

Walterboro City Council  
Regular Meeting  
July 13, 2010

### **MINUTES**

A Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, July 13, 2010 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Bill Young presiding.

**PRESENT WERE:** Mayor Bill Young, Council Members: Dwayne Buckner, Randy Peters, Charles Lucas, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls and Tom Lohr. City Manager Jeff Lord, City Clerk Betty Hudson, City Attorney George Cone and Attorney Ashley Amundson were also present. There were approximately 23 persons present in the audience.

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

With no objection, Mayor Young added the following item to the Executive Session: Item No. 2, A Personnel Matter.

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

The Mayor asked for public comments on agenda items.

**Mr. Horace Simmons**, leader of Community Action Line Against Violence Program, told Council its discussion of the agenda item on youth violence was coming after the fact. He told Council if everybody had joined with him ten years ago, a lot of the crime would have been cut out. He stated that I didn't have any help when I needed it. Now the door is open, crime has been committed and it's after the fact. Anyway, I don't like discussing things after the fact.

**Mr. Herman Bright** addressed Council regarding the playground closest to the Ray B. Johnson Building on Gruber and Ackerman Streets. He asked if Council planned to make any of the playgrounds better, I would certainly want you to consider doing a little to make the playground on Gruber Street useable. One item in particular is the basketball goal, and another item is the graffiti on the concrete. He stated, anything that the City could do to make that particular playground or any other playground that might need something to draw the people back to it, would certainly be good. Mr. Bright explained that he does not live in that area. His connection to this is that he is affiliated with the CTS/CTHS Alumni Association, Inc. housed in that building. He stated, this happens to be our meeting place.

At this point Mr. Herman Bright publicly thanked Mayor Bill Young for his attendance last weekend at the CTS/CHS Alumni Association Reunion Banquet and for bringing words of welcome from the City. This was a black tie event.

**Attorney Gerald Maree**, a local attorney and resident of Walterboro, then addressed Council regarding the Sankey Maree Park on Gruber Street which was named after his grandfather. He stated, some of the Councilman can remember why the park was dedicated to his grandfather's name. He was a long time resident of Gruber Street and lived directly across from the park. Before the City got ownership of the park, it had not been kept up, so he would go and rake and clean up that park himself, even into his 90's. So, there were a lot of reasons why that park was named after him. I went through there the other day and looked at the park. It is not being kept up. The basketball goals are dilapidated - they are torn down. The playground equipment for the children was closed down with ropes around them with caution signs telling people not to get on them. There were benches torn down. A lot of the kids in that neighborhood do not have transportation to get out to the Recreation Center in the Industrial area. They do rely on the basketball goals, and the baseball field. So, I do know as a community, that is needed in that area. If we could get the basketball

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goals workable and eventually get the baseball field in a decent condition so the kids can have something to do in that area.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the June 22, 2010 Regular Meeting were approved on the **MOTION** of Council Member Peters, seconded by Council Member Buckner, and passed unanimously.

**PRESENTATION:**

**1. Discussion of Youth Crime - Council Member Dwayne Buckner**

Council Member Buckner stated he requested this item to be placed on the agenda because of his concerns with the recent crime involving youth violence that occurred in the City. Whenever I read these reports, it hurts my heart to read about these situations. I know City Council created the Youth Advisory Commission to address this, which was done in November. So, I asked that this item be placed on the agenda to get a status on the commission and where we are. He then asked Councilman Lohr, who is Council's Liaison to the Youth Advisory Commission, if he had any new information.

Councilman Lohr announced that an initial meeting of the Youth Advisory Commission has been set for July 20 at City Hall. On the agenda tonight, you'll see that we are trying to finalize the members of this commission. We have one more member to go and I should have that name prior to the meeting - that is a representative from Colleton Prep. Mr. Lohr then read out the names of the members on this board. He stated, as far as what we liked to do is do something to help the youth. One of the things that came up and I think we will have to provide some structure. First of all, I don't know how you're going to define "youth." Are we talking about five, six, seven and eight-year-old children? Most research indicates that you'd better get them about that age because their values are pretty well formulated after that and they tend to give in to a lot of peer pressure. However, if you look at statistical data concerning discipline, most people would assume that discipline problems are in the middle school level. If you get to them then, perhaps you'll help with dropouts.

