

December 4, 2023

CITY OF CONWAY  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CONWAY CITY HALL  
229 MAIN STREET, CONWAY  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2023 - 4:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy, Mayor Pro Tem Justin Jordan, Autry Benton, William Goldfinch, Beth Helms, Larry White. Absent: Amanda Butler

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

**OTHERS:** There were approximately 50 others in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order. Eric Roberts 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:** White made a motion, seconded by Helms, to approve the December 4, 2023 meeting agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Final Reading of Ordinance #2023-12-04 (A) amending Title 6 – Health and Sanitation, Chapter 3- Garbage and Waste Disposal, of the City of Conway Municipal Code to update fees, amend refuse receptacle and service requirements.**
- B. Approval of November 20, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: Motion:** Benton made a motion, seconded by Jordan to approve the December 4, 2023 consent agenda. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

- A. Recognition of 2023 Artist of the City of Conway Christmas Card Contest** - Blain-Bellamy recognized Sophia Pulunto, student at Conway Elementary as the 2023 City of Conway Christmas card contest winner.
- B. Presentation of 2022 Quattlebaum Award for Outstanding New Construction of a Non-Residential Building** – Blain Bellamy presented the award to Bojangles at 1617 Church Street. Present to accept the award was Mark & Jennifer Kiskunas, franchise owners and Henry Atkins, Jr, developer and property owner.
- C. Recognition of Recent Retirees** – Emrick and L. Smith recognized the following retirees: William Johnson, 26 years; Andy Hendrick, 35 years (absent); Mike Prosser, 10 years; Michael Brazier, 15 years; Anthony Campagna, 16 years; Teresa Emanuel, 17 years; Pat Livingston, 17 years; Sandra Skipper, 17 years; Nancy Belinda Mills, 20 years (absent); Mark Bobbitt, 21 years; James Givens, 22 years; Jeremy Carter, 25 years; Nathan Nelson, 25 years; and Roko, K9 (absent).
- D. Presentation of Employee of the Month for December 2023 – Public Safety** – Long presented Nick Padley, School Resource Officer at Conway High School as the Employee of the Month for December 2023.
- E. Presentation of Longevity Awards – November 2023 – 5 Years: Mykal Moody, Recreation; 5 Years: Joshua Albrecht, Solid Waste; 15 Years: Jeffery Jordan, Police.** Emrick and Benton presented the longevity awards.

**SECOND/FINAL READING:**

**Final Reading of Ordinance #ZA2023-12-04 (B) to annex 20.7 acres located at 3633 Highway 501 West (PIN 326-00-00-0024) and rezone from Horry County High Bulk Retail (RE4) and Horry County Commercial Forest Agriculture (CFA) to City of Conway Light Industrial (LI).** Hucks stated that staff was told last week that this property had received a CO. Staff called Horry County this morning to check and was informed that they have 3 additional buildings to have permitted before they are complete; therefore, staff recommends that this request be deferred until such time.

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Blain-Bellamy, to defer this annexation request. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

**FIRST READING:**

- A. First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2023-10-02 (B) to annex approximately 1,765 +/- acres located on or near the intersection of Highway 701 S and Pitch Landing Road, Highway 701 S and Wildair Circle, Highway 701 S. and Kinlaw Lane, and Highway 701 S, Pitch Landing Rd, and Blaze Trail (PIN 381-00-00-0003, 381-08-01-0006, 381-08-04-0009, 381-08-04-0010, 380-00-00-0038, 403-00-00-0001, 403-00-00-0002, and 403-00-00-0022), and rezone from the Horry County Highway Commercial (HC), Commercial Forest Agriculture (CFA), and Community Retail Services (RE2) districts to the City of Conway Planned Development (PD) district.** Hucks informed Council that this request has been in process for the past year or longer. Staff began meeting

with the applicants last year to discuss annexation of the subject property, consisting of approximately 1,765 acres. Initially, the property was not contiguous to City limits. Over the course of the next several months, contiguity was achieved thru the annexation of the Dollar General and Bucks Township Storage, and with the approval of a plat between The Gun Store property and one of the properties included in the annexation request. While initially the requests included annexation and zoning of both a Planned Development (on the larger parcels) and Highway Commercial on the external, smaller parcels, the request was revised to annex as a Planned Development for all of the parcels included in the request. Per the City's Unified Development Ordinance, the intent of a Planned Development is to provide for large scale, quality development projects of 3 acres or larger with mixed land uses which create a superior environment thru unified development for the application of design ingenuity while protecting surrounding developments. More specifically:

