

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
1001 3RD AVENUE
CONWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA
MONDAY – FEBRUARY 25, 2008 – 5:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Gregory K. Martin, Mayor; Alys C. Lawson, Mayor Pro-Tem; and the following council members: Vivian E. Chestnut, Irby L. Koon, Jean M. Timbes, Randle L. Alford, and Thomas J. Anderson II.

STAFF: Bill Graham, City Administrator, Barbara Blain-Olds, Assistant Administrator; Freddie DuBose, Director of Public Utilities; Karen Scott, Director of Planning and Development; Ken Senn, Director of Parks and Recreation; Reginald Gosnell, Chief of Police; Greg Richardson, Special Projects Coordinator; Michael Hardee, Finance Director; Larry Schilling, Grants and Procurement; Billy Joe Sawyer, Building Official; Jerry Barnhill, Director of Public Works; Timmy Williams, Director of Beautification; Wanda Lilly, Arborist; and Vicky Lefler, City Clerk.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Rev. Paul Farmer, Bradley Cain, Brian McMullen, Janel Ralph, David Newsom, William Mayfield, John King, Stewart McIntyre, Gerrel McDowell, Ricky Richardson, Gary Loftus, Susan Libes, Tonya Root of the *Sun News*, Kathy Ropp of the *Horry Independent*, and other citizens.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Martin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Rev. Paul Farmer gave the invocation. City Council and those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS:

Longevity bonus awards were presented to two employees: William Mayfield, Solid Waste Department, 5 years; and John King, Police Department, 5 years. These employees were recognized and honored by City Council for their years of service to the City.

PUBLIC INPUT:

- A. Ms. Janel Ralph – teen dance club, 2300 Church Street.** Ms. Ralph appeared before Council requesting a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to permit teen dances on the property at 2300 Church Street which is zoned Highway Commercial. She also plans to operate an arcade, dance class studio, and restaurant at this site. She estimates approximately less than 20% of the building will be used for the teen dance club. Anderson made a motion for staff to prepare a text amendment to add this use to the zoning ordinance. Anderson then withdrew his motion as being unnecessary and staff was directed to prepare the amendment for consideration. Alford asked that consideration be given to also adding this use to Core Commercial.

- B. Special Event Request – Round the Fourth, June 28, 2008.** Ms. Bridgette Johnson with

the Chamber of Commerce had submitted this request for police assistance with traffic and crowd control for “Round the Fourth” activities on June 28, 2008, in downtown Conway.

Motion: Koon made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve the request. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

There was no further public comment.

RESOLUTIONS:

- A. Southern Evacuation Lifeline (“SELL”).** Mr. Gary Loftus appeared before Council to give an overview of the need for Southern Evacuation Lifeline to improve hurricane evacuation and reduce traffic congestion along existing roadways on the South Strand and Waccamaw Neck areas of Horry and Georgetown Counties. All city councils in Horry County have been requested to adopt a resolution of support. **Motion:** Chestnut made a motion, seconded by Lawson, to adopt the resolution as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried. See attachment.
- B. “Cities Mean Business” Month – February, 2008.** “Cities Mean Business” is the kick-off of Hometown, SC, a long-range initiative of the Municipal Association of South Carolina. At its last meeting, Council requested that a resolution be prepared to acknowledge this event. **Motion:** Alford made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to adopt the resolution as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried. See attachment.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

- A. Proposed recognition of businesses in operation within the City at least 25 years – “Cities Mean Business.”** At the last Council meeting, staff was asked to obtain a listing of businesses that have been operating in the City for at least 25 years for possible recognition by Council as a part of the “Cities Mean Business” project. Richardson shared with Council a preliminary list of names obtained with assistance of the Chamber of Commerce and the City Business License office; an updated list will be provided as developed. Alford asked that the businesses recognized (1) have been in business in Conway for at least 25 years and (2) if it is a chain, that it be franchise-owned. Koon asked that all chain stores be included for recognition if they have been operating in Conway at least 25 years and suggested that recognition be done at informal drop-ins at various times during the year apart from regular Council meetings. Dates for these events will be determined later.
- B. Crime Prevention Campaign – Construction Site Thefts.** Gosnell reported that a media campaign begins next week and will focus on construction site theft; a specific crime and/or crime trend/pattern will be highlighted every quarter. This item was presented for information only.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