Mr. Lohr further stated, it is easy to talk about youth crimes and youth problems, but I think the first thing we are going to do is to narrow things down some, because I don't think we can be everything to everybody, and that's only my opinion. There are five or six other people who can certainly override that opinion. He told Council to contact any of the members of the commission or himself and we will be glad to put most anything on our agenda. It is really unstructured right now. I think the first thing we are going to try to do is define where we want to attack this problem. I think for particular children who have transportation problems, there are activities here, but there may be a problem in that they do not know about the activities or they can't get to the activities. Because if you think that broad statement, "there is nothing for the youth to do," I invite you to go to the Recreation Commission any day during the week, and look in the newspapers to find church activities. The Arts Commission and many other places within the city offer lots of activities. My concern is they may be cost prohibitive for some of the children that we are trying to get to. If that's the case, I'm not going to promise you that we are going to dump a pot of money at it, but there are such things as trying to make an appeal to people to donate, or have scholarships. I look forward to being on this committee. Generally speaking, my plans would be to organize and report back to this body what we have discussed with some structure to it, perhaps to prioritize what we would like to do first or recommend.

Before offering a motion Council Member Buckner asked Mr. Lohr if the Youth Advisory Commission could bring a report to Council within 60 days outlining activities

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or recommendations for activities for the youth and a balanced report outlining consequences for derelict youth activities, because I think we need to balance it not with just activities but also consequences for that type of behavior that's going on.

Mr. Lohr answered, speaking only for me, I would be glad to put that on the agenda. Being the first meeting, I will do my best to see that you get a report in less time than 60 days. Whatever motion you make and whatever is approved, I will certainly try to follow it up.

Council Member Buckner then **MOVED** that the Youth Advisory Commission report to City Council in 60 days with recommendations for opportunities for the youth, but also consequences for derelict behavior. On a question raised by Council Member Lohr, Council Member Buckner explained that some current youth activity is hurting the city. He said, I think we need to look at not only providing activities and opportunities, but also have the Commission to look at our codes to see whether or not there are other things we can do which says we are not going to tolerate that kind of derelict activity and behavior within the city. I am not sure whether or not this Commission can be charged with this task, but I think it needs to be a balanced report, not just activities but also consequences.

**Council Member Smalls then seconded the motion.**

In discussing the motion, Mayor Young stated, it has not been the practice of Council to direct a Council Member to take certain action on their committee. I don't have a problem receiving a report from a committee, what they are doing and the direction they are taking. I don't have a problem with anybody providing guidance to the committee as to what they'd like to see accomplished, but it has not been the practice of Council to place deadlines on other Council Members and direct them what to do within their committees. While I don't have a problem with the report and I don't have a problem with making suggestions as to topics they should discuss, I do have a problem with the procedural end of it.

Council Member Lohr then stated, I have no problem giving the report, however, I am beginning to have a problem making this Commission some type of policing organization, because if we are going to talk about what activities they may be involved in now which are questionable or illegal, I certainly don't see myself or this committee as being a policing organization to give out punitive type of things if they violate certain things.

Council Member Buckner then **amended his motion** with the approval of the Second, Council Member Smalls, to only include whatever activities or reports that the Commission can bring to us within 60 days outlining whatever activities/opportunities that the Commission would like to recommend to Council to consider.

In discussing the amended motion, Council Member Smalls stated that since this is the first meeting of this committee, I think they will have to organize, set how often they will meet and where they will meet. I can see the Commission bringing that back to us at the next meeting.

Speaking from his notes, Council Member Lohr then reiterated the items to be discussed by the Committee: 1) who, what groups, what age levels; 2) what type of activities might not be in place, when would we have this, where would these things take place. If there is a place where we need to have an activity, we need to find out what is available, where we are going to do these things, and how we're going to go about it. Hopefully, we can come back with something and at the second meeting, we'll come back with something else.

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Council Member Lucas felt that Council should just ask the committee for a report and not put the request in any kind of a motion. Mayor Young agreed and stated, we would like to hear what the committee is doing, but only when you are ready to bring us a report.

**Council Member Buckner then withdrew his motion.**

**2. Discussion of the City Parks Maintenance and Equipment - Councilman Dwayne Buckner**

Council Member Buckner then addressed the maintenance of the parks. He stated, I know we are in a transition period from the Colleton County Recreation Commission in that we have assumed a responsibility for maintenance of the parks. Two parks I want to address are the Gladys Whiddon Park and the Sankey Maree Park. I want to address the lake at the Gladys Whiddon Park. I was there about a month and a half ago, and the algae had grown up in the lake and it was looking very bad. So, I want to ask the City Manager, are you aware that the park's lake has gotten to that condition?

City Manager Lord affirmed that the City was aware of this condition and that the Parks Director has already started to investigate ways to handle this. As of this week, the lake is completely cleared up, and the algae gone.

