

March 18, 2024

CITY OF CONWAY  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CONWAY CITY HALL  
229 MAIN STREET, CONWAY  
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024 - 4:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Barbara Jo Blain, Mayor Pro Tem Larry White, Amanda Butler, William Goldfinch, Julie Hardwick, Beth Helms, Justin Jordan.

**STAFF:** Adam Emrick, City Administrator; Mary Catherine Hyman, Deputy City Administrator; John Rogers, Deputy City Administrator; June Wood, Public Information Officer; Jeff Leveille, Technology Services Director; Timmy Williams, Hospitality & Beautification Director; Reggie Jenerette, Solid Waste Director; Lynn Smith, Human Resource Director; Rock Rabon, Fleet Maintenance Director; Jessica Hucks, Planning and Development Director; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Ashley Smith, Recreation Director; Dale Long, Police Chief; Ted Dudley, Public Utilities Deputy Director; Robert Cooper, Construction Services Director; Brandon Harrelson, Public Works Director; Katie Dennis, Planning Concierge; Allison Williams, Finance Director; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Kayla Fleming, Municipal Judge; and Alicia Shelley, City Clerk.

**OTHERS:** Priscilla Fuller, Ronald Matta. There were approximately 30 others in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Blain called the meeting to order. Rev. Robert Bannan, Kingston Presbyterian 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.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Final Reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-03-18 (A) to amend the Future Land Use Map (2019-2029) (FLUM) of the City of Conway Comprehensive Plan, relative to property located near the corner of Highway 501 (Church St) and Mill Pond Road (PIN 338-10-01-0015), consisting of a total of 8.96 acres, from the Conservation Preservation (CP) district to the Highway Commercial (HC) and Conservation Preservation (CP) districts.**
- B. Final Reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-03-18 (D) to annex approximately 11.53 acres of property located at/near the intersection of Gardner Lacy Road and Highway 501 (PIN 399-00-00-0403), and rezone from the Horry County Highway Commercial (HC) district to the City of Conway Highway Commercial (HC) district.**
- C. Approval of Mutual Aid and Law Enforcement Support Agreement with the City of North Myrtle Beach**
- D. Approval of Special Event – Family Fun Day – June 15, 2024**
- E. Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with the South Carolina Fire Academy**

**F. Approval of February 19, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes**

**G. Approval of FY 2024-2025 Budget Retreat Minutes**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** **Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Butler to approve the March 18, 2024 consent agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

- Thessalonia Graham, Kingston Lake Missionary Baptist Association spoke to Council regarding property at Grainger Road, Highway 378 and Rose Hill and said that the Association supported Parkers Kitchen being at this location. Graham then said that after reading the newspaper article, he felt Council was unethical with their decision and that Parker's Kitchen had pulled out of the deal.
- Ron Matta told Council that he was opposed to the Warden Tract Annexation and that he was told that this property would not be annexed into the City.
- Priscilla Fuller spoke to Council regarding Council's decision to put the Whittemore Task Force on hold and asked them to reconsider. Fuller said that she supported the Hate Crime Law. Fuller then said she would like for Council to be more inclusive with the Invocation at City Council meetings.
- Carolyn Hickman Williams informed Council that she was disappointed in the pause of the Whittemore Task Force and asked Council to share the details of their decision.
- Marvin Neal, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President of SC State Conference NAACP asked Council to support the Hate Crime in the form of an Ordinance, instead of a Resolution.

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

**A. Presentation of Longevity Awards – February 2024 – 5 Years: Corina Goodson, Hospitality and Beautification; 10 Years: Christopher Price, Fire – Emrick and Helms presented the February 2024 Longevity Awards.**

**B. Presentation of Employee of the Month for March 2024 – Public Safety – Hendrick presented Christopher Price with Public Safety Employee of the Month for March 2024.**

**PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING:**

**A. First Reading and Public Hearing of Ordinance #ZA2024-04-15 (A) to amend the City's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) of the City of Conway Comprehensive Plan, relative to property located on Sixth Ave (PIN 338-13-03-0006), consisting of approximately 0.31 acres, from the Low/Medium-Density (R-1) district to the Professional (P) district.** Hucks stated that the Future Land Use Map was adopted in 2019 in conjunction with the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. When reviewing and considering requests for annexation and/or rezoning, staff must consider the use that is designated on the future land use map for the subject property. When a request for rezoning does not align with the use specified on the future land use map, the

map must be updated to reflect the change. This particular property, located on Sixth Ave, is currently zoned R-1, Low/Medium Density Residential, and the City's current future land use map also identifies the future land use as R-1. The property is located directly behind the old Barker's gas & service station, which is zoned Neighborhood Commercial (NC). There are 2 properties that abut this property with frontage on Main Street and before you get to Kingston Lake Drive, already zoned Professional (P). Additionally, there are other properties that do not have direct frontage on Main Street that are zoned Professional, including 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Lakewood Avenue, and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Professional zoning district allows both commercial and residential uses, and some properties in this area that have either been used both residentially and commercially, or that are set up for residential or commercial use. The subject property is abutting 2 other properties that are already zoned Professional. The applicants would like to amend the future land use map so that they may request to rezone the property to the Professional district. Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, including amendments to the future land use map, require a 30-day notice in advance of a public hearing. The request has been properly advertised for a public hearing for today's meeting. Planning Commission also held a public hearing on the request at their March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, and recommended approval of the request to amend the Future Land Use Map.

There was no public input.

**Motion:** White made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch to close the Public Hearing. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Blain to deny first reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-04-15 (A). **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

#### **FIRST READING:**

- A. First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-04-15 (B) to rezone approximately 0.31 acres of property (PIN 338-13-03-0006) located on Sixth Ave from the Low/Medium-Density Residential (R-1) district to the Professional (P) district.**

Goldfinch stated that this parcel encroaches into the residential neighborhood, and he can see all properties directly fronting Main Street eventually become Professional but not parcels behind those.

**Motion:** Blain made a motion, seconded by Jordan to deny first reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-04-15 (B). **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

#### **CONSIDERATION:**

- A. Consideration of approval of a name for a new residential development, located on Collins Jollie Rd – “Maple Grove”** - Hucks stated that the proposed development is located on Collins Jollie Road, and make up Tracts E, F, and G of the Collins Jollie Conservation Subdivision Master Plan. The Collins Jollie Conservation Subdivision Master Plan was approved in 2022, and since that time, Tracts A, C and D have received

preliminary plan approval. These tracts (E, F, and G) are now going through the Technical Review Process. Article 10, Section 10.3.18 of the Unified Development Ordinance requires that all subdivision names be approved by City Council. Hucks said that staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision name.

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to approve Maple Grove as the name of the residential development. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- B. Consideration of a Special Event – Halloween Hustle - October 19, 2024** – Smith informed Council that this was the Third Annual Halloween Hustle and would be held on October 19, the same day as the CCU Homecoming Parade. Smith said that the routes had changed and there would be 3 races, a 10K, 5K and a mile run.

**Motion:** Blain made a motion, seconded by Hardwick, to approve the special event permit as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- C. Consideration of a Special Event - Easter Egg Drop – March 30, 2024** – Rogers informed Council that the Easter Egg Drop would be held at Langston Baptist Church property on March 30. A helicopter will drop 5,000 eggs from the sky. The event will be held on the church’s soccer field and parking lot.

**Motion:** Blain made a motion, seconded by Jordan to approve the special event permit as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- D. Consideration of a Special Event – Stations of the Cross – March 29, 2024** – Rogers informed Council that the Catholic Church of St. James would be holding Stations of the Cross on March 29. The procession will line up at the old tennis center. Roads impacted include Elm Street, Second Avenue, and Laurel Street. There will be 11 altar-like stands that will be spread along Laurel Street, Horry County Government property and Second Avenue with the group stopping at each altar for 10-15 minutes.

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White to approve the special event permit as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- E. Consideration of a Resolution Encouraging the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor to Enact a Statewide Hate Crime Law** – Rogers stated that during previous discussions, council has expressed the desire to formally encourage the state to pass hate crime legislation. South Carolina is one of only two states in the US with no formal hate crime legislation. Rogers said that staff drafted a Resolution encouraging the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor to enact a statewide hate crime law.

White said that he would like to see the league of cities write to the Governor.

There was a brief discussion regarding a City Ordinance and the limitations of Municipal Court versus state law.

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Blain to approve the resolution encouraging the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor to enact a statewide hate crime law. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

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

Emrick informed Council of the following:

- The Waccamaw Sportsman's Expo is this Friday and Saturday, and Emrick said that if you've not been to an Expo before, you don't want to miss it.
- Conway High School and most of the County schools will hold their prom next week, on Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup>. Conway High's is at the Peanut Warehouse this year. Expect to see lots of kids downtown looking spiffy and getting their pictures taken.
- Emrick invited everyone to Conway High's Boys' soccer match tonight against Green Sea Floyds. Tonight is 80's night at the Backyard! 7:15 is gametime. Emrick promised that you will experience high school soccer in a different way if you attend.
- Emrick said that tonight, we do have department head reports from Ashley Smith and Chief Le Hendrick.

**Fire Department** – Hendrick reported the following:

#### Department Update

- Fully staffed since March 2023
- 18,723 hours of training in 2023
  - Does not include the Command Staff
- Training Center has been used several times.
  - Logged about 80 hours of use at the facility since August 2023
- Fire Apparatus order – Delivery September 2026
- SAFER grant – Application period is open.

#### Call Volume

- 3,795 Incidents in 2022
- 3,879 Incidents in 2023
  - 2.21% increase

#### EMT Update

- 31 of 42 current EMTs
- 3 currently in class
- 3 possibly slated to go next (no date)

#### Risk Management

- Working on an annual update to the Safety Manual

#### Emergency Management

- Reviewing the EOP for annual update(s)
- New evacuation zones
- Cone of uncertainty will now include island areas versus just coastal areas.

March 18, 2024

- Hurricane Idalia full EOC activation in August
  - Trying to get that claim paid and closed out.
  - Federal declaration for overtime costs
- Two partial EOC activations in winter
  - December & January
  - No declarations

**Recreation Department** – Smith reported the following:

### **Sports and Fitness Center:**

#### Memberships

- During the month of February, we signed 94 new memberships.
- For the month of February, the Sports and Fitness Center has sold:
  - Guest Passes (With a member) (\$7): 60
  - “Try Us Out” One Day Passes (Without a member) (\$10): 128
  - Youth Drop-in Day Pass: 641
  - Youth Membership: 123
  - Total Members: 2857

#### Aquatics

- Total # of Patrons: 2,713
  - TigerSharks Swim Team have continued to have swim practice. We have a total of 35 swimmers from 5-18 years old.
  - February 10<sup>th</sup> the TigerSharks hosted their 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conway Medical Center Invitational. Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, and Georgetown YMCA attended the meet. Ribbons were given to the top five swimmers in each event. Each swimmer was also awarded a Conway Medical Center Swim Cap.
  - The Aquatics Dept. hosted a Fitter and Faster Swim Clinic. The clinic was open to all our local swim programs. From varsity swim, recreation swim, and US Masters swim. The clinicians were Olympian Iago Moussalem, and Olympic Qualifier Bailey Nero. We had 26 swimmers who attended (that was the max), and we have received wonderful feedback.

### **Parks and Recreation:**

#### Community Events

- February 15 was Family Fun Night at Whittemore Park Middle with Zumba Class at 6 p.m.
- February 3 was the Backpack giveaway with 150, Bethel AE Church gave 100.
- Beginner Pickleball Classes – 332 participants

#### Parks

- New benches and concrete bench pads have been installed at Collins Park.
- We have parks with playgrounds, and parks with plenty of open space.

#### Athletics

March 18, 2024

- Soccer, Baseball, Softball – 1366 participant with 1364 last year
- Spring Sports Jamboree will be April 6 at the Billy Gardner sports complex. Coach Kevin Schnall, Chauncey and members of the 13<sup>th</sup> ranked CCU baseball team will be our guests. This will also be picture day and Spring Yard Sale.

### Sports Tourism Report

- 22 Baseball tournaments with the last one scheduled for November 23
- This past weekend we had 36 teams from SC, NC, and Georgia competing at the Billy Gardner Sports Complex.
- Hosting the SC State Gymnastics Championships April 4-7
- Hosting La Lucha Lebre Mexican Wrestling April 21
- We are currently working with CCU to determine the economic impact these events have on the city. The one concern so far is limited hotels in the Conway area. These teams stay in the MB/NMB area.

### Programs

- March 22 – Floating Egg Hunt
- March 23 – Easter Egg Hunt
- March 23 – Sensory Friendly Egg Hunt
- March 28 – Teen Egg Hunt
- April 1-4 – Spring Break Camp
- Summer Day Camp is full.

### **COUNCIL INPUT:**

**Butler** said that she wants to make sure that Council is being as transparent as possible regarding the Whittemore Task Force Committee with the public as well as the members of the task force in the decision making and the direction of where the task force is going. Butler said that she knows individual members were contacted but the public may possibly be unaware of how everything transpired.

