CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
MARCH 1, 2022, AT 6:30 PM

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Howard Nettles, Sheila Baccus, Bryant Gardner, John Segars, John Milling and Elaine Reed. Also present was Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Ms. Brook Sylvester, City Attorney Kevin Etheridge, Police Chief Kelvin Washington, Recreation Director Mr. Lee Andrews, Building & Codes Officer Sheila Jones, W&S Superintendent Charles Shugart and one of his workers, Ms. Gloria Hines, Mr. Steve Abbott, Ms. Ernestine Lyde, Ms. Anna DeWitt, Mr. Melvin Fox, Mr. John Lewis, and other visitors.

Ms. Taylor Ford with the Morning News was present at the meeting & Mr. Bobby Bryant with the News & Press was present.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Prayer was led by Councilwoman Elaine Reed followed by the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON February 8, 2022
Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular council meeting on February 8, 2022. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA
Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to remove Item 9B until next month and motion to approve the meeting agenda. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES
DDRA - LISA BAILEY
Darlington Downtown Revitalization Association
Report for Council – March 1, 2022
Thank you for agreeing to fund our **Saturdays on the Square Concert Series** for 2022! The slate of bands has been secured for May through September.

- May 14 – Muddy Creek Revival (Southern Rock & Country)
- June 11 – Mike Taylor & the Holiday Band (Beach Music Hall of Fame)
- July 9 – The Saxxy Keyz (Jazz)

- August 13 – The Rick Strickland Band (Beach Music Hall of Fame)
- September 10 – John King (Country – Songwriter for Hootie & the Blowfish in 2015)

Our Annual Taste of Darlington will be here before you know it **on Thursday, April 7, at Darlington Raceway.** We are still accepting cooks and table hosts for spots at the Taste, and new this year, each participating table will receive a pair of tickets to the May race! **Our Annual Golf Tournament will be held Wednesday, April 13, at Darlington Country Club.** Teams and sponsor slots are still available. Come enjoy an afternoon of golf, a delicious buffet lunch, and fellowship with area business leaders.

The DDRA continues our monthly **Member Breakfasts at 8 a.m. on Thursday, March 24, at Taki's Diner, 609 Pearl St.** These meals are at no charge for members and a small $5 fee towards the meal for all others. The events allow our businesses to build connections and strengthen our local economy.

The DDRA Board has approved $5,000 for façade grants for 2022! The DDRA Improvement Incentive Grant Program helps businesses and property owners to make repairs, install signage, and paint. Since its inception, the program has been in direct connection with more than $177,000 worth of upgrades. The grant deadline is the 24th of each month until funds are exhausted.

In the meantime, **we continue to promote Darlington and its businesses on social media and through our News Alert System each week.** Our alerts reach more than 2,700 people! We continually update our Web page, www.BuildUpDarlington.org, where individuals can submit information or sign up to receive these alerts on your phone, by text message or via email.

GREATER DARLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE – BROOK SYLVESTER & ANNA DEWITT

Ms. Brook Sylvester said the Chamber is undergoing renovations at this time. The Chamber is closed to the public, but she is there in the office. The Annual Membership Award Banquet for the Chamber will be held March 24, 2022, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at The Grand Old Post Office and South of Pearl will be catering the event. Ms. Sylvester said for tickets visit members.darlingtonchamber.com/events or you can call her. Ms. Anna DeWitt said they are there to ask for funding for their Freedom Fest 2022. She said their Treasurer, Amanda spent five months going over every part of their financial situation. She cut out any non-essential services, she negotiated contracts with local businesses for essential services and was able to bring our chamber to a place of financial stability. Ms. DeWitt said the executive board voted to change Freedom Fest from a fundraiser to a gift to our town. She said she has worked Freedom Fest for the past four years and decided on year one that we needed to do better for the children of our town. Ms. DeWitt said you will never know the heartache it brought to have the children offer up a handful of change to purchase one ride ticket. She said this is not what Freedom Fest should be about and this is what we are setting out to change. Ms. DeWitt said we want to offer the rides free of charge for the children of our community. Ms. DeWitt said tonight they are asking for $11,000 to cover the cost of the fireworks, which is what the city so generously gave last year. They would also like to ask for an additional $3,500 to offset the cost of the carnival rides. She said they are actively seeking other funding for the rides, but our gift

