

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
229 MAIN STREET
CONWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2016 – 5:30 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy, Mayor Pro Tem Jean Timbes, Council Members Randle L. Alford, Thomas J. Anderson II, William M. Goldfinch IV, Ashley Smith, and Larry A. White

STAFF: Bill Graham, City Administrator; Vicky Lefler, Deputy City Administrator; Captain Tammy Carter, Police Department; Kevin Chestnut, Public Works Director; Adam Emrick, Planning Director; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Foster Hughes, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Director; Billy Joe Sawyer, Building Official; Allison Williams, Finance Director; and Debbie F. Smith, City Clerk

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kathy Ropp, Charles Perry, James M. Ross II, Barbara Streeter, Holly Littles, Scott Ledford, Larry Dickerson, Pat Henry, Lundy Booth, Shawn Godwin, David Sweeney, Doug Humphrey and others

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Blain-Bellamy recognized Rev. Kevin Lambert of Coastal Community Church who gave the invocation. City Council and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: **Motion:** Anderson made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch, to approve the agenda as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Final reading of Ordinance #ZA2016-02-01 (A) Accepting the petition by Langston Memorial Baptist Church to annex approximately 1.06 acres of property located at the corner of Sellers Road and Highway 905 (TMS# 123-16-01-046, PIN 33911020014 & TMS# 123-16-01-045, PIN 33911020013) and to rezone the property Low Density Residential (R-1) upon annexation

B. City Council Minutes – January 19, 2016

Motion: Alford made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to approve the consent agenda as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT: The following persons addressed Council with their concerns regarding the proposed multi-use path on Long Avenue.

Scott Ledford praised City staff and the State for trying to mitigate the impact on residents but questioned why advance notice of path was not given before the project began. He also commented on the path's lack of connectivity and the safety issues involved given the path's proximity to the highway.

Larry Dickerson expressed concern for the provision on ongoing maintenance of the path.

Pat Henry commented that funds are not budgeted to maintain the path and, without maintenance, it would become an eye-sore in the neighborhood. He asked Council to stop the project.

Lundy Booth commented that the path would decrease property values; construction of the path would destroy the brick columns on his property and his palm trees would have to be removed. He questioned who would benefit from the trail.

Shawn Godwin remarked that he lives on the opposite side of the street from where the path is to be installed and he was at this meeting in support of his neighbors.

David Sweeney stated the path would deface the neighborhood, decrease property values, and that the path was not wanted nor needed in the neighborhood. He remarked that there was a greater need for additional street lights and enforcement of speed limits in that neighborhood.

Doug Humphrey informed Council that he believed most residents would be more accepting of the project if the path looked better or if a sidewalk could be installed instead of the path.

Freddie Thompkins expressed his concerns that the path would be installed over water/sewer lines and repairs to that infrastructure would entail cuts/removal of the path's asphalt.

At the request of Council, Emrick gave an overview of the project. The project was funded by a \$500,000 Rural Enhancement Grant and a \$100,000 match by the City. Emrick stated that the path and obstacles noted by residents are in the State's right of way; however, the City is working hard to mitigate impact on residents. In response to an inquiry from Goldfinch, Emrick advised that the City would maintain the path as it does all of its infrastructure. Chestnut reported that City staff had met with residents in the neighborhood and the contractor was asked to look into the extent impacts could be mitigated. It has been determined that Mr. Booth's brick columns and palm trees could be moved, and a State hydrologist has developed a plan for the drainage in front of Billy Shannon's residence. Chestnut also commented that, at this point, there has been no extra cost for the changes to the project.

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to close public input. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

