

February 7, 2022

CITY OF CONWAY  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CONWAY CITY HALL  
229 MAIN STREET, CONWAY  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 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; Robert Cooper, Building Official; Ashley Smith, Recreation Director; Lynn Smith, Human Resource Director; Timmy Williams, Grounds & Maintenance; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Braxton Fleming, Public Works Superintendent; Allison Williams, Finance Director; Christina Powers, GIS Analyst; Ann Howell, Utility Billing Manager; Dwayne Singleton, Business License; Kym Wilkerson, Zoning Administrator; and Alicia Shelley, City Clerk

**OTHERS:** Stephanie Powell, Cedric Blain Spain, Devin Parks, Edna Dewitt, Annie Austin Staley, Mary Owens, Orton Bellamy, Jeff off of Dirty Branch Road, Laurie Wise, Mr. McDowell, Rodney Cannon, Connie Wilson an approximately 30 others.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order. Blain-Bellamy 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:** Jordan made a motion, seconded by Hyman, to approve the February 7, 2022 meeting agenda with the removal of XI. Workshop. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Purchase of 3500 Chevrolet Pickup Truck for Solid Waste Department (budgeted)**
- B. Approval of January 18, 2022 Minutes**
- C. Approval of January 20, 2022 Emergency Meeting Minutes**
- D. Approval of January 24, 2022 WES Workshop Minutes**
- E. End the Localized State of Emergency**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** **Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch to approve the February 7, 2022 consent agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

Stephanie Powell stated that she had concerns that a mobile home was going in at 1850 West Ridge. She then had concerns with the Housing Authority putting in apartments. Lastly, she said that the new homes with no HOA have mailboxes and the residents that have been there are told that they have to go to the Post Office to get their mail.

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

- A. Presentation of Longevity Awards – January 2022 – 5 years: Christina Powers, Planning; 15 years: Ann Howell, Finance; 20 years: Dwayne Singleton, Finance –** Emrick and Jordan presented longevity awards to Christina Powers, Planning – 5 years; Ann Howell, Finance – 15 years; and Dwayne Singleton, Finance – 20 years.
- B. Employee of the Month – Public Service –** Hardin presented Kym Wilkerson, Zoning Administrator with an award certificate for Employee of the Month for January.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING:**

- A. Public Hearing and First 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.** Hyman informed Council that in 2016, City Council expressed a desire to lessen fees and other costs associated with commercial development in certain districts that have struggled with economic development. Currently, the City charges capital recovery fees to businesses opening or changing uses if the number of residential equivalency units (REUs) increases. These fees can run into the tens of thousands of dollars. Additionally, the City charges building permit fees, business license fees, and property taxes. To help with these issues, the Redevelopment Enhancement Incentive Program was created to lessen the burden of opening or expanding a new business endeavor within commercial zoning districts that have shown a need for a boost to help stimulate development or redevelopment. While creating the incentive, City Council considered capital recovery fees, property taxes, and business license fees. After review, City Council concluded that it was in the best interest of the City to start the incentive program by offering only the reimbursement of capital recovery fees. In 2016, the incentive was approved and applied to new or expanding businesses in the Central Business District, Core Commercial, and commercial property fronting Highway 378

(Wright Boulevard) or Highway 701 (Main Street/4<sup>th</sup> Avenue). At that time, Council asked that the incentive program expire after three years (unless renewed by Council) to allow the opportunity to be tested to see if it accomplishes the stated goals. In 2019, the program was renewed and Waccamaw River Districts (WRD-1 and WRD-2) were added. Currently, the program is set to expire on March 18, 2022.

Cedric Blain Spain spoke in opposition to this request, particularly to Highway 378. He asked Council to vote no or insert language that protects Highway 378.

Devin Parks of the Conway Chamber of Commerce spoke on favor of this request.

There was no further public input. **Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by Hyman, to close public input. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

Hyman stated that projects that have previously been approved for this incentive include Vaught Surgery Center, Under the Bridge Restaurant, Conway Animal Hospital, Boco Bistro, Third and Laurel, and Crooked Oak.

Goldfinch asked that if a dilapidated store on the corner wanted to renovate, this program could help. Hyman said yes.

White asked if the gas station on Main Street wanted to re-open, they could apply for this program. Hyman said yes.

Hyman stated that in the prior ordinance the eligibility was reviewed and approved by the city administrator but this ordinance states that would be done by city council.

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

- B. Public Hearing and First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2022-02-21(B) to rezone approximately 182.22 acres of property located along Highway 378 (PIN# 369-00-00-0044) from Low/Medium Density Residential (R1) to Light Industrial (LI).** Hardin informed Council that this property was annexed and zoned R1 in July 2021 with the intent to be used for a single-family residential development with 285 lots. Since that time, the property owner had had another opportunity present and has filed to rezone this property to Light Industrial (LI). At the time of the July rezoning, this parcel was identified on the City's Future Land Use Map as Industrial. This rezoning request, if approved, would restore the zoning of the district to consistency with the Future Land Use Map from prior to the July rezoning. Hardin gave some traffic impacts on the following uses: single-family homes – 10 trips per day, apartments/condos/townhouses – 7 trips per day, office – 10 trips per day, retail – 38 trips per day, and industrial – 5 trips per day. She then gave other considerations as follows: Industrial development generally means additional jobs enter the work force, any internal access pathways are private and not turned over to the city for maintenance, and there is ample space for buffers and other design factors on the site.

