

Walterboro City Council
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 28, 2006

MINUTES

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, February 28, 2006 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr. presiding.

PRESENT WERE: Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr., Council Members: Charles Lucas, Bill Young, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls, and Mary Anne Cannady. City Manager Tuck McConnell, City Clerk Betty Hudson and Attorney George Cone were also present. Council Member Johnnie Thompson was absent.

There being a quorum present, Mayor Sweat welcomed everyone to the meeting and called on Council Member Smalls for the invocation and Council Member Lucas to lead the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

The Minutes of the February 14, 2006 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting were approved as submitted on the **MOTION** of Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Young with all members voting in favor. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Next, Ms. Sherry Cawley, on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission, appeared before Council to present a brochure, which is to be utilized by the Commission, and to make a request on behalf of the Commission.

Ms. Cawley told Council that the Historic Preservation Commission had prepared a brochure to educate people in the city and in the historic district on what the Historic Preservation Commission is and what it does. The brochure was designed with a Q&A format. It will be available when a person applies for a building permit, given out to all the real estate agencies that deal with the historic area, Leadership Colleton and to the general public.

Council Member Cannady asked what the cost factor would be to send the brochure to every property owner in the historic district. She felt this was something that should be given to those property owners. Ms. Cawley responded that this was a good suggestion and would get back with Ms. Cannady on this cost.

Next, Ms. Cawley presented a copy to Council of the Preserve America Communities Program: 2006 Neighborhood Application. She briefly explained to Council the general scope of the "Preserve America" program.

She stated the program was created by an Executive Order signed by President Bush in March, 2003. This order declares that it provides leadership in preserving America's heritage by actively advancing protection enhancement and contemporary use of historic properties. It encourages agencies to seek partnerships with the state, tribal, local governments and private partnerships to make more efficient and informed use of their resources and economic development. It better combines preservation and nature tourism by directing the agencies to assist in the development of local and regional nature tourism programs using the historic resources that are a significant feature of many state and local economies.

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Ms. Cawley pointed out that there are 5 different areas of this program, which are:

- 1) It recognizes and designates communities that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. Some of the benefits of this designation are: 1) White House recognition, certificates of recognition, a Preserve America community road sign, 2) authorization to use the "Preserve America" logo and signs, banners and promotional banners, and makes you eligible to receive "Preserve America" grants.
- 2) It provides for 4 presidential awards given annually.
- 3) It preserves the America History Teacher of the Year Award.
- 4) It is related to matching grants program which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior Appropriations Bill. U.S. Congress approved up to \$5 million in "Preserve America" grants for the year 2006. These grants are designed to support a variety of activities related to heritage tourism and innovative approaches to the use of heritage properties as educational and economic assets.
- 5) It is an educational outreach program that has been developed with a history channel to save our heritage initiative. It provides teachers' manuals with lesson plans to involve students in preserving historic sites in the communities.

Ms. Cawley informed Council there are currently 346 communities throughout the U.S. that have been designated as "Preserve America" communities. Only 5 communities in South Carolina have this designation: Anderson, Charleston, Bluffton, Dillon and Chesterfield. She recommended that the City of Walterboro join this list.

Concluding, Ms. Cawley stated that the 'Commissioners of the Historic Preservation Commission requests that City Council grant its permission to organize and implement the application process for the City of Walterboro to become a part of the Preserve America Program.' Ms. Cawley pointed out that there are 4 deadline dates during the year to submit this application: March 1, June 1 and September 1.

Mayor Sweat brought attention to fact that Council had received a copy of the application for cities over 200,000. On his request, Ms. Cawley agreed to supply a copy of the correct application to Council for its review and consideration. No action was taken on this request.

Under Old Business, the following ordinances were adopted by Council:

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Ordinance # 2006-02, An Ordinance to Assign the Duties in Article II, Downtown Improvement District Review Board, to the Board of Zoning Appeals and to Eliminate the Downtown Improvement District Review Board - Adopted on Second and Final Reading on the motion of Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Cannady and passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Ordinance # 2006-03, An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 19, Weeds, Trees, Vegetation, Article I, Tree Protection, Section 19.901, Tree Committee, Paragraph (a) to Change the Membership of the Tree Committee - Adopted on the Second and Final Reading on the motion of Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Smalls and passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Under New Business, the following ordinances were before Council:

Ordinance # 2006-04, was given First Reading Approval on the motion of Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Lucas, and passed unanimously; being: An Ordinance to Establish a Tax Increment Finance District for the Purpose of Providing a Method of Financing Public Improvements in an Area to be Known as the Downtown Revitalization District. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Ordinance # 2006-05, was given First Reading Approval on the motion of Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Smalls and passed unanimously; being: An Ordinance to Establish a Tax Increment Finance District for the Purpose of Providing a Method of Financing Public Improvements in an Area to be Known as the 2006 Tourism Project District. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote. In discussing the motion, Council Member Parker asked what area this involved. Council Member Cannady asked if Council was approving \$3 million for both TIF's tonight. She asked how much money are we looking at? Mayor Sweat explained that this is included in the bond ordinance.

Ordinance # 2006-06, was given First Reading Approval on the motion of Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously; being: An Ordinance Providing for the Issuance and Sale of a Tax Increment Revenue Bond, Series 2006, of the City of Walterboro, South Carolina, and Other Matters Relating Thereto. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

In discussing the motion, Council Member Cannady asked if it would not be more than \$3 million for the bonds. She asked what is the total amount projected for both the TIF districts?

City Manager Tuck McConnell responded that there are actually no monies projected for the Downtown TIF. This is just a vehicle in case something comes up, but there are no monies associated for the downtown TIF. He stated that it is projected for up to \$3 million for the 2006 Tourism Project TIF. Mayor Sweat further clarified that \$2 million would be for the Discovery Center and the remaining money for the Loop Project, Ireland Creek and the two Interstate Interchanges.