- To allow for flexibility in design to take the greatest advantage of natural land, trees, historical, and other features;
- Accumulation of large areas of open space for recreation, preservation of natural amenities, and provision of community facilities;
- Creation of a variety of residential and compatible neighborhood arrangements that give the home occupant greater choice in selecting types of environment and living units;
- Clustering of one residential type for better use of land and open space;
- The allowance of sufficient freedom for the developer to take a creative approach to the use of the land and related physical development, as well as utilizing innovative techniques to enhance the visual character of the city;

Hucks said that the Warden Station PD will contain a mixture of single-family detached, single-family attached (townhomes), and multifamily dwellings, as well as commercial outparcels. Per the Master Site Plan provided, there are 1,380 single-family detached dwellings proposed, 1,018 single-family attached, or townhome dwellings proposed, and 920 multifamily units. The total number of residential lots or units proposed is 3,318. However, the applicant is proposing a condition in the PD that would allow the developer to shift densities between tracts with like uses, such as single-family detached to single-family detached, as long as the overall density is not exceeded. A majority of the property is currently zoned Horry County Commercial Forest Agriculture (CFA). Some of the smaller parcels are zoned Horry County Highway Commercial (HC) and Horry County Community Retail Services (RE2). Additionally, the property – being outside the City's utility service area, is not identified on the City's Future Land Use Map. The County's Future Land Use Map, adopted with their current comprehensive plan in 2019, identifies the properties as 3 different designations: Scenic and Conservation, Rural, and Rural Communities. Hucks said that she would be happy to go into more detail for each of these future land use designations; however, specifics were included in information provided to you.

Hucks stated that the first public hearing on the request was scheduled for the May 4<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, however, the applicant requested that their items be deferred to the July Planning Commission meeting. During the "general" Public Input

section of the agenda, several people in the audience expressed their concerns with the requests, which included the strain on city services, traffic, lack of infrastructure, cost of the development to the city, and certain uses in relation to the existing, surrounding residences. Planning Commission deferred the request, at the applicant's request, and in order to hold a workshop with the applicants to discuss the requests in further detail, which was held on May 17<sup>th</sup>. At the July 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the public hearing on the requests was held. Approximately 60-70 people were present in opposition to the requests, with concerns raised to include existing and future traffic on Hwy 701 S, strain on emergency services, lack of water/sewer facilities, the distance from residences adjacent to the subject property, destruction of forestland and animal habitats, lack of hospitals in the area, the proposed density, stormwater, and flooding; among other concerns that were mentioned. The request was deferred by PC at both the July and August Planning Commission meetings. At the Sept. 7 PC meeting., Planning commission ultimately recommended approval of annexing the property as a Planned Development, with the condition that the PD include and/or address all of staff's comments and recommendations. City Council held the second of the two required public hearings on the development agreement at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The requests were deferred in order to have a workshop on the requests. The first workshop was held on October 16<sup>th</sup>, and a second workshop was held at the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Hucks said that for several months, the applicants and city staff have worked diligently to ensure that, to the extent possible, all of staffs and the community's concerns have been addressed. One of the biggest concerns – of staff and the community – is the current and anticipated traffic of Hwy 701 S. Per the traffic study provided, there are 5 intersection improvements proposed. Signalization is also recommended – when warranted - at Access 1 and Access 3, with Access 1 being the main entrance into the project, located on Hwy 701 S, and Access 3 being the Pitch Landing Rd entrance. Additionally, the traffic study has recommended that dual left lanes be installed at Pitch Landing Rd and Hwy 701 S. Other improvements at this intersection call for a southbound right-turn lane, an additional northbound through lane and an additional southbound through lane. The improvements at the Hwy 701 South and Pitch Landing Rd intersection are expected to be warranted once 435 homes are occupied. The widening of Hwy 701 South has also been a popular topic for discussion, and it was mentioned in the traffic study; however, it was not clear as to whether it should be required solely as a result of this development. It states specifically *“The existing traffic on US 701 along with projected project traffic may require widening of US 701 north of Pitch Landing Rd in the future. Widening of US 701 S of Pitch Landing Rd requires widening based on projected demand at the signal. Removal of the east leg of Pitch Landing may provide additional improvement for signal operation.”* With regard to the northern portion of US 701 and Pitch Landing Rd, the traffic study states that existing and future ADT's should likely earmark this segment as a candidate for widening.

