

City Council
Work Session
September 14, 2020

Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. All members were present with the exception of Councilwoman Breazeale. The press was notified by email on Sept. 11th, 2020.

Mayor Womack turned the meeting over to City Administrator Stephen Steese for discussion.

Council Discussion:

Golf Carts on the Doodle Trail (see attached)

This is an idea that has been discussed between the cities of Easley and Pickens.

The cities would administer the program jointly and would have limited permits and matching guidelines. No more than 20 permits will be issued by each city per year with priority given to those that work with seniors and those with disabilities.

The goal would be to give access to those who would not normally be able to use the trail.

This would be a pilot program that can be stopped if needed. Golf carts will be allowed to access the trail from 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month October 15, 2020 - May 31, 2021.

Mayor Womack stated that right now there is no ordinance in place and if there are golf carts on the trail the police can't enforce anything.

Councilman Moore asked if two carts pass at the same time.

Mr. Steese answered "yes".

Mayor Womack stated that the sheriff's office has a golf cart that they use on the trail.

The police and recreation departments have gators that are used on the trail. The asphalt can handle it. What we are trying to accomplish is helping the elderly and the handicapped enjoy the trail.

Councilman Garrison asked where our jurisdiction ends. Mr. Steese said both cities normally monitor the entire trail.

Councilwoman Webb asked about signage. Will it be obvious that they can't be on there without a permit? There have been other complaints about motorized bicycles.

Mr. Steese stated that they are allowed as long as they are not 100% electric and only electric assisted. They have to go the speed limit.

Councilman Dykes stated the proposal was put together well. Will it come up next meeting? Mr. Steese stated that the goal would be to do this as a pilot program and then bring back an ordinance after the 6 months to see if it works or not.

Mayor Womack commented that we may not have anyone wanting to use it, but it gives us options.

Councilman Robinson asked if we are going to adopt this as our pilot program?
Mr. Steese said “yes”.

Mayor Womack stated that if there was something in the proposal that council did not like or have issues with changes can be made.

Councilman Moore stated that with him being retired he could volunteer to take people on the trail in the 8 passenger ATV.

There was no further discussion on this subject.

Refunding of GO Bond – Mr. Steese gave the details. In 2009 we did a \$1,830,000 GO Bond for work at Town Center. It was financed at 4.72% for 17 years. Our average annual payment is \$160,000. The current bond will be repaid by April 2027. We can refinance and lower the interest rate and bring the payment down to \$140,000 and save approximately \$140,000 over the current issuance. It would cost about \$20,000 to refi and close.

Councilman Moore asked who the loan was with now.

Mr. Steese answered that it was with BBT. He has sent it out for bid for the interest rate. The lender with the best rate will be announced at second reading.

Councilwoman Webb stated she was glad someone was watching out for us and helping us save money.

There was no further discussion on this subject.

Roads in Deer Meadows – Mr. Holcombe explained the developer abandoned this subdivision before it was finished. It is now complete and the HOA wants to turn the roads over to the city. The roads are in good condition.

Councilman Moore asked where is this located.

Mr. Holcombe stated it was off Meadow Ridge Drive. Part of the subdivision is in Anderson county.

Councilwoman Webb asked if we will maintain the entire road?

Mr. Holcombe said “yes”.

Councilman Dykes asked how long would the roads last?

Mr. Holcombe stated probably 15 or more years.

Mr. Steese commented with the maintenance that we have been able to do we can keep them in good shape. It is not a heavily traveled road.

Councilman Robinson asked if the storm water system was ok?
Mr. Holcombe stated that it had been inspected and appears to be ok.

Councilman Dykes asked if they had an HOA?

Mr. Holcombe stated “yes very active”.
There was no further discussion on the subject.

Project up dates:

Impact fees

The planning commission felt that adequate public comment was not allowed due to Covid restrictions and Council agreed at their August 10th meeting. Council voted 6-0 to send back to the planning commission.

The Planning Commission plans to meet on September 21st at the LEC at 5:30. After the meeting they will make a recommendation back to council for the Oct. 12th meeting.

The presentation from Tischler was given to the Home Builders Assoc, the Realtors Assoc. and Youngblood development.

Councilman Webb commented that they were talking about a lag time between adoption and implementation.

Mr. Steese said this is a common practice.

Councilman Robinson commented that the information is very complicated to understand. We could probably use a work session to go over this line by line.

Councilman Dykes stated that he had reviewed the information in detailed also.

Councilman Robinson asked if the money had to be spent in 3 yrs.
Mr. Steese said “yes”.

Councilman Robinson stated that he would like some guidance on fees for a range of low/medium/high.