will reduce their goal to $10,000. Ms. DeWitt said, “Thank you for your consideration tonight and a decision soon would help us finalize our budget goals”. She told them they have a copy of the fireworks contract, and of the carnival rides and of the carnival ride costs in the packet that Brook gave them. Councilwoman Reed said, “I want to be clear. So, what is the total? Is it $3,500 or …..Mrs. Dewitt said, “We would like $11,000 to pay for the fireworks, but if you would bump it up to $15,000 we could put $3,500 toward the carnival rides so that no one pays for carnival rides this year; they would be free”. Councilwoman Reed said, “Ok, sounds good to me. It costs me a lot to pay for those rides”. Councilwoman Baccus said, “so my question would be…and I guess it would be for Gloria or maybe you would know”. She said, “The money we donated to the Chamber last year, did we get any kind of receipts back or any kind of accountability for this money”? Mr. Payne said, “I was not here at that time”. Ms. DeWitt said, “We paid first and turned in our receipts and then ya’ll paid us back after our receipts were turned in to you. Mr. Garland did.” I told them that’s’ the way Howard did it. Councilwoman Baccus said, “So we did spend $11,000 justifiably on fireworks?. Pridgen said, “I think whatever Howard requested, they turned it in to him”. Councilwoman Baccus said, “Ok, as long as we’ve got accountability. Mayor Boyd asked, “Will it be the same way this time also”? Ms. DeWitt said, “Yes, we’ve already paid (the first deposit invoice is in their packet) that they’ve already paid $5,500 to secure the date. Councilwoman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve $14,500 for the Darlington Chamber of Commerce for this event for this summer. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted for the motion. Councilman Howard Nettles abstained due to a conflict of interest. (He’s chairman of the Board of Directors for the Chamber) Ms. Dewitt said the event takes place on June 25, 2022. Councilman Milling said, “Just as a follow-up on this and this isn’t for you all. We get our funding requests along and along and along and more than once we made a suggestion that we have a designated time in January where people come before us. So, I would ask that between now and January if our city administrator would work on getting us something so that we’ve got it one time”. Councilman Gardner asked, “Should we do it between now and budget time”? Councilman Milling said, “We can probably as we’re doing our budget, we can make a decision as to how much we think we are going to allocate for that and then let everybody know they’ve got to come on a certain time frame to do it”. Councilwoman Baccus said, “So then what you’re saying is… so what happens if other nonprofits come and want to get donations from the city. We can’t say we just going to give to the same people all the time and not look at other donations (nonprofits). Councilman Milling said, “I think we would do it like the County does it and they would make applications. The applications would be reviewed, and the awards would be given rather than coming up on the night of a presentation and asking for an award at that time”. Councilman Milling said, “My understanding is, and I could be wrong, but my understanding is these things are submitted to council, they are reviewed, they are discussed by council and awards are made, but that’s the kind of thing that I’d like to see us doing so that we know what kind of money we have set aside. The community know what kind of money we have set aside, and they know when to come and ask for it. Councilman Milling said, “We may have some bumps in the road when we first put it together, but I just think it would be good to start working on it. Councilwoman Baccus said, “As long as it’s set up where everybody has an opportunity to put in their request and then all

requests are reviewed fairly and not say we're going to give this specific group a certain amount just because we've done it in past years". Councilman Milling said, "Every year is a new year".

CITIIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL (5 MINUTE PER PERSON MAXIMUM)
*Council may have open discussion with citizens after meeting
*Disruptive behavior is not permitted

Ms. Nova Harkless said she's there to speak about the property at 308 Washington Street which is where her mother lives and it's the family home. She said for six years, when my daddy rode by dead in the coffin, in the hearse, somebody fell in a hole. This is six years now and the city hasn't done anything for it. Ms. Harkless said whenever she goes to talk to somebody about it they always push her back and say we're going to see about it, I'll talk to you later. Ms. Harkless said, "I haven't even had a phone call from you, Mr. Payne. You haven't returned my calls and I gave you my number. Nobody has returned my call about that property. Ms. Harkless said, "We need to have that property covered either way. She said, "Cement. I understand there's a pipe running across the street to the oil mill, but that's not our problem, that's the city's problem and they need to do something about that. She said that hole has been there for six years. She said you pass by there and you look at my mama yard and you see the fade out posters there. Ms. Harkless said, "They were orange when you put them there, but they are white now and that don't make no sense. None whatsoever. I can't get no kind of response. I can't get no help. The only thing is you're pushing us to the side, and we'll see about it. She said, "Now nobody has seen about it yet but the only thing I want you to do is go to my mama house and walk in the yard and stand right there and see when you come back up. That's what I want you to do because it's decaying again, and it don't make no sense. Ms. Harkless said what you can do is set a meeting with me and I'll be there, but I want you to stand there and see will you come back up. Ms. Harkless said, "Now I got grandchildren, nobody can park over there. It don't make no sense and it looks terrible over there and my mom's house shouldn't even be looking like that for six years. Ms. Harkless said, "For six years I ride up there and I think about my poor daddy and that's when they buried him and that's when that hole decay. She said she shouldn't have to ride up here every day and see it like that. Ms. Harkless said they were asking for the hole to be covered and somebody said Well if you can't cover it with dirt….. Ms. Harkless said, "I know you can't cover it with dirt; cover it with dirt if you want to and stand on top of it and see where you go". She said it needs cement, it needs mortar mix, you need to check into before somebody gets hurt again. She said somebody got hurt there and the hole…..when it rain…raining for six years it's going to keep on merging into my mom's yard. She said somebody needs to check on it. She said somebody said they don't know about what DOT can do about it. She said if you don't know about it then you shouldn't have the job. Ms. Harkless said, "And that's just point blank. If you can't talk to them but I can talk to them for you, but my mama yard needs to be fixed. Councilwoman Baccus told Ms. Harkless she will come see her tomorrow. Councilwoman Reed said, "Council I asked Ms. Harkless to come so she could voice her opinion, but we have been dealing with this for quite some time. Councilwoman Reed said, "This is the same resident that I voiced at our last… it might not have been at our last council meeting but whenever we may have even been in executive session where I was telling you that when the project, the stormwater project that we had in ward two at

that time the engineers tried their darndest to identify how they could fix it and they identified that they had three different systems running up under there and they were only concerned, at that point of course, with finishing the stormwater project. Councilwoman Reed said, we've had others to go out but that's why I was kind of anxious or just pushy that we, out of this whatever this infrastructure we have now, I know it's not for individual homes and things but this is a system that the engineers is saying is running over there that we could possibly go ahead and get her fixed now because as she said it's been that long". Councilwoman Reed said I've been with her and talking with the different administrators to see what we can do and the only thing under the prior administration was able to put that metal plate over and that doesn't last. She said it's really dangerous and folk have fallen in the hole. Councilwoman Reed said we have to really do something so I was thinking with all of this new things for infrastructure that we could put that as a priority she said Ms. Harkless is a long term tax paying resident in ward two; been there for a long time and very active in our political processes so I do want us…and I asked her to please come that I wanted you all to hear it from her and I would appreciate it if we could figure out a way to go ahead and get this done.

Melvin Fox - Decided not to speak

Mr. John Lewis said in our last meeting you and I had a discussion after the meeting and at that time you were quoting from a book stating what the regulations for city council meetings were and I apologize you were right. In there it doesn't say that we have to have the right to speak. That's up to you, the council members. The time limit is up to you and the members and what they recommend in there is 5 to 10 minutes some places are less. Mr. Lewis said, and it does say city Council approves the minutes of the meetings which we don't get to see so you were right, and I apologize I don't agree with it so that's just my personal point. Mr. Lewis said, more importantly to me, a couple of things with water and sewer. At the last meeting Mr. Mayor, you talked about how the city has been running in the hole year after year and that you decided to raise the water rates. I saw the newspaper article and in there it was mentioned and you kind of said that…you kind of laughed it off and that you kind of put pressure on the city council to approve it. Now did anybody ever stop to think that last year this town, this city, the county, the state everyone was going through Covid. People had lost jobs, they were hurting, inflation was going up and we have a lot of people in this town that couldn't afford all of that so on top of it we raise their sewer rates and then when they couldn't pay the rates, we cut the water off. And then we want to get all of this backpay or a penalty for not being able to pay it. you even mentioned that you paid for somebody's. You went and raised the rates. I don't know if anybody in here was privy to what you were going to be doing. Those rates, if we were going to have to raise them, didn't have to be raised that high. The city could have been aware that what was going to happen. Late fees: We could have foregone the late fees for a period of time simply because we know this town is hurting. Mr. Lewis said, there's people out there hurting so we didn't have to do all that. Mr. Lewis said, I think it really needs to be looked at. Mr. Lewis said, my final thing is still on water and sewer. Last meeting, we had a couple of people come up here and they talked about areas where sewage is coming up along the roads and pipes and everything and it's been an ongoing problem for years. Mr. Lewis asked, "What happens when a child gets out there and plays and they're going through this sewer, and they