- A. Collins Park Improvements, Phase II.** As requested at the last Council meeting, Senn provided samples and cost estimates for wood mulch, rubberized mulch mat, broom brushed

walk, and aggregate walk, based on 450' of trail in the Retreat Garden at Collins Park. Council requested additional cost estimates for other options such as brick pavers, "clinkers," (a slag-type byproduct from Georgetown Steel Mill), and a combination of brick insets in concrete. No action was taken.

B. Main Street Traffic Study. As a result of data gathered from a recent traffic study, no changes are recommended to the current maximum speed limits posted on Main Street. Gosnell did, however, make the following recommendations to address concerns regarding the speed of vehicles traveling west across Main Street Bridge into downtown: (1) Request SCDOT to reduce the maximum speed limit to 45 mph on US 501 Business beginning at Highway 90 to east of Depot Street; (2) request SCDOT to reduce the maximum speed limit to 25 mph beginning at Depot Street (westward); and (3) in conjunction with #2, request SCDOT to install a flashing light, with appropriate verbiage, to alert drivers of possible congestion and/or pedestrian traffic ahead. Anderson reported that he still has concerns regarding speeding in the area of the Theatre/Fifth Avenue/Barker's Service Station. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve staff's recommendations as presented and authorized the City Administrator to draft a letter to SCDOT requesting these measures be considered. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Approval of transfer of one additional police officer to the Fifteenth Circuit Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU). The Police Department currently has one officer assigned to the DEU. Gosnell reviewed staff's recommendation for the assignment of one additional officer. **Motion:** Anderson made a motion, seconded by Chestnut, to approve this recommendation as presented. **Discussion:** Timbes asked if the assignment of an additional officer would place a hardship on the remaining officers with the Department and stated that the Department seemed to be short-staffed at certain times of the day. Gosnell responded that the staffing level at the Department had increased since the DEU began by ten positions. As soon as the new hires are trained, Gosnell said, an increased police presence on the street should be noticeable. Any inconvenience to other officers would be minimal and very worthwhile. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

D. Update on construction phase of new Public Works Complex. FBi, the construction firm for the design/build project, is quoting the City a guaranteed maximum price of \$5,891,609 for the construction of the new City Public Works Complex. In addition, the City will have a cost of \$130,000 for materials for water and sewer facilities and \$27,330 for mandatory site testing and inspections. With those additions, the total guaranteed maximum price for the project is \$6,048,939. Graham stated that adequate funds are available for this project without negatively impacting other resources of the City. Staff asked for authorization to move forward with construction of the new Public Works Complex. Chestnut asked why some local businesses and local contractors are not being given the opportunity to be involved in the project. Graham responded that bid solicitations were advertised by FBi Construction and the deadline for submission was January 31, 2008. FBi reported that no contractor was excluded from the opportunity to bid. In answer to an inquiry from Chestnut, Mr. Stewart McIntyre of FBi Construction reported that approximately 90% of the subcontractors and suppliers for the project will be from Horry County. Timbes asked if Council had seen the plans for the facility; Graham advised they have been available in his

office for review. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to move forward with the construction of the new Public Works Complex. **Discussion:** Mayor Martin stated he was in favor of the project but felt it should be done in phases and that the City was taking a great financial risk by trying to complete the entire project at once. He noted a cost increase of \$5.6 million in the estimated cost to over \$6 million with no explanation given and also noted the decline in City revenues. Timbes stated she did not think it was prudent, given the state of the economy, to expect citizens to help pay for this construction by way of fee increases. Alford spoke in favor of the project, saying the \$272,000 in interest earned on monies the City had available plus the savings gained from a significantly lower interest rate than what had been projected would more than cover the increase in cost. Alford's opinion is that it would be less expensive to borrow the money at the lower interest rate and complete the project now than it would be to wait and pay cash in the future because of inflation. Chestnut said she would vote against it because of the state of the economy and the financial risk to the City. Lawson noted the cost increase was due to site preparation, a problem encountered on other projects, and she felt it was a manageable amount of overage. **Vote:** Lawson, Koon, Alford, and Anderson voted in the affirmative; Mayor Martin, Chestnut, and Timbes voted in the negative. Motion carried.