Hucks stated that one of the concerns that staff raised at the beginning of the discussions with the applicant was the issue of structures or lots being located in flood zones. Staff was adamant that no residential lots or structures be within a designated flood zone. Can they be built within a flood zone? Yes, as long as the property meets the base flood elevation that is required. The City's Flood Damage & Prevention ordinance requires that building areas be elevated 2' above the 100-year flood elevation. However, riverine flooding resulting from hurricanes and other rain events that have occurred over the past several

years has taught us valuable lessons, including the importance of conservation and perpetual preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Therefore, the applicants went back to the drawing board and removed all single-family lots and any structures from flood zones. There are some areas of the multifamily tracts that are within a flood zones, but no structures are shown to be within a flood zone. Additionally, with this project, the applicant proposes to convey 500+ acres of property to the City; much of which is within a flood zone or contains wetlands. The property will contain master stormwater ponds, master open space, and a city park will be installed on the property that will contain pickleball courts, a flood-proof / flood-resistant playground that is adequate in size to accommodate the number of children that would utilize the playground at project buildout, and associated site improvements. Most of all, conveyance of this property to the city will ensure the preservation of the sensitive area in perpetuity.

Hucks said that with regard to stormwater, the applicants have provided a Master Pond Stormwater Evaluation to address concerns that were presented at the October workshop. The evaluation methodology used the Advanced Interconnected Channel and Pond Routing (ICPR) program to analyze existing and proposed conditions as a result of the development, and includes hydrologic and hydraulic data. In addition to this, the applicant has agreed to include language in their development agreement that requires stormwater to meet or exceed the city's stormwater ordinance that is in effect at the time of plan submittal. This will ensure that if more stringent stormwater requirements are adopted – even within the development agreement time period – that all development will be compliant with the stormwater requirements that are in effect at the time in which development occurs and not just what is in effect at the time the development agreement is adopted.

Hucks said that staff also recognizes that there has been a lot of community concern with density and pointed out that in comparison to other developments in the surrounding area, this development is relatively similar in comparison, with an overall *gross* density of 2.04 dwelling units per acre. This is because most of the density is being clustered in areas that do not contain wetlands or flood zones, thus preserving the rural character of the land and retaining more acreage for fields, trees, and other natural features undisturbed by allowing developers to bypass these natural features or obstacles that are onsite. Cluster developments can reduce impervious areas by reducing land disturbance. Cluster development, when used correctly, is a conservation design and considered low impact development. This is why staff promotes conservation subdivision development design when possible and requires that major developments over a certain acreage provide a site plan showing a conservation subdivision – in the hopes that the incentives that the city offers to develop as a conservation subdivision will entice developers to utilize the development design, which include density bonuses for low-impact development practices, such as cluster development. And while Warden Station is not a conservation subdivision, there are aspects of the development that incorporate key aspects of a conservation subdivision, including the preservation of the flood zone areas and wetlands, and wide perimeter buffers from external properties, with increased buffers between some of the uses that are adjacent to external, existing residences.

Hucks informed Council that if developed under the current county zoning, or if the property were annexed as R or R1, there would be no requirement to install perimeter buffers, no requirement to stay outside of the flood zones, no requirement to convey

acreage to the city for the perpetual preservation of 500+ acres of environmentally-sensitive areas, and if developed in the county, the residential design standards that the city has in place today would not be applicable to this property. There is a list of outstanding staff comments that were also included in your packet, which include concerns with the installation and timing of traffic improvements, the installation of the onsite improvements on the recreational acreage, collection of sanitation and stormwater fees, as well as a connection on Kinlaw Lane to one of the tracts proposed for development.

Hucks said that in closing, this property is outside the city's utility service area. When the service area was created or adopted, the city never foresaw the expansion of the city limits this far south of where the current city limits are, which is why they stop at The Gun Store. However, there is also no written ordinance that prohibits application to request annexation into the city; only that which requires when annexation must be requested. Like the City's Comprehensive Plan, which includes the City's Future Land Use Map and identifies future uses on properties based on current use and property conditions, there is no crystal ball into the future, which is why there are avenues for amending future land use maps or the current zoning of property. It is also why Comprehensive Plans are updated every 10 years. Staff expects that the next plan will look very different from the current and past plans due to the growth that has occurred in the city over the last several years.

Hucks then said asked, could the applicant develop this property in the county? The answer is yes. Would the effects of the development, if developed in the county, still be felt by adjacent property owners and city residents? Yes. Traffic will still be a concern, as will over-development, as will flooding and stormwater. At the end of the day, if developed under city regulations, staff feels that the more stringent requirements of the two jurisdictions would be implemented, and a better development product will result. For these reasons, staff recommends approval of the annexation and rezoning requests.

Benton stated that this is a big decision for Conway and if approved will increase the City's population by some aspects of 40-50 % more than what the population is now. Benton complimented the development team and engineers for the time that they put into this project and said that they have been willing to work with the City. Benton said that the City has to take this annexation as it is and whether it is good for the City, and make the best decision for Conway. Benton said that it comes down to the dumping of that many cars and residents on a two-lane road, which is a big concern that the City is not prepared to do that. Benton said that the City needs another river crossing over the Waccamaw. Benton said if this was a four-lane road and better infrastructure, he would welcome the growth. Benton said that the term of smart growth and public safety is used around here a lot and then said that he cannot vote for it as we do not have the infrastructure in place to support it at this time.

Goldfinch stated that the density would be 2 dwellings per acre and that he didn't want this here, but that Landbank can go in right now with the exact same density in the County, and there will not be 500 acres given to the City, there will be no park, no trail system and there will be no plan. Landbank will sale it off in 50and 100-acre chunks to Lennar and DR Horton, who will come in and put up inferior homes and the traffic will still be here. Goldfinch then pointed out the acreage that is proposed to be given to the City and if in the County they can build on it. Goldfinch said that we live in a growing

community. Goldfinch said that when he was growing up Carolina Forest was a dirt road and now it is a 4-lane highway. No governmental entity builds it before it comes, it comes and then it is built.

White said that Highway 701 going towards Georgetown has been a problem for years and that is something that Council cannot do anything about, as we need to talk to our legislators and DOT that have the power to widen that road. White said that this development could be a good thing, that as homes are built, the powers to be will see the need and then try to help us develop that 4-lane highway.

Goldfinch said that in the package that road improvements are going to be made. People think that Council can stop development, but we can't. They can go in now, develop the full 1,700 acres and not do anything to the road. Goldfinch said that the developers are coming to the table with solutions.

Helms stated that if first reading is passed, that Council will still be able to talk about enhancement fees and if an agreement can not be made, Council will be able to vote no at second reading.

Blain-Bellamy said that first reading is preliminary and a statement of good faith. Council agrees to work out the blanks that remain and will move forward based on our accomplishment.

**Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to approve first reading of Ordinance #ZA2023-10-02 (B). **Vote:** Blain-Bellamy, Helms, White, Goldfinch, Jordan voted in favor while Benton voted no. Motion carried 5-1.

- B. First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2023-10-02 (A) for the City of Conway to enter into a Development Agreement with BRD Land & Investment, LP for the development of property located on or near the intersection of Highway 701 S. and Pitch Landing Rd, known as the Warden Station tract, containing approximately 1,765 +/- acres (PINs 381-00-00-0003, 381-08-04-0009, 381-08-04-0010, 380-00-00-0038, 381-08-01-0006, 403-00-00-0001, 403-00-00-0002, and 403-00-00-0022).**

**Motion:** Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by Jordan, to defer this request to Executive Session. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- C. First Reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-01-02 (A) to annex 0.23 acres of property located at 289 Wedding Lane (PIN 367-13-01-0025), and rezone from the Horry County Residential, including mobile homes (MSF10) district to the City of Conway Low/Medium-Density Residential (R-1) district.** Hucks said that this request was submitted as a requirement to connect to city services due to transfer of ownership. This property is within the Red Hill subdivision located between Highway 501 Business and Claridy Road. There is an existing single-family residence on the property. Restrictive covenants were recorded for this property at the time annexation was applied for. Hucks said that there are other properties along Wedding Lane that have been annexed into the city limits, one in 2017, 2020, and the most recent one in 2023. Between 2018-2020, city staff sought annexation of parcels within the Red Hill area but this parcel was not

identified. Parcels along Claridy Road were identified and 3 other parcels on Wedding Lane were annexed within the last few years. Hucks said that if it is the long-term goal of Council to annex the Red Hill area, including properties along Highway 501 Business, staff recommends continued annexation of properties in the area.

**Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to approve first reading of Ordinance #ZA2024-01-02 (A). **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **CONSIDERATION:**

- A. Consideration of Selection of Firm to Design and Engineer Phase 1 Development of the Chestnut Bay Resilience Project** – Hyman stated that the City advertised to select a firm to design and engineer Phase 1 Development of the Chestnut Bay Resilience Project. Two firms submitted proposals, and were ranked based on certain criteria. Staff recommends Robinson Design Engineers and should Council approve the hiring, the City would enter into negotiations for a contract of services immediately.

**Motion:** Benton made a motion, seconded by White, to authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with Robinson Design Engineers. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

- B. Consideration of a Proposed Four Way Stop on Sixth Avenue at the Hill Street Intersection** – Long stated that complaints were received and the police department installed the covert data collector at Sixth Avenue and the Hill Street intersection. The data collected indicates there is not a speeding issue, but had approximately 1,000 cars per day traveling in both directions. This is a high traffic count for a true residential area. Long said that he recommends adding stop signs on Sixth Avenue at the Hill Street intersection, making it a four-way stop intersection.

**Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by White, to approve making this a four way stop intersection. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

## **CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:**

Emrick informed Council of the following:

- The Christmas Tree Lighting had fantastic attendance and was well received. Clearly, the City had a lot of complaints related to traffic. Next year the Town Green redevelopment should be complete and there will be a new location for the City Christmas Tree.
- The Whittimore Task Force meets Wednesday at 5 p.m. There was some difficulty in establishing a quorum at the last meeting. The Task Force has asked to make their own agendas, but staff hasn’t had anything provided for the Wednesday meeting, so to be legally compliant, staff went ahead and prepared an agenda for this meeting.
- The Hospitality Fee numbers are in from October, a real gauge of the success of Halloween festivities. Last year, if you remember, collections for the month, year over year, were up City-wide about 6% and for downtown, 18%. This year, city-wide, we were up 9.4% for this year over last year. For downtown restaurants, we were up 21% from last year.

Cumulatively almost a 40% increase in the two years we've been Halloween for downtown restaurants.

- Tomorrow night is the City Staff Christmas party at the Sports and Fitness Center at 6 p.m. Come hungry and ready for Christmas bingo!
- Wednesday at 6 p.m. is the Under the Lights 5k starting at the Marina. Even if you are not a runner, this event is a lot of fun to watch and cheer on the participants.
- Thursday night is one of the big Rivertown Christmas nights. Adding to that is a new event, a Sensory Friendly Tree Lighting event. At 5:30 p.m., the tree will be lit at Riverfront Park, there will be music and an atmosphere that is welcoming to all of our residents. We have a large population of children and adults that have autism or other neurocognitive issues and we have unintentionally excluded them from events like our Tree Lighting Ceremony for years. We hope to fix that going forward by fixing it this year. Please join us this Thursday at Riverfront park.
- The Annual Christmas Parade is Saturday at 10 a.m. Please be at the start of the parade route, near Main and 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:45 a.m. at the latest, to ride the train in the parade.
- Before the parade, join us for Pancakes with Santa at the Sports and Fitness Center, 7 -9 a.m.
- This Friday and Saturday night at the Terrace, staff is showing movies: Christmas Vacation and Die Hard. Keep in mind, Die Hard is an R rated movie, so parental supervision is suggested. Also, on the 15<sup>th</sup>, we will show the Grinch. All movies start at 6 p.m.
- A couple of non-Christmas related reports:
  - o Lights for the Pickleball courts should go up late this week or early next week. The courts have had very steady usage every day.
  - o Repairs to street lights damaged during last year's work on Laurel Street are finally going to be made next Monday so that all work can be completed by next Thursday's big Christmas activities.
  - o On the 13<sup>th</sup> of December at 11 a.m. there will be a ribbon cutting with Santee Cooper for the EV Charging Stations across the street in the mural parking lot.
- Something that staff just learned today, late today in fact. Santee Cooper's Board met today and voted to approve the transfer of the Ashponds, Lake Busbee and the former Steam plant site to the City of Conway. The transfer is still conditioned on the Joint Bond Review Committee of the State Legislature approving the agreement. That will happen in January, fingers crossed.
- Department head reports from Finance, Planning and Construction Services.

**Finance** – Bury explained the H2O Help to Others pilot program to help qualifying customers receive a bill credit starting December 1, 2023.

**Construction Services** – Cooper reported that Construction Services have been extremely busy finishing City Hall renovations, working on Court and Finance renovations, Santa's Village, replacing boards at Riverfront Park Riverwalk and Scarborough Alley. Construction Services has issued approximately 300 more building permits this year than during the same period in 2022. There was a decrease in single-family dwellings earlier this year compared to the previous year due to the residential developments being mostly built out.

**Planning & Development** – Hucks said that 2023 has been a very busy, yet productive year for Planning & Development. The department recently filled the position of Zoning and Landscaping Inspector, a new position that was created this year to handle most of the zoning enforcement and will assist the arborist. Staff has worked on 12 text amendments and 11 more are in progress. There have been over 70 applications submitted for annexation or rezonings in 2023. As far as plan review, the department has had over 300 submittals for review so far in 2023. The Planning Commission has considered 91 items. Staff has removed over 1,000 illegal signs. As for GIS so far for 2023, staff has created close to 2,500 maps for all city departments, calculated stormwater fees for 82 businesses, given 536 new address points, 2,198 new, updated, or upgraded water meters have been added to GIS, and updated GIS layers to reflect restrictive covenants for an additional 336 properties. Hucks said that 9,413 residential units are in review but that these numbers could change significantly depending on market conditions and whether or not many of the projects under review continue with the review process.

### **COUNCIL INPUT:**

**Benton** stated that this is his last official meeting. He thanked Council and the Mayor for being kind and helping him along the way. Benton thanked staff for their work and professionalism, and encouraged all to thank them. Benton said that all of the ones sitting up there with him may not always agree, but that all love Conway. Benton said that he would be available to help at any time and thanked the citizens for being able to serve. Benton then wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

**Helms** said that Council is a big seat to fill, Council gets blamed for everything and that Council does what they think is best in the interest of everybody. Helm said that it is Christmas and Conway is putting on a great show, as every month is. She thanked all of staff and said that Jessica is very professional and that staff has gone way beyond what they ever have been asked. Helms wished Benton good luck. Helms told everyone Merry Christmas and asked for prayers for her family and said she is praying for all to have a good Christmas too.

