

City of West Columbia, SC

Regular Council Meeting

October 4, 2011 at 6 p.m.

Members Present:

Bobby E. Horton, Mayor
Eric L. Fowler
L. Dale Harley
Boyd Jones
Marsha Moore
Tommy Parler
Cathy Shannon
BJ Unthank

Members Absent:

None

Others Present:

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

Dennis Tyndall, Police Chief
Stuart Jones, Building Official
Rick Hodge, City Treasurer
Ken Ebener, Municipal Judge
Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief
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 meeting by e-mail on September 30, 2011.

Agenda Item II – Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Council Member Moore gave the invocation. Mayor Horton dedicated the meeting to the memory of Mayor Pro-Tem Jack Harmon who died on September 19, 2011. The Pledge of Allegiance followed the invocation.

Agenda Item III – Requests for Appearance

- A. Mayor Horton recognized Mr. Michael Mayo, owner of Palmetto Outdoors, who gave a presentation on the 2011 tubing season on the Congaree River. Mr. Mayo said when he began the tubing business in 2006 he had about 50 tubes and about 1,000 participants. He said the current inventory is over 300 tubes and life jackets for the tubing season, which lasts between 16 to 18 weeks. Mr. Mayo stated that Palmetto Outdoors has become the largest volume outfitter in South Carolina with the ability to process over 100 participants an hour using vans, two school buses, and a centralized processing booth. During the 2011 season, Palmetto Outdoors processed over 8,800 participants, including 386 tubers in one day and over 1,000 people during a week-long period. He said demographics show tubers come from as far away as Florida, Georgia and North Carolina to enjoy the tubing experience.

Mr. Mayo noted that so far in 2011 he has invested over \$25,000 in preparation for the 2012 tubing season. He said next year his goal is to process over 500 participants in one day. He said although tubers wear life jackets and receive safety speeches before tubing on the river, next year he plans to have a CPR certified swift-water lifeguard stationed near Riverbank Zoo ready to assist tubers as a safety precaution. He thanked City Council for allowing him an opportunity to grow a business that significantly impacts tourism in the City of West Columbia.

- B. Mayor Horton recognized Mr. Jay Harmon, son of the late Mayor Pro-Tem Jack Harmon. Mr. Harmon read a statement from the Harmon family regarding his father's visitation at City Hall on September 21, 2011, as follows:

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Agenda Item III – Requests for Appearance (continued)

“Dear Mayor, City Council, Administration and Staff. Our family wishes to thank you for the outpouring of love and support expressed for our father during his recent illness and passing. What began as an idea to have his visitation at City Hall blossomed into something we could never have imagined. Once the Mayor and Council approved the use of the New Brookland Room, we had no expectations of anything additional, but the administration and staff really went out of their way to make this an unprecedented tribute. From the press releases, the flawless coordination of the setup, refreshments, audio and video, and the smooth flow of guests; to the funeral service with representation from all departments of the City (including a fire truck) and the most impressive escort to a cemetery that we have ever seen – it was all an unbelievable effort! We thank you for these and so many other things done that we are probably not even aware. We are reluctant to thank individuals by name, as we are sure to leave someone out, because what we experienced was obviously a tremendous group effort. We are sure that our father would have been both proud and humbled by the wonderful honor given him by his West Columbia friends and family. Thank you again and may God bless you and the City of West Columbia. Sincerely, Jay, Sharon and Sheila and the family of Jack L. Harmon.”

Agenda Item IV – Announcements by the Mayor

- A. Mayor Horton recognized Fire Chief Wyatt Coleman who commended Firefighters Jimmy Patrick and Matthew Rowlette for their extraordinary response during a house fire in January 2011 that saved the life of a woman trapped in her burning residence.

Mayor Horton announced that the candidate filing period for the Special Election for Council District 3 opens at noon on October 7, 2011 and closes at noon on October 21, 2011. He stated the Mayor’s Round Table Meeting would be held at 5:30 p.m. on October 17, 2011. The public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan 2011 would be held at 6 p.m. on October 17, 2011 before the Council Work Session. The Planning Commission will meet at 6 p.m. on October 24, 2011.

Agenda Item V – Minutes

- A. Mayor Horton entertained a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Council Meeting held September 6, 2011. Council Member Moore so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item VI – New Business

- A. Mayor Horton entertained a motion for first reading consideration of an ordinance to amend Section 4-2-13 of the city’s water and sewer ordinances to establish availability or standby fees and charges with respect to customers and properties within its corporate limits to which the city is making water or sewer service available but where customers have chosen not to connect to the city’s system. Council Member Moore so moved and Council Member Parler seconded.

Mayor Horton recognized City Administrator Jenny Cunningham who said the city’s loan agreement with the State Revolving Fund requires the city to charge an availability fee, but there is nothing in the city’s water and sewer rate ordinance to establish the fee. The amendment allows the city to establish the fee as equal to the minimum monthly charge as determined by the city for water and sewer service. Mrs. Cunningham explained that if a customer has water and/or sewer available but does not use one or both services, then that customer will be charged a minimum fee for service availability.

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Agenda Item VI – New Business (continued)

Mayor Horton recognized Council Member Moore who asked what are the current minimum water and sewer rates. Mrs. Cunningham responded that the minimum rate for water is \$15.10 bi-monthly and for sewer it is \$9.20 bi-monthly for in-city customers. Mayor Horton recognized Council Member Unthank who asked what the city has been charging up to this point for customers who have water and sewer services available, but choose not to use them. Mrs. Cunningham responded the city has been charging the minimum rate, but it was not written anywhere in the city ordinance. The purpose of the amendment is to establish the fee in the ordinance as the minimum water and sewer rates for those customers who choose not to use the services. Mayor Horton called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

- B. Mayor Horton entertained a motion for first reading consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation to establish zoning for recently annexed properties located as follows: .86 acres at 1724 and 1728 Sewanee Drive (TMS# 003717-07-002 and 001 respectively), .50 acres at 1700 Cofield Drive (TMS # 00630-02-013), 1.38 acres at 1705 Cofield Drive (TMS# 003630-04-014) and .48 acres at 1604 Riviera Drive (TMS# 003639-02-012) as R-4 (Low-Density Residential). Council Member Unthank so moved and Council Member Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. Mayor Horton entertained a motion for first reading consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation to adopt the City of West Columbia Comprehensive Plan, 2011. Council Member Moore so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. Mayor Horton recognized Brian Carter, Director of Planning and Zoning, who explained that state law requires the city to adopt a comprehensive plan every ten years as established by the SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Enabling Act of 1994. He said the plan incorporates many elements of the previous plan with a couple of new elements. Mr. Carter introduced Mr. Wayne Shuler with the Central Midlands Council of Governments who assisted the Planning Commission and city staff in developing the comprehensive plan. Mr. Shuler said the Planning and Enabling Act of 1994 requires additional elements such as identifying investments the city or other agencies should make within the city boundaries so that those investments are coordinated among the various agencies and jurisdictions. He said the transportation element was removed to become a free standing element and the affordable housing element was addressed in greater detail in the housing section. He said the plan was updated using available 2010 Census data and some goals and strategies in the previous plan were eliminated as being considered no longer appropriate by the city. He said one big change to the plan was the staff recommendation for a larger study area in contemplation for additional annexation. Mr. Shuler said that Mr. Carter would make a more formal presentation during the public hearing on October 17, 2011. Mayor Horton called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.
- D. Mayor Horton entertained a motion for first reading consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation to adopt text amendments to Section 611 of the West Columbia Zoning Ordinance relating to off-street parking requirements and travel or camping vehicle and boat parking requirements. Council Member Harley so moved and Council Member Moore seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item VIII – Adjourn

Mayor Horton entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Parler so moved and Council Member Unthank seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta M. Valentino, CMC
City Clerk