E. Kingston Street and Norman Alley overhead to underground conversion project construction contract. The design and bid process for this project is complete. All easements that were necessary have been obtained. Blain-Olds informed Council that the low bid in the amount of \$528,648.57 was submitted by Greenwall Construction of Myrtle Beach. The majority of the cost will be paid through the Santee Cooper franchise fee. The City's expense is limited to approximately \$7,000 for materials and installation of the Verizon conduit. **Motion:** Alford made a motion, seconded by Lawson, to authorize the City Administrator to sign the contract with Greenwall Construction Services, Inc., for the construction of the Kingston Street/Norman Alley project. **Discussion:** Lawson advised that Kingston Presbyterian Church will celebrate its 150th Anniversary on June 1 and asked that access to the Church buildings during that time be available and pedestrian traffic not impeded by equipment or work areas. Blain-Olds will coordinate this and other downtown events with the contractors. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried. See attachment.

F. Approval of proposed changes to the City's Code of Ordinances Titles I and III. Blain-Olds gave an overview of the work done by the Committee on Codes, Development, and Zoning to date. It was agreed by Council that proposed changes would be reviewed by section and one ordinance would be prepared to cover all changes when review is complete. The Mayor recommended that the committee make sure it reviews the latest version of ordinances as some amendments may not have been included. Scott reviewed a major proposed revision of the Preservation Tax Incentive to make it the same as that of Horry County. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by Lawson, to give tentative approval to the proposed revisions to Titles I and II of the City's Code of Ordinances. Final approval of all sections will given by ordinance at a later date. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

G. Contracts with Coastal Carolina University for storm water services. In response to water quality mandates placed on the City by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control and to meet storm water goals, the City has verbally contracted with

Coastal Carolina University for specific services. Two contracts were prepared to affirm these agreements, one for a volunteer monitoring program and another for USGS Waccamaw River Gauging Station Monitoring. The total for both contracts is \$32,577. **Motion:** Lawson made a motion, seconded by Koon, that the contracts with Coastal Carolina University be approved at the stated full amounts. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried. See attachment.

H. Additional benches and trash receptacles for downtown area. Blain-Olds presented the recommendation from the Beautification and Thoroughfare Committee to increase the number of park benches, wrought iron trash receptacles with plastic receptacle liners, and planters for downtown streets and strategically along Elm, Laurel, and Kingston Streets towards the Riverwalk. The committee recommends purchasing 35 new 4' benches at \$299 each, 15 trash receptacles with liners at \$727 each, and eight planters at \$160 each including painting, for a total of \$22,253.40 to be paid from hospitality fee funds. **Motion:** Anderson made a motion, seconded by Alford, to approve the purchase as recommended. **Discussion:** Mayor Martin informed Council that the number of benches, trash receptacles and planters is an estimate and may increase as specific locations for placement are identified. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

I. Purchase of equipment. Barnhill reported that Public Utilities and Public Works have budgeted funds in the 2007-08 budget to purchase three backhoes and one wheel loader. Experience with John Deere performance and the city's current investment in John Deere spare parts, diagnostic equipment, computer software, and attachments for current equipment that could interchange with new equipment were cited as reasons for staff's recommendation to purchase John Deere equipment. Bids were received from Van Lott, Inc. (John Deere) and Blanchard Machinery (Caterpillar). **Motion:** Anderson made a motion, seconded by Alford, to accept the bid submitted by Van Lott, Inc., in the amount of \$388,800 for three backhoes and one wheel loader (John Deere). **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

J. Comprehensive sidewalk construction plan. Barnhill presented information on sideway projects that have been approved for construction along with a list, in priority order, of sidewalk needs to be used when funds become available. Council had questions about the how the priorities were set. Barnhill was asked to provide an estimated cost for the projects and a comprehensive map of existing sidewalks in the city.

