

February 21, 2022

CITY OF CONWAY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CONWAY CITY HALL
229 MAIN STREET, CONWAY
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2022 - 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy, Alex Hyman, Mayor Pro Tem
Council Members: Amanda Butler, William Goldfinch, Beth Helms, Justin Jordan, Larry White

STAFF: Adam Emrick, City Administrator; John Rogers, Deputy Administrator; Mary Catherine Hyman, Deputy Administrator; Jeff Leveille, Technology Services Director; June Wood, Public Information Officer; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Allison Hardin, Planning & Development Director; Dale Long, Police Chief ; Wayne Calhoun, Police; Steven Pearce, Police; Reggie Jenerette, Solid Waste Director; Lynn Smith, Human Resource Director; Timmy Williams, Grounds & Maintenance; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Braxton Fleming, Public Works Superintendent; Allison Williams, Finance Director; Kayla Fleming, Associate Judge; Kent Bitting, Public Utilities Superintendent; David Williams, Associate Director of Recreation; Tim Chapman, Police; and Alicia Shelley, City Clerk

OTHERS: Hillary Howard and the CDA Board, Devin Parks, and approximately five others.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order. Timmy Tyner of The Rock Church gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The requirements for posting notice of this meeting under South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) were met.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: **Motion:** Hyman made a motion, seconded by Jordan, to approve the February 21, 2022 meeting agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Final Reading of Ordinance #2022-02-21(A) amending Article I, Chapter 5 – Redevelopment Enhancement Incentive, of the City of Conway Municipal Code to extend the Redevelopment Enhancement Incentive Program, which provides incentives for development or redevelopment of properties located within the Central Business District (CBD), Core Commercial (CC), commercial properties located on Highway 378 or Highway 701 and the Waccamaw River Districts (WRD-1 and WRD-2) in the City of Conway.**
- B. Special Event – WYOC Community Celebration – April 9, 2022**
- C. Special Event – Laurel Street Yard Sale – April 23, 2022**
- D. Approval of February 7, 2022 City Council Minutes**

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Hyman to approve the February 21, 2022 consent agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried

PUBLIC INPUT:

Stephanie Powell asked for an update regarding the Smith Jones pool and tennis courts. Emrick gave his business card.

There was no further public input. **Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Butler, to close public input. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

- A. Visitor Center Mid-Year Report – Hillary Howard, Conway Downtown Alive** – David Kinard, CDA President of the Board and Daisy Fair said that Conway Downtown Alive was a 501 C 3 non-profit organization with approximately 78 paid staff hours a week. The CDA rents office space from the City of Conway in the City owned 5th and Main Building. CDA was founded in 1986 to promote and preserve our Historic Rivertown while creating and sustaining interest in Downtown Conway as a place.

Travis Overton, CDA Vice President presented the following information regarding CDA:

- 28 event days in 2021
- Awards scholarships, grants and business recognition
- Almost \$8,000 in façade improvement grants in the past year
- \$5500 in rent assistance grants
- Business of the Month, Window of the Month and Annual Awards
- A number of Downtown Service Programs

Kinard then stated that in 2021 visitors came from 44 states and the Visitor Center welcomed 4723 guests, an increase over 2020 but still 40% under pre-pandemic “normal operations” numbers. The normal guests per day is 21-23 and in 2021, CDA had an average of 16 guests an operating day.

Howard presented the following information regarding CDA:

- Historic Tours
- Rack Cards
- Visitor Parking Tag Program
- Map Distribution
- Visitor Center Downtown Marketing Campaign
- Ad Placement
- National Public Radio
- TV Advertising
- Geo-Fencing Campaign
- Billboard Advertising
- Social Media Visitor Center
- 5th and Main Building

- 5th and Main Social Media
- Economic Development Grant Programs

Blain-Bellamy thanked the CDA and stated that she receives tons of compliments about the CDA and she does not know what the City would do without the CDA.

Goldfinch said that 28 event dates were mentioned, he then asked Howard, how many events were held when you started. Howard said maybe 4-5 per year. Goldfinch said that is a tremendous growth and exciting.

Goldfinch stated that he serves on the board and is familiar with the CDA program. He would like to discuss at the budget retreat getting them more resources to move up to where he knows they can be.

Hyman said that he has talked to some of the shop owners about staying open past 5 p.m. Howard said that in order to bring visitors it would need to include all of the shops, not just one here and one there. Hyman agreed.

- B. Request to rezone approximately 0.47 acres of property located at 1705 McKeithan St (PIN 338-06-03-0071) from City of Conway Low Density Residential (R1) to City of Conway Neighborhood Commercial (NC).** Hardin informed Council that this property is located on the corner of 18th Avenue and McKeithan Street. It is bound on two sides by properties zoned R1, and on the other two sides by properties zoned NC. The potential buyer is interested in opening a funeral home. Funeral homes are allowed in the requested NC zone. Funeral homes are often allowed in residential zones, and the City of Conway allows them in higher density residential zones of R2 however they are not a permitted use in the current R1 zoning. The NC District is intended to provide small-scale retail and service uses for nearby residential areas. Dimensional requirements and design standards of the NC district are intended to promote compatibility to surrounding residential areas and accommodate pedestrian use and access. Strip commercial development, designed primarily to accommodate vehicular access and parking, and development that is insensitive or incompatible with the scale and character of the surrounding residential areas, is discouraged in this district. The Comprehensive Plan identifies this parcel as R1 on the Future Land Use Map. She then showed the chart with the NC uses. She stated that the setbacks for this application would be 30 ft. from the front and the side abutting R1, and 15 ft. for the rear abutting NC and the side street of 18th Avenue. She stated at the February 3, 2022 Planning Commission meeting that they reviewed the proposal and discussed parking, the neighborhood, and how the use would address McKeithan Street. The applicant's representative stated that, even if the proposed purchase fell through, the applicant would still want the rezoning for the property. The Commission discussed concerns about potential impact to the neighborhood and recommended approval by a 4-1 vote.

Hardin said that the Public Hearing would be held on March 21 and any letters of opposition received would be presented to Council.

Hyman asked if this was a daycare before. Hardin said yes, it was utilized in the past as a daycare.

White stated that he did not like this, as there would be a big parking issue in the established neighborhood. He asked if the applicants had talked to IGA and Healthcare Partners about parking. Hardin said not to her knowledge.

Blain-Bellamy asked would they have to provide space for required parking. Hardin said yes, and that she found an error in her calculations and would bring forth the correct information to the public hearing.

Goldfinch stated that he has no financial interest in Goldfinch Funeral Home and then said that there is no way that a funeral home would work at this location due to parking for visitation and services.

Helms asked if they would tear down the structure. Hardin said if they did, they would not be able to build back the same square footage.

- C. Request to annex approximately 18.6 acres of property located at 3525 West Hwy 501 (PIN 326-00-00-0025) and request to rezone from Horry County Commercial Forestry Agriculture (CFA) to City of Conway Highway Commercial (HC).** Hardin informed Council that this request is being made to create commercial uses on the property, which is currently vacant. This property is contiguous to the Conway city limits via frontage on Hwy 548 that aligns with Colonial Farms, which was annexed December 20, 2021. Other properties in this area that are in the City limits are zoned Highway Commercial. These include Tractor Supply, the neighboring hotel, and a gas station/convenience store. The future land use map for Conway splits this property into Highway Commercial on the Hwy 501 frontage and Low Density Residential on the remaining portion. Horry County's CFA zone allows for a wide range of businesses, as does Conway's Highway Commercial zone. The main differences between the two zones seems to be the presence of agricultural based uses: Conway's HC does not allow the agricultural, forestry, or livestock uses that the CFA allows. The intent of the HC District is to provide compatible locations to serve the automobile oriented Commercial activities in harmony with major highway developments, reduce traffic congestions and to enhance the aesthetic atmosphere of the City. Planning Commission recommended approval.

Hyman said that he knows the applicants and they are excited to be coming to Conway.

Hardin stated that access would be provided on Highway 501 and Highway 548.

White asked about drainage. Hardin said that the Stormwater division would be reviewing the plan.

FIRST READING:

First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2022-03-21(A) to annex approximately 0.25 acres of property located at 2637 Oak St (PIN 325-15-04-0122) and request to rezone from Horry County Residential (SF20) to City of Conway Low/Medium Density Residential District (R-1). Hardin informed Council that this request is being made to allow an existing residence on the property to tie into City utility services. This property is contiguous to the Conway city limits, and other properties on the same side of Oak Street have been previously annexed and zoned R-1. If the property is annexed into the City of Conway, the R-1 zoning district requirements must be met on any future permitting processes.

White asked if this is an attempt to fill those donut holes. Hardin said yes.

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Jordan to approve first reading of this request. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Emrick informed Council of the following:

- Today, our City lost an icon in athletics, Pete Wilkes, Sr., for whom Pete Wilkes Field is named. Coach Wilkes was a mainstay in our recreation leagues for 33 years, coaching baseball and football. He led Conway to a State Championship in baseball in 1986. In 2017, The City of Conway honored him by naming the new football field, Pete Wilkes Field.
- This past weekend, The Billy Gardner Sports Complex hosted over 700 people at a 20+ team youth softball tournament representing 11 states including Hawaii. Great job to David Williams and Ashley Smith for putting this together and showcasing what Conway has to offer.
- We did have some issues with permit submission on Smith Jones Pool, but we have received confirmation that this permit has been received by DHEC and they are in review.
- This Wednesday evening, from 5:30 PM until 7:00 PM, our consultants will be in
- Conway, holding a public information meeting about the new Trails and Pathways Plan. This will be held at the new Planning and Building Department's Building at 196 Laurel Street. Enter on the Peanut Warehouse side.
- This Saturday, beginning at 10 AM is the Gullah Geechee Community Day, happening all around Downtown Conway. This event is presented by Coastal Carolina University with help from the City, Horry County Museum, the Horry County Memorial Library and Conway Downtown Alive. I am most looking forward to the Puppet Processional happening from 5th and Laurel down Laurel Street at 1 PM. Hope to see you all there to welcome this event back.
- On March 5, Clemson Extension will be at the Town Green to offer trees as a reward for cutting down Bradford Pear Trees on your property. More information can be found on the Extension's website or social media.