Blain-Bellamy recused herself from this request.

**Public Input:**

Edna M. Dewitt spoke in opposition of the request. She says that putting in amphitheater in this location would disrupt the history of the area and the value of their properties.

Annie Austin Staley spoke in opposition of bringing this type of business such as an amphitheater into the residential area of Sand Ridge.

Mary Owens spoke in opposition saying that this would lower the value of the homes.

Orton Bellamy stated that the Sand Ridge community is not against development, but would like to see more green space and buffers. He stated that Light Industrial would impact the community and they would like to maintain the community's integrity.

Jeff who lives on Dirty Branch Road is opposed to this request siting that the amount of noise it would bring to the community.

Cedric Blain Spain stated that he would like City Council to deny this request just as the County denied the same request on 905 and Highway 22. He stated that the area would see a higher tax.

Laurie Wise said that she lives on Tampa Lane and is opposed to this request.

Mr. McDowell stated that there are jobs in other areas available.

Rodney Cannon stated that he lives on Dirty Branch Road and he is concerned about the value of his home and asked not to allow this in his backyard.

Connie Wilson asked to please put the amphitheater somewhere. She is concerned with the noise.

Hyman asked how many were in attendance that opposed this request. Approximately 35 people raised their hands.

Emrick stated that staff received several letters that were all given to Council and they should be made as part of the record.

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

Hyman asked if the City had gotten anything that says what is going in this location. Hardin said nothing is in the application. The name is the same as the one that applied for the amphitheater in Horry County.

Hardin said that the LI buffer would be bigger and more landscaping would be required than in R1. She then said that LI is more compatible with this area especially with the proximity to the airport.

Hyman said that he viewed the property and there seemed to be many pines and asked about the cutting of the timber. Hardin said that a pine tree is not a protected species, like the hardwoods.

White stated that the Marion County Amphitheater is now gone and that Horry County did not allow an amphitheater, so why should the City. He said that this area has been dumped on with the road and that he feels sorry for them, as eminent domain is bad.

White said that he saw in the newspaper that an amphitheater was going here and he was also blindsided.

Hyman stated that he is not sure what the best use for this area is, either 300 houses or manufacturing/industrial.

Hardin stated that she would like to talk to this community when the Housing Element is due to see how they can be better served in the comp plan.

**Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Helms, to deny this request. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING:**

**Public Hearing and second reading of Ordinance #ZA2022-02-07 to rezone 1.01 acres of property located at 2908 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (PIN 368-08-03-0006) from City of Conway Low-Density Residential District (R1) to Jamestown Baptist Planned Development (PD).** Hardin informed Council that the rezoning application was submitted by Jamestown Baptist Church on request from staff. The property in question, 2908 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, is owned by Jamestown Baptist, which is located next door at 2916 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. In 2016, Jamestown Baptist Church applied for and received approval of a rezoning request to create a Planned Development district for a new church site containing 10.4 acres. The proposed two-phased planned development included a new church campus with passive and active recreation facilities and future institutional facilities, such as a sanctuary, fellowship hall, classrooms, etc. The area currently subject to rezoning had a single-family residential structure on site until recently, and County tax maps showed the property as a separate tax parcel. While researching the property for a demolition permit, however, City staff discovered that the parcel line was just for assessment purposes, not an actual division of property. The City's policy is that zoning lines follow actual property boundaries. Once staff determined that the map line shown between 2908 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (the house) and 2916 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (the church site) was not a property boundary, staff requested the rezoning petition from the church to extend the Planned Development zoning to the full boundary. Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval at their November 30, 2021 meeting.

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

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Hyman to approve final reading of this request. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Emrick informed Council of the following:

- He congratulated the City's Recreation Department for the Father/Daughter Dance on Saturday.
- An update on Phase II of the Fourth Avenue Underground Utility Conversion. This next phase runs from Beaty Street to the intersection of Third and Fourth Avenue. The project was originally delayed due to shipping delays and some of the winter weather; however, the contractor, Carolina Conduit, is currently ahead of schedule and plans for the underground portion to be completed by July of this year. The removal of the overhead lines should happen by the end of this calendar year. The resurfacing will not likely occur until the spring of 2023. Mostly all of the work is occurring at night per SCDOT regulations. You will likely see a bid for electrical services come through soon. The City hires an electrical contractor to make many of the connections, not covered under the contract with the conversion contractor.
- Staff had a wonderful few days last week with our Master Plan consultants. The planning effort started with a long walking tour of downtown and the Riverfront. We had numerous input sessions from a wide variety of stakeholders, all of whom weighed in on the creation of the plan. There will also three public sessions, two for input, and the last for the draft presentation. A survey is also still open to make sure your thoughts are considered going forward, as of Friday morning, nearly 500 people had responded, which, for a survey like this, is pretty amazing. The goal of this planning effort is to help shape the growth of our downtown through 2030. Once the plan is completed, it will be presented to Council for consideration and adoption.
- We have not spoken about the Chestnut Bay project in a bit, so I wanted to update you of where we are, even though not much new has happened. As you know, we were denied funding on the first round of BRIC due to FEMA having some internal issues. We have appealed this denial, which is still pending. In the meanwhile, we have applied for funding under round two of the same funding source, and awards have not been given as of yet. There were a number of parcels we needed to acquire to facilitate the project and we have purchased all of them but one at this point.
- Often, and mostly on social media, we see posts about what the City needs... the latest was a Hobby Lobby. Inevitably, a comment or series of comments will come up that the "City needs to add more businesses and stop caring about fast food restaurants or houses." My comment tonight is less for you on Council and more for the public watching or media reporting. The City does not build houses. We do not open businesses. We do not own the empty shopping plazas where people think would be great for these things. Most of us agree that a Hobby Lobby, Kroger, Publix, Home Depot, Trader Joes, Outback... would all

be great. If any of those companies are listening, we welcome you with open arms. But for our residents... the City does not open stores or operate them once they are here.

- We are working on a second plan that we have mentioned before, for pathways and trails. A survey on those will be released on Thursday. Together, these two plans will shape how we continue to grow while improving.
- Finally, we are working on the Budget Retreat. I have heard from a few of you with items you want us to look into and address. We need whatever you have by this Friday or we will not have time to research it and have it ready. If you have it available to email, please do so ASAP.

## **COUNCIL INPUT:**

**Helms** thanked Smith and his staff for the father/daughter dance as she was selected to be a judge. She said that there were 640 people at this event. She then said that she enjoyed the input of the Master Plan that was submitted but was disappointed that nothing was said for a new facility for City Council.

**Hyman** welcomed the Leadership Grand Strand participants that were in attendance at the meeting. He stated that he did not attend the father daughter dance as he thought his daughter was aged out but understands there is no age limit now.

**White** asked about the mailboxes that were torn down in West Ridge and was it due to a car chase and when might the residents get their boxes back up. Chief Long stated he would check on it. He then thanked the Recreation Center and Ashley for all the good work and stated that a team from Atlanta would be coming soon to do free Covid testing and vaccinations. He then asked about the Smith Jones Pool. Emrick said that the engineering and survey was complete and that staff was waiting on DHEC to approve the plans so that it could then go out to bids. White said that the kids need a pool and tennis courts. Emrick said that the tennis courts would be discussed at the Budget Retreat.

**Goldfinch** stated that the City needs to quit expanding its footprint and catch up. He stated that we are stretching our resources. He said that as far as the amphitheater, he was torn as he thinks this type of venue would be unique in Conway and he would love to have. However, he would not want it beside him either. He then asked when a mother/son dance would be held. He said that we need to figure something out regarding the tennis courts and annexation expansion and is glad to see that it will be discussed at the Budget Retreat. He then said that the MASC is a great time to catch up with those who serve. He commended Blain-Bellamy on the forum she hosted on the law enforcement safety. He said that her presence reflected well on the City. He then congratulated her on being the Second Vice President of the MASC.

**Jordan** thanked Smith and his outstanding crew for the father/daughter dance as this was year 8 or 9 for him attending. He said that he looks forward to it every year and that his daughter had a blast. He then told Smith he is not sure how he would top it for next year.

**Butler** acknowledged the Conway High School boys basketball team as being ranked in the state and number two in the region. She then stated that some of the parents had voiced concerns to her

February 7, 2022

regarding the numerous vape shops in the area and the amount of young kids that are using and bringing to school.

**Blain-Bellamy** then read a letter from a resident, Mr. Parler who commended staff for help on his water issue at his home. She then said that she could not describe the amazing Father/Daughter dance that took place Saturday night. She presented slides of how the gym looked like a ballroom. She recognized Ashley and his crew for an amazing job! And, said that Jordan was really dressed up. She said that this event is a lifetime memory that is so well thought out and encouraged the Recreation staff to keep building. Smith gave the credit to all his staff, including “Mamie” Janic Hopkins, Mikal Moody, Karen Johnson, and Junior Hemingway.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White to enter into Executive Session for the following: A. Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Committees [pursuant to SC Code §30-4-70(A)(1)]; B. Discussion of Annual Evaluation of City Administrator [pursuant to SC Code §30-4-70 (A)(1)]. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**RECONVENE FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion:** Hyman made a motion, seconded by White to leave Executive Session. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion:** Hyman made a motion, seconded by White to approve the following board appointments as discussed in Executive Session. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

A-Tax Committee – Russell Fowler was reappointed for a 3-year term expiring on 12/31/2024.

Planning Commission – Chris Guidera was reappointed to fill a 3-year term expiring 12/31/2024.

Housing Authority – Ashley Hadfield was appointed to fill an unexpired term ending 4/24/2023.

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

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

  
Alicia Shelley, City Clerk