Mayor Womack commented that he used what taxes we would lose in one year. This was looked at about 15 years ago and it was shot down immediately.

Councilwoman Webb stated she is very interested in the input from the builders and realtors.

Mayor Womack stated that the only negative is the builders would like to be given a year so they can get current projects finished. It would help them be better prepared.

Mr. Holcombe had a meeting with a developer who wants to annex 17 acres with a zoning of GR2. This will go before the Planning Commission in October. There is a lot of opposition from the neighbors. The owner has expressed the potential of building apartments on this parcel which adjoins a lot they already own. It would allow for 220-240 apartments depending on acreage.

Councilman Garrison suggested we have a moratorium on apartments for a few years.

Mayor Womack stated that he didn't think it would be fair to annex and then put a moratorium.

Councilman Robinson asked if they have sewer/electric/water available. "What if we didn't annex?"

Mr. Holcombe commented that they would still have police and fire protection, and ECU could give utilities.

There could be an addition to Shadow Brook on Rock Springs Road. It would be approximately 100 apartments.

Councilwoman Webb asked if we know what the occupancy rate for apartments is.

Mr. Holcombe said that at Perry Bend it is about 96%.

Mr. Steese said that the newer complexes normally have a waiting list. If we keep the same level of service that we offer now with all the new developments this is where the impact fees would help out.

Councilman Garrison asked Mr. Holcombe if Mr. Leaner filed for RFD? Do you still believe he will do that?

Mr. Holcombe "yes".

Councilman Garrison commented that could be our only way to control.

Mr. Holcombe stated that the request from Toyota of Easley had been pulled and the meeting on Sept. 28th has been cancelled.

Operations and Maintenance/Fire Station Construction Update

Operations - Framing being done, plumbing and electrical coming in.

Fire Station - Framing being done, roof is on, 2nd floor being framed.

In a month or so we will schedule a time when council and department heads can go see both buildings.

Stormwater Updates

Carson place is complete and we are out of that neighborhood with Phase 1. Phase 2 will be in about month or so.

Working on Rock Springs Road for some stormwater issues.

South 2nd has been closed down. We are currently working with Pickens County School District on this project.

The rural grant request was hand delivered. The request was for \$483,000. We should hear back between October/November. We received \$293000 from CTC funds. We are waiting to see if we get a grant to work on Dogwood and S. 2nd. Both were estimated at about \$380,000 each.

Budget Update

\$140,000 from last month was being held for leaf truck. We are within \$12,000 of fund balance. We did amend the budget to add new items totaling over \$425,000. One was the house on Esther Drive. We are close to being in the black. Looks like we are in red with \$1,898,565 over revenue. That is bond money from operations and maintenance construction. The auditors will be here the end of September to first week in October and will present at the November council meeting. It appears we weathered ok with COVID and all of the unknowns.

Councilman Dykes asked for input about grass clippings and how to handle. It is causing problems with our trucks. That fine grass gets in others yards, etc. What actions do you think we should take?

Eddie Fortner, Director of Public Works commented that he had run some numbers on usage of vehicle. At this current time, we change the blades, housing, bearing, shafts, etc at least once a year. The price of the parts is about \$4,000.00 and it usually takes about 3 days to repair. That is about another \$900.00 in payroll. Spoke with Mr. Trotter in Pickens they only run their leaf truck October – May. They don't advertise picking up of grass.

Clemson runs October-February. They pick up grass with boom. Pickens County doesn't want grass bagged. Fort Mill picks up leaves in fall/winter season and place in carts and picked up by truck.

Greenville, tries to pick up but they have a hard time with wear and tear on the trucks.

Councilman Garrison asked if bagging grass was not an option?

Mr. Fortner commented that if we take to Pickens County it has to go to C&D.

Councilman Moore commented that if you have it in can and it would be wet it would be heavy.

Councilman Garrison asked if there was a proposal?

Councilman Dykes said there would be another meeting of the Public Works Committee on October 7th. We need to come up with a proposal and bring back to council.

Justin Durrell commented that we could offer residents an option to bring to recycle center if they didn't want to mulch back into yard.

Mayor Womack commented that contractors could also dump at the recycle center.

Councilman Garrison said it would be important to hear from the public on this.

Justin Durrell stated that we can't keep up with the growth the way things are currently. We would have to have more resources.

Mr. Fortner added that vehicle wise we have one spare truck that we are currently using for brown goods. We are collecting 75-80 tons of brush than we were this time last year. Last month we had 95 tons of grass and 511 tons of brush.

There was no further discussion and the work session ended.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk