



MINUTES

FORMAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL

City Hall, 206 S. Main Street, Council Chambers

Monday, June 26, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Knox H. White

2. **INVOCATION**

Councilmember Lillian B. Flemming

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

4. **ROLL CALL**

The following members of City Council were in attendance: Mayor Knox White, John DeWorken, Lillian Flemming, Ken Gibson, Wil Brasington, Russell Stall, and Dorothy Dowe.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

June 12, 2023; Approved as submitted

6. **COMMUNICATIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

None

7. **CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

Nataza Gabar, of the Israelite School of Universal and Practical Knowledge, referred to his group speaking in downtown Greenville and to harassment they have received from businesses and Greenville Police. Mr. Gabar expressed a grievance for not being allowed to practice their constitutional rights.

Paula Fulghum, 822 Crescent Avenue, spoke regarding Item 9a, McNeil Court abandonment, sharing that she has visited the current townhomes which she considers good affordable housing and that she understands the proposed townhomes are not going to be affordable housing.

8. **PRESENTATION**

a. Retirement Recognition of City Employees

Mayor White and City Council recognized a total of 564 combined years of service from this year's municipal retirees and acknowledged the retirees individually thanking them for their service to the city of Greenville.

Mayor White and City Council acknowledged City Manager John McDonough on his retirement, thanking him for his service and recognizing his accomplishments while at the City. Mr. McDonough thanked City Council, the Senior Leadership Team members, and the community for its support.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Abandonment of McNeil Court (AB-4-2023)

City Engineer Paul Dow presented a request from Beauwright, LLC, for a proposed abandonment of a portion of McNeil Court for the purpose of constructing a townhomes/condo subdivision. Mr. Dow stated notification of the proposed abandonment has been distributed to utilities and abutting property owners.

Councilmember DeWorken asked if the project would go through the Planning Commission. Mr. Dow responded yes, and he advised that the project would be a new multi-family development with a new roadway. Assistant City Manager Shannon Lavrin stated the project was submitted under the existing land management code and would go before the Planning Commission because it is a subdivision. Ms. Lavrin also stated if the project was submitted under the new code, it would fall under the RN zoning classification, and she would have to perform an analysis to determine if the project meets the new code criteria.

Councilmember Dowe asked if the proposed properties are in the affordable spectrum or have housing vouchers. Ms. Lavrin responded they are not housing vouchers, but they are in the affordable spectrum. Councilmember Dowe also asked if there is a tax abatement running out. Ms. Lavrin responded she is not aware of one and would doubt there being one due to the existing property's age.

Councilmember DeWorken asked if the developer could still develop the property with townhomes if the road is not abandoned. Ms. Lavrin responded that the developer could probably redevelop it, however, she questioned the ability to achieve the same proposed layout without the abandonment.

Councilmember Gibson asked if the City does not abandon the road and the developer comes back with a new layout, would that trigger use of the new code. Ms. Lavrin responded yes, if the submission is after July 15. Ms. Lavrin reminded Council that the abandonment is only receiving public comments tonight and that first reading of the abandonment is anticipated for August 14.

Councilmember Brasington stated he would like the Planning Commission to determine approval of the project prior to considering the road abandonment. Ms. Lavrin responded that a similar project occurred last year and the Planning Commission was uncomfortable with approving the project prior to Council's decision on the road abandonment. Councilmember Brasington suggested further discussion regarding the proper sequence approach.

Councilmember Flemming asked if residents are still living there and questioned the type of townhomes being developed. Councilmember Flemming expressed concern with how many affordable houses are being lost.

Councilmember Dowe stated the only leverage Council has is to not abandon the road, since there is the potential of market rate homes being built. Mayor White stated when the City has leverage, it pursues the policy of 20% percent affordable housing. Councilmember Dowe shared if the new RN zonings has a density bonus, then it could potentially have a density bonus offering.

The following individuals spoke during the public hearing.

Akhil Singh, Development Manager with Beauxwright, commented on the project and stated his team has spent the last year receiving input from the surrounding neighborhoods in an effort to improve the site plan. Mr. Singh also commented on the proposed plan and stated the current units are not justifiable to renovate and are leased at a rent below market. Mr. Singh stated a third of the property is vacant due to the age and non-livable conditions.

Mayor White asked how many units are currently on the site. Mr. Singh responded there are 30 existing units. Councilmember DeWorken asked if significant investment has been made to the homes that are still inhabited. Mr. Singh responded they acquired the property on January 3, 2023, and conducted inspections of each of the duplexes to determine their condition. Mr. Singh stated based on the assessments, the recommendation is pursuing new construction. Councilmember DeWorken asked for an opinion regarding the inhabited homes over the next five years. Mr. Singh advised that they are receiving notices from tenants wanting to vacate and that they have started offering assistance to tenants to help in relocation.

Allison (inaudible), resident of McNeil Court, stated she has lived at the location for over six years and it has been affordable for her with the ability to have her daughter in the area schools. She stated the neighbors are family with many of them being single parent homes. She also stated the rent is affordable enough for her to raise her daughter by herself. She advised that some of the homes have been renovated and that those who have moved have done so under the fear of losing their homes. She also advised that while she appreciates \$2,000 to assist with moving, it does not make a dent in the expense.

Shashona (inaudible), resident of McNeil Court, commented on the neighborhood being small and friendly, and she stated the neighborhood saved her by allowing her to afford a home and provide appropriate schooling for her son. She stated she could understand structural matters, but she believes the homes are extremely livable. She asked for consideration to be given to maintaining the current homes before tearing them down and if necessary, to consider further alternatives in helping residents with relocation.

Ahban Qarah, of the Israelite School of Universal and Practical Knowledge, referred to being raised in Nicholtown and stated he was a witness when developments came to the neighborhood and people relocate to the county because they could not afford to live here. Mr. Qarah also stated there is no place in Greenville you can pay \$1,000 for rent, and he acknowledged while Nicholtown is beautiful, it is not affordable.

Mayor White recognized Bryan Brown with the Greenville Housing Fund and asked for any comments regarding the project. Mr. Brown stated the Greenville Housing Fund usually does not comment on proposed developments until they are approved and expressed that the questions being asked during the meeting are the right ones.

Councilmember Gibson asked what a robust relocation package looks like. Mr. Brown responded while it does not make up for differences in rent, it allows for assistance in replacement housing within a range one can afford. Mr. Brown stated some suggestions they have shared with developers is to pay for the move or pay the resident to move and to provide a stipend for the hardship and inconvenience.

Samantha (inaudible), resident of McNeil Court, commented on the neighborhood being a great community and stated the houses are not falling apart. She stated everyone is baffled with the timeline of the development and shared that no one moved until the developer started knocking on doors.

Robert Ring, abutting property owner to McNeil Court, expressed concerns including the proposed traffic flow, fire hydrant locations, the development being an open area and not gated, potential historical trees, and the location of a retention pond next to his property.

Jordan Michael, North Main Community, stated it would be nice to foster more inclusivity and that a renovation of the property would be key instead of pursuing a new development.

Nataza Gabar, of the Israelite School of Universal and Practical Knowledge, questioned how the developer determined \$2,000 as an amount for moving expenses and whether the residents are being heard. Mr. Gabar encouraged Council to listen to the residents and to determine a better financial amount for relocation.

10. RECOGNITIONS AND APPOINTMENTS – Boards and Commissions
None

CONSENT AGENDA

There will be no discussion of Consent Agenda items unless a Council member so requests in which event the item in question will be considered separately.

