

Regular Council Meeting

February 2, 2010 at 6 p.m.

Members Present:

Bobby E. Horton, Mayor
Jack L. Harmon, Mayor Pro-Tem
Eric L. Fowler
L. Dale Harley
Boyd J. Jones
Marsha J. Moore
Cathy Shannon
B.J. Unthank

Members Absent:

Tommy G. Parler

Others Present:

Jenny Cunningham, City Administrator
Myron Corley, Deputy City Administrator
Mardi McKinnon, City Clerk
Brian Carter, Planning and Zoning Director
Donna Smith, Economic Development Director
Sid Varn, Director of Planning & Engineering
Joe Owens, Utilities Director

Stuart Jones, Building Official
Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief
Dennis Tyndall, Police Chief
Rex Adkins, Water/Sewer Superintendent
Charles Garren, Public Works Director
Ken Ebener, Municipal Judge
Members of the Public and Press

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

Mayor Horton called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. and noted a quorum was present. *The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, and The Columbia Star* were notified of the public hearing by e-mail on January 29, 2009.

Agenda Item II – Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Council Member Unthank gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item III – Requests for Appearance

- A. Mayor Horton recognized Mr. Michael Mayo, owner of Palmetto Outdoor, LLC, who gave a brief overview of the 2009 tubing season on the Congaree River. Mr. Mayo said since he started the tubing business about five years ago it has grown from 390 customers in 2006 to 3,190 in 2009. He expects about 5,000 tubing enthusiasts to go down the river during the 2010 season. Mr. Mayo said no one has been injured in the four years Palmetto Outdoor has offered river tubing. He explained that customers are required to wear life vests and must sit through a safety lecture before being shuttled up river to the launch point. He also maintains excellent communications with South Carolina Electric & Gas Company regarding water releases from the Dreher Shoals Dam. He said that in 2008 an 81-year old woman tubed down the Congaree River twice, proving the adventure was safe for all ages.

Mr. Mayo said demographical information gathered from customers indicates that people come from as far away as New Jersey, New York and Florida to experience a tube ride down the river. The Palmetto Outdoor, LLC website got 9,500 hits during last year's four-month season. He plans to launch an advertising campaign to target the Jacksonville, Florida area, which is only a five-hour drive from Columbia. An upcoming issue of *Canoe & Kayak* magazine will feature water sports in the Columbia area, including the Palmetto Outdoor tubing experience. Mr. Mayo thanked the city council for allowing his company the opportunity to promote the beautiful scenery of the Congaree River while offering families and groups a chance to enjoy a wonderful water experience.

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Agenda Item III – Requests for Appearance (continued)

- B. Mr. Horton recognized Dr. Joseph Albert with the Bridgepointe Condominium Homeowners Association. Dr. Albert stated that Bridgepointe Condos is a 40-unit complex with no commercial activity. He explained that household garbage is placed in a chute which empties into a two-cubic yard dumpster that when full is transferred to an eight-yard dumpster. He said Bridgepointe used to pay a commercial carrier for twice-a-week pick up until a year and a half ago when the city began to pick up the garbage at no cost. In December 2009, Bridgepointe was notified that commercial garbage service would no longer be available. Dr. Albert requested the city council to either restore the service or give a tax credit to the residents at Bridgepointe.

Mayor Horton responded by saying that the city no longer provided commercial garbage service because it was not cost effective. He said the city lost \$80,000 last year on commercial garbage service and if the city were to continue providing the service it would have to charge more than what the private carriers charge for the same service. He explained that the city no longer operates or insures commercial garbage trucks and plans to sell the vehicles. He said the CDL drivers that used to drive the commercial garbage trucks have been assimilated into residential garbage collection. Mayor Horton said that any residential building with over six units is considered to be suited for commercial garbage pickup. He said the city can offer Bridgepointe the “Herbie Curbie” type 90-gallon rollcarts that are offered to all residential households in the city. He said he realized that Herbie Curbie carts would create difficulty since there is little room in the service area at Bridgepointe for the garbage truck to back up to empty rollcarts. Mayor Horton asked Public Works Director Charles Garren how many rolls carts would be needed to replace the dumpsters at Bridgepointe. Mr. Garren responded that three 90-gallon rollcarts could replace the two-yard dumpster and 12 rolls carts could replace the eight-yard dumpster.