come down with Ebola or cholera and somebody dies. It comes back on this council and the councils before because nothing's been done. They brought it up, but I didn't hear not one person on this council speak up and say let's do this, let's look at this and how we're going to address this. Mr. Lewis said I have worked in 15 countries in Africa, and I've seen cholera, I've had cholera. God forbid it ever happens here with our children. We need to do something about this. It's an environmental problem. The EPA needs to be involved in it. This city Council needs to do something to address those problems and then we need to get something done about it. Mr. Lewis said, "I do appreciate the fact that you took off that we couldn't ask questions of the council". He said, "So, I appreciate that, but you and I had in our discussion last week after the meeting we talked. We had several people that you said would talk after the meeting". Mr. Lewis said, "Mr. Mayor if there's anything that needs to be said after the meeting, needs to be said at this meeting where everybody at this council and sitting out here can hear it because we don't have any idea what's talked about or decided". Councilwoman Baccus said, "I want to say this to you Mr. Lewis, twice I've already addressed those fees and I think the council do need to revisit those fees that we charge citizens on that water bill. I've brought that up twice already, but this council seems to not want to even address the fees. Even the structure of the fees needs to be addressed because it's definitely hurting the citizens of Darlington." Mr. Lewis said, "What bothers me is you do it and nobody is aware you're doing it". He said we have a lot of elderly people in this area that don't have the income that some of us may have, and we need to think about them". Councilwoman Baccus said, "And on top of that there's another ordinance that was put in place as far as people with abandoned …. with houses they're not living in so that ordinance on top of the water bill is going to affect citizens. Councilwoman Baccus said, "It's too expensive because it starts out at $400 a year and then $1000 a year and then $3000 a year. The citizens can't afford that, so it needs to be addressed…that ordinance also needs to be addressed. Mayor Boyd thanked Mr. Lewis and called for the next person on the agenda while councilwoman Baccus was still speaking. Mr. Lewis said, "Just one last thing Mr. Mayor. This is a prime example of what I was talking about. I bring up about the sewage and everything else. What are we going to do? Nothing. we're gonna set up there…… Mayor Boyd cut Mr. Lewis off and said, "Let's go ahead and discuss it tonight, ok…my turn to talk". Mayor said, "Mr. Lewis, you want us to fix everything so that there's no sewer out on the street but then you want to say that we shouldn't raise the water bill. You said that we didn't tell the people…we gave everybody a reading, a notice ahead of time. The water bill didn't get raised until August. If you listened to numbers that I quoted you the other day, less people got their water turned off than the year before. There's always been late fees and if you're gonna get things fixed… we finally got it from "*why is it not being fixed"* because I told you for the last eight years it's been in the hole. So, we finally got it to where it's not in the hole so we can start trying to get things fixed; so, you can't have it both ways. And that's why I raised my hand. If you don't want to vote me in, don't vote me in, but please quit coming to my council and whining about stuff when we're trying to get things done. We're getting things done and we're letting people know what's happening. I'm as clear and transparent as everybody can possibly be. We let everybody know their water bill was raised, the water bill got raised. We got out of the hole. We're getting things fixed. We've been in the hole for years…stuff has to be fixed, it's a business…has to be fixed, ok. So, please quit coming up…we'll take your comments, we're not here for discussion, that was the purpose for

