

Council Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 11, 2023
5:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall

Council Present: Mayor, Brandy Amidon; Councilmembers Grant Bumgarner, Kelly Byers, Shaniece Criss, Lisa Lane, Sherry Marrah, Wayne McCall, and Brantly Vest

Staff Present: Eric Vinson, City Administrator; Carson Ruffrage, City Clerk; Mac McMakin, Assistant Fire Chief; Ben Ford, Police Chief; Mike Forman, Planning Director; and Phillip Tate, Public Works Director

1. Call to Order

Mayor Amidon called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor Amidon made a motion to vote for temporary mayor pro-tempore in Miscellaneous Matters. Councilmember Criss seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.

2. Public Works Committee

Members: Shaniece Criss (Chair), Lisa Lane, and Sherry Marrah

- a. Chair Criss called the meeting to order by roll call.
- b. Chair Criss made a motion to approve the minutes from the Public Works Committee meeting held on August 7, 2023. The motion was approved by Councilmember Marrah and seconded by Councilmember Lane.
- c. Director Tate updated the Committee on recycling carts picked up next week that are not used, fall décor plant changeover and decoration install starts at the end of September. The new sign machine will be up and running next month.
- d. Councilmember Lane inquired about the flags around the Northcliff neighborhood. Director Tate noted it was Duke Energy preparing to do a power upgrade with a start date of mid-September. Councilmember Lane asked if they will be sending out a notice which was confirmed to start going out next week.

- e. Committee member Marrah noted there were no crosswalks at Roe Road and Hwy 25. Administrator Vinson noted it would be a joint project with DOT and that he would investigate the cost of adding infrastructure to either side of 25 on Roe Road.
- f. Chair Criss asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Committee member Marrah motioned to adjourn. Councilmember Lane seconded the motion.

3. Public Safety Committee

Members: Kelly Byers (Chair), Grant Bumgarner, Shaniece Criss, Wayne McCall, and Brantly Vest

- a. Chair Criss called the meeting to order by roll call.
- b. Committee member Criss made a motion to approve minutes from the Public Safety Committee meeting held on August 7, 2023. The motion was seconded by Committee member Bumgarner.
- c. Police Chief Ford introduced new employees Morgan Wynn in dispatch and Officer Nichole Brown. The department has one current opening, and another is expected to leave for Greenville County. There is also one officer deployed to the military. The two new Mustangs being built will be delivered within the next month. Committee member McCall thanked Chief Ford for the speed monitoring of Williams Road and other roads. Committee member McCall also noted the increase in speed monitoring at other busy roads and intersections. Committee member McCall wondered if a deer sign could be replaced in the Williams Road area. Committee member Bumgarner asked if the city could put the sign up and if the city could make it itself. Director Tate noted that the city could make the sign. Lastly, four speed limit signs have come in and will be placed around town. Chief Ford said they will be able to monitor the time of day that gets the most speeding traffic on the targeted roads.
- d. Assistant Fire Chief McMakin noted that there is one opening in the fire department. The Department has a memorial on 9/11 that included the fire truck at the Travelers Rest Historical Museum. Ambulance calls are on the rise along with call times. The fire department must sit on the scene until the ambulance gets there. Greenville County doesn't have the personnel or trucks to respond quicker. Committee member McCall asked if there are any EMT certified people. Assistant Chief McMakin noted there are three and all firemen are medically trained. They can run life threatening calls (Delta calls). 90% of fire departments in Greenville County have stopped answering calls to nursing homes or NG Hospital because many times there are staff on site to handle those calls. Committee member Criss asked if there are any updates on the fire department and Furman University. Administrator Vinson noted there is a meeting set for September 27, 2023.
- e. Chair Byers asked if the jump in electrical was because of the Pinestone subdivision. Administrator Vinson responded that many are stand-alone permits, which points to more renovations. There is also a jump in new construction homes due to approved neighborhoods starting construction. Administrator Vinson said he is seeing a steady increase with the number of new homes coming up in the pipeline. Mayor Amidon asked about the new residence hall on Furman campus. Administrator Vinson said it

would replace an older residence hall with no increase in beds.

- f. Committee member Criss made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Committee member Vest seconded the motion.

4. Planning & Development Committee

Members: Brantly Vest (Chair), Grant Bumgarner, Kelly Byers, Shaniece Criss, and Wayne McCall

- a. Chair Vest called the meeting to order by roll call.
- b. Committee member McCall made a motion to approve the Planning and Development minutes from the August 7, 2023 committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Committee member Byers.
- c. Director Forman noted that a couple of projects have moved from approved to under construction causing the jump in permits (Magnolia Cottages and Gateway Village). Gateway Village is next to the bunched arrowhead and the silt fencing is being monitored by Greenville County. Chair Vest asked about Whitehawk Meadows and if it is on track. Director Forman stated it would be 163 homes and is on track. Chair Vest also asked about the slowdown in short-term rentals. Director Forman noted that they are cyclical and just happen to be 0 for this month, but not seeing any trends. Mayor Amidon asked for a list of new construction neighborhoods and locations to help Council keep track of them. Committee member Bumgarner noted the time between approval and construction can be 1-2 years.
- d. Committee member McCall asked about the commercial construction on State Park Road and the total number of units/parcels and what they are permitted for. Director Forman responded with six and that it is subdivided into 7-8 parcels, but only one currently has permits, which is the carwash. They will need to build the road as they build the other parcels. Committee member McCall was concerned about parking Administrator Vinson noted that any future developments will trigger an improvement on Tigerville Road. Committee member McCall also inquired about the future of Kirby Drive, a city street that is closed off from the Hawkins Road side. Administrator Vinson stated that the physical road will remain and is needed because of one current residence, but the long-term plan is looking at it for another potential use like a bike path that would connect Hawkins to the Spinx.
- e. Committee member Bumgarner made a motion to adjourn. Committee member Byers seconded.