Mayor Horton recognized Council Member BJ Unthank who stated that New Brookland Place is a townhouse condominium in his district. He said the complex manager had called him with concerns about losing commercial pickup with the city. He suggested that New Brookland Place look into what commercial pickup would cost with a private carrier. He said a few days later he received a call from the manager who advised him that the commercial carrier was cheaper than what the city charged so the residents would save money.

Dr. Albert stated that each Bridgepointe resident pays city taxes and should receive a tax credit since the city is no longer offering garbage service. He said commercial pickup with a private carrier would cost Bridgepointe \$3,100 a year, which was not figured into the condo regime fee for the owners. Council Member Unthank responded that each resident at New Brookland Place is a homeowner and pays for commercial garbage pickup. Mayor Horton stated that the city began to pick up garbage at Bridgepointe a year and a half ago at no cost to the residents. He said notices were sent to the city’s commercial garbage customers in mid-November that the city would no longer offer commercial pickup. Mr. Garren responded that in December he had a personal conversation with Mr. Rudy Fleischhacker, the property manager at Bridgepointe, that the city would no longer offer commercial pickup. He said he explained to Mr. Fleischhacker that the city would no longer have trucks to pickup garbage in dumpsters, but the city could offer the same residential service it provides to other residents in the city.

Dr. Albert stated that the rollcarts would not be practical because Bridgepointe residents dispose of their garbage using a chute that empties into a two-yard dumpster. Mayor Horton stated that Bridgepointe residents could either pay for commercial pickup or let the city supply rollcarts.

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Agenda Item III – Requests for Appearance (continued)

Mayor Horton recognized Mr. Rudy Fleischhacker, who stated that he was the property manager as well as a resident at Bridgepointe. He stated that the city was discriminating against the 40 property owners at Bridgepointe because the city was no longer picking up the garbage. Mr. Fleischhacker said Mr. Garren had told him the city would have to pay for a private carrier for dumpster pickup at city hall. He suggested that the city include Bridgepointe in its contract with the private carrier for the Bridgepointe dumpster to be emptied. Mayor Horton stated that 18 months ago Bridgepointe was paying for commercial garbage pickup with a private carrier. Mr. Fleischhacker responded that the city made a decision a year and a half ago to provide dumpster pickup at no cost to Bridgepointe residents. He said the city could just add one more pickup to the city hall pick up. Council Member Unthank stated that residents at New Brookland Place have been paying for commercial pickup all along. He said other condos and townhouses have to pay for dumpster pick too. He stated that the city offers rollcars for residential pickup. New Brookland Place has dumpsters and the owners are willing to pay for that kind of pickup. Mr. Fleischhacker asked why the city begin picking up the garbage for free at Bridgepointe a year and a half ago. Council Member Shannon responded that the city no longer had the trucks or the employees to pick up garbage from dumpsters. She said the city could no longer provide the commercial garbage service and had nothing else to offer but rollcars.

Mayor Horton recognized Council Member Harley who stated that tonight was the first time he heard the city had not been charging to pick up garbage at Bridgepointe for the past one and a half years. He said the city had to get out of the business of commercial garbage pickup because it was losing \$80,000 a year and apparently part of that loss was providing free commercial garbage service to Bridgepointe. Mayor Horton asked Mr. Fleischhacker what was the cost per month for dumpster pickup by a private carrier. He responded that the monthly cost was \$262 divided by 40 families. Mayor Horton remarked that the monthly cost for each family would not be very much. Mayor Horton thanked Dr. Albert and Mr. Fleischhacker for bringing their concerns before the city council. He said he could not see a solution other than Bridgepointe owners either paying for commercial garbage service or the city providing the rollcars as it does for other city residents.

Agenda Item IV – Announcements by Mayor

Mayor Horton announced that City Hall will be closed February 15, 2010 in observance of the Presidents' Day Holiday. Mayor Horton noted that council members were given copies of a draft ordinance to prohibit smoking in workplaces. He asked council members to review the ordinance so it could be discussed at the next Council Work Session, which would be held at 6 p.m. on February 16, 2010. He said a Special Council meeting would follow the Work Session for Council to consider first reading on the ordinance. Mayor Horton stated that on February 22, 2010 the Mayor's Round Table would meet at 6 p.m. in the New Brookland Room and the Planning Commission will meet at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

- A. Mayor Horton recognized city employees for their years of service to the city. Five-year pins were awarded to BJ Unthank (Mayor and Council), Robert P. McIntyre, Jr. (Police), Joshua Fullwood (Fire), Robert Birchmore (Sanitation), James Scott Bell (Water Plant I), Darrel McKinney (Water Plant 2) and Richard Stanley (Water Plant 2). Ten-year pins were awarded to Nitin Chauhan (Water Plant 1), William Long (Water Plant 1), Joel Gerber (Water Plant 2), and Mark Samples (Water Plant 2). 15-year pins were awarded to Colleen Belk (Police), Nathaniel Harper (fire), Willie McCoy (Sanitation), Boyd Jacobs (Water Plant 2), and Legrande Baker (Sewer Collection).