Council Members Cannady and Parker agreed they would like to know what is planned to be spent on each item. Council Member Cannady explained that when we are spending \$3 million, I would like to know where the monies are being spent and the people need to know.

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City Manager McConnell stated that \$2 million would be for the Discovery Center, roughly \$225,000 on the planning process for the loop road, \$100,000 on the Ireland Creek and \$100,000 on the two interchanges. He explained that what makes it difficult to give an exact figure is that we have \$300,000 earmarked from the federal government through Congressman Clyburn's office. There may also be some grants involved. He said, what we did was to take the worst scenario and said not to exceed \$3 million. We anticipate that we'll have other funding sources that will be forth coming and that will reduce that amount considerably. He also stated that the total build-out on the loop road is probably \$1.5 million or so. Because the planning process will take a little while, we thought the \$225,000 would cover this, and then we thought we would see what sort of assistance we could negotiate with the Department of Transportation.

Council Member Parker asked if any of the monies from the City's other bond would be applied to this. Mr. McConnell explained that considerable time had been spent speaking with the City's bond attorneys today and they had some different suggestions. He stated, he could not answer this until they (the attorneys) complete their research and get back to us. Mr. McConnell further stated that the attorneys had some suggestions about paying off that bond and doing some restructuring. He stated that we certainly need to get first reading out the way to take care of any timing issues. If you have any questions, we will be glad to address them.

Next, **Ordinance # 2006-07** was given First Reading Approval by Title Only on the motion of Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously, being: An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Walterboro to Join with the Walterboro-Colleton County Airport Commission and the County in conveying Eight and Nine Tenths Acres, More or Less, of Land to _____. (Buyer name unknown). Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote on the motion for approval.

Next, a list of funding requests and recommendations for approval were submitted by the A-Tax Committee for review and consideration as follows:

Requestor	Amount Requested	Amount Approved	Note
City of Walterboro Welcome Center	\$20,000	\$20,000	Amt. not transferred until needed
Lowcountry Tourism	\$12,000	\$8,000	
Rice Festival	\$10,000	\$8,500	
Red Rocker Program	\$60,000	-0-	Request to be considered in next fiscal year
SC Artisans Center	\$25,000	-0-	Request to be considered in next fiscal year
Criterion	\$16,621	\$10,000	
Arts Council	\$15,000	-0-	More information requested
TOTAL	\$158,621	\$46,500	

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A motion was made by Council Member Cannady to approve the recommendations as submitted by the A-Tax Committee. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion that passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

In discussing the motion, Council Member Cannady asked to see a copy of the Accommodations Tax from 2004 to 2005. She explained that she would like to see the comparison of last year's taxes to 2006 taxes. She stated we should be able to get that information from the county to see what was spent. She said we would be interested in knowing what the county spent, and since we have taken it over, this is what we are going to spend. City Manager McConnell responded that he did not have that information. We requested it from the county, but have not received it.

Council Member Cannady then asked if the city would be changing its budgeted items in July to give more money to the Rice Festival. In other words, what are the total amounts we are giving those organizations listed here, because some of them already have a line item in the current budget. Mr. McConnell responded that would be a decision for Council to make at budget time. He stated that Lowcountry Tourism received from the Council's budget \$1,200. There are no monies in the budget for the Rice Festival, \$0 for the Artisan Center, \$0 for the Criterium and he was uncertain about the Arts Council. He further stated that he believed the Criterium and the Rice Festival were budgeted last year by the County. He responded that this is the first time that the city has participated in this and these are off budget items.

Council Member Cannady stated she was concerned that some of the organizations were already listed as a line item in the city's budget and now we are going to be giving them more monies.

A request to place a banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing the Annual Business Expo on March 9, 2006 was unanimously approved on a motion by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote. The banner would be displayed from March 6 through March 10.

As an add-on agenda item, a request to place a banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing the Relay for Life was unanimously approved on the motion of Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Parker and passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote. The banner would be placed the week of May 15, 2006 and removed on May 22.

As a second add-on agenda item, Council Member Young presented a letter of acknowledgment from the Colleton Center. Council Member Young stated that the steering committee for the Colleton Center is asking the City and the county to sign a letter of acknowledgment, which basically does not commit the city to anything, other than being aware there is a steering committee that is working to renovate Hampton Street School as a museum and arts center. A motion approving this request was made by Council Member Lucas, seconded by Council Member Parker and passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Next, Council Member Lucas suggested that since Council has approved the ordinance to increase the membership of the Tree Committee, that Council vote on the two persons who have applied

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for membership on this Committee. A motion was then made by Council Member Young to appointment the two persons who previously requested membership on the Tree Committee (Jimmy Powers and Dr. Martha McKevelin) for a two-year term. Council Member Cannady seconded the motion that passed unanimously. Council Member Thompson was absent and did not vote.

Next, the Mayor reported a reply had been received from the Department of Transportation regarding the request from the City to study the left turn arrows on Jefferies Boulevard. One turn was in the northbound lane on Jefferies onto West Washington Street and the other turn was in the southbound lane on Jefferies Boulevard onto Hampton Street. He reported that SCDOT was unable to approve the request at this time because the traffic count was not appropriate. It did not meet the 220 vehicles per hour for a six-hour period of study in order to be approved. The maximum number of vehicles found was 78 vehicles per hour on the southbound lane.

A motion was then made by Council Member Young, seconded by Council Member Cannady to enter an executive session to discuss a contractual matter on the Colleton County Intergovernmental Agreement and a property matter on the North Lemacks Street Property. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting returned to Open Session with no action being taken in executive session. There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Parker and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:50 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 April 4, 20006