5. Ways and Means Committee

Members: Grant Bumgarner (Chair), Councilmember Criss, Councilmember Vest, Councilmember Byers

- a. Chair Bumgarner called the meeting to order by roll call.
- b. Committee member Criss made a motion to approve the Ways and Means minutes from the August 7, 2023 meeting. Committee member Vest seconded.
- c. Administrator Vinson presented information on the city owned lot in the Athens

neighborhood and a proposal provided by the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority to build an affordable owner-occupied house on the lot. The zoning is R7.5 single family residential and the lot is .17 acres. Currently, there are SFH on either side of the lot. Funding for construction would come from the City's Home Funds and GCRA would fund the difference. The property would be marketed to a buyer meeting the low to moderate income criteria for our community.

- i. Councilmember McCall wanted to know what happens to the profit. Administrator Vinson noted there would be no profit, because GCRA is providing the subsidy for the down payment.
- ii. Committee member Vest asked about the value of the lot. Administrator Vinson said he was judging around \$30,000- \$35,000. He also mentioned that every year there are home funds that are not spent and with the monetary assistance of GCRA the city could build something that could not be accomplished by the city alone. Committee member Vest asked if the price of the house with the interest rate would disqualify the same people we were trying to help and wondered if there is a better use for the land and money. Councilmember Bumgarner responded on how hard it is to spend the home funds money because of the specific rules on how it can be spent. Committee member Vest asked if GCRA gave downpayment assistance. Administrator Vinson said that they do and mentioned that affordable housing is about \$750/month including insurance and taxes.
- iii. Committee member Criss asked if the family who purchases the house decides to sell would there be any stipulations and would that family have to also sell in the 80% median. Administrator Vinson understood that depending on how much money was invested determines how long that person must stay in the house to resell or resell to someone who is also at 80% median.
- iv. Committee member Criss mentioned Homes for Hope and having a rental with the city keeping the land. Administrator Vinson said yes, owning a rental is an option. GCRA would manage the rental portfolio with the rental income going into the home funds budget line. Councilmember McCall pointed out that the money used is coming from a federal program that may not get funded next year.
- v. Councilmember McCall questioned whether municipal government should be in the rental or land business. Committee member Criss noted having land is important. If it is a rental, would it also be an area that after a certain number of years could be repurposed. Administrator Vinson wanted to note that the city wouldn't be in the rental business, but GCRA would be responsible for the management of the building. Councilmember Vest believes that home ownership is the best part of the program.
- vi. Administrator Vinson noted there are two paths- home ownership or rentals. In that neighborhood, there are more rentals than homeowners, so getting more ownership in the neighborhood is important.
- vii. Committee member Criss' main concern is that property remains affordable over the years and not just beneficial to one family.
- viii. Mayor Amidon says she is on the opposite end of land ownership. She doesn't want to give up land until we know what we can do with it. Land is important. She struggles to see the public benefit when the benefit is for one person or family.
- ix. Councilmember Bumgarner asked whether GCRA could come in and

Council could get more information and ask them questions.

- x. Mayor Amidon wondered if we could sell it and see a public benefit for something else (similar to the Tandem parking lot). Councilmember McCall noted that that neighborhood is gentrifying. Mayor Amidon noted it is still one of the lowest income areas in the city. Councilmember Bumgarner stated that we may lose the ability to spend the money because the prices in that area will increase. Councilmember McCall noted we had been unable to use the money for housing and reiterated Councilmember Bumgarner's comment about finally being able to use the money.

- d. Fire Truck Purchase. One of the firetrucks is getting to the end of its service life. The long-range planning budget approvals (2026) is for a fire truck. Because of the current economy, the time for a fire truck to be built and delivered is 2.5 years. To get one by 2026, it needs to be ordered now. Truck building wouldn't start until 18 months prior to delivery but would be locked into today's prices which would avoid future increases (which average 4%). There is no payment obligation until they start planning and building. Mayor Amidon asked Assistant Chief McMakin what Plan B is if Council said no to the fire truck. Assistant Chief McMakin said the truck being replaced is 35 years old. The recommended time of use for a truck is 25 years old. The amount of money spent on repairs is increasing and parts are harder to find if they can be found at all. Because of the growth of the city, the truck is being used more. Councilmember Lane asked if there is any salvage money in the retired truck, Assistant Chief McMakin said it is minimal (\$5,000) to none.

6. Old business

- a. None

7. New Business

- a. None

8. Miscellaneous Matters

- a. Voting for Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor Amidon nominated Councilmember Bumgarner as Mayor Pro Tem for the remainder of the year. Councilmember McCall seconded the motion which was carried unanimously.
- b. Mayor Amidon noted that it was nice to see the fire truck and the police at Bob Jones for First Responder's Day.
- c. Administrator Vinson reminded everyone that Breakfast For Good is September 13 at South Wind Ranch.
- d. Downtown Merchants meeting is Thursday at 8:30.
- e. City Hall is in the process of implementing POS transactions for court and other purposes in City Hall. It will be through SC.gov.
- f. On this anniversary of 9/11, Administrator Vinson thanked all first responders for all they do to keep the city safe.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Council Committee, Councilmember Bumgarner made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Vest seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mayor Amidon adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Brandy Amidon Brandy Amidon, Mayor
Completed by Carson Ruffrage Carson Ruffrage, City Clerk
Eric Vinson Eric Vinson, City Administrator