

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
229 MAIN STREET  
CONWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2017 – 4:00 PM

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**PRESENT:** Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy, Mayor Pro Tem Randle L. Alford, Council members Thomas Anderson II, Ashley Smith, and Larry A. White; **ABSENT:** Council Member William M. Goldfinch IV

**STAFF:** Adam Emrick, Interim City Administrator; Vicky Lefler, Deputy City Administrator; Kevin Chestnut, Public Works Director; Foster Hughes, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director; Timmy Williams, Beautification Director; and Debbie F. Smith, City Clerk

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Kathy Ropp and others

The requirements for posting notice of this meeting under South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) were met.

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

Emrick gave an overview of the pros and cons for the City accepting ownership of Lake Busbee from Santee Cooper. He also reviewed the estimated cost to maintain the lake should the City accept ownership. Afterwards, the following persons offered input during the public hearing:

**Leslie Wilson** - allow the lake to return to its natural state and put in a nature trail.

**Jody Nyers** - if the lake can't be used for recreational purposes, it should be allowed to return to its natural state.

**Vernon Wingo** - spoke in favor of Lake Busbee remaining a lake but the City should not take on the liability that would come with its ownership. Santee Cooper should be held responsible for cleaning up the lake or at least lowering the contamination to safe levels and DHEC should be involved in the discussions.

**Christine Ellis (Waccamaw Riverkeeper)** – Santee Cooper is responsible and should be held accountable for cleaning the lake.

**Bob Scarborough** – Lake Busbee was once the City's solid waste site; opposed to the City taking ownership of the lake because of the liability.

**Matt Richardson** – opposed to the City taking ownership of the lake because of the liability; he suggested the lake be covered with solar panels to produce energy.

**Leroy Johnston** – would be cheaper to drain the lake and put the solar panels over the lake bed; Santee Cooper is only looking to see who they can push the lake off on.

**Ben Powell (Clemson Extension agent)** – estimated cost of \$500-\$1,000 per acre per year to maintain the lake.

**Craig Roberts** – referenced EPA documents in his possession that showed Lake Busbee as 1 of 30 sites in the country that were detrimentally polluted in 2006-2007 and that the lake had 91 times the amount of acceptable level of arsenic. Mayor Blain-Bellamy requested that he share those documents with her.

**Christine Ellis (Waccamaw Riverkeeper)** – DHEC said closure plan depended on use and restrictions.

**Leslie Johnson** – contaminants will eventually seep into groundwater; Santee Cooper should be responsible for clean-up.

In response to questions from those present, the Mayor noted that the City is not currently paying the maintenance costs as reviewed earlier by Emrick as the City does not own the lake. She also reported that Santee Cooper is waiting for the City's decision and if the City doesn't accept the lake, it will be allowed to return to wetlands.

**Ben Powell (Clemson Extension agent)** – shared that the end result of the Iron Swamp Trail, a similar project, and noted the timeframe for such results was about 100 years. He suggested that the best group to take the lake would be the Waccamaw National Refuge and that, once the property returns to wetlands, the contaminants would be embedded in the soil.

**Leslie Wilson and Christine Ellis (Waccamaw Riverkeeper)** – asked how Santee Cooper could be forced to clean the lake and how citizens and organizations could assist in this effort.

Timbes stated that the lake was not part of the fly ash ponds closure plan and that the report on contamination of the lake came months after Santee Cooper offered the lake to the City.


Smith noted the huge expense involved to maintain the lake and that the City should not accept it.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy thanked everyone for the thoughtful and studied input.

Emrick stated that he would contact state representatives and ask why the closure plan for Lake Busbee was approved. Council Member Anderson suggested that those in attendance make contact with Santee Cooper's Board of Directors and request that they help the City.

There being no further comments, Mayor Blain-Bellamy closed the public hearing and adjourned the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes approve by City Council this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2017.

  
Debbie F. Smith, City Clerk