

April 15, 2024

CITY OF CONWAY
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CONWAY CITY HALL
229 MAIN STREET, CONWAY
MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024 - 4:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Jo Blain, Mayor Pro Tem Larry White, Amanda Butler, William Goldfinch, Julie Hardwick, Beth Helms. **ABSENT:** 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; Becky Graham, Human Resource Deputy Director; Rock Rabon, Fleet Maintenance 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; Anne Bessant, Planning and Development Assistant; and Alicia Shelley, City Clerk.

OTHERS: Hillary Howard, Kelli James, Kyle Randle. There were approximately 20 others in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain called the meeting to order. Rev. Kyle Randle, First United Methodist 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.

Blain welcomed Gerry Shea, Field Representative for Congressman Fry.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approval of Adoption of Annual Resolution Recognizing April as National Fair Housing Month**
- B. Approval of Special Event – Under the Lights 5K – December 11, 2024**
- C. Approval of a Resolution to accept a Letter of Credit for the Remaining Infrastructure for Kingston Bay, Phase 2.**
- D. Approval of Purchase of Replacement Vehicle for the Fire Department (budgeted)**
- E. Approval of Purchase of Vehicle for the Finance Department (budgeted)**
- F. Resolution Accepting Dedication of Roadway and Drainage System for Jenkins Field Road**

G. Resolution Honoring Gary Gilmore

H. Approval of March 18, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: Motion: Butler made a motion, seconded by Helms to approve the April 15, 2024 consent agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch to approve the agenda with the exception of moving item VIII.C. Consideration of Approval of a Standard 5K Run Route before item VIII.B. Consideration of Approval of a Special Event – Gobble Gobble 5K & 1 Miler. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

PUBLIC INPUT:

- Kelli James, Executive Vice President of the Conway Chamber of Commerce asked Council to consider a City Ordinance change to allow the sale and consumption of canned beer within the festival area for Riverfest 2024.

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

INTRODUCTION OF NEW HIRES:

Blain introduced the following new employees:

- Matthew Anderson – Police Officer
- Christopher Turner - Firefighter
- Samantha Huggins - Judicial Assistant
- Jarrod Brown - Hospitality & Beautification Technician
- Andrew Pye - Hospitality & Beautification Technician
- Frankie Edwards - Zoning & Landscaping Inspector
- Jordan Carpenter - Firefighter
- Shakeria Jenerette - Utility Billing Specialist
- Esteban Cruz-Turner - Welder/Fabricator/Mechanic
- Anthony Molnar - Firefighter
- Brian Szebenyi - Hospitality & Beautification Technician
- David Crocker - Police Officer
- Morgan Morris - Accounts Payable Clerk
- Henry Green - Right of Way Technician
- Clark Davis - Right of Way Technician

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

- A. Presentation of a Proclamation Declaring April as Autism Acceptance Month –**
Blain presented a Proclamation declaring April as Autism Acceptance Month to Sara Pope, SOS Care; Patsy Baker, South Conway Elementary; and others.

- B. Presentation of Employee of the Month for April 2024 – Public Service – Hyman** presented Anne Bessant, Planning and Development Assistant with Public Service Employee of the Month for April 2024.

FIRST READING:

First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-05-06 to annex approximately 0.34 acres of property located at 5204 Columbia Street (PIN 383-08-03-0003), and rezone from the Horry County Residential, no mobile homes allowed, district (SF10) to the City of Conway Low/Medium-Density Residential (R-1) district. Dennis stated that this annexation application was submitted as a requirement to connect to water and/or sewer utilities. There is an existing single-family residence and storage building on the property. Council has annexed approximately eleven properties within the College Park Subdivision. Dennis said that staff recommends approval of this annexation request.

Motion: Blain made a motion, seconded by Hardwick to approve first reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-05-06. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION:

- A. Consideration of a Resolution to authorize the fee-in-lieu of open space for the (proposed) Chapman Village subdivision located on Medlen Parkway (parent PIN: 338-00-00-0003).** Dennis stated that the applicant is requesting approval to pay the fee in lieu of providing open space for the proposed Chapman Village Subdivision, in accordance with Section 10.3.9, B.4 of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which states that “if less than one (1) acre of open space is required for any major subdivision, the developer shall submit a fee in lieu of providing the open space” as described in Section 10.3.9, D. The development will consist of 45 single-family lots. Dennis said that the applicant has provided an appraisal that meets the intent stated in *Section 10.3.9, E.2*. The fee in lieu amount is determined by calculating the appraised value (as provided) divided by the total area in the subdivision or development and multiplying by the amount of open space that would otherwise be required. In this case, the applicant has provided an appraisal from a SC licensed real estate appraiser based on the assumption that all entitlements and permitting will be completed by May 2024 with a value of \$1,350,000, which when divided by the total area of 11.83, totals approx. \$114,117 per acre. The required amount of open space that would otherwise be required is 0.94 acres (45 lots x 2.6 x 0.008). Therefore, the open space fee in lieu calculated (per the appraisal) is \$107,269.65. This fee would be required to be paid prior to the recording of any lots, in accordance with *Section 10.3.9, E.7*, as well as all other conditions of development be satisfied. Dennis said that Planning Commission recommended approval at their April meeting and that staff also recommends approval of the fee in lieu of open space.

Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Helms, to approve the Resolution accepting the fee in lieu of open space for Chapman Village in the amount of \$107,269.65. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Consideration of Approval of a Standard 5K Run Route. Long stated that on the Consent Agenda, Under the Lights 5K was approved and that the proposal for this request is to use this same run route which showcases the Riverwalk, Riverfront Park, and other Downtown areas. Long stated that this route has less impact and the only residential neighborhood that would be impacted is the Kingston Point Condos, and it also reduces demands on manpower. Long proposes that anyone that wants to do a 5K would use this standard 5K run route for permitted events.

Motion: Blain made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch, to approve the standard 5K run route as presented. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

C. Consideration of Approval of a Special Event – Gobble Gobble 5K & 1 Miler – November 23, 2024. Rogers stated that this request is from Apex Promoz for the Gobble Gobble 5K and 1 Miler to be held on November 23, 2024 from 8 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. Rogers said that he did not think that the applicant would have a problem amending the route to match the standardized route that was just approved.

Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to approve the special event with staff's recommendation to amend the route map to match the standardized route.

Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Emrick informed Council of the following:

- The last couple of meetings, there has been less rezonings and annexations. Emrick assured that this does not mean that there is a lack of development happening. To the contrary, the numbers have been way up. So far this year, the City has permitted 123 single family homes. Last year, at this same point, staff permitted 89 homes, which was a very busy year. The City is on track to permit close to 450 homes this year. That will be the most ever permitted in one year by a great margin. As more and more recently approved subdivisions come online, this number will continue to grow.
- The Joint Board Review Committee in Columbia approved the transfer of 808 acres from Santee Cooper to the City of Conway. Staff is wrapping up our Phase 1 assessment of the property which has to be complete prior to the transfer going through. Staff is looking at June or July for the date of transfer to occur. In the meanwhile, staff is working on having the property surveyed and getting the title work completed on it.
- The kickoff meeting for Chestnut Bay was last week. This was a daylong meeting with engineers and other design professionals. The engineering and planning is expected to take 18 to 24 months with construction commencing sometime in 2026.
- The McKeithen Outfall project, which is adjacent to Chestnut Bay has begun its design and engineering phase as well. Staff hopes and plans to tie this project together with Chestnut Bay allowing for several levels of flood storage and water passage without impacting Crabtree Canal.
- Two weekends ago, the Sports and Fitness Center hosted the SC Gymnastics Championships and saw more than 5,000 people come through the center. This is an increase from the 1,000 that came through last year during the same weekend.

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- On April 28th, the Sports and Fitness Center will welcome a whole other kind of gymnastics. In partnership with the El Gallo family of radio stations, the City will host Lucha Libre, Mexican Wrestling. This will start at 4 p.m. and will also include a kid's festival, games and food. Emrick applauded Ashley Smith and our Recreation team for adding some very new and unique programming to our City and for its continued partnership with El Gallo.
- Emrick encouraged all to go by the parking lot behind the old Jerry Cox Building at Kingston and Fourth Avenue, on their way home this afternoon. The City hopes to lay asphalt Friday or Monday and the brickwork on ERF#3 and the new welcome sign will commence Wednesday if weather permits.
- There will be delays on the remainder of the Town Green and Laurel Street Fountain projects. There is an RFQ out for engineering services to complete these projects after some key staff left our former contractor. This should be on the next agenda for Council to consider.
- Also on the next agenda will be a firm to design a new phase of the Crabtree Greenway, connecting Mill Pond Road to El Bethel, and essentially connecting the new Whittemore Middle School and Conway High School to the Sports and Fitness Center and Recreation Complex. This project is possible due to a state grant obtained in the current budget of \$2.4 million.
- This Friday Coastal Baseball is having a BlackOut Game and will hand out several hundred of our City Sponsored towels. It should be a great atmosphere for a very important Sun Belt Conference home series.
- Coming up, Fridays this May, Conway Downtown Alive will host Groovin' on the Green. The lineup for this popular event is on their website and social media pages.
- Staff have begun meeting internally to get ready for our fall and winter holidays. There are not any specifics yet, but pretty sure it's going to be amazing, even more so than in past years.
- Finally, tonight there are department head reports from Judge Kayla Fleming and from James Friday in Public Utilities.