He asked if there were any other issues with the lake. City Manager Lord responded that this is one of the things that will take continual maintenance. Right now we are looking at the aerators. Both of the aerators were burned out. They were completely under-powered for the size of the lake, and we are now investigating alternatives.

On the issue of the Sankey Maree Park, Council Member Buckner reemphasized the need to repair the basketball goals and the park equipment. He stated, my concern with the park equipment is that not only is it creating a potential hazard, but also I want us to look at the status of that equipment.

City Manager Lord responded that staff had uncovered the safety issues. There was plywood on there when we took it over. When we removed that, trying to get a better look, we discovered how bad it was. That's when we roped it off. We ordered the parts, the parts came in I believe last week, and we began installing them today.

Council Member Buckner then pointed out that the only other concern he has with the Sankey Maree Park is the bad condition of the basketball court. The backboard is torn down. City Manager Lord stated, this is certainly something we can look at, we just haven't gotten to that problem yet.

Councilman Buckner then made a **MOTION** to fix the basketball court at the Sankey Maree Park, including the backboard, and do it with immediate speed so that the children in that area can have a basketball court in order to play on, similar to what we have at the Doodle Hill Park.

Mayor Young then asked, when you say to fix it, how extensive are you talking about? Council Member Buckner responded that the basketball goal is in excellent condition at the Doodle Hill Park, and I would like to see the same type setup at the Sankey Maree Park. This means the backboard is bent over now, it looks like it's about to fall down now. That would need to be fixed and some new rims would need to be put on it with nets on both goals because it is a full court. I don't think it would cost a lot of money in order to fix that.

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Council Member Smalls asked the City Manager if the court is in the process now of being fixed? City Manager Lord responded that staff had not began to look at the court. We have addressed the swings first. We have replaced two or three swings because of safety issues. We are trying to address the safety issues first. The playground equipment was really in bad condition and we are replacing those. As resources are available, we will continue to make improvements, but we prioritized safety issues.

Council Member Smalls asked the City Manager, aren't we in the process of looking at all the parks?

City Manager Lord affirmed that City Council had commissioned a comprehensive park study, and that Council should have received those preliminary recommendations, which included upgrading that basketball court in the future. On a question by Council Member Smalls on the time frame involved for repairing the basketball court, City Manager Lord responded that those were just preliminary recommendations. There are still more public meetings to be held to get public input on those recommendations. That design process is ongoing.

Mayor Young then asked, is it possible to fix the basketball goals as part of what we've gotten in our master plan, so that would just be part of it? I know the safety issues are first. He then asked the City Manager to give a summary of the work on the parks already performed by the city. City Manager Lord pointed out that at the Sankey Maree Park, the city has removed four hazardous trees, installed four swings with new hardware, took out the old signage and replaced it with new signage, and we are fixing the playground equipment so it is safe. At the Doodle Hill Park, we have cleaned it, trimmed two oaks, replaced the signage, and also cleaned up the back fence. At Pinckney Park, we replaced two swings, relocated one picnic table because of safety issues, replaced the signage and worked on the irrigation system. At Gladys Whiddon Park, a lot of landscape work was done, replaced and installed swings, worked on the aerators. At Mayfield Park, we cleaned it up and replaced the signage, ordered parts to fix the swings, but haven't installed them yet. With the tennis courts, we have been cleaning it, replaced a breaker panel and installed a safety fence along the ditch.

Mayor Young then asked if we were to fix the basketball goals over there, would that encourage people to get on some of the other stuff that's still a safety issue? City Manager Lord responded, it could - you're talking about two different age groups.

Mayor Young asked if we were to fix the goals, could that fit into the plans we have? City Manager Lord affirmed that the repair could fit into the plans.

Mayor Young then stated, when the city took that park from the county, there was some discussion whether or not to take it, but the city wanted to take the park because we felt we could make a difference over there and that we could improve it. Finding the money to do everything we need to do is always a problem.

Council Member Peters then asked if all the legal problems had been straightened out with the county transferring the property to the City. City Attorney responded, "No, we have not." Council Member Peters then asked, how can we go and start doing all these repairs on property we do not own. City Manager Lord pointed out that the Memorandum of Agreement in addition to a resolution adopted by Council is what we are operating under right now. The actual legal transfer of property has not happened yet.

Attorney Cone stated, we had to get information on all the PARD grants because the county and the city had to agree which ones would go to which body as far as the

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requirements of them. He then asked City Manager Lord if that matter was resolved? City Manager Lord responded that the City is still waiting on the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to approve those transfers.

Attorney Cone then explained that the City gave the county the information about two or three months ago about the breakdown and to get copies of at least the first page of the grants that were involved, and I have not heard back from them yet. We can deed it back and forth, we just need to make sure the grants and responsibilities are straightened out.

Attorney Cone further explained, you got an agreement with the county that has been signed and I think it is a valid agreement.

Council Member Peters explained that he is for fixing the goals. He stated, I just wanted to be sure that we are going in the right direction, because I have not heard anything about it and I know we sanctioned the study. I felt there was a reason why we are holding back. City Manager Lord explained that the reason was the budget. This is just not something that has been budgeted.

Council Member Peters then brought up the matter regarding the graffiti at the Sankey Maree Park. He stated, I think we need to get that done. He asked Mr. Bright, where is the graffiti located. Mr. Bright answered that the graffiti is located on the basketball court. City Manager Lord explained that the city has cleaned the graffiti from the playground equipment and we have something to remove it, so we should still be able to address that without a problem.

Council Member Buckner stated, my concern is when we put the seal of Walterboro on a piece of property, that should stand for something. It should stand for our commitment to excellence in making sure that what we put our seal on best represents the City of Walterboro. Right now, that is not the case at that particular park. We need to do something with it, and most pressing right now to me is to at least fix the basketball court, because the goal is hanging down and it looks bad for the City. So, I am asking this Council to please let's just at least fix the basketball court goal, and put some nets up there, so that won't be an eyesore.

**At this point, Council Member Smalls seconded the motion.**

Council Member Smalls then commented that he lives in that area. He pointed out that since the City has taken over that park, it looks better than it did when the county had it, even though we have some problems. We still have some problems and some improvements, but I can speak that the park looks better. The grass is being cut and a tree on the fence in center field has been removed. All this has taken place since the city took over the park. I am for fixing the basketball court, so we have two problems. The equipment that the smaller kids play on is not quite up to par. The kids that play basketball are a different age group from the smaller kids. I don't think the smaller kids will go on the equipment, but I feel that the older kids will prevent the smaller kids from using the equipment until it is fixed.

Council Member Lohr then said, I am concerned with the recent events that are positive to me in terms of getting some folks off the streets. I'd like to have that gang graffiti taken care of too. I don't know if you need some paint, but I'll volunteer to go over there and help paint. We need to let them know, you're gone and so is some of the stuff that you have left us.

Council Member Lucas agreed that the city should try to get rid of the graffiti. He said, if we have to paint over graffiti, I think that we should try to get the

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community involved, get the kids in the neighborhood to paint over it. They might keep other kids from putting graffiti back on it, if they are involved and taking pride in making it look better. We can provide the paint or whatever is necessary to cover it.

Mayor Young then pointed out that the city is pursuing funding in other areas to help with the parks.

**The Mayor then repeated the motion to proceed with the repair of the basketball goals at the Sankey Maree Park. The motion then passed with all members voting in favor.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no Old Business before Council.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Consideration of Appointment to the Youth Advisory Commission**

Council Member Lohr reported that Ms. Leila Williams, Superintendent of Education, had given that name of Ms. Cathy Turner to serve on the Youth Advisory Commission, representing the School District. He stated that Ms. Turner has been a principal, assistant principal, hearing officer, and Title One Coordinator, which is her current job. She has a wide variety of experience which will bring a lot of things to the table.

Council Member Lohr then **MOVED** to appoint Ms. Cathy Turner to the Youth Advisory Commission as the Colleton County School District representative. Council Member Lucas seconded the motion that passed with all members voting in favor.

**2. Request to Use the City Property on Black Street for a Street Service, July 17, 2010, Irene Portee, Summerville Miracle Revival Center**

City Manager Lord reported that this request was similar to the one received last year. Chief Rhodes reported that last year he went door to door in that neighborhood and no one objected to it. He said, I have not done that this year, but we did not have any problems with this at all last year.

A **MOTION** was made by Council Member Peters to grant the request as submitted. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

There were no Committee Reports given.

The Mayor then entertained a motion to enter an Executive Session. Council Member Lucas so **MOVED**. Council Member Buckner seconded the motion.

The Mayor then announced that the meeting will enter into an Executive Session for a legal briefing on a contractual matter and to consider a personnel matter.

The meeting returned to Open Session and the Mayor announced a New Business Item, First Reading By Title Only of Ordinance # 2010-11.

A **MOTION** was made by Council Member Parker giving First Reading by Title Only to Ordinance # 2010-11, being: An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Walterboro to Join with the Walterboro-Colleton County Airport Commission in Conveying Up to 120 Acres More or Less, of Land to the County of Colleton, Subject to the Limitations

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and Restrictions of Matters Related There. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Lohr and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:42 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: July 27, 2010**