the Work Session beginning at 5:00 P.M., with Mayor Pro-Tem Bill Young presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Pro-Tem Bill Young, Council Members: Randy Peters, Charles Lucas, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls and Mary Anne Cannady. City Manager Tuck McConnell, Projects and Finance Director Jeff Lord, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present. Mayor Charlie Sweat was absent.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Pro-Tem Young opened the work session to hear a presentation from the Great Swamp Sanctuary Design Team on the proposed new Discovery Center. Projects Director Jeff Lord announced to Council that the presentation would be a culmination of about 2 years of work by the design team. He informed Council that the Great Swamp Sanctuary Commission has met several times and advised and participated in the design of the new Discovery Center building. He stated that what you will see is what is recommended by the Great Swamp Sanctuary Commission which met this afternoon and voted to recommend to Council for approval the proposal as presented here. He then introduced the design team: Mr. Howell Beach of Robert Marvin, Howell Beach & Associates, Mr. Scott Horner of BIOS Design, who handled the exhibits' design and Mr. David Novak of BRPH (formerly Wilson Associates), who is the architect for the project.

An open public forum was then held by the design team members giving specific details on the design of the Discovery Center building construction, the RV Park, building parking, exhibit displays, signage, etc. with questions and answers given during the presentation. City Manager McConnell noted that the RV Park is anticipated to have only self contained units, where people would stay 2 or 3 days. It is anticipated to net \$150,000-\$200,000 per year. When summarizing the exhibits design, Mr. Scott Horner indicated that the water exhibit design is unique and from his knowledge, there is not one of its type in the area or in the United States. Mr. Horner also explained the opaque screen display to be used to show the different level of donations to the Great Swamp Sanctuary. The idea for this display was made on the suggestion of the Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary committee.

Concluding the presentation, Mr. Horner told Council that this project is a gem in itself and is unique. It is very clean, and his staff put a lot of attention to detail in it. Comparing this project to others in the United States, there is nothing similar to it as far as the quality level we are taking it to.

Mayor Pro-Tem Young thanked the design team for the great job on the project, and stated a lot of hours had been spent by the design team on this project. On a question raised by Council Member Peters, City Manager McConnell pointed out that the cost estimates for this project would run approximately \$4.6 million.

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City Manager McConnell stated that the Great Swamp Project when completed would be a strong economic driver for this area. Jeff Lord briefly summarized some of the fund-raising suggestions made by the Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary. Council Member Lucas asked if any thought had been made for a place for people to eat. He suggested that maybe at phase 2 or 3 that consideration is given to adding a restaurant. Mayor Pro-Tem Young pointed out that the thought was that we did not want to compete with the retail shops in town.

Concluding the discussion, Mayor Pro-Tem Young stated that if we can make this happen, this would be something that this Council can look back on and say that we got this done and contributed this to our community and helped Walterboro in this way. One of the things we have talked about is that the swamp with its natural beauty is what we have to offer. We have more than that, but that's one of the things we have to offer.

The Work Session was concluded at approximately 6:00 P.M.

Following a brief discussion, Council agreed by consensus to call the rescheduled regular meeting to order.

The rescheduled regular meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 P.M., and a motion to enter an Executive Session to hear a legal matter was made by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously. The meeting then reconvened into Executive Session.

The meeting returned to Open Session at approximately 6:15 P.M.

Council Member Smalls then gave the invocation and Council Member Lucas led the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.

Mayor Pro-Tem Young then stated it was a pleasure to have the City Manager Tuck McConnell back with us at the city.

A motion was then made by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Parker, to approve the design plans as presented by the design team on the Great Swamp Sanctuary. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Sweat was absent and did not vote.

The Minutes of the October 23, 2007 Regular Meeting were approved as presented on the motion of Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Smalls, with all members voting in favor. Mayor Sweat was absent and did not vote.

There was no old Business before Council.

Under New Business, a motion was made by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Peters, giving First Reading Approval to Ordinance # 2007-13, being: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF WALTERBORO TO CONVEY TWO (2) TRACTS OR PARCELS OF LAND WITH A BUILDING THEREON LOCATED ON LEMACKS STREET IN THE CITY OF WALTERBORO TO COLLETON HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, INC. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Sweat was

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absent and did not vote. City Attorney Cone recommended that before second reading, that we talk with Habitat for Humanity to make sure they can comply with the time deadlines. In discussing the motion, Council Member Lucas then asked if Eric Campbell had received a refund of his money on the property. City Attorney Cone explained that an option was taken by them on this property. They forfeited it, and they did not exercise it. The money was sent to the city. It was noted that the amount was \$500.00. The motion then passed with all members voting in favor. Mayor Sweat was absent and did not vote.

Next, Council considered an appeal on a water bill from Mt. Sinai Temple. City Manager McConnell stated that there was a leak on their side of the meter. He said, my concern is that we are getting more and more of these requests before Council. There will continue to be more requests, and Council may need to decide what its policy will be or decide to hear every appeal on a case by case basis. It was noted that the problem was a running toilet that ran the bill up about \$150.00 and they have a perfect payment record.

A brief discussion on the policy for water bill appeals was held. Council Member Lucas suggested that Council should look at the person's ability to pay in certain situations. Maybe in this case, there is \$150.00 and they are able to pay. Attorney Cone pointed out that he recalled that because of bonded indebtedness, we did not forgive indebtedness for water consumed. We could forgive sewer charges if the water did not into the sewer line, and we could forgive penalties and interest. If they had water that did not go into the sewer system, we could cut that, or if they had penalties and interest. Further discussion was held, after which no action was taken by Council on this agenda item, however Council requested that staff contact Mt. Sinai Temple to explain that the City did not feel any consideration could be given at this time, based on the past methods we have operated under.

There were no concerns expressed by the public.

At this point, a motion was made by Council Member Cannady to return to an Executive Session for a legal matter. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

The meeting returned to Open Session, and there being no further business to consider a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Smalls and passed unanimously. The Mayor Pro-Tem adjourned the meeting at 8:43 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