that, so we don't be here all night for discussion. I do not have anything to hide Mr. Lewis. I stood there in front of everybody the other night and talked. Please do not insinuate that I have anything to hide. I tell everybody what everything that's being done. So, I raised the water bills. I did not force anybody to raise the water bill; everybody voted for it, the ones that wanted to vote for it. That's the way things work. Mayor Boyd said, "Mr. Boyd does not make things happen. Mr. Boyd works to try to get things changed". That's what the rest of the council is here for. So please quit coming up to my council. This is my room, this is my council, this is the only thing that I have control over. So, please, I'll allow you to speak. If I ask you to speak you're allowed to speak, but please do not come up and badger us about that. Anytime that you would like to talk afterwards or have a complete discussion, we'll complete the discussion, but please excuse me Mrs. DuBose. Mr. Lewis said, "You're not going to sit there and accuse me of whining". Mayor Boyd said, "No more, that's it, no sir that it is. I'll ask you to leave if you continue on. Mayor Boyd said, "Mrs. DuBose, please come up. Thank you. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Wait a minute, let me say something", Mayor Boyd called Ms. DuBose to come up. Mayor Boyd said, "No, no, discussion is over. Councilwoman Baccus said, "First of all, wait, no, excuse me". Mayor Boyd said, Mrs. DuBose please come up". Councilwoman Baccus said, "You don't own me. You might own the rest of these people, but you do not own me on this council. Mayor Boyd kept calling for Ms. Dubose to come forward. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Let me educate you on that right now; my council, my city, my this. That's your racist problem right there, my this. You don't own nobody around here. This ain't no dictatorship. You done lost your mind in here".

Jacqueline DuBose said she speaks peace and unity among the council. Ms. DuBose said she's a bus driver for Darlington …She said in 2018 she started a non-profit organization called "Jumping to New Heights" which is geared toward the youth and young adults. She said it's a two-fold program which consists of double-dutch, which they started, dance, jazz, tap, ballet, boxing, fencing and its an educational program where children can learn law, business structure. She said not college prep but changing the mindset of going to college because there's a whole new world out there. Ms. Dubose said they also have law school for lawyers coming in because her belief is that children and young adults should know business and law because we have to deal with that for the rest of our lives. Ms. Dubose said right now she's renting the building at 116 Main Street. She said when she started in March 2018 she had 300 kids signed up. She said she asked the school to help her in order to practice there, but of course to no avail. Ms. Dubose said they continue to practice, and she still has the 300 students and she's coming before council to find out if she can receive any funds in order to expedite this program to the level it needs to. Ms. DuBose said they don't want the kids to fall by the wayside. They want them to have different outlets and under this program they get to taste everything without it being such a taxing on the parents. She said kids get to see whether they want to do karate, double dutch, boxing and tap into law, architect, and a vast list of things under one umbrella. Ms. Dubose said she does have 501 (c) 3, she has her board. She has Shawn as president and then she has two other people that's working with her. She's incorporating volunteers and to highly expedite this program, she is allowing mentors in in order to execute the different sections. She said she's involving the community as well to help bring a better mindset to Darlington County. Ms. DuBose said she's asking for funds in order to