GRANTS

A. Approval to apply for the Palmetto Pride Tree Grant. Schilling advised council of the species of trees available under this grant program. All of the trees were acceptable to Council except the Green Ash. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to approve the application for a Palmetto Pride Tree grant. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Approval to submit an application for the SCLGAG Wellness Grant. Staff is requesting approval to apply for this a grant from the South Carolina Local Government Assurance Group in the amount of \$2,000 to assist with employee wellness endeavors. There is no matching fund requirement. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by

Anderson, the request was approved as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- C. Acceptance of the 2007 PARD Grant Award.** This total amount of this grant, including the city's match, is \$7,356.76. Funds are to be used for a sidewalk adjacent to the parking lot at Collins Park and for planters on Parkview Road. **Motion:** Chestnut made a motion, seconded by Timbes, to accept the grant. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
- D. Approval of Multi-Jurisdictional Alcohol Enforcement Unit Grant Award.** This grant in the amount of \$7,000 will be used by the police department to purchase a mobile radio, an in-car video camera, and a dual antenna radar unit. There is no matching fund requirement. **Motion:** Chestnut made a motion, seconded by Koon, to accept the grant as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
- E. Approval to submit an application for the 2008 Highway Safety Grant.** The Police Department requests permission to apply for this grant which would be used to continue funding for two officers to conduct traffic enforcement. The total amount of the grant is \$88,173 which includes the city's match of \$17,635. The application is for the second year of a multi-year grant. **Motion:** Alford made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve the request as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.
- F. Consideration and approval of projects for the Urban County Entitlement Grant through HUD.** As part of the requirements of the city's agreement with Horry County and Myrtle Beach under the Urban County Entitlement Grant, the city must submit projects that need to be included in the Consolidated Plan. The city will receive \$217,851.60 for projects in its low/moderate income neighborhoods. Schilling presented two options prepared by staff for the expenditure of these funds; he recommended Option #1 for approval. **Motion:** Koon made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to approve Option #1 as presented. This option consists of the following: Project #1 – project on Pittman Street from Woodward Drive to 9th Avenue (includes 1500' of sidewalk, drainage, resurfacing, surveying, and engineering; Project #2 – large draining project at Woodward Drive and Pittman Street; and Project #3 – large drainage project at Dewitt Street. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.** City Council Minutes, February 4 and 11, 2008
- B.** Departmental Monthly Reports

Motion: A motion was made by Koon, seconded by Anderson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: None.

COUNCIL INPUT:

Chestnut commended Graham and Barnhill for bringing to fruition the project at 18th Avenue.

Timbes thanked everyone involved for their work on Phase I improvements at Collins Park. She also expressed appreciation to Tonya Root of the *Sun News* for the positive newspaper article on the park.

Alford suggested that council discuss the possibility of reducing the maximum amount of the fee to be accepted in lieu of open space from 100% to 50% of the open space requirement. He also asked the city to make sure it had a method for ensuring that people who do contract work for the city are not illegal aliens.

Koon commended Williams, Lilly and the Beautification Department for their work in maintaining the attractiveness of Conway, especially the planters.

Mayor Martin noted that additional planters are being purchased for downtown and the Thoroughfare Committee is moving forward with the beautification projects in medians on Millpond Road and Highways 501 and 378. He thanked the Beautification Department for installation of the new courtyard lights and noted that the renovation of City Hall is now virtually complete.

Mayor Martin also advised Council and staff that he had serious concerns regarding the drastic drop in revenue from building permits and that other areas may see a similar decline. He asked that potential shortfalls be identified now so adjustments can be made if possible.

Lawson asked that the city look into the possibility of adding more transient docks at the Riverfront, especially where originally drawn in the architect's plans. She also asked staff to check on a boat that had been reported to have been using the transient dock under the bridge for an extended period of time; she also wanted to know the city's rules for use/monitoring of transient docks.

Graham introduced the city's newly employed Storm Water Manager, Joe Dignam, who was welcomed by Council.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Koon made a motion, seconded by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this _____ day of _____, 2008.

Vicky Lefler, City Clerk