



**REGULAR MEETING OF FLORENCE CITY COUNCIL
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020 – 1:00 P.M.
CITY CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
324 WEST EVANS STREET
FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA
MEETING CONDUCTED THROUGH ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Stephen J. Wukela, Mayor Pro tem Frank J. “Buddy” Brand, Mayor-Elect Teresa M. Ervin, Councilman George Jebaily, Councilman Glynn F. Willis, Councilwoman Octavia Williams-Blake, Councilwoman Pat Gibson-Hye Moore, Councilwoman-Elect Lethonia Barnes and Councilman-Elect Chaquez T. McCall.

ALSO PRESENT

Mr. Randall S. Osterman, City Manager; Mr. James W. Peterson, Jr., City Attorney; Mrs. Amanda P. Pope, Municipal Clerk; Mr. Scotty Davis, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager of Development; Mr. Kevin Yokim, Assistant City Manager of Administration/Finance; Chief Allen Heidler, Florence Police Department; Chief Shannon Tanner, Florence Fire Department; Mr. Michael Hemingway, Director of Utilities; Mr. Chuck Pope, Director of Public Works; and Mr. Jerry Dudley, Director of Planning.

MEDIA PRESENT

Notices of this regular meeting of City Council were provided to the media and individuals requesting a copy of the agenda informing them of the date, location and time of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wukela called the November 9, 2020 regular meeting of Florence City Council to order at 1:06 p.m.

INVOCATION

Mayor-Elect Ervin gave the invocation for the meeting. The pledge of allegiance to the American Flag followed the invocation.

Mayor Wukela congratulated Pro tem Brand on his election to Florence County Council. Mayor Wukela said Pro tem Brand is a trusted friend and counselor and his voice has been important to the City and he will be missed.

Mayor Wukela congratulated Mayor-Elect Ervin on her election to Mayor of Florence City Council. Mayor Wukela said given Mayor-Elect Ervin’s time and history on Council, this Council will be well served moving forward.

Mayor Wukela also congratulated Councilman-Elect Chaquez McCall and Councilwoman-Elect Lethonia Barnes on their election to Florence City Council.



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Mayor Wukela explained this will be the last meeting with himself, Pro tem Brand, Councilwoman Williams-Blake and Councilman Willis. The swearing in for Mayor Ervin, Councilman McCall and Councilwoman Barnes will be Thursday, November 12th. The new Council will be seated at the December meeting with two vacancies (seats of Pro tem Brand and Mayor-Elect Ervin) to be filled. State law mandates that the election of Pro tem happen immediately following the General Election; however, Mayor Wukela suggested they defer this appointment until the new Council is seated at the December meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Pro tem Brand made a motion to adopt the minutes of the October 12, 2020 Regular City Council meeting and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

ORDINANCES IN POSITION

Bill No. 2020-36 – Second Reading

An ordinance to annex property owned by The Grove at Ebenezer, LLC, located as an extension of Sunflower Bluff Drive and being a portion of TMN 00075-01-221.

Mayor Pro tem Brand made a motion to adopt Bill No. 2020-36 on second reading and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to adopt Bill No. 2020-36.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bill No. 2020-37 – First Reading

An ordinance to grant Florence County a permanent right-of-way easement on Dargan Street for the construction of a sidewalk.

Pro tem Brand made a motion to pass Bill No. 2020-37 on first reading and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.

Mr. Scotty Davis, Deputy City Manager reported Florence County has requested the permanent easement for the construction of a sidewalk located on the property of 706 North Dargan Street. The property is currently vacant, and the request is for a right-of-way of 50 feet in length and 5 feet in width from the property line. The easement is subject to a right of reversion to the City of Florence if Florence County does not complete the North Dargan Street Sidewalk project.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to pass Bill No. 2020-37.

Bill No. 2020-38 – First Reading

An ordinance to annex and zone 2 acres on Jody Road, identified as Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00123-01-152 and 00123-01-R/W, and portions of Florence County Tax Map Numbers 00123-01-005 and 00123-01-006.

Pro tem Brand made a motion to pass Bill No. 2020-38 on first reading and Councilwoman Williams-Blake seconded the motion.

Mr. Jerry Dudley, Planning Director reported the site is being developed as a city fire station and the 10-foot strips are to provide contiguity to the existing city limits. The proposed zoning is AC-Activity



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Center, which is not in agreement with the Future Land Use plan; however, Planning Commission did recommend the zoning. The area was initially proposed as industrial but has developed into more of a commercial character since the future land use plan was adopted; therefore, the proposed zoning of AC fits in with the character.

Pro tem Brand inquired on the number of employees to be stationed at the new station. Mr. Randy Osterman, City Manager responded the 12 employees currently stationed at the West Palmetto Station will move to the new station.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to pass Bill No. 2020-38.

Bill No. 2020-39 – First Reading

An ordinance to annex and zone 3553 Texas Road, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00741-01-007, and 695 Florida Drive, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 00741-01-008.

Pro tem Brand made a motion to pass Bill No. 2020-39 on first reading and Councilman Willis seconded the motion.

Mr. Dudley reported the two lots are currently the site of single-family detached homes within the Oak Forest subdivision. The proposed zoning is NC-6.1, Neighborhood Conservation 6.1. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the zoning request of NC-6.1.

Mayor Wukela inquired on if these are low lying properties with potential stormwater issues. Mr. Dudley replied that there are stormwater concerns across the road with rear yard flooding. Mayor Wukela said these have been recommended by Planning Commission and he wants to note that we have brought property into the city before with underlying stormwater issues that ultimately have flooded. Mayor Wukela said he wants to support the annexation, but we need to make sure the property owners understand the stormwater issues in this area will not be resolved by virtue of this annexation.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to pass Bill No. 2020-39.

Bill No. 2020-40 – First Reading

An ordinance to annex and zone 234 Shenandoah Lane, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90113-01-120.

Councilwoman Moore made a motion to pass Bill No. 2020-40 on first reading and Mayor-Elect Ervin seconded the motion.

Mr. Dudley reported this property is currently the site of a single-family detached home in the Spaulding Heights subdivision. The proposed zoning is NC-6.1 and Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend this zoning.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to pass Bill No. 2020-40.

Bill No. 2020-41 – First Reading

An ordinance to rezone from NC-15 to NC-10 a parcel located on Marion Avenue, identified as Florence County Tax Map Number 90067-03-014.

Mayor-Elect Ervin made a motion to pass Bill No. 2020-41 on first reading and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.



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Mr. Dudley reported the property is 1.67 acres borders Jeffries Creek and partially lies within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). The current zoning is Neighborhood Conservation-15 (NC-15), which is characterized by single-family detached development with 15,000 square feet minimum lot areas. Adjacent developed properties to the south, east, and west are zoned NC-15 and property to the north is zoned Open Space Recreation (OSR). The proposed zoning is NC-10, which is still characterized by single-family detached homes but allows for smaller lots. The purpose for the rezoning is to allow the subdivision of the property into three lots for the development of two single-family detached homes, with the possibility of a third in the future. This could result in two smaller lots outside of the regulated SFHA and a third larger lot that would be subject to floodplain development regulations. Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend the rezoning.

Councilwoman Williams-Blake asked if there currently is a structure on the lot, to which Mr. Dudley replied there is not.

Pro tem Brand asked if there is street access to both lots, to which Mr. Dudley replied there is.

Councilman Jebaily expressed concern on flooding and asked for clarification on the lot subdivision. Mr. Dudley said the initial two lots would be located outside the 100-year floodplain, but the third, potential lot, would be located within the 100-year floodplain and would be subject to floodplain development regulations. These regulations will require any development to be at least one foot above base flood elevation. Mr. Dudley said there is also a riparian buffer of 20 feet outside of the floodway in which there could be no development, so any development would have to be pushed as far south as possible. Councilman Jebaily asked if development for the third lot were to move forward, would the developer have to get a building permit from the city so the city knows exactly where on the lot the structure would be placed. Mr. Dudley replied they would have to get a building permit. Furthermore, they would have to provide a plat showing where the 100-year floodplain is in relation to the structure and provide an elevation certificate, which is a FEMA document showing that the structure is to be constructed at least one foot above the base flood elevation. The city will review all these documents prior to issuing a building permit and an inspection will be conducted at the end of construction to verify.

Mayor Wukela said a portion of this lot is in the floodway (no development allowed), a portion is in the floodplain, and a portion is outside the floodplain. The rainfalls the city has recently seen have not honored the floodplain boundary. Mayor Wukela clarified that this lot has already been annexed into the city, the task before Council is to approve the subdivision of these lots as well as the rezoning.

Mayor-Elect Ervin asked why the property owner is requesting to subdivide property that is unusable. Mr. Dudley replied the rezoning to the smaller lot size will allow two lots to be completely outside the floodplain and the homeowner would not be obligated to purchase flood insurance; however, should the homeowner choose to purchase flood insurance it would be at the preferred rate.

Councilwoman Moore also shared her concerns. She said all three lots have a potential to flood, but the third lot is probable.

Councilman Jebaily asked if the south side of Jefferies Creek experiences the same stormwater and sewer issues as the north side of Jefferies Creek and further asked if these properties will have problems with sewer service once developed. Mr. Michael Hemingway, Utilities Director approached the podium and said that they would have to look at the elevations of the houses once constructed to make sure those elevations were above the current sewer elevation based on the last significant rain event. Councilman Jebaily asked if it were possible to figure out the sewer situation before the homes were built in order to determine if sewer service will be compatible with the development of the homes. Mr. Hemingway said



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they could go ahead and get measurements on the current elevation and get with the developer on what elevation they will decide to build on.

Mayor Wukela summarized the two main concerns brought forth by Council. The large lot has a) a portion that is located within the Floodway in which no development is allowed; b) a portion that is located in the floodplain (the 100 year boundary) which sees frequent flooding; and c) a portion that is outside the floodplain and the floodway that is still subject to have flooding and stormwater issues. Mayor Wukela then summarized the second concern regarding sewer. He said a main sewer line runs through Jefferies Creek that was placed there approximately 50-60 years ago because of its low-lying vicinity. As the water levels in Jefferies Creek have risen, due either to beavers or increased storms and flooding, the city has seen intrusion into the stormwater lines which has caused surcharging into Jefferies Creek. These issues will hopefully be addressed with the construction of the new wastewater treatment plant on the west side of town; however, it is an extremely expensive endeavor and will take several years.

Councilman Jebaily made a motion to defer in order to give staff time to meet with the owner and determine if sewer service is capable and available for construction. Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to defer Bill No. 2020-41.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 2020-21

A resolution pursuant to Section I., II., and III. Of Ordinance No. 2020-28 to extend the emergency term and the application of said ordinance by an additional sixty (60) days.

Councilwoman Moore made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-21 and Mayor-Elect Ervin seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to adopt Resolution No. 2020-21.

Resolution No. 2020-22

A resolution designating Friday, December 4, 2020 as Arbor Day in the City of Florence.

Councilman Willis made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-22 and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.

Council voted unanimously to adopt Resolution No. 2020-22.

Resolution No. 2020-23

A resolution to adopt the COVID-19 CARES Act Budget of \$312,331.

Mayor-Elect Ervin made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-23 and Councilwoman Moore seconded the motion.

Mr. Dudley reported the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) on March 27, 2020. The \$2 trillion aid package provides financial aid to families and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.



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On May 11, 2020 the City of Florence adopted a Community Development Block Grant budget for the initial allocation of CARES Act funds totaling \$161,263 for fiscal year 2020-2021.

On September 11, 2020, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary announced the allocation of the remaining \$1.98 billion in CARES Act funding, of which, the City of Florence has been allocated an additional \$312,331. These funds are to be used to assist low-moderate income citizens whose jobs or incomes have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed allocation of additional funds is to provide direct services to residents to include rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to eligible clients with caps of \$500 for rent/mortgage and \$250 for utilities for up to 6 months, as well as funding for food pantries and meal centers to combat hunger and food insecurity due to the pandemic.

Proposed 2020-2021 CARES Act Funding

Lighthouse Ministries	\$	112,331
Harvest Hope Food Bank		50,000
Manna House		50,000
Meals on Wheels		50,000
My Brother's Keeper Shelter		50,000
Total	\$	312,331

Councilman Jebaily noted that anytime the city receives federal funding they must report back the accounting of funds. He asked what accounting documentation each of these entities provides so that the city may report back to the Federal Government. Mr. Dudley replied there is initially a public hearing on the allocation of funds to receive any public input. The proposed recipients for funding then provide justification for the requested funds. These recipients submit line-items and receipts to the city for activities related to COVID-19 based off their justification and the city then reimburses these entities. The city in turn files for reimbursement of these funds to the Federal Government through the CARES Act.

Councilwoman Moore voiced her support to each of these entities, stating they have each been willing to help when called upon.

Councilman Willis asked if a review of the accounting is completed when an entity requests reimbursement to ensure the money is being used according to the CARES Act. Mr. Dudley replied a review is completed and the city has a Federal representative in the event any questions arise.

Council voted unanimously (7-0) to adopt Resolution No. 2020-23.

COUNCILMAN GEORGE JEBAILY

Councilman Jebaily proposed a motion to add to the agenda the authorization of a third Christmas holiday for city employees and Councilman Willis seconded the motion. This item was added to the agenda by unanimous consent. Councilman Jebaily then made a motion to authorize a third Christmas holiday for city employees and Councilman Willis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor-Elect Ervin requested the third Christmas holiday be a permanent holiday for city employees. Mr. Randy Osterman, City Manager said we will move forward this year with the third holiday being a temporary holiday and staff will get something together at the first of the year for Council's consideration to make it a permanent holiday.



REPORTS TO COUNCIL

Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Design Review Board

Mayor-Elect Ervin deferred her appointment to this Board.

Construction and Maintenance Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Being no applicants, Mayor Wukela deferred his appointment.

Housing Authority

Mayor-Elect Ervin nominated Lawrence Smith to fill the unexpired term of Felicia Smith Charles, to expire June 30, 2024. Mr. Smith was appointed by unanimous consent.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council entered into Executive Session at 1:50 p.m. for a discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements.

Council reconvened Open Session at 1:58 p.m.

Mayor Wukela stated Council entered into Executive Session to hear a report from staff regarding the applications for redevelopment grants within the downtown H-1 Overlay District. Mayor Wukela explained Council adopted a mechanism to award grants utilizing an established scoring criteria. Each application is reviewed and scored by a committee of staff and the scoring and recommendations are then referred to City Council for action.

Councilwoman Moore made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-24, a resolution approving redevelopment grants in the downtown H-1 Overlay District, and Mayor-Elect Ervin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

SERVICE PRESENTATIONS

Councilman Glynn Willis

Mayor Wukela presented a service award to Councilman Willis and thanked him for his service. Councilman Willis served two terms on Council.

Councilman Willis requested to make a few comments with it being his last Council meeting. He thanked his wife, Sandra, and his family for being the root of his success. He also thanked the neighborhood watch groups throughout the City and stated they are the core of the quality of life among each neighborhood. Councilman Willis said he worked with the neighborhood watch groups when he was on Planning Commission and for two terms on City Council and the different departments throughout the city have heard their concerns. Councilman Willis also thanked the citizens of Florence who volunteer to make the city the best it can be. Next, Councilman Willis thanked city management, department heads



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and all city employees for making the City great and the hub of the Pee Dee. He further acknowledged the Police and Fire Departments for everything they do when emergencies occur.

Councilman Willis addressed Council and said it has been a pleasure to work with them and Mayor Wukela. He said it is impressive what this Council has been able to achieve the past few years by coming together and listening to each other.

Lastly, Councilman Willis thanked the citizens of Florence and said “it has been an honor and pleasure to serve these two terms on Council and I will miss my interactions with you throughout the City. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve and represent you, it has been an awesome trip for me.”

Councilwoman Octavia Williams-Blake

Mayor Wukela presented a service award to Councilwoman Williams-Blake and thanked her for her service. Councilwoman Williams-Blake served 3 terms and was the first African American elected to an At-Large seat and the first woman to serve on Council since 1953.

Councilwoman Williams-Blake thanked Mayor Wukela and Council for their friendship, city staff for their guidance, and the citizens of Florence. 12 years ago, she was the first African American elected to an at-large seat and the first woman elected to Council since 1953. She noted that the city has made history again with the election of two African American at-large members and the first female and first African American Mayor. Councilwoman Williams-Blake said she is thankful to have been part of Council for 12 years. She said she is most proud of the many examples of Democrats and Republicans working together in order to get things done including the newly revitalized downtown, athletic facilities, and the smoke-free ordinance of 2012.

Councilwoman Williams-Blake thanked Mayor Wukela for being the type of leader council members could follow over the years. In closing, Councilman Williams-Blake thanked the voters of Florence who elected her three times to be of service to them. She said “there is a saying that the first rule of positivity is no matter where you go, the place should be a little bit better when you leave, and I hope I have done that for the City of Florence.”

Mayor Pro Tempore Frank J. “Buddy” Brand

Mayor Wukela presented a service award to Mayor Pro tempore Buddy Brand and thanked him for his service. Pro tem Brand has served on Council since 2005. Mayor Wukela noted the differences he and Pro tem Brand have had over the years, with the Mayor being a Democrat and the Pro tem being a Republican. The Mayor said the decisions made by Council have been bettered by the tension that exists between their different perspectives.

Pro tem Brand thanked Mayor Wukela, Council, and City Staff and said he’s learned a lot over his years of service. He noted the Mayor’s leadership and said it is the reason the city has worked as well as it has.

Mayor Stephen J. Wukela

Pro tem Brand presented a service award to Mayor Wukela. Mayor Wukela was elected in 2008 and served 3 terms. Pro tem Brand thanked Mayor Wukela’s family for allowing him to be of service to the city. Pro tem Brand said Mayor Wukela is a great listener and has compassion for the citizens of the city as well as the region. He has the willingness and the ability to bring people together and has done an



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outstanding job in our community. In closing, Pro tem Brand said, “he’s my Mayor and he’s made me a better person because he’s my Mayor.”

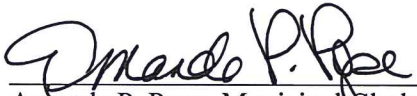
Mayor Wukela mentioned the word legacy and said he wanted to talk a little about Council’s shared legacy. He said this Council has been part of a grand coalition in the community and as a result of the efforts of this coalition, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested into downtown, in our neighborhoods, in our parks and in infrastructure.

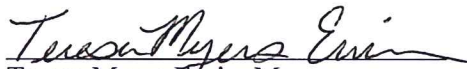
Mayor Wukela said this group comes from vastly different backgrounds with vastly different perspectives and they have disagreed passionately. All too often disagreement becomes hostility and, quoting Abraham Lincoln, the Mayor said “‘though passion may have strained, it has never broken our bonds of affection that bind us together’ and that, ladies and gentleman, is our legacy as a Council and it is my earnest hope that it is a legacy will be shared by our successors.

ADJOURN

Without objection, the Regular meeting of City Council was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Dated this 14th day of December 2020.


Amanda P. Pope, Municipal Clerk


Teresa Myers Ervin, Mayor