

City Council Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2021

Easley City Council met on May 10, 2021 for its regular meeting. Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present. The press was notified by email on May 7th, 2021. The meeting was in person however, the meeting was recorded and could be viewed on You Tube. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Prior to the meeting council met in executive session and no action was taken.

Mayor Womack called on Councilman Moore for the invocation. Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes were approved as written. There were three sets of minutes.

Reports from Council:

Ward 1: Happy late Mother's Day to all the mothers, we thank you. Mr. Steese is moving on to Bluffton next month. Thank you for your service to the City of Easley.

Ward 2: Thanked Stephen for his good work over the past 6 years. We will miss him. The Public Works committee met and we will go over the recommendations later in the meeting. We had a cleanup day on May 1st. There were 91 volunteers that came out and cleaned up. They picked up one ton of garbage.

Ward 3: We will miss Stephen, thanked him for all the help. The Coffee with a Cop was very successful. The cleanup was really good with the scouts, citizens, and all the volunteers. We are going to try and set up a committee meeting for development impact fees.

Ward 4: Thank you Stephen for his years of service. The litter pick up was good. Thanked the citizens for helping.

Ward 5: Thanked the citizens and police department that helped with the litter pick up. Thanked those that came out for the Coffee with a Cop. This was the first time attending one of these events. Thanked Stephen for all his good work.

Ward 6: Several items on the agenda this evening about rezoning and annexation. We are all struggling with how to deal with growth. There was an article on the Wallstreet journal about growth in Greenville.

Report from City Administrator, Stephen Steese. May 31st City offices will be closed for Memorial Day. The Farmers Market is now open 8-12 on Saturday morning in Old Market Square, encouraged citizens to check it out. Thanked council for their kind words and the opportunity. His last day will June 10th.

Mayor Womack stated that we will be looking for an interim administrator to fill in a couple of days a week for a couple of months before we begin searching for a city administrator.

Council Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 2

Citizens wishing to address council:

Diane Stanley: The aesthetics on businesses need to have an uplift. There are businesses across from the Doodle Trail that has window shields over glass, a liquor store, a white building that has been for sale for years. We should not have any empty businesses, or run-down houses. Buildings need to be updated, maybe we need a theme and have businesses adhere to new regulations. It would be nice to have some type of water/splash park for kids. We need new and fresh instead of old and rundown that says we don't care. We need a face lift.

Jeff Cooper: Thanked Stephen for his leadership. Would like council to consider a moratorium. We need a pre fire plan like the fire dept. uses. The City's growth plan needs to be revised. We need to look at it defensively. We need to look at high density developments. He provided a list of people who couldn't come to the meeting that are opposed to the ordinances on the agenda.

Nancy Mawhinney: Thanked Council for the opportunity to speak. She is concerned about traffic from Pineview onto Brushy Creek. Can emergency vehicles get in when there is an emergency? SC DOT needs to put another traffic counter out for at least two weeks at that section of road when school is in session. A traffic light would be good. Who will take care of the sewer pump on this property? Encouraged a moratorium for the area of Brushy Creek Road. She is in favor of impact fees. What about green space? What about the wildlife? We were recently rated low for air quality. The land on Pearson Road has been ravished. We need developers to be required to plant trees. Told Mr. Holcombe that the signs for the Planning Commission meetings need to be larger.

Sylvia Petrilla: Thanked Council for opportunity to speak. She lives in Cobblestone off Couch Lane. She received a flyer about the proposed project on Couch and McAlister. Understands the proposed project will be 7 buildings, 4 stories high. There will be a lot of stuff going on with apartment. The apartments behind Wal Mart are a mess. With 224 new apartments there will be more cars and more trips per day on the roads. The roads are single lane in that area. It takes three or four light changes to get to 123 at Jimmy's. Would like an impact study for that area. Things to be looked at are the roads, fire, EMS, sewer system, police, traffic, what is the capacity of the schools. These things need to be considered. Pause development and put a moratorium in place until we figure out where we are going. Peace, foundation and the future. Have you asked God about all of these projects? What are we doing with our gifts? We need to consider the future.

Rod Ramsey: He lives at 202 Pineview Drive. He thanks God every time he things about Easley. He loves it here that is why he moved here 40+ years ago. Doesn't want anything to hurt this city. We are not ready for the growth that we are getting. We are not doing what we should, bigger is not better. Bigger is usually worse. Come sit on the porch with him sometime at Wimberly and Pineview. We have drag races there all the time. We do not need any more automobiles on the roads. It is difficult to get out of Pineview onto Brushy Creek.

Council Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 3

Jamie Chaney: She lives at 200 McBee Ave. Moved here 3 years ago and is excited for the growth but would like for it to be responsible. How will it affect our police department? We need more schools. She is concerned about the roads, McBee is used for a cut through. Speeders fly down that road where kids are playing. What about water and sewer. I want us to slow down. Fast growth is not good. Talk with the citizens and see what they want. We want the people that are moving here to like living here.

Mayor Womack thanked everyone for their comments.

Second Reading of ordinances:

Ordinance No: 2021-06 to annex approximately 9 acres of real property located at 117 Wimberly Lane, Easley, SC., being shown and designated as tax map number 5028-12-75-6061 and to provide a zoning designation of FRD. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave a brief overview. There have been no changes since first reading. If council denies, this project can still be constructed without control of the City. The Planning Commission did approve and Council approved on first reading.

Councilman Moore commented that this is for senior living so schools will not be impacted.

Councilman Garrison asked if there was a plan for an elevator.

Mr. Holcombe said there was.

Councilman Garrison commented that he understands where people are coming from. We are going to grow. We are a great city and we have good people. We are trying to be responsible. Our understanding from Easley Combined Utility is that we are at 52% capacity on utilities. We have had emails from school board members and they do have plans for expansion. They feel like they are prepared. We do have a strategic plan but due to COVID it got delayed in updating. We have contracted a planner that is going to help us with a comprehensive plan. We will have community meetings in each ward for input.

Councilman Dykes commented that residents from each ward will have an input for the comprehensive plan. He also stated that the owner of this property sent us an email. She lives out of state and regrets that she could not maintain the property. It is not good for it to just sit there. Her mother wanted the land to be developed for senior living.

Councilman Moore asked Mr. Holcombe if he would give information about a moratorium.

Mr. Holcombe said there has to be a plan, it can't be just because we want one. There has to be a start and finish date and an objective. It can't be just to slow down growth. We do talk to ECU and the school board all the time. We meet weekly with police and fire weekly. People have a right to development their property. It is up to the Planning Commission to hear and Council to approve or deny.

Councilman Robinson commented that it is important to him to look at matters before Council. Zoning and annexations are different matters. He doesn't like to vote no on first reading of an ordinance until more input is given from developer and citizens. He voted in favor of this on first reading. City council is starting to listen to the concerns of the citizens. We are in the initial steps to have a comprehensive master plan to help with growth. To stop development would not be good for our City.

Councilwoman Webb wanted to remind everyone if we vote to deny the annexation that does not stop the project and we will still have to provide police/fire service for it. ECU will provide utilities. It does not stop this issue. If we annex, we can regulate to a higher standard. Ours are higher than the county. We can service more appropriately with fire/police. It is to our advantage to annex it in the city and tax it rather than let it be billed in the county.

Councilman Moore commented that the police would not have any jurisdictions if it is in the county. If a crime happens it could take 45 mins for someone to arrive on the scene. There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 6-1 with Councilman Robinson voting no.

Ordinance No: 2021-07 to rezone approximately 17.02 acres of real property located at 103 Pineview Dr. Easley, SC, County of Pickens, being shown and designated as Tax Map Number 5028-12-75-6949, from FRD to FRD. Councilman Garrison made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese went over the ordinance. This has already been annexed into the City and approved by Council. The property was sold and the new owners want to reduce the number of units and change from townhomes to single family homes. The Planning Commission approved the new project.

Councilman Moore ask if the number of units was being reduced.
Mr. Steese said it is about 20 units less than originally planned.

Councilman Dykes stated that with the project changing to single family residential it is like an expansion of the subdivision. Homes would be better than townhomes. The developer is going to replant trees on each lot. He understands that traffic is an issue. We are looking at trying to improve that area but it would take a while to go through SCDOT.

Councilman Moore suggested that more people go to the school board meetings and the Easley Combined Utility meetings. We have no control over them.

Councilwoman Webb commented that the developer is saving an area to straightening out the exit.

Councilman Robinson stated that it is important to note that this is a rezoning and the current plan has been changed from townhomes to single family homes.
There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

New business first reading of ordinances.

Ordinance No. 2021-09 to approve the FY 21/22 City of Easley Operating Budget.

Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief overview. The total budget is \$16,063,041.00. There is a 1.5 mil tax increase. There will be a public hearing at the June 14th Council meeting prior to the regular meeting.

Councilman Dykes commented that Mr. Steese and department heads did an excellent job controlling the budget and making sure we have a small surplus at the end of the year.

Councilwoman Webb commented that the department heads worked together to put in a lean budget. Wish we could help out with more employees that are needed. We have been able to refinance some of our bonds that cut the interest rate to save money over the year.

There was no further discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2021-10 to amend §50.15 - Solid Waste Collection of the City of Easley Code of Ordinances to address the usage of roll carts for collection. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Moore. Mr. Steese went over the ordinance.

On April 20th council approved second reading of a budget amendment. They approved the financing, and the purchase of roll carts.

Mr. Steese explained some of the rules and regulations for the carts, where to place the carts for collection, and fees for additional carts. It is recommended that no resident can have more than three roll carts. He went over care, replacement and collection assistance.

We will have a few 48-gallon carts that an individual can get if a 96 gallon is not needed.

This will become part of our Code of Ordinances. We want to finalize in June so we can distribute in July that will enable us to send out the guidelines when the carts are delivered.

Councilman Robinson asked will this apply to multifamily dwellings.

Mr. Steese said any dwelling that charges rent like a duplex, apartment, we don't pick up.

Councilman Garrison commented that this is one step toward aesthetics, we have been trying to get this for years. Lowering signs along 123 has made a big improvement.

Councilman Robinson expressed his opinion on the cost of the project but was out voted on the issue.

There was no further discussion. Councilwoman Breazeale called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2021-11 authorizing the extension of lease of 103 Esther Drive. Councilman Garrison made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. Last year Council approved a one year lease until Station 1 was completed.

Construction has been delayed. It is suggested to extend the lease until the end of the year.

There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Ordinance No. 2021-12 to approve quit claim of a portion of a City of Easley right of way to RKD Holdings, LLC in exchange for RKD Holdings, LLC quit claiming a portion of tax map #5019-16-83-7900. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese explained the ordinance. There was no discussion. Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Resolutions:

Resolution No. 2021-13 To designate May 9-15, 2021 as Peace Officers' Memorial Week. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Garrison. There was no discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Councilwoman Breazeale present Police Chief Stan Whitten with a proclamation for Peace Officers' Memorial Week.

Resolution No. 2021-14: to award the invitation for bids to complete stormwater culvert repairs on Dogwood Lane and South 2nd Street. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese explained. The company that we awarded to had not renewed their license so we had to go to the next lowest bid.

Councilman Moore asked if we check license before we award a bid?

Mr. Steese said we have to go back and recheck and when we did, they had not renewed their license.

There was no further discussion.

Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Councilman Moore made the motion to adjourn at 8:28 p.m.

Butch Womack, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa S. Chapman, CMC
City Clerk

Council Work Session
May 10, 2021

Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. All members were present. The press was notified by email on May 7th, 2021. The meeting was in person with social distancing. The meeting could also be viewed on www.youtube.com. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Mayor Womack welcomed everyone to the meeting he then turned the meeting over to Mr. Steese to go through the agenda.

Agenda Items:

Budget Ordinance: Mr. Steese briefly went over the budget ordinance. There have been no changes since the budget workshop. He did suggest we think about selling the house on Esther Drive while the housing market is hot. There is a 1.5% mil increase in property taxes. With the increase in LOST we are getting a decrease on our property taxes. We are the second lowest in Pickens County. The lowest is Six Mile.

Four positions were added in the budget. Two public works, one parks and rec and one firefighter. We need three firefighters, one on each shift. He would recommend that we push to get new firefighters on each shift. With growth we need more personnel.

Councilwoman Webb asked if there a benefit with our ISO rating.

Chief Littleton said with our growth not adding more personnel could hurt us. There are requirements based on size of the population.

Councilman Robinson asked if there is a limit to how much tax millage can be raised.

Mr. Steese said that the growth number from the census have not been released. Therefore, 1.5% is the max right now until census numbers come in.

Councilwoman Webb thanked Mr. Steese for keeping us conservative in our projections.

Mr. Steese stated that we are looking to finish with a surplus of approximately \$200,000-\$250,000. Right now, we are watching gas prices we don't know what is going to happen with that.