- The Budget Retreat is next Thursday, Friday and Saturday. We are all very much looking forward to it. The next City Council meeting is not until March 21.
- Because of the upcoming retreat, my report is short. Tonight, we have Timmy Williams and Jeff Leveille with Department Reports.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Grounds and Maintenance – Williams stated that City staff recently developed a proposed landscaping plan for improvements to the five cutouts on US Highway 501. Four of the cutouts are on Highway 501 East between the Waccamaw River Bridge and the intersection of Highway 501/Highway 544, and the last cut-out is on Highway 501 West near Conway Ford. Landscaping plans include a design for large crepe myrtle trees and ornamental grass (muhly grass). On Highway 501, the plans call for a design of trees and shrubs in the grassy medians along Highway 501, spaced about every half-mile, beginning at the intersection of 501- and Four-Mile Road, and ending this phase at 501 and El Bethel Road. There will be four additional cutouts between El Bethel Road and Four Mile Road. The plan calls for a design of knockout roses in each cut out on Highway 501.

IT – Leveille stated that in his August report, he talked about email phishing and how it was the main cause of introducing ransomware onto private networks. At the time, we had a 44% failure rate from our initial test. After the initial test security, awareness training was assigned to all staff to start an awareness campaign on what to look for in fake emails and how to report them. After the initial training, we started sending out quarterly tests. These would randomly be sent over a two-week period to all staff that used City email. The first test in October the results were an 11% failure rate, significantly down from the initial test and the most recent test conducted at the end of January we were down to a 7% failure rate. The industry standard for small government is 3.9% so we are making progress to meet this. If a quarterly test is failed, (clicking on an attachment, link, or replied to), IT would assign a short training video to reinforce the training. One of the features IT added to outlook is a phish alert button where staff can report suspicious emails. This morning was a perfect example where two staff members reported one and that had a malicious link. Leveille saw it was sent to about 20 employees and was able to purge it from their mailboxes before someone clicked on it.

Leveille stated a new datacenter install was started recently. This consists of replacing six aging datacenter servers with four new ones that have twice the processing power and memory. The new servers are operational and we will then migrate all city services over to the new systems over a period of a couple weeks. As part of this project, we also added a second firewall to provide redundancy and added two new switches for redundancy.

Leveille stated that IT completed the upgrade of the connectivity at 196 Laurel. Fiber is run back to the Annex and we upgraded all the data connections, connected a couple dozen TV's and added new switches and patch panels.

Leveille said that the City has added five more portable camera systems for the Police department, this time building them in house at half the cost of previous ones.

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Hyman asked about the bridge camera. Leveille said that this is a license plate reader. Emrick said it has been there for about 6 months.

COUNCIL INPUT:

Jordan congratulated the Conway High boy's basketball team on a stellar year. He then thanked CCU for the hospitality at their basketball game.

Goldfinch stated that he loved trees and just planted 250 pine trees. He then thanked the Conway Police and Building Departments as a car ran through their building over the weekend.

White asked about a few items:

- Cleaning of the lot across 378 - Emrick said that staff has something to discuss at the Retreat. He then asked if we could get back to cleaning the entrance on 378.
- Sidewalks along 378 to El Bethel - Emrick said that some of that is not in the city and 378 is a DOT road. Last time that was looked at putting in sidewalks it was several million dollars. He then said that as development comes the sidewalks are put in.
- Smalls TV Shop property – Emrick said that we cleaned it up and will plant trees. The City also plans to retain the frontage and put back on the market the rear portion to help redevelopment in that area.
- Pete Wilkes – Emrick said the City would send flowers.
- Key to the City for Vanessa Ellerbe White while she is at the CCU graduation – Blain-Bellamy stated that there are a number of citizens that should be extended a key to the city and she is certainly at the top of the list. She is not sure that this event would be an appropriate time but she is open to suggestions.

Hyman stated that as he was walking around town with his daughter and niece, it was exciting and now to have the WYOC event coming up and the Gullah Geechee next weekend. He said that he grew up in Plantersville and Sandy Island and loves the history. He also talked to a friend from Georgetown who is excited about attending the Wildlife Expo.

Helms thanked David Williams and the Recreation Department for letting her throw out the first pitch at the softball tournament this past weekend. She said there were 300 or more girls playing. She looks forward to the festival this coming weekend.

Blain-Bellamy stated that everyone always does a good job. She then inquired about the illegal sign on Main Street near the Freeze. Emrick said that he would look into it.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this 21 day of March, 2022.


Alicia Shelley, City Clerk