expedite the grant opening hopefully in April and also to bring in the mentors because it's going to cost. Mayor Boyd asked Ms. DuBose if she is located on North Main or South Main. Ms. DuBose said South Main right beside the Jamaican store (the beige building). Councilwoman Reed said, "It's the building where the night club use to be. Ms. DuBose said she started talking with Mr. Jackson in November because he saw what she was doing, and he held the building for her up until last week when she rented the building. Ms. Dubose said it's astonishing for him to believe in her and the program because he could have advertised the building a long time ago. She said she want to have a big grand opening and start out on a good foot, bring in the mentors, and have the children to do something different. She said she went to Society Hill to see if she could utilize their gym, so she guesses they are waiting to see how covid is going to be. Ms. Dubose said her overall vision is to have this program to go to all forty-six counties. She said she knows and truly believes this is a good program, so it won't be so taxing on the parents that if a child gets into an activity and doesn't like it, they have an opportunity to taste all of these different things that falls under one umbrella. Councilman Nettles said, "So is the funding that you're asking from us for the people that live in Darlington"? Ms. Dubose said, "Yes, I was just giving you an overall view for long term. This is just for Darlington." Councilman Nettles asked, Ms. DuBose if she had an amount that she was looking for. Ms. DuBose said, "I was thinking about $13,000 to start". She said, "I know what you were saying Mr. Milling that there should be an application process". She said this is a new non-profit organization and she believes this would be beneficial to the children of Darlington. Mayor Boyd said, "So the children would have to pay when they come now"? Ms. DuBose said they would have to start out with a registration. She said she was looking at a registration of $30-$35 because most of the kids and parents are not in a high bracket income. She said, "They will have to contribute per month, maybe $40 a month or maybe 3 children per household $45 a month". Ms. DuBose said they have to pour into something because they are teaching stewardship as well". She said they are also working with the beautification and garden club of Darlington because she believes that they should be able to contribute to beautifying Darlington, so they have to do volunteer work whether inside or outside. Councilman Nettles asked, "so do you have something broken out where you would give monies….Ms. DuBose interrupted and said, "I can bring that. I can submit it. I didn't know how you all did it; whether to send it through email or….Councilman Nettles said, "Well, let's just talk through the questions first and we can kind of figure that out". Councilman Nettles said, "As we were talking before you heard us ask about, Ms. Baccus asked about we submit the monies and the receipts and everything so we won't be able to do the same thing so I was thinking of something you could show us that you could show us that would say "here is what I'm going to spend it on". Councilman Nettles said, "I'm all about helping kids. That's not a problem for me. I just want to see something. Councilman Nettles asked, "What's your time frame". Ms. Dubose said she was thinking about opening up in April. She said she emailed the governor because she wanted his person to come to see what different towns are doing in helping to capture the youth. Ms. DuBose said, "I know what you're talking about basically having a hard copy of everything worked out". Councilman Nettles said, "Just something ….I just want to make sure we don't pass your time frame. Ms. DuBose said I'm waiting for the governor to respond back to see what month and what time he will be able to attend. Councilwoman Reed said, "So, have you done this any

place else"? Ms. Dubose said, "No, I started driving buses. Really I'm a class A driver …She said she noticed that Darlington doesn't have a good youth program so this inspired her to start this program. Councilwoman Reed said, "Do you have the proposal, the project outline….. Ms. DuBose interrupted and said, "Yes, I just didn't know how you handled that as far as do I email everybody or…..Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Payne to comment. Mr. Payne said, "Mr. Mayor may I suggest that I meet with Ms. DuBose tomorrow and we can sit down and discuss this, and I can report back to council". Ms. DuBose said, "That will be fine, that sounds good". Councilwoman Baccus said, Can I suggest that you come back at next council meeting and ask again after we have a chance to look at whatever you're going to present and come back and ask again".

PUBLIC HEARING – RICHMOND & SPRING STREETS ANNEXATION ORDINANCE

Mrs. Lisa Bailey said she did not receive any public comment regarding the annexation of the property at Richmond & Spring Streets.

OLD BUSINESS

2ND READING RICHMOND & SPRING STREETS ANNEXATION ORDINANCE – LISA BAILEY, PLANNING DIRECTOR

Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve Ordinance 2022-02 annexation of property at Richmond & Spring Streets into the City of Darlington. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

a)PDRTA LEASE AGREEMENT, MR. DON STRICKLAND – LISA BAILEY, PLANNING DIRECTOR

Mr. Strickland said he wants to give a transit update based on how they are doing. He said the Darlington transit and the commuter bus that leaves Darlington and goes toward Florence back and forth everyday averages over a thousand trips a month right now and it's continuing to grow. He said more seniors and more veterans are using the bus in Darlington. Mr. Strickland said, "As you may know the services in Darlington are now fare free so there is no cost to the individuals using the service. Mr. Strickland said Pee Dee Health Care - Genesis are getting a lot of those trips every month so he thanks them for what they do and the city as well. He said on March 15th there will be a public hearing in Society Hill which will be a connection between Society Hill, Dovesville, Darlington and Hartsville. He said they have been getting a lot of calls from different individuals that really need to get to a grocery store, doctor, and other places so the plan is to start that service in mid-April. Mr. Strickland said the trip shortage in their buses slowed that process down. He said it's anywhere from a year to eighteen months to get buses in, but they did get two recently to be able to provide that service. He said as far as the lease agreement, they have had a major issue with catalytic converters being cut off their buses and each time it costs around $1,200 to get one replaced on their buses. He said the city allowed them to park on W. Broad Street at the city water & sewer department. He said they need some work there. The fence is in rough shape and the gates are tough to open. Mr. Strickland said, "the proposal I would like to bring before council for consideration is basically a lease agreement and in order for us to apply federal funds to a project, (we get 80% federal funds for that type of