A. Update on re-establishment of rail service and request for letter of support from City for TIGER Grant for improvement of railroad for Conway and Horry County. Bill Henderson, Vice President of Marketing, RJ Corman Railroad, gave an update on the reinstatement of railroad service. He reported that Corman employees are working 24/7 to restore rail service which is expected to begin March 1st. Rail service will start at 10 mph; plans are to increase the speed to 25 mph but that will entail significant cost. The railroad is in talks with Santee Cooper regarding assistance with removal of fly ash at the former Grainger Generating Station. Henderson remarked that grants will be sought wherever possible to assist with the cost of improvements to the rail line and asked Council for letters of support for Corman's application for a TIGER grant. Anderson inquired about drop arms at rail crossings in the City and Henderson responded that the State determines if arms are needed and, if so, would pay for installation. Graham advised Council that SCDOT had been contacted and had agreed to include these crossings in its next annual survey. In response to Timbes, Henderson stated that the operations team would be informed and will work with the City to prevent extended wait times at crossings near school zones. Alford inquired about the feasibility of passenger service for a short line railroad. Henderson remarked that the railroad is currently far from being at a point that passenger service would be approved and the focus now is on restoring service. **Motion:** Timbes made a motion, seconded by Alford, to authorize Mayor Blain-Bellamy to issue a letter of support as requested by Henderson. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Input on ideas for Ride III projects – Johnny Vaught, County Councilman, District 8, asked Council to reconsider its proposed projects for Ride III funding as follows: End the widening of Highway 701 North at the County Complex and omit the extension of El Bethel Road for estimated savings of \$55.5 million; widen Singleton Ridge Road, widen a portion of Highway 378, and widen Highway 905 to Highway 19 at an estimated total cost of \$88.2 million. Vaught informed Council that Ride III is expected to generate more funds than first anticipated and the increased funding could cover the increase in cost for these projects. He asked Council to consider these suggestions and noted that any changes in the City’s request would need to be presented at the next Ride III meeting which is scheduled for February 17th.

C. Special event request:

1. **Derrick Law Firm’s Run for the Children 5K, March 19, 2016.** Holly Littles of Derrick Law Firm submitted this special event request. Emrick reviewed the plans for the event and noted that the route is the same as in previous years. Event set-up begins at 7:00 am and cleanup is to be completed by noon. Emrick confirmed hangers to provide notice of the event will be placed on roll out carts along the route and the interior streets of the route. Staff recommended approval of the special event application with the cost of any support services provided to be absorbed by the City’s operating funds. **Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Smith, to approve the special event application for Derrick Law Firm’s Run for the Children 5K. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
2. **Indie Market, April 2, 2016.** Barbara Streeter of Create! Conway submitted this special event request. The event is planned for Saturday, April 2, 2016, from 2:00 pm to 9:00 pm on Laurel Street between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Maps depicting the location of the event, street closures (with times), and the alcohol consumption zone accompanied the special event application. Staff recommended approval of the special event application with the cost of any City support services provided to be absorbed by the City’s operating funds. **Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve the special event application for Indie Market as presented by staff. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
3. **2016 Conway Spring Festival, May 28, 2016.** Hughes reported that the event is planned for Saturday, May 28, 2016, and will be held on Laurel Street and 3rd Avenue. Maps depicting the location of the event and street closures were provided. Streets will close at 11 pm on Friday, May 27th, and re-open by 9 pm on the day of the event. No public alcohol consumption was requested for this festival. Staff recommended approval of the special event application. **Motion:** Smith made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve the special event application for the 2016 Conway Spring Festival as presented by staff. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

D. Recognition of employee achievement. Adam Emrick was recognized and commended for having recently achieved his professional certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners. The presentation was made by the City Administrator.

E. Employee Longevity Bonus Awards were presented to Sandra Skipper, Finance Department, 10 years, and Terry Bryant, Fire Department, 15 years. Jason Perzan, Fire Department, 15 years, and Rodney Bellamy, Recreation Department (part-time), 20 years, were recognized but were unable to attend. The presentations were made by Council Member Alford and the City Administrator.

ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION: Acceptance of bid for pool slide at Smith-Jones Park. Funds were allocated in the FY 2015-16 budget for the purchase of a pool slide at Smith-Jones Park. The following

bids, which include sales tax, delivery and installation were received for the slide: Churchich Recreation, SC - \$15,450.96; Hasley Recreation & Design, GA - \$16,451.00; and Piedmont Parks, NC - \$17,010.00. Staff recommended that the low bid be accepted. Hughes informed Council that the slide will be ordered in blue to match other colors at the pool. **Motion:** Anderson made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to accept the low bid of \$15,450.96, which was submitted by Churchich Recreation. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

COUNCIL INPUT:

Alford:

- Asked that consideration be given to moving forward with Project 20/20, a community development initiative.
- Suggested a calendar of events, to include photographs of City departments at the top, be created for sale.
- Asked for an update on Sherwood Forest Park at the next Council meeting.

Timbes suggested the Santee Cooper holiday lights as a topic and possible field trip at the budget retreat. She also noted the success of the recent Chocolate Walk in the Downtown area.

Anderson:

- Asked for increased police enforcement of the speed limit on Elm Street.
- Expressed sympathy on the passing of Wilson Webb and noted, with appreciation, Mr. Webb's public service to the City.

Goldfinch asked that consideration be given to a moratorium to reduce the cost of infrastructure for new businesses.

