

### **Council Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, October 9, 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; Greg Robertson, Fire Chief; Ben Ford, Police Chief; Mike Forman, Planning Director; and Phillip Tate, Public Works Director

#### **1. Call to Order**

- a. Mayor Amidon called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- b. Mayor Amidon made a motion to move the Ways and Means Committee to 2<sup>nd</sup> on the agenda. Councilmember Bumgarner seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **2. Ways and Means Committee**

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

- a. Chair Bumgarner called the meeting to order by roll.
- b. Committee member Criss motioned to accept the September 11, 2023 minutes. Committee member Vest seconded.
- c. Joe Smith, the Operations Director from GCRA, discussed building affordable housing on the property the city owns in the Athens neighborhood.
- d. GCRA proposed building a 2 story 1,400 square foot house around \$300,000.
- e. Chair Bumgarner opened it up to the Council for questions.
- f. Points that were discussed:
  - i. The ability of the homeowner to sell after 15 years. Once the house is purchased, the city has no more ownership of the property. It is a one-time opportunity for affordable housing.

- ii. GCRA offers downpayment assistance.
  - iii. GCRA has a counseling piece to the homeownership.
  - iv. The amount requested is \$36,000 (which is money the city has for affordable housing projects) plus the lot.
  - v. If it is a rental the rent amount would be around \$1,000-\$1,200, but Mr. Smith doesn't recommend it because of the homeownership opportunity for that neighborhood.
  - vi. Council is limited in where the affordable housing money they have can be used.
  - vii. GCRA stays in contact with the family and as a safeguard information gets recorded with the title.
- g. Committee member Kelly motioned to adjourn. Committee member Vest seconded the motion.

### **3. Executive Session**

- a. Mayor Amidon made a motion to go under Executive Session for an update on the Furman Fire Service Agreement. No second needed.
- b. Councilmember Criss abstained from the session.
- c. Councilmember Marrah made a motion to adjourn Executive Session, Councilmember McCall seconded the motion.

### **4. Public Works Committee**

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

- a. Chair Criss called the meeting to order by roll.
- b. Chair Criss made a motion to approve the minutes from the Public Works Committee meeting held on September 11, 2023. The motion was approved by Councilmember Lane and seconded by Councilmember Marrah.
- c. Director Tate updated the Committee on a vacancy in the department due to the resignation of Steven Freund. The new candidate starts next week. Fall decorations are going up along with the fall plants. A new intern started, Jake Ware, from Southside High School. The tree management survey was recently completed. Public Works will be able to report tree issues through an app. Eight people from City Hall were certified in CPR. Shred event is at Trailblazer Park on November 11.

- d. Councilmember Lane inquired about the recycling carts. Tate noted that all recycling information goes through Evergreen, now. Councilmember Lane also asked about the Adventure Park. Director Tate noted that David Garland obtained his certification as a Playground Inspector and is managing the cleaning of the park with Greenville County.
- e. Councilmember McCall requested that certified arborists be added to the website.
- f. Committee member Marrah noted how efficient using the app was to enter work orders.
- g. Committee member Marrah motioned to adjourn, Committee member Lane seconded.

**5. 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 September 11, 2023. The motion was seconded by Committee member Vest.
- c. Police Chief Ford noted the increase in phone calls for service was due to more proactivity by the officers. The officers are engaging in traffic stops and finding more criminal activity. All other numbers are flat from last year, so the increase is from the proactivity of the officers. The increase in narcotics violations are also due to officers being proactive during traffic stops. Mayor Amidon thanked the police for their assistance during the Homecoming Parade. Lastly, Councilmember McCall wanted the crosswalk signs to blink and become more noticeable.
- d. Chief Roberson noted the department is down one member but plan to hire someone within the month.
- e. Administrator Vinson highlighted the jump in residential permits. He also mentioned that the city will be using a new software service for permits. It should be added in the next month. Committee member Byers liked the greater understanding that comes with getting the year over year and month over month reports.
- f. Ordinance to Establish a Fire Service Fee.
  - a. Consider the addition of fees for fire protection services for those properties who are exempt from ad valorem taxation. It would be equal across all non-profits and establish a cost per call for those agencies which averages about \$800.
  - b. An exemption would be an entity to opt out if they entered into a fire protection service with the city. Also, some of the language would be clarified before the next reading.

- c. The goal is not to punish those who are paying taxes, but to have more consistency in who is using the services the most vs who is paying for those services.
- d. Committee member Bumgarner motioned to move the ordinance to council and Committee member Vest seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- e. Committee member Vest motioned to adjourn; Committee member Bumgarner seconded.

**6. 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 Bumgarner made a motion to approve the Planning and Development minutes from the September 11, 2023 committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Committee member Criss.
- c. Director Forman noted that a new high for the Swamp Rabbit Trail crossed the 40,000-user threshold. The highest day was a little under 2,500 on a Saturday. Committee member Byers asked about the Master Plan. Director Forman mentioned that they had covered the Land Use and Resiliency chapters this month and will be back in front of council in November. The survey has had 430 responses and they will keep promoting until ready to present.
- d. Committee member Bumgarner motioned to adjourn; Committee member Criss seconded.

**7. Old business**

- a. None

**8. New Business**

- a. None

**9. Miscellaneous Matters**

- a. Councilmember Marrah asked if there were any updates on the bench that was hit and if there were any notice about purchasing a second one. Councilmember Marrah also asked for a parking lot update. Administrator Vinson stated that the Historical Society received bids and were meeting to review them. At that point the City will know the cost of construction and make a donation to the Historic Society. There was no response from the owner in regards to improving the parking lot across from TR Oriental.

**10. Adjournment**

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

Mayor Amidon adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Brandy Amidon

Brandy Amidon, Mayor

Completed by

Carson Ruffrage

Carson Ruffrage, City Clerk

Eric Vinson

Eric Vinson, City Administrator