**White** said that he was accused of having something to do with the dissolving of the sale of the Baptist Church and stated that he had nothing to do with the sale of it, and that his concern with it was that the group brought back an exit route to get back to 378. White said he was concerned about the safety of the kids, the two new houses that were just built to make sure that they did not go back to the right to Smith Jones. White stated again that he had nothing to do with Parkers Kitchen getting out of the deal and wanted all to hear it from him.

**Goldfinch** said he wanted to piggyback on White's comment, as he was not at the last meeting, but it was his understanding that it was deferred. Goldfinch then encouraged the applicant to go back after Parker's Kitchen as he said he would love to have one there, perhaps the logistics do have to get worked out. Goldfinch said that this Council has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars purchasing property on Highway 378 in the last few years to enhance the quality, and in some cases to clean up things that needed to be cleaned up, and when you have an organization like that comes in and puts millions of dollars on a corner to make it look good. Goldfinch said that he thinks is going to happen is it will encourage the owners of the surrounding properties to do the same thing and he said that he sees it as an economic development opportunity for that stretch of

378. Goldfinch said that would have been his pitch had he been here the other night, but he wasn't. Goldfinch then said that the mayor said we do not interact during public input, so he said that he could not say what he really wanted to say. Goldfinch said that we live in a growing area and with that comes constraints and with that comes new challenges. Goldfinch said that it is frustrating when it seems to come from groups of people who have just moved here. Goldfinch said taxes are not going up because a lifelong resident should not have to subsidize growth and that is why Council did what we did in a way to ensure by using the Planned Development that we would be compensated for this additional growth. Goldfinch said that the city was going to receive money from this development to not put that burden on the backs of the citizens that have been paying their share for decades.

**Jordan** said that he would not repeat everything that Goldfinch said but agreed. Jordan then told White happy birthday.

**Hardwick** said that she loves coming over the bridge and seeing the easter eggs in the trees and the Happy Easter sign, as it totally made her afternoon. Hardwick then said a job well done. Hardwick said that looking at the good in the community, CCU Baseball is ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the Nation as that is huge for our community, economic development, and to bring students into our area. Hardwick said as we continue to work and grow to retain people and have them invest into our community and our creative eggs in the trees that help keep students and families want to stay and move here. Hardwick thanked Hendrick for the EMT certifications as she witnessed it firsthand with a neighbor, and it was great to see them working quickly and efficiently to provide the aid that was needed to the patient. Hardwick said she is looking forward to all the activities that Smith spoke about at the Recreation Center and it is great that there are so many of our young people in those activities and to see it grow and grow. Hardwick then told White, happy birthday.

**Blain** said that regarding the Whittemore Task Force she is all about being transparent, and she said that she didn't know how but to sit today and say that it was not anyone's intention that the news got out before Council got out to say anything about it, as it was intended to be a pause that has to do with some clear lines of communication that have not been utilized. Blain said that she thinks that the task force and the city have different sets of ideas with what is available, what can happen in the timeframe, and said that she tried her best personally to invite members to the task force. What council learned as the direction is outside the realm of what the city thinks is possible in any reasonable amount of time. The possibility of having a staff person present was determined to be not essential to the task force but could have kept everyone in the same line of thinking. Blain stated that she is total transparent and doesn't know who said it was the breaking up of the organization, as Council only said to pause. Blain said she doesn't get to say what happens as she is one of seven and it takes a majority of the council votes to make any plan in the decision making. Council just needed to take the time to determine where we are going. Blain said about Parkers Kitchen that there is nothing unethical about just trying to make sure that our children are safe. Blain stated that Council did not deny the sale or designation of what could be had on that property. Blain said that she said to everyone that she was talking out of both sides of her mouth, and was concerned with things like a daycare, children walking unsupervised, a cemetery, a playground so close by, and that is within the realm of her responsibility. Blain said that on the other side she said that she did want development such as that in the community and that we needed to work it out to make that happen. Blain said that nothing here is unethical as she doesn't get anything out of allowing Parkers Kitchen to be here or disallowing Parkers Kitchen to come and we just simply needed to work out some things with them, and pulling away is not our doing. Blain then said that



March 18, 2024

she is extremely excited about all the events that are coming in our community, and that they serve the best interest of our community broadly, particularly our children whom we should keep in the forefront of our minds.

Blain then asked everyone to join in singing Happy Birthday to White.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes approved by City Council this 15 day of April, 2024.

Alicia Shelley  
Alicia Shelley, City Clerk