

City Council Work Session
February 8, 2021

Mayor Pro Tempore Brian Garrison called the meeting to order at 5: p.m. All members were present with the exception of Mayor Womack. The press was notified by email on February 4th, 2021. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing this meeting was virtual. The meeting could be viewed by live stream at www.youtube.com. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Mayor Pro Tempore Garrison turned the meeting over to City Administrator, Stephen Steese for discussions.

Face Covering Ordinance – Numbers are coming down. We are about where we were before Thanksgiving. Daily positives have come down. The trend is looking positive, not to say it will stay that way.

Councilman Dykes said we should go another month with the ordinance.

Councilwoman Webb stated that this has been a good outcome but not willing to take the ordinance away.

Police Chief Byers said there have not been any complaints about the ordinance.

Councilman Garrison commented, it is frustrating to see people without a mask, however he is comfortable where we are right now.

Councilman Moore stated he had visited a lot of the stores in Easley especially the big box stores, people are not wearing masks the correct way. Businesses are not enforcing this. We need to make this stricter with a penalty. People are still dying, people we know. Twenty deaths a day is awful.

Councilman Dykes asked Stephen and Lane to do a preliminary ordinance with a fine to see how that would read and have for the March meeting, if needed.

Councilwoman Breazeale – Agrees with Councilmen Dykes and Moore, we still see people without masks. Some of our police officers are not wanting to take the vaccine. There will probably be big celebrations for St. Patrick's Day and numbers could go back up. We need to have something in place in case we need it.

Grass Clipping Collection: Currently the city collects grass clippings curbside. They are finer than leaves and create damage to our trucks. The vacuum trucks are not set up to pick up grass.

Councilman Dykes reported from the public works committee. On January the 27th the public works committee met with staff. Repair cost is getting expensive. Staff surveyed other cities some don't pick up clippings, some have citizens bag the clippings. Staff suggested that citizens bring their clippings to a designated area at the recycle center. Education will be key in getting the word out to citizens as well as professional landscapers.

Councilman Garrison commented this is tough, a lot of people are not going to like losing this service but it has been such an issue over the years. It knocks our trucks out during the busiest times. If we go forward, I would like to have a local area where clippings can be taken.

Justin Durrell, Deputy Director of Public Works – Currently the plan is to allow residents to bring grass clippings to the recycle center where we will partner with Pickens County to compost at the landfill. Residents could then come to the landfill and get free compost.

Councilwoman Webb stated it is important that we explain to the public why we are doing this. Providing a place for them to dispose of will be important.

Councilman Moore commented if they bring to the recycle center, then we haul to the county, then the public hauls the compost back to their residence. What is the difference in just mulching back into their yard?

Councilwoman Webb some people do not have room to compost their grass clippings.

Councilman Robinson asked if we have any numbers on the cost to continue this service.

Justin stated it could cost up to \$80,000-90,000 in labor yearly, maintenance on vehicles \$10,000+. If we are going to continue this service, we are going to have to get additional equipment.

Mr. Steese commented that we are having to replace the impeller blades frequently.

Councilman Robinson asked if the decision would be done by ordinance or resolution.

Mr. Steese said it is just a recommendation by staff, similar to when we stopped recycling.

Councilman Dykes commented that this can be discussed during the budget workshop when they have a discussion about trash cans.

Councilman Moore stated if we had to choose one, he felt trash cans would be the best choice.

Councilman Garrison asked Mr. Steese if he would bring the recommendation up in the regular meeting.

Councilman Robinson asked if this would be in the budget?

Mr. Steese said it would be.

Happy Hollow: The property was purchased and cleared when we extended the Doodle Trail into downtown it is 3 acres in size. Tax value is \$113,000 still have remnants of the old road. Pastor Tim Sutton of Divine Purpose Outreach Ministry has expressed interest in the property. In conversation, he stated the potential use is for a cemetery. This would match the surrounding property. Would require an ordinance to approve sale, and Council would need to set a price if they desire. The city has also been contacted by parties that are interested in residential development but no offers have been received yet.

Councilwoman Breazeale – Pastor Sutton contacted her about using the property as a cemetery. They would like to help those families that may not have the money for a burial. They would be responsible for maintaining the property. It has just been sitting there for several years. She recommends that we give to them for \$1.00 with love and affection since it is for the church and the Simpson Community.

Councilwoman Webb commented that it is not a very desirable building area. It seems like it would be good use of the property.

Councilman Dykes asked if the church is going to sell the lots to people that can't afford?

Councilwoman Breazeale stated that she does not have all the information yet. She will talk to Rev. Sutton and get back to council with more information.

Mr. Steese said council can put guidelines and restrictions into an agreement.

Councilman Robinson commented that the state has strict laws for starting a new cemetery and maintaining it.