Smith:

- Asked for more cameras and increased lighting on the Riverwalk.
- Suggested consideration be given to installing a four-way stop at the intersection of Laurel Street and 2nd Avenue.
- Congratulated the Conway Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department for Conway having been selected to host the 2017 Dixie Youth Tournament.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy commented that running red lights appears to be a rampant problem in the City and that perhaps legislators could be requested to help enable enforcement by cameras.

The Council meeting recessed after this item of business and reconvened in the Conference Room for the remainder of the meeting.

WORKSHOP

A. Presentation and discussion on proposed Senior Living Project on Pine Street. Emrick reported that Steve and Penny Ayers of Trustmark Construction Corporation of Florence, Alabama, have requested letters of support from the City to assist them in obtaining federal tax credits for a senior housing project on Pine Street. This development will be age-restricted (for persons 55 years of age and older) and will offer rent modified housing. James M. Ross II of Ross/Deckard Architects was present and reviewed a general design and site plan of the proposed project. Ross reported the tenants would benefit from reduced rent which would result from income qualifiers and not subsidies. Emrick noted the property for this development is currently zoned R2, medium density residential, which

allows for multi-family residential housing. **OUTCOME:** Council agreed to consider this request at the next Council meeting.

B. Discussion on FY 2016-17 (Year 9) HUD/CDBG funding and ideas for utilizing these funds.

Emrick advised Council that approximately \$305,000 is anticipated in this funding. He presented information on possible utilization of these funds: (1) Construct the first phase of an asphalt bike path system, most of which would utilize power line easements, with the long-range goal of connecting City parks to the neighborhoods that are closer to them. In response to concerns raised regarding the safety of such a path, particularly after dark, Emrick commented the trail would be only for dawn to dusk use. Emrick suggested that the project could be completed in four phases. Phase I could be a 10 ft wide asphalt path connecting Marion Street to the Rosehaven Subdivision sidewalk (approximately \$100,000). (2) Construct a community center building in Smith-Jones Park (\$241,000). Graham noted that \$140,000 for the building could come from CDBG funds with the balance in matching funds from the City or CDBG funds could be utilized for the entire cost. Hughes remarked that the project would include expansion of the ball fields and additional parking. A more permanent arrangement with the Smith Jones Board of Commissioners for the park would be required for this financial commitment. (3) Continue the home rehabilitation program with an allocation of \$50,000. Emrick informed Council that the existing housing rehab program is allotted \$100,000 for FY 2015-16 and \$37,000 in HOME funds are also available. There were concerns expressed about the number of dilapidated houses in the City and Emrick will bring more information on demolition and housing to the next Council meeting. (4) Jail Diversion Program request for \$13,000. (5) Administrative costs (\$10,000) to provide funds to pay for CDBG organization membership fees, training, administrative supplies and advertising. Representatives from the Jail Diversion program were present and spoke on the benefits and success of that program. In response to an inquiry about assistance with certain "repeat offenders," Chaplain Eddie Hill noted that the Detention Center has a mental health component, separate from the Jail Diversion Program, that may be utilized to assist with these situations and he will follow up on this issue. **OUTCOME:** Based on input received during discussion, Staff will present the proposed expenditures of the FY 2016-17 CDBG funds at the next Council meeting for Council's consideration.

C. Presentation on housing rehabilitation program by Grand Strand Housing and Community Development.

The City has, by Sub-Recipient Agreement, contracted with Grand Strand Housing & Community Development to administer its CDBG housing rehabilitation program for the last two years. The company is interested in administering the program again for the FY 2015-16. Kari Dettmer, Assistant Director of Grand Strand Housing and CDC, gave a brief summary of the work completed in the housing rehabilitation program, along with before and after photos of the rehabilitated houses. She reported that, in two years, 17 houses have been rehabilitated, the average amount spent on each house was \$13,000, and leveraged funds total \$44,730. She also informed Council that aesthetic improvements will probably be a larger part of the rehabilitation process in the future. Emrick commented on the different outlets used for advertising this program and it was suggested that notices also be aired on the City Access Channel. **OUTCOME:** The proposed agreement with Grand Strand Housing and Community Development for administration of the City's housing rehabilitation program will be presented for Council's consideration at the next Council meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to enter into executive session for the specific purpose of receiving a staff briefing and discussing proposed contractual arrangements relating to the provision of legal services and matters relating to the proposed location of a business within the City of Conway as authorized by Sections 30-4-70 (a) (2) and (5). **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to come out of executive session. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Alford, to adjourn the meeting. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this 15th day of February, 2016.

Debbie F. Smith
Debbie F. Smith, City Clerk