Municipal Court: Fleming reported the following:

- The City recently signed a contract for a new prosecutor, Mr. Fran Humphries. Municipal Court has changed court day from Wednesdays to Thursdays and changed the way the cases are prosecuted with hopes to dispose of cases in a timelier manner. Also, staff has implemented new strategies for collecting money.
- Fleming said that as far as the debt setoff, the City is seeking \$450,000 in 2024 from years 2019, 2020, and 2021. Court has received two checks thus far, one for almost \$1,200.00 and the other for \$1,500.00.
- Fleming said that in prior council reports there were some questions about the breakdown of fines. Fleming provided Council a copy of a few different charges that are frequently charged and their disbursements.

Public Utilities: Friday reported the following:

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- There have been 403 new water meters installed to date this year.
- There have been 266 new sewer services to date this year.
- Public Utilities is working on the Sherwood Pump Station and SCDOT projects located on Highway 701 North and the widening of Highway 501.

COUNCIL INPUT:

Hardwick told Chief Long that she was really excited to see the number of 18 wheelers that are being pulled for going over the bridge, job well done. Hardwick then told staff to look into the Ordinance change for the Chamber of Commerce allowing beer cans versus opaque cups. Hardwick gave kudos to Mayor Blain and announced that she is making her debut on Thursday at the Theatre of the Republic as Nurse Norman in Waitress.

Goldfinch said that last week the Downtown Police Department was dedicated to Lt. Odell Cochran. Goldfinch said that he served 38 years and that is such a huge commitment, and it also speaks to who Goldfinch thinks he was. Goldfinch said it was a pleasure getting to meet people that he had never met before and learning more about Lt. Cochran. Goldfinch appreciates staff and everyone for doing that. Goldfinch said that a few weeks ago the Horry Independent ran a nice piece about the City's proposed tax increase and the impacts that it would have. Goldfinch said that he has had several people come up to him and ask why taxes are being raised. Goldfinch said that every 5 years property is reassessed and when values go up, the City has to rollback the millage so that it is revenue neutral. Goldfinch said that if we never had to rollback millage, the City would never have to increase taxes. Goldfinch said that the City is not a business that makes money but a governmental organization that needs money to pay salaries, and the only way to do that is from time to time to stay up with the Consumer Pricing Index. Lastly, Goldfinch said that state legislation passed a law that now allows an 18-year-old to carry a handgun on their waist with absolutely no training, and no background check. Goldfinch said that Senator Rankin was the only Republican in the Senate that voted against this. Goldfinch said that he does not think that this makes us safer, as he thinks that it does the opposite.

White said that now that 18-year-olds can carry a gun, he thinks that is all the more reason for passing of a hate crime. White asked why the seasonal decorations are only Downtown and asked that they be expanded to the corridors coming in at 378, 701, and 501, in safe places. Emrick said that in most places the City does not own property to put anything and if the City does own it there is usually no power. Emrick said that the idea of doing Downtown is because it is walkable and interactive that way. Emrick said that there are spaces where decorations could be put, such as the Gateway signage and we should put something there. Emrick said that the Recreation Center will also have more decorations this year.

Blain said that the City has a whole new reputation when it comes to holiday decorations as the demand is not only for new placements but for more celebrations. Blain thinks that the public needs to be aware that while these things have had the impact that we had hoped for as they bring people into Conway, it also does come with some costs. Blain said that she jokingly said to the Administrator recently that soon the City will need a whole warehouse for decorations and a new crew of people to put them up and take them down. Blain said that she and Helms went to a meeting of the Wild Wing residents and that the County had responded to one of the complaints that they made relative to the timing of the operation of an asphalt plant and some of the concerns

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that they have about the emissions from that plant that unfortunately may never be answered according to the representative from DHEC who were present at the time. Blain said that DHEC does not necessarily test for kinds of particulars that would bring health concerns. Blain thanked staff for all that they do and that she gets more credit than she could ever deserve and that is because of the work of the people who are sitting here. Blain told staff that everything they do is wonderful that she gets credit for, and that she gets far more compliments than complaints, and she hopes her colleagues receive the same. Blain said that she doesn't think she could ever say enough about the people who work for the City and those that tell the story about the City.


EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion: White made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch to enter into Executive Session for the following: Consideration of Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Committees for the Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission and Conway Housing Authority [pursuant to SC Code §30-4-70(A) (1)].

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

POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion: Blain made a motion, seconded by Goldfinch to appoint Donna Baxley, Board of Zoning Appeals; Gregory Bryson, Planning Commission; and Ashley Hadfield, Housing Authority. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

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 6 day of May, 2024.


Alicia Shelley, City Clerk