Mr. Steese said he recommended to Pastor Sutton to research and see what he would have to do to start a cemetery. There are some guidelines from DHEC. He is in the process of doing this.

Agenda items:

Annexation of properties on Rock Springs Rd. It is two tax map numbers they total 2.45 acres they have asked to be annexed in with a zoning of GR2. The request is to put 24 more apartments as an expansion of the Shadow Brook apartments. Planning commission approved unanimously with no opposition.

Councilman Moore asked about the location.

Mr. Steese said it is beside the ballfield on Rock Springs Road.

Walnut Hill Right of Way - Companion has asked for both rights-of-ways They own the properties touching the ROW's Companion has plans to develop the property along these ROWs The plans for the property under development to the north does not show access along this ROW. All properties bordering the ROW's are in the City Limits. The east ROW will be transferred once the potential trail path is finalized and prepared to transfer to the City.

Councilwoman Webb asked if there are any utilities in those ROW's.

Mr. Steese said that can be verified between first and second readings.

Awarding of Audit Services – The previous award for audit services to Greene Finney, LLP expired after the FY 19/20 audit was completed. The bid was advertised on November 24, 2020, and closed on December 29th. Four bids were received.

The bids were reviewed by Stephen and Joni. The award would be for a five-year term. They are familiar with our system and we work well together.

Councilman Dykes wondered if it was wise to lock it in for 5 years?

Mr. Steese stated that is what we have always done. It is pretty standard. There are guidelines in there if Council wants to terminate the agreement.

Project updates:

Op/Maintenance - Office areas are almost complete. Furniture being delivered this week. Locker rooms are almost complete. A lot going on in the back areas. Putting in pallet racks for equipment.

Fire Station – The windows are in and they have started inside. They should start sheet rock this week. Started framing the old building to match the new building.

Budget update – LOST - We are about \$115,000 ahead of this time last year.

Business License was lower in January than last year.

Accommodations Tax – That is \$12,260 lower than last year. Hospitality is up \$7,834. State accommodations tax is \$9561 below last year.

Upcoming annexations and zonings

Tommy Holcombe gave a brief explanation. A request has come in for the corner of Crestview and Sheffield to be rezoned to FRD from Neighborhood Commercial for townhomes. The Planning commission will meet next Monday at the Courtroom in the LEC. This will be on the agenda for March.

Councilman Dykes commented that he is very familiar with that property. The intersection is very busy and we need to involve the DOT. There are also some condos that may come to the Smithfield area. The entrance and exit for this proposed development will be on Crestview.

Councilwoman Webb stated that this will be an advertised meeting so council can attend.

15.01 acres behind Burdine Springs - There is a lot of interest in this property. The owner has expressed interest in constructing an assisted living facility. It is currently zoned R7.5 They want to go Office and institutional. This will go before the Planning Commission on February 15th at 5:30 in the courtroom of the LEC.

There is another property in which the owners have expressed an interest in rezoning/annexed at the intersection of Couch Lane and McAlister Road. We will have a preliminary meeting with staff and Easley Combined Utility. It should be toward the end of February and will be on the March agenda for the Planning Commission. They are getting all of their drawings together. The property consists of 15.40 acres and would need to be rezoned with a designation of FRD. The owner has expressed an interest in constructing apartments. They have completed a stormwater study, and site plan for the neighborhood. They will leave as many trees as possible and add fencing. They have gone above and beyond what we have asked them to do.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be March 3rd at 5:30 at the LEC.

Mr. Steese – If you did watch any of the videos from the MASC on Home Town Legislative Day, they had information about properties that are surrounded by the city limits and are not annexed into the city. We call them donut holes.

Councilman Dykes asked if we can annex those in.

Mr. Holcombe said that one property owner has no interest in coming into the city.

Councilman Robinson stated that it is his understand that the City cannot require a particular zoning for annexation.

Mr. Holcombe commented that staff works with this developer to get the best zoning for the property. For the property at Couch/McAlister he originally requested GR2 and he would have had a good argument to get that zoning, but we encouraged him to go FRD to satisfy some of the neighbors.

Stormwater Update: Pineview Drive 17.02 acres currently zoned FRD and was approved for 93 attached single-family townhomes. They now have a new owner that has proposed to build 70 single family detached homes. Original zoning was R-10 that would have allowed for 68 homes. The Planning commission will hear in March, and should be on the April agenda.

Mr. Holcombe stated that this is the perfect example of how FRD zoning designation works. It changed the total outlook of what was originally submitted. The roads will become City streets when finished.

Councilman Dykes commented that the adjoining neighbors did not want the townhomes. There should be less opposition to this plan. Would still like for the sidewalk to be extended to Brushy Creek Road.

Mr. Holcombe stated that the sidewalk on the other side of the road does go to Brushy Creek.

Councilman Dykes would like for the gap to be connected. It would give better access to the complex.

Councilwoman Webb thanked Mr. Holcombe for working with them on the FRD. It can work well. This was a major change and it comes back before the community as well as staff.

Stormwater Updates: Wellington has been completed; Carson Place swale has been completed. Sunningdale has been completed. Working down the center median on Pineview Drive to make a ditch line for water to flow. There are 18 projects out to bid. They are due tomorrow and will be reviewed. It will come before Council in March to award.

There was no further discussion.

Mayor Pro Tempore Garrison adjourned the meeting at 6:40

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk, Lisa S. Chapman, CMC

Council Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
February 8, 2021

Mayor Pro Tempore Brian Garrison, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present with the exception of Mayor Womack. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing this meeting was virtual. The meeting could be viewed by live stream at www.Youtube.com. The press was notified by email on February 4th, 2021. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Mayor Pro Tempore Garrison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mayor Womack had some late appointments and was unable to attend. We all continue to pray for him and his family as they recover from COVID.

Councilwoman Webb gave the invocation followed by the pledge of allegiance.

The minutes were approved as written.

Reports from council members:

Ward 1: No report

Ward 2: On January 27th the Public Works Committee met with staff. We discuss grass clipping collection and touched on the possibility of trash cans in the next budget year. We also received some updates on storm water projects. Continuing to pray for the Mayor.

Ward 3: We have been in touch with the builders and realtors they have been really busy and have been unable to meet on the impact fees. We also wanted to wait on the Mayor to get back before we schedule anything.

Ward 4: We discussed a lot in the work session about the mask ordinance. We are still high in numbers. Everyone still needs to wear a mask, wash hands, and social distance. 1 out of 3 people that you pass in your daily activities could have been exposed.

Ward 5: No report

Ward 6: No report, wish a speedy recovery to the Mayor.

Mayor Pro Tempore Garrison called on City Administrator, Stephen Steese for his report. We have a lot of spam emails that are going out from city officials. If you receive any please do not reply back to them. Let Chase know so he can handle. We will be sending out notices on President's day trash collection. The city is open but the county landfill is closed. Budget season has started, department heads are working on their numbers. Still working on a location and a date for the retreat.

Citizens wishing to address council: Nancy Holcombe commented on the mask ordinance asking council to make the ordinance stricter.

First reading of ordinances:

Ordinance 2021-01 To annex certain pieces, parcels or lots of land lying and being in the State of South Carolina, County of Pickens, being shown and designated as tax map numbers 5038-06-49-5574 and 5038-06-49-1499 and to provide a zoning designation of GR2. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave some background. This is two parcels totaling 2.45 acres and the developer is requesting zoning of GR2. This will be an expansion of the Shadowbrook Apartments. It would be approximately 24 units. The planning commission approved unanimously. There was no opposition to the rezoning. Councilman Moore commented that the traffic would exit off Andrea Lane and no new road on Rock Springs Road. There was no further discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Mayor Womack being absent.

Ordinance 2021-02 To authorize the conveyance of right-of-way extending beyond the end of the pavement on Walnut Hill Drive by quitclaim deed to Companion Associates Incorporated and Companion Foundation Incorporated. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave an explanation. Companion has asked for both rights of ways because they own the properties touching the them. Companion has plans to develop the property along these rights-of-way. The plans for the property under development to the north does not show access along this right-of-way. All properties bordering the rights-of-way are in the city limits. The east right-of-way will be transferred once the potential trail path is finalized and prepared to transfer to the City.

Councilman Webb stated that we are going to research to see if there are any utilities that would be involved.

Councilman Robinson asked if the developer was going to pay for the deed?

Mr. Steese commented that in the past we have just gotten our city attorney to handle.

Councilman Robinson would rather our attorney do the deed and pass the cost along to the developer.

There was further discussion and Councilwoman Breazeale called for the question. The motion passed 6-0 with Mayor Womack being absent.

New resolutions: Resolution No 2021-01 to award the audit services for the City of Easley to Greene Finney, LLP. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Dykes. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. The previous award for audit services was for five years to Greene Finney, LLP this agreement expired after the FY 19/20 audit was completed. We put out to bid on November 24, 2020. The bid closed on December 29th, 2020.

We received four submittals. They were reviewed by City Administrator, Stephen Steese and Joni Smith, Finance Director. They agreed that Greene and Finney were the best option. The award would be for a five-year term. They are familiar with our system and we work well together. This would be our 2nd term with this firm. Their cost would stay the same as last year \$21, 900.

Mayor Pro Tempore Garrison said he was very satisfied with this company. They have done a good job for us.

Councilman Dykes agreed and called for the question. The motion passed 6-0 with Mayor Womack.

Councilman Moore made the motion to adjourn at 7:27 p.m.

Mayor, Butch Womack

ATTEST:

City Clerk, Lisa S. Chapman, CMC