**White** said ditto, and good luck to Benton. White thanked all of the citizens for his reelection to Council and that he will try to do his best to make all satisfied with the decisions that are made. White said that the street lights on Sixth Avenue are out, except one. White invited everyone to Smith Jones to see the Christmas lights and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

**Goldfinch** said that until you have held an elected position and taken criticism from all then you can't fully appreciate to throw your name and family into something. Goldfinch then applauded Benton and wished him and his family the best. Goldfinch said when he first got on Council it was a good group and somehow flew under the radar, were safe and didn't take risks and then hired Emrick, who thinks outside the box in a way that no one else had. Goldfinch said sometimes with that comes trouble. Goldfinch said that he came to one of the greatest events that the City does Thursday night and staff worked their behinds off after hours, before hours, to put this event on and then you have some that hide behind a keyboard and make comments, some about Council members wives, which is a shame. Goldfinch said that is the price you pay to look down the street in October and see pumpkins in the trees, the lights on the bridge, or the lights on the water tower. Goldfinch said to let's keep looking to the sky because if it means that we have to take a little

criticism to have a fantastic town, then we will just do it. Goldfinch asked Williams for an update on the treasury portfolio.

**Jordan** said he took blame for the traffic this past Thursday night and he will take it all day long when you see the crowds downtown, kids, the streets were packed and it was an incredible event. The event gets bigger and better each year, even with the growing pains. Jordan said it is not easy to sit here and take darts, but leave my family out of it. Jordan gave kudos to staff for all that they did working around the clock, and it shows. Jordan said that he and his wife had dinner Friday night, did the long walk around Conway and it was absolutely beautiful as was the tree lighting on Thursday was incredible. Jordan said that the tree lighting coming up this Thursday night is going to be an incredible thing and thanked everyone for that as working in the health care and with the disabled, as that is an opportunity to show that Conway is inclusive for all. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and best of luck to Benton.

**Blain-Bellamy** told Benton that she is glad to know him, thanked him for his contribution and wished him and his family well for the future. Blain-Bellamy said that she gets some of the critiques by others but that she gets way more credit than she could ever deserve. People recognize what is different here. Goldfinch has a way of saying things, we did not take any risks, we did not spend any money, and we were stuck in place and stayed stuck in place decade after decade. Blain-Bellamy said that as more funds became available and we met Emrick who never had a box. We got catapulted to a place where people choose to come just to Conway. The tree lighting event was....and afterwards she said that she walked down to the Riverwalk and thought she was in some fantasy land as it was incredible. She encouraged all to take their families to Downtown Conway and beyond as it is changing and will continue as the leaders in every arena are doing the best that they can managing those changes and making sure that it makes sense. Blain-Bellamy gave credit to the hiring of Emrick for the good things happening and said that she is glad to know him and work with him. Blain-Bellamy said that all of staff go out and help as she saw Lynn and Becky serving the workers at Town Green, always helping each other.

Emrick said that the latitude that Council affords staff to be able to do crazy stuff is why and he thanked them.

Jordan said that the reaction from the young lady that did the Christmas cards was incredible. Jordan said that he had the opportunity to award staff with the employee of the year awards, which was a joy and very well deserved.

Goldfinch updated Council on the Ride IV and asked Council to prioritize projects.

## **BREAK**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: Motion:** Jordan made a motion, seconded by Helms to enter into Executive Session for the following: Discussion of a Proposed Development Agreement known as the Warden Station Tract [pursuant to SC Code §30-4-70 (A) (2)]. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

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

December 4, 2023

**POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Motion:** Blain-Bellamy made a motion, seconded by Jordan to approve first reading of Ordinance #ZA2023-10-02 (A) of the Planned Development Agreement and within 36 months of the first land disturbance permit being issued the park will be conveyed to the City of Conway after improvements have been made on the park. The developer will provide a letter of credit to guarantee the park improvements at final plat approval; and that enhancement fees will be paid to the City by the developer in the amount of \$5,750 per residential unit. **Vote:** Unanimous. Motion carried.

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes approved by City Council this 2 day of January, 2024.

Alicia Shelley  
Alicia Shelley, City Clerk