Councilman Dykes commented "that is a good number to end the year with."

Councilman Moore asked if the fuel that we get has increased in price.

Mr. Steese stated that we haven't had any delivered. The company can't find drivers, and now with the gas company being hacked we don't know when we will get fuel delivered.

Councilman Dykes commented that was a good summary on the budget. He appreciates the department heads keeping things under control.

Council Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 2

Annexation of property at Wimberly and Brushy Creek. Mayor Womack received an email from the owner he went over the general comments of the email.

Councilman Dykes stated that the owner of the property does not live here and is unable to care for the property.

Mr. Steese briefly went over the project. This is 2nd reading and there have been no changes since first reading.

There was no more discussion.

Rezoning of Property at Wimberly and Pineview.

Mr. Steese went over the project. This property has changed owners and the development plans have changed. There have been no changes in the ordinance since first reading.

Councilman Dykes commented that the owner is concerned about the green space. The developer is going to leave some of the large trees and add trees to the development. There will be a green space.

There was no further discussion.

Award Stormwater Repair Dogwood/South 2nd.

Mr. Steese explained that we are asking for council to re-award the project. Howard Contractors have not renewed their license and they did not respond. The award will go to AOS Specialty Contractors. The cost increased by \$98,766. We will still have enough C-Funds to cover the increase.

Councilman Robinson asked if the price was for both projects.

Mr. Steese said it was the cost for both projects.

Councilwoman Webb asked if we will be able to use the extra money for another project.

Mr. Steese said with the grant it can only be used for what it was awarded for. We would need to talk with the county about using the C Funds for other projects.

There was no more discussion.

Esther Drive:

Mr. Steese explained that the property is currently rented to a City employee. The renter will have the opportunity to continue renting. It is recommended to extend the lease until 12/31/2021. The initial intent was to hold the property until Station 1 was finished.

There was no discussion

Council Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 3

Old Market Square property swap:

Mr. Steese went over the ordinance. The City would deed a total of 54 square feet to RKD Holdings LLC. They would deed 56 square feet to us. This would allow them to connect their two properties. It would provide the City a portion of public sidewalk. It would in turn allow us to control the sidewalk.

Councilwoman Webb asked if this would take care of the issue with the wall.

Mayor Womack said that it would.

There was no further discussion.

Amend Solid Waste Collection

Mr. Steese went over the transition to roll carts for solid waste collection. The Public Works committee made a few changes and the ordinance reflects those changes. This will be part of our codes of ordinances.

All residents must use a roll cart that is provided by the city. No other garbage containers can be used.

Councilman Moore asked if there is a fine if someone puts something in there that is not allowed.

Mr. Steese said a fine is allowed as part of our code.

Mr. Holcombe commented that anything on the side of the road would be considered litter and there is a fine for that.

Councilman Moore commented that he is asked all the time about TVs.

Mr. Steese said that e-waste has to be taken to the landfill.

Councilwoman Webb commented that homeowners will be given the rules and regs.

Mr. Steese continued with his explanation. Homeowners will be able to get more than one cart with a maximum of three. They will be charged for the additional carts. It will be billed annually. If they don't pay, we will pick up the can. The fee will be paid a year in advance. If you have three carts it would be \$180 year. The cost is \$5 for two carts, \$10 for three. Bills will go out in January. The resident will be responsibility for the care of the cart. They are to be stored beside or behind the house or in an enclosure. Carts cannot stay at the road.

Councilman Moore asked what would happen if a cart is stolen.

Mr. Steese commented that the resident would need to call and report that it has been stolen. The carts can be traced.

Council Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 4

Collection assistance: If a resident is a senior and can't physically take their cart to the road, we will assist them. They will have to have to get a note from a medical provider that will

need to be updated yearly. We can also help with temporary assistance. If someone is having surgery or is sick an can't get cart to the road. Employees are not allowed to go into an area where they may get attached by an animal.

Councilman Robinson asked if recyclables could be put in the carts.

Mr. Steese said they could but they would go in the trash.

Councilwoman Webb stated that this is one of the reasons we need extra personnel in Public Works. There will be a lot of administrative work.

Councilman Moore asked if the lid on the cart will have to close.

Mr. Steese said it would have to close and bags could not be on top of the cart or beside it or it would not be picked up.

Councilman Dykes said that we will need additional manpower as we roll out. The public will need to bear with us until we get it all worked out.

Mr. Steese said that the company that we are getting the carts from will deliver.

Project updates:

Op/maintenance/fire: We received the CO Thursday on the Ops facility and are working on getting the final items finished up. There will be a training on Wednesday for the fuel system. The relocation will take about 2-4 weeks. The shop will be the first to get set up. We are already using the fuel island. The Fire Station is moving along well. They are finishing up the metal this week. Finishing sheet rock. The overhead inspection passed.

Mayor Womack asked when the Recreation Maintenance department would move.

Christman Short, Recreation Director said they are meeting with Tim Mobley on Thursday to go over details.

Updates from Departments:

Councilman Dykes reported from the Public Works Committee Meeting. The two issues that we discussed were the roll out of the trash carts and the discontinuation of picking up grass clippings. The current situation is that it effects 7% of the homes in Easley. With the use of Bermuda and other fine type grasses it is causing more and more problems. We have two trucks that are not designed to pick up grass. The maintenance on these trucks was over \$32,000+ for the last five months. The current budget is over \$27,000 because of this. There have been complaints from the residents about the dust and debris left behind by the trucks. Trucks have about 2 hours of down time to blow out the radiators to keep them from catching on fire. It is the recommendation of the committee to discontinue this service and encourage the recycling of grass clippings by cutting back into the yard, or creating a compost pile. The

Council Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 5

City is going to provide a spot at the recycling center for grass to be dropped off. The county landfill is filling up quickly and we need to encourage recycling. It is also having a negative impact on stormwater due to pesticides and fertilizers.

Councilman Moore asked about pull behind equipment.

Public Works Director, Eddie Fortner said it is a leaf vac and it is not designed for grass.

Councilman Robinson asked if is there any other alternative.

Councilman Dykes commented that the committee and staff have labored over this and all the options.

Mr. Fortner commented that it is not economical, we would have to have two people on a truck. We have two trucks covering the city. We are picking up astronomical amounts of brush. One of the biggest issues is contractors leaving debris and not hauling off.

Mayor Womack stated that in the future we can't commingle brush and grass.

Mr. Fortner commented that the county wants only brush to go through the grinder. Grass damages it. The county is wanting to set up a compost pile at the landfill.

Councilwoman Webb explained that residents are putting chemicals on their lawns to make it look good. Those chemicals are eating up the internal parts of the trucks. It is deteriorating the metals. The leaves do not do the same damage.

Councilman Dykes commented that he would like to have a resolution at the June meeting.

Councilman Garrison stated that Council continues to get emails, calls, and request from citizens about our comprehensive/strategic plan. Is there an update?

Mayor Womack commented that the City has contracted with Ms. St. John to do the comprehensive plan for us.

Mr. Holcombe stated that he has met with her. She did a great job for Travelers Rest. The Mayor has put together a committee consisting of members of City Council, the Planning Commission, staff, and Mayor Womack. They will be meetings in each ward. She is also working with us to redo the Christopherson Park replacing the swings. The frames have deteriorated. It will be done in phases.

Councilman Robinson asked about the cost of her services and would she make recommendations for the plan.

Council Work Session Minutes

May 10, 2021

Page 6

Mr. Holcombe said he didn't have the exact figure with him but it was approximately \$23,000 for the comprehensive plan. She will make a recommendation for the Council and the Planning Commission to go by especially for annexations.

Councilman Dykes said there would be recommendations from the citizens of Easley. The Planning Commission will recommend adoption and send to council.

Councilwoman Webb stated that the comprehensive plan should be reviewed when new plans come into the P&D dept.

Councilman Moore commented that he is hearing a lot of talk about moratoriums.

Mr. Holcombe said that you have to have a few things in line before a moratorium can be put in place. There has to be a start and finish date and an objective. It can't be just to slow down growth. There was a lot of talk about that in Clemson and Greenville, Greenville turned theirs down. Clemson was about sewer capacity. We depend on ECU and Ft Hill to help with utilities. A moratorium does not affect what is already on the books.

Councilman Moore made a motion to go into executive session with a second from Councilwoman Webb.

Councilman Dykes made a motion to come out of executive session at 6:43 p.m. with a second from Councilwoman Webb. No action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned.

Butch Womack, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa S. Chapman, CMC
City Clerk