Councilmember Dowe requested that Item 11e be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Flemming, to approve second and final reading of agenda items 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d, and 11f, of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – (Ordinances – Second and Final Reading)

- a. Ordinance to approve an easement in favor of Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC for the purpose of providing utility service to city property located at the Greenville Zoo, 150 Cleveland Park Drive (Tax Map Number 006720100100)
(Presented by Engineering Services Director Clint Link)
- b. Ordinance to abandon Goodwin Street (AB-1-2023)
(Presented by City Engineer Paul Dow)
- c. Ordinance to abandon Holiday Street (AB-2-2023)
(Presented by City Engineer Paul Dow)
- d. Ordinance to abandon Alvins Alley (AB-3-2023)
(Presented by City Engineer Paul Dow)
- e. Ordinance to annex approximately 1.69 acres of real property and 0.48 acre of adjacent right-of-way located on Conwell Street and to provide the zoning designation of ~~RM-2, Single family and Multifamily residential district, or~~ RN-A, Neighborhood-Scale A district (Tax Map Numbers 0112000900100, 0112000900600, 0112000900700, and a portion of 0112000902000)(AX-14-2023) (REVISED)
(Presented by Assistant City Manager Shannon Lavrin)

Councilmember Gibson moved, seconded by Councilmember Stall, to approve first reading.

Ms. Lavrin stated the Ordinance was revised to add the right of way in front of the project.

After discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

- f. Ordinance to appropriate \$3,930,495 in the Miscellaneous Grant Fund and Wastewater Fund for South Downtown Sewer Improvements
(Presented by City Engineer Paul Dow)

12. NEW BUSINESS – (Ordinance – First Reading)

None

13. NEW BUSINESS – (Resolutions – First and Final Reading)

None

REGULAR AGENDA

14. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – (Ordinances – Second and Final Reading)

None

15. NEW BUSINESS – (Ordinances – First Reading)

- a. Ordinance to appropriate \$7,712,728 from the Parking Fund for the prepayment of operating expenses to the Greenville Transit Authority and to rescind Ordinance Number 2023-32
(Presented by Interim Office of Management and Budget Director Karen Crawford)

Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Stall, to approve first reading. The motion carried unanimously.

16. NEW BUSINESS – (Resolution – First and Final Reading)

- a. Resolution to award \$22,970 in funding received from the Greenville Zoo Conservation Fund from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, to eleven designated local and international conservation programs
(Presented by Zoo Administrator Bill Cooper)

Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Gibson, to approve first and final reading. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Resolution to award \$45,000 in funding received through the Greenville Zoo “Quarters for Conservation” Program from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, to four designated global conservation organizations
(Presented by Zoo Administrator Bill Cooper)

Councilmember Dowe moved, seconded by Councilmember Gibson, to approve first and final reading. The motion carried unanimously.

- c. Resolution to approve the addition of the Greenville Zoo farmyard facilities to the schedule of naming opportunities
(Presented by Zoo Administrator Bill Cooper)

Councilmember Gibson moved, seconded by Councilmember Dowe, to approve first and final reading. The motion carried unanimously.

- d. Resolution to appoint Shannon Lavrin as City Manager
(Presented by City Council)

Councilmember Stall moved, seconded by Councilmember Dowe, to approve first and final reading. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilmember Dowe recognized Ms. Lavrin as the first female full-time City Manager to serve the city of Greenville, and Mayor White recognized Ms. Lavrin as the first urban planner to serve as City Manager. Each Council member expressed congratulations to Ms. Lavrin on her appointment.

Mr. McDonough administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Lavrin. Ms. Lavrin provided comments and expressed her appreciation to City Council, the community, Mr.

McDonough, her family, and city staff. Ms. Lavrin stated that tonight she has reached her dream of being a City Manager, and she hopes with the right encouragement, the right leadership, and with hard work that everyone has an opportunity to succeed within an organization, within city government, and more specifically within the city of Greenville.

17. STAFF REPORTS
None

18. ADJOURN. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

KNOX H. WHITE, MAYOR

CAMILLA G. PITMAN, MMC, Certified PLS
CITY CLERK

MEETING NOTICE POSTED AND MEDIA NOTIFIED ON JUNE 23, 2023.