

Council Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2020

Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present with the exception of Councilman Moore who was absent. The press was notified. The meeting was closed to the public and was streamed via YouTube due to COVID-19. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Councilman Dykes gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes from the previous meeting on May 11th, 2020 and May 14th, 2020 were approved as written.

Reports from Council:

Ward 1 – The recreation committee met and approved the Phase 3 plans for reopening our parks and recreation department. Everyone agreed it was a safe plan. Saddened by all of the events that have happened around our country lately. Commended the four young girls that organized the demonstration as well as the police and fire department that helped out. Happy early July 4th.

Ward 2 – Commended the police department for the way they handled the demonstration along with the help from the Sheriff's office. Its good we can work together.

Ward 3 – Proud and please with how the demonstration went. The four young ladies did a great job. EMS did a great job responding to the two people that got over heated.

Ward 4 – Absent

Ward 5 – Agreed with all that has been said so far. Councilwoman Breazeale was unable to attend the demonstration but was very please with the City and how everyone conducted themselves.

Ward 6 – Agreed with everyone. Very proud of our citizens, it showed how you can demonstrate in a peaceful manner.

Mayor Womack commented that staff had met with Lucas Durham, who is volunteering his time to help revamp some of our landscaping and flower beds.

There was also a traffic incident that occurred near Easley Combined Utility and Mayor Womack asked Councilman Robinson to look into it. Councilman Robinson asked Chief Tollison what would he suggest. He stated that the first thing would be a traffic count.

Mayor Womack called on Mr. Steese, City Administrator, for his report. He gave an update on revenue and how COVID has affected it. Hospitality taxes are down about 1/3 from last April. We are not charging any late fees to allow restaurants to get caught up. Our recreation fields will be opening up for practices. Carr room will be opening up with 50% occupancy, the amphitheater can only have 50 people per event, Nalley Brown and Doodle Park shelters are restricted to 12 people per shelter and the remainder of our shelters is limited to 20 people.

Mr. Steese called on Chase Campbell to comment on the plans for July 4th. We will only have fireworks on the 4th at 9:30 p.m. There will be no food trucks, no rides or games. We are encouraging citizens to visit our downtown merchants and restaurants.

Councilman Robinson asked if we had any plans to open the meeting back up to the public.

Mr. Steese stated that we will have a public hearing on June 29th for the budget. At that time if anyone wants to address council they will need to sign up and only one person at a time will be allowed to come in.

Citizens wishing to address council: There was one email that was received. Mayor Womack asked Councilman Garrison to comment since it is in his ward. This is an issue with a retention pond in Turtle Tracks subdivision. Councilman Garrison asked Mr. Steese to comment further. The pond is in the HOA name, after more research this HOA does not exist. Stormwater Director, Eric Greenwood has been out to access the area. There are several options that can be presented to the homeowners about creating an HOA if it is required in their covenants and restrictions.

Councilman Garrison commented that the pond is in bad shape and there is no one to maintain it. As a council we need to see what can be done to help the homeowners that live right beside it.

Tommy Holcombe, Building Official stated that when the subdivision was completed, we had to take the roads by legal action to pave and take ownership. The pond has never had anyone taking care of it. The developer abandoned the project.

Second reading of ordinances: Ordinance No. 2020-11 - to amend §132.05 (disturbing noises) in the City of Easley's Code of Ordinances to address construction noise hours. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Garrison. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. There have been no changes since first reading and the planning office has not received any comments. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-12 - an ordinance of the City of Easley, South Carolina, approving the execution and delivery of a development agreement. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. There have been no changes since first reading. There was no discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-13 - to approve a lease agreement between the City of Easley, a political subdivision, and Spalding Properties, LLC, a limited liability corporation, for tax map 5019-15-63- 9342 located at 119 Folger Avenue. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a

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second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. There have been no changes since first reading.

Councilman Robinson asked if there were any plans for the box car that is by Silos. Mr. Steese commented that it is their plan. There was no further discussion. Councilwoman Breazeale called for the question and the motion passed 6-0, Councilman Moore was absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-14 - authorizing the sale of real property comprised of tax map #5019-12-75-9904, 5019-12-76-8183, 5019-12-86-2362, 5019-15-52-2733, and portions of tax map #5019-15-53-1144 and 5019-15-52-2601 to Palmetto State Capital, LLC for \$27,000. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese stated there had been no changes since first reading. He did go back and look up values as requested by Councilman Robinson. The properties totaled \$34,550 in assessed value and we have an offer of \$27,000. There was no further discussion and Councilwoman Webb called for the question. The motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

First reading of ordinances: Ordinance No. 2020-15: authorizing the lease of 130 Esther Drive for one year. Councilman Garrison made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese commented that council approved the purchase of this property which was completed in March. The previous owner wanted to rent the property but backed out and moved at the end of May. This ordinance would allow us to rent the property for up to a year with priority given to city employees. The rent would be \$900.00 per month. Once the fire station is complete then the property could be sold.

Councilwoman Webb asked if we needed some type of construction easement just in case something happened during the construction.

Mr. Steese stated that the property had been surveyed and a portion of the lot has been removed for the construction and we feel comfortable with it. There was no further discussion and Councilwoman Webb called for the question. The motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-16: providing for the issuance and sale of a not exceeding eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) City of Easley, South Carolina Stormwater System Revenue Bond, Series 2020; and other matters relating thereto. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave an explanation. The City has many stormwater projects that need to be completed. We have applied to the county for some C-Funds money to assist with the Dogwood Lane and South 2nd Street projects that total approximately \$700,000. In 2016 the City did a \$400,000 bond to assist with the Oak Creek Project and increased stormwater fees by \$4.00 to help offset this cost. This bond is a 10-year bond for \$790,000. It would wrap around our current funding and payments would stay at approximately \$120,000.

Mayor Womack commented that we are trying to borrow the money to put all of these projects together and get them taken care of.

Mr. Steese stated that if we did these projects year by year it would take 5+ years to completed and some areas would have failed.

Councilman Garrison stated that it is time to get this taken care of.

Councilman Dykes commented that we need to be proactive. Thanked Stephen and the stormwater department for addressing this.

Councilwoman Webb commented that she is not always in favor of borrowing money but this has got to be done.

Councilman Robinson asked if this would refinance existing debt. Mr. Steese stated it would not. We would pay both bonds at the same time. Councilman Robinson also asked if Council would approve any expenditures/projects. Mr. Steese stated yes.

Councilman Dykes asked about completion dates for the projects.

Mr. Steese stated hopefully by the end of the year. There was no further discussion and Councilman Dykes called for the question. The motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-17: authorize the conveyance of property located on Brookview Circle by quitclaim deed to STP Development, LLC. Councilman Garrison made a motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. This would be a property swap with STP Development for a project at Pearson Road and Walnut Hill. They need a parcel of land for a sewer easement with Easley Combined Utility. We would get approximately 7-9 acres for a Brushy Creek Greenway Trail Extension. There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-18: to provide for the adoption of a City Operating Budget, its execution and effect, for the fiscal period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief overview of the budget. This year's budget was difficult due to COVID 19 and the unknown impact it will have on our budget moving forward.

Councilman Garrison asked Mr. Steese to explain about recycling.

Mr. Steese explained that during the budget work session we talked at length about recycling and what staff recommended to Council. The market has declined and does not generate any revenue. The problem with the curbside recycling is contamination from citizens. The best option was a recycling center that would have a city employee that could help educate on what is recyclable and what is not.

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Mayor Womack stated that Eric Greenwood and Chase Campbell were doing a commercial with the drone about what we are doing. Chase is working on a magnetic to send out to residents.

Councilwoman Webb stated that she liked the possibility of going back to curbside because we have come so far with our recycling program.

Councilman Dykes stated that he agreed with Councilwoman Webb and we need to keep recycling.

Councilman Garrison inquired about the hours the center would be open. Mr. Steese said we would operate the same hours as the county. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 7:00 a.m. until 7:20 p.m. closed on Wednesday and Sunday.

There was no further discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Ordinance No. 2020-19: to amend §1.6 (accessory uses) in the City of Easley's Zoning Ordinance to provide for administrative review and approval of additions, fences, pools, and other structures. Councilman Garrison made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese explained and showed pictures of some of our stormwater issues. We do not have anything in our policy or development regulations that outline anything on fences. This would allow staff to approve fences it insures they are not on any easements and done per our code. The biggest problem is people putting up fences, storage buildings, kennels, etc. in stormwater swells.

Councilwoman Webb commented that she has a concern over item #7 with the requirement that a review would be required for non-commercial shrubs, gardens, greenhouses, etc. Would like the wording changed to reflect only if grading or heavy equipment is used, something to that effect.

Mr. Steese stated if Council agrees he can make changes between first and second reading.

Councilman Robinson asked how a review would be triggered.

Mr. Steese commented that the Planning and Development office gets a lot of calls about these types of situations. They would be able to have an administrative review, with a cost, to make sure the work is not on an easement.

Councilman Robinson stated that someone would have to apply for a permit to plant a garden? How will this be enforced if they are on an easement?

Mr. Steese said as the ordinance is written right now, they would need a permit. If it is on an easement, they would have to move it. We have received over 24 complaints from neighbors about these types of issues.

Mayor Womack commented that if there are two fences with a space in between who has to cut the grass? Mr. Steese said that would be the homeowner's responsibility.

Mr. Holcombe commented that the biggest complaints you will get is no same day permits for fences, garages, etc. there will be a process they will have to go through. It will be 48 hours to three days max.

There was no further discussion and Councilman Garrison called for the question. The motion passed 6-0, with Councilman Moore being absent.

Resolution No. 2020-12 certifying the property located at 105 Stewart Drive (tax map number 5029-15-53-1854), Easley, in Pickens County, South Carolina as abandoned building sites pursuant to the South Carolina Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese explained this is for the old Gettys Middle School building. They have submitted site plans to turn this into apartments. The City can certify that no business has operated out of this facility for the past five years through licenses and permits. The owners have signed affidavits to this effect. This allows them to access tax breaks. Councilman Dykes stated that it is a good use of this property. There was no further discussion. Councilwoman Webb called for the question and the motion passed 6-0 with Councilman Moore being absent.

Councilman Dykes made the motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk