

City of West Columbia, SC

Special Council Meeting
October 19, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Members Present:

Casey Jordan Hallman, Mayor Pro-Tem
Boyd Jones
Eric L. Fowler
L. Dale Harley
Temus C. "Tem" Miles, Jr.
Tommy G. Parler
B.J. Unthank
Teddy Wingard

Members Absent:

Joe Owens, Mayor (previous engagement)

Others Present:

Jenny Cunningham, City Administrator
Brian Carter, Deputy City Administrator
Wyatt Coleman, Fire Chief
Kelli Ricard, City Clerk/Events Coordinator
Wayne Shuler, Director of Planning and Zoning
Jamie Hook, Director of Public Works
Donna Smith, Director of Economic Development
Anna Huffman, IT Systems Administrator
Mark Waller, Director of Planning and Engineering
Mardi Valentino, Director of Human Resources

Dennis Tyndall, Police Chief
Scott Morrison, PIO/West Columbia PD
Marquis Solomon, Fire Battalion Chief

Members of the Public and Press

Agenda Item I – Call to Order

Chairperson Unthank called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and noted a quorum was present. *The State, Free Times, Lexington County Chronicle, Cayce-West Columbia News, The Columbia Star, COLADaily.com* and radio and television stations were notified of the meeting by e-mail on October 18, 2015.

Agenda Item 2 – Determination of Quorum

Chairperson Unthank noted a quorum was present to conduct business.

Agenda Item 3 – Invocation

Council Member Tem Miles gave the invocation.

Agenda Item 4 – Pledge of Allegiance

All attendees at the meeting recited the Pledge of Allegiance before the flag of the United States of America.

Agenda Item 5 – Opening Remarks

- 5.1 Chairperson Unthank began by making a statement to address the WIS-TV new story released regarding alleged racists comments made by Mayor Joe Owens.

Special Council Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2015
Page Two

Agenda Item 5 – Opening Remarks - continued

“As the Chairman of this Council, I feel it is important to open this meeting by making a statement regarding the WIS-TV report last week. I believe it is important to address this issue head on.

It’s unfortunate that our Mayor is not here tonight to possibly issue a heartfelt and personal apology. I would hope that he would also echo the sentiments of myself and my colleagues on this Council. At no time is it ever acceptable for anyone, especially an elected leader, to make degrading and racist comments about anyone in our community. We don’t tolerate that and that is not who we are. Whether it’s by phone call, or out in public or here in City Hall it is simply not acceptable!

I want to be clear that the remarks, allegedly made by the Mayor, are in no way a reflection of how I, or any member of this Council feels about any member of our West Columbia community. To the contrary, as a matter of fact, we are here to serve this community and we do so sacrificially.

To our fellow Council Member Boyd Jones, towards whom these degrading and racist remarks were made, I want to say that you are very much valued member of this City Council. And on behalf of my fellow City Council members, I am sorry that you have had to endure this deplorable comments and this abuse. The comments and threats made toward you do not reflect in any way the attitudes of your colleagues and friends on this Council and we appreciate the important contribution you make to Council, and to our fine city.

I also want to say the same to the members of the African American community in the city of West Columbia. The deplorable remarks are not reflective of how we as a Council feel about anyone in West Columbia and the value you bring to our community. Many of you are rightfully angered by the remarks that were made, but as Reverend Larry Corley so eloquently stated, “Our shoulders are broader than that, we move on and we learn not to let wrath beget wrath. That’s what the scriptures tell us.” And to that I say, Amen Reverend Corley!

While we are all disgusted that these comments were made; it is my hope and belief that we can put this incident behind us, and continue to work together towards making our City the very best city that it can be. So at this time I would like to give the floor to my fellow Council Member Dale Harley who also has some comments.”

5.2 Chairperson Unthank recognized Council Member Dale Harley.

“Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for allowing me to address some disturbing behavior that was brought to light this past week.

I want to begin with a sincere apology to the Honorable Councilman Boyd Jones and our entire African-American community on behalf of our city council. The statements that were reported on our local news television station, WIS, were unfortunately, that of one person who was elected to lead our community. This type of behavior is not leadership; it does not reflect the beliefs of this council. I have served on this council for 22 years, and I know beyond all doubt the identity of the person whose voice was recorded.

**Special Council Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2015
Page Three**

Agenda Item 5 – Opening Remarks – continued

The City of West Columbia is committed to a culture of diversity and inclusion. It is the policy of the city of West Columbia to create an environment in which people are free from discomfort or pressure resulting from slurs, threats, and harassment. Therefore, the city of West Columbia is committed to protect an environment in which all people are free from discrimination because of race, color, religion, gender, disability, age or national origin. Racist remarks have no place in our society, do not reflect the feelings and beliefs of the city of West Columbia, and are completely unacceptable to have been spoken by a person of supposedly city leadership.

We will endeavor to eradicate all behavior that stands in the way of our commitment to be a city that embraces all people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.”

Council Member Miles so moved to have the remarks made by Chairperson Unthank and Council Member Dale Harley be set forth verbatim in the minutes from the meeting and Council Member Harley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 6 – Announcements/Communications by the Mayor

The Mayor was not in attendance so Chairperson Unthank moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Item 7 – Presentations and Recognitions

- 7.1 Chairperson Unthank entertained consideration of a resolution recognizing firefighter Bradley Smith for heroic acts of service on October 4, 2015. Mr. Smith was not in attendance so Chairperson Unthank deferred the presentation and vote on the resolution to a meeting in the future.

Agenda Item 8 – Requests for Appearances/Citizen Comment Period

- 8.1 Chairperson Unthank recognized Ms. Cora Washington of 1112 Monticello Street. Ms. Washington spoke of an issue with Mayor Joe Owens regarding a Bobby Horton campaign sign in her yard.

Agenda Item 9 – Unfinished Business

- 9.1. Chairperson Unthank entertained second reading consideration of an ordinance amending the West Columbia code to address discharge of fireworks within the city. Council Member Harley so moved and Council Member Miles seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 9.2. Chairperson Unthank entertained second reading consideration of an ordinance to annex 13.09 acres of property (TMS # 003698-01-005) known 420 Davega Drive. Council Member Miles so moved and Council Member Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Special Council Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2015
Page Four

Agenda Item 10 – Adjourn to Executive Session to Receive Advice and Information from Outside Legal Counsel Concerning Legal Matters Related to a Proposed PUD-C Map Amendment to Rezone Four +/- Acres at the Intersection of Meeting Street and State Street (Pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70 (A) (2))

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn to executive session to receive advice and information from outside legal counsel concerning legal matters related to a proposed PUD-C map amendment to rezone four +/- acres at the intersection of Meeting Street and State Street. Council Member Harley so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned to executive session at 6:21 p.m.

Agenda Item 11 – Reconvene to Regular Session

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn executive session and reconvene to regular session. Council Member Miles so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council reconvened to regular session at 7:31 p.m. Chairperson Unthank stated no action was taken in executive session.

Agenda Item 12 – New Business

- 12.1. Chairperson Unthank entertained first reading consideration of the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve a map amendment to rezone Four +/- acres at the intersection of Meeting Street and State Street (TMS# 004647-31-002,003,004,007,010,011,012, and 013) from C-1 (Intensive Commercial) and C-2 (General Commercial) to PUD-C. Council Member Miles so moved to lay the action items on the table until further notice and Council Member Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 12.2. Chairperson Unthank entertained consideration to accept staff's recommendation on the proposed area of annexation West of I-26. Ms. Donna Smith, Director of Economic Development, provided Council with two proposals for annexing the area proposed by Springdale. The first proposal included 827 total parcels consisting of residential, commercial and non-taxable properties. The total assessed values are \$128,218,825.00. Potential issues are the areas east of I-26 without sewer or water and sewer, and the cost to install water and sewer in the area.

The second proposal included the Rainbow Circle area which would need to be canvassed to assess whether there is enough positive interest to include in the proposed annexation area. The proposal would include total parcels consisting of residential, commercial, and non-taxable properties. The total assessed values are \$119,887,359.00.

Ms. Smith requested a decision from Council to be able to move forward with possibly annexing the proposed areas. Council Member Miles requested a reduction in the water rates for the Rainbow Circle area to include those residents in the overall annexation area. Mrs. Jenny Cunningham, City Administrator, will have the City Attorney draw up a resolution to include the Rainbow Circle area in the reduced water rates.

Special Council Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2015
Page Five

Agenda Item 12 – New Business- continued

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to accept staff's proposal for annexation. Council Member Miles so moved and Council Member Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- 12.3 Chairperson Unthank entertained consideration to approve a bid for \$675.00 authorizing Exceed Landscape Solutions, Inc. to go upon property located at 2393 Klapman Road to correct accumulations of weed or refuse violations pursuant to section 6-1-5 (e) of the West Columbia code of ordinances regarding enforcement procedures. Mr. Wayne Shuler, Director of Planning and Zoning informed Council of the issues with 2393 Klapman Road have been ongoing since 2013. The current issues began in July of 2014. Code Enforcement officers have taken necessary steps to resolve the problem and the notices are being returned. Council Member Harley so moved and Mayor Pro-Tem Hallman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 13 – Adjournment

Chairperson Unthank entertained a motion to adjourn. Council Member Harley so moved and Council Member Parler seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Council adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelli Ricard
City Clerk