



MINUTES
SPECIAL FORMAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL, 206 S. MAIN STREET, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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Wednesday, March 18, 2020 - 3:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER
Mayor Knox H. White

2. 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

3. PRESENTATION CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE PLAN UPDATE

City Manager John McDonough provided an update on the City's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, as provided in a presentation located in Council's Agenda packet, and shared details regarding the proposed Ordinance before Council.

Mr. McDonough introduced Dr. Eric Ossmann with Prisma Health who provided an update regarding the COVID-19 in South Carolina. Dr. Ossmann stated there have been 47 cases reported in South Carolina so far and the next two weeks will be a critical time regarding the number of cases that develop in South Carolina. Dr. Ossmann recommended continuing the aggressive social distancing process and commented on the virtual visits and evaluation lines at the hospital.

Councilmember Dowe asked how the virtual MD system is holding up to volume. Dr. Ossmann responded the number of calls coming into the virtual platform has increased from approximately 500 to 7,500 and advised the first class of providers was trained today to expand and handle the surge.

Mr. McDonough provided information on how other local and state governments are responding to states of emergency. Mr. McDonough referred to Mayor White's Proclamation issued on March 17, 2020, and to the measures taken within the municipal organization since Friday, March 13, 2020, reducing the number of employees physically working in the facilities and allowing for telecommuting of city employees by telephone and emails.

Councilmember Gibson asked what is being done to assist city employees in easing the financial burden. Mr. McDonough responded that hourly employees are being paid throughout the duration of the emergency and that tasks are being distributed throughout the organization to allow for working from home.

City Attorney Mike Pitts provided information regarding Mayor White's Proclamation and Governor McMaster's Executive Order, both issued on March 17. Mr. Pitts stated in light of the Governor's Order, some amendments have been made to the proposed Agenda being presented today.

Councilmember DeWorken asked for clarification regarding the process of ordering take-out food. Mr. Pitts responded there are no specific directives to the process, however, the proposed Ordinance, as amended, will address that item.

Communications Director Beth Brotherton provided information on how the City is working to help local businesses with promoting shopping, retail and discounts through the City's webpage entitled "Connecting Our Community." Ms. Brotherton stated signage has been posted on Main Street allowing for parking spaces for takeout orders. Ms. Brotherton spoke on the City's efforts to educate and respond to public concerns.

Councilmember Dowe asked about the closing of playgrounds and parks which are shared by the City and the School District. Mr. McDonough responded he would obtain information regarding that question.

Mr. Pitts provided an overview of the proposed Ordinance, as amended. Mr. Pitts stated the Ordinance is an emergency ordinance that requires one reading, requires two-thirds vote, and will remain in place for 60 days unless Council takes action to terminate it sooner.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. An Emergency Ordinance to temporarily restrict operations of restaurants, bars, and breweries; defer certain business license payments; suspend normal operating procedures for city boards and commissions; restrict city issued permits for gatherings of a certain size; and matters related thereto
(Roll Call)
(Presented by City Manager John McDonough)

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

Councilmember Brasington asked if there is any consideration given for restaurants with outdoor dining for less than 50 people. Mr. Pitts responded that the scenario would be prohibited under the Governor's Executive Order. Councilmember Brasington requested that Council keep that consideration in mind.

Councilmember Dowe asked how food trucks are addressed specifically and if artisan breweries are covered separately or under bars. Mr. Pitts responded that food trucks fall under the Governor's Executive Order as a retail food establishment, however, they could operate under a carry out function, but could not set up tables for congregating. Regarding artisan breweries, Mr. Pitts responded they would fall within the Governor's Executive Order and the proposed City Ordinance, whether they do or do not serve food.

Councilmember Dowe asked about event space and how it is governed. Mr. Pitts responded event locations are subject to the limitations as provided by a restaurant and they could not have a private event inside.

Councilmember Dowe asked about business license payments and asked about potential penalties and waiving fees. Mr. Pitts responded the Ordinance is written not waiving, but deferring collection.

Councilmember Dowe asked if the City is extending time for payment of H-Tax and A-Tax, similar to Charleston. Mr. Pitts responded the revenues are pledged to bonds issued and the City is currently reviewing the matter. Councilmember Dowe stated she would like to advocate for deferring payment to assist with the cash flow of a business.

Councilmember Dowe asked about the timeline for a business seeking loans, stating the loans could be a first lifeline for those businesses. Councilmember Dowe shared that she would like Council to have an appreciation for it. Mr. McDonough offered to provide an update on small business loans, the unemployment insurance process, and short term relief.

After discussion, Councilmember Gibson moved, seconded by Councilmember Stall, to approve the Ordinance as amended. The motion as amended carried unanimously.

5. ADJOURN.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.



KNOX H. WHITE, MAYOR



CAMILLA G. PITMAN, MMC, Certified PLS
CITY CLERK

MEETING NOTICE POSTED AND MEDIA NOTIFIED ON MARCH 17, 2020, AT 2:57 P.M.