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Agenda Item IV – Announcements by Mayor (continued)

20-year pins were awarded to Wilhelmenia Frazier (Court Administration), and Richard Hulon (Fire). 25-year pins were awarded to Sue Meisner (Administration) and Garner Wilkins (Fire). A 30-year pin was awarded to John Holladay (Water Billing). Mayor Horton thanked the employees for their hard work and devotion to West Columbia. He said the City of West Columbia is a well-run city because its employees do outstanding jobs for the welfare and benefit of its citizens.

Mayor Horton announced the West Columbia Fire Department will hold a memorial service at 10 a.m. on February 11, 2010 at Elmwood Cemetery to honor Lt. George LaMott, West Columbia's only firefighter lost in the line of duty. Mayor Horton recognized Fire Chief Wyatt Coleman who stated that a procession would leave from the West Columbia fire station at 9:30 a.m.

Agenda Item V – Approval of Minutes

- A. Mayor Horton entertained a motion to approve minutes for the regular council meeting held January 5, 2010. Council Member Fowler so moved and Council Member Harley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. Mayor Horton entertained a motion to approve minutes for the special council meeting held January 19, 2010. Mayor Pro-Tem Harmon so moved and Council Member Fowler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item VI – New Business

- A. Mayor Horton entertained a motion for first reading consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation to establish the zoning classification for recently annexed property located at 1911 and 1917 Sunset Boulevard (TMS # 004666-01-001) as C-2 (general commercial). Mayor Pro-Tem Harmon so moved and Council Member Unthank seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- B. Mayor Horton recognized Council Member Harley who gave a brief update on the West Columbia Beautification Foundation. Council Member Harley said that over four years ago the city set up the West Columbia Beautification Foundation to spearhead beautification projects around the city. He said funding for the Foundation began with \$50,000 in state funds obtained through Senator Nikki Setzler and \$68,000 from the City of West Columbia for improvements along Jarvis Klapman Boulevard and \$50,000 from the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission for park improvements. He said the city did an excellent job in selecting community leaders as foundation board members who have stepped forward with commitments in time and money. Council Member Harley said that future plans include plantings at the intersection of Highways 321 and 302 at K-Mart and setting up a program for citizen's involvement similar to Clemson University's IPTAY (I Pay Thirty A Year) Club. Citizens could join for \$10 and receive bumper stickers that identify them as Beautification Foundation Members. Council Member Harley said that two West Columbia businessmen have committed to purchase and plant 14 trees on their business site at their own expense. He said other nearby municipalities have followed West Columbia's example by setting up beautification committees to handle similar projects in their towns. The City of Cayce has set up a beautification committee to work on improving the Airport Boulevard corridor from the Columbia Metropolitan Airport to Knox Abbott Drive.

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Agenda Item VI – New Business (continued)

Council Member Harley said that he, Council Member Fowler and Mayor Pro-Tem Harmon have discussed the dramatically declining membership at the American Legion Posts. He said over the years the American Legion has strongly supported Palmetto Boys and Girls State, but membership loss has affected its ability to send students to the program. Council Member Harley said this year he wanted Airport High School and Brookland-Cayce High School to be able to send 18 students to Palmetto Boys and Girls State, which he described as a learning classroom for state and local government. He said although there are three posts in the area, Posts 79, 90 and 130, the posts do not have enough funds to sponsor as many students as they have in the past. Council Member Harley made a motion to contribute \$2,000 to sponsor attendees to Palmetto Boys and Girls State. Council Member Moore seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Council Member Fowler noted that in past years the city gave \$1,500 annually to the Boys and Girls State program so it was increasing the city's contribution by an additional \$500 this year.

Agenda Item VII – Adjourn

Mayor Horton entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Unthank so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Harmon seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta Valentino McKinnon, CMC
City Clerk