project), we have to have local support which is about 20% on the project itself. He said they have to have a lease agreement in place to be able to use those federal funds. Mr. Strickland said if they are able to bring federal funds to the table they can do a new fence, automated gates to where the city employees can come up and hit a button and the gates will roll open and close back behind them. Mr. Strickland said their female driver recently had a situation and it was after dark and she was backing in, got out of the vehicle; went to go put things in her car and came back out and as she was turning around, there was a man there in the dark and scared the life out of here. He said we want to try to avoid that. She did not know what he was there for but luckily he walked away, and nothing came from that, but it showed us that it can. Mr. Strickland said, "We would love to pursue that". He said they definitely can apply for the federal funds; they have two grants right now that is pending but they can achieve 80%, but they will need to try and come up with 20%. He said the project itself with the fence, repaving the surface there (whether concrete or asphalt), and then putting in a fence and potentially section off a portion of the fence to where three to four buses and our driver's vehicles can be stored within that property. Mr. Strickland said the benefit from the city's standpoint would be a new fence, it will cosmetically look a lot better, they can add additional lighting and they can also add surveillance cameras there. He said that is their proposal. He said he knows the city will be going into the budget season soon and hope they can see the good things that are happening with all of the services that are being provided when it comes to funding for this upcoming year. Councilman Nettles asked, "Don are you going to give us numbers or put it out for bids now"? Mr. Strickland said, "Right now, and I am sure you all are aware of this. It's very difficult to get contractors to show up to provide bids. He said right now he has two fence estimates, but the paving piece has been a struggle to get someone to come. They are looking for projects that are twenty acres. He said he has someone scheduled to come next week to come give them a quote. Mr. Strickland said the way they operate they have to get three quotes. He said they will have to end up going out for bid for that and doing and RFP for that. Mayor Boyd asked, "What you need from us is a lease agreement"? Mr. Strickland said, "What I would to love to seek is a lease agreement and then look at the potential of local support. He said giving a $100,000 number, they can $80,000 from the federal level to be able to make that project happen but he would still need to come up with the other $20,000. Mr. Strickland said that number may be right on what they are looking at as far as the project itself". Councilman Nettles asked, "Is there a required time limit for the lease that you're looking for to match the funds"? Mr. Strickland said, "It is based on the useful life and the useful life of the fence will probably be more than the surface. Councilman Milling asked, "Do you have a proposed draft lease at some point that you would like for us to consider". Mr. Strickland said, "Yes. It's very similar to the one we have. It is pretty straight forward and I'll be happy to send that one back over as an option". Mr. Strickland said you can almost take it and because of the way it was worked up it is almost the exact same thing we're trying to do here in Darlington. He said you can go in and change it and have your attorney take a look at it. Councilman Milling said, "I think it would be good to send it to Mr. Payne so our city attorney can take a look at it". Mr. Payne said, "Mr. Shugart is here and since this is his maintenance building I would like to offer him the opportunity to say anything he would like to since it is where your facility is. Mr. Shugart said, "We have spoken several times and I'll be in touch with him this week. He said I think everything will be ok. Mr. Shugart said it looks good so far and we have not had a lot of problems except

that one instance. He said they have added a lot of lighting but some more will be needed and cameras will be much appreciated. Mr. Payne said, “Mrs. Bailey and I will get together with Mr. Strickland and bring something back to you next meeting.

b. ORANGE STREET PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT – LEE ANDREWS, PARKS DIRECTOR

Item Tabled

c)Discussion of Start Time of City Council Meetings – John Payne, City Manager

Mr. Payne said, “Several council members approached me about (*and this is just for discussion; there’s nothing to take action on tonight*) to determine if council would like to start their meetings earlier propose 6:00 instead of 6:30. Councilman Gardner said, “Good by me”. Councilwoman Baccus said, “Question is, it was at 7:00 o’clock, last year or year before last, and then we moved it to 6:30 so now why are we moving to 6:00”? Councilwoman Reed said, “I don’t remember it being at 7:00”. Councilwoman Baccus said, “It was at 7:00 for years and years and years”. She said, “When Milling came on here Milling wanted to go to 6:30, we went to 6:30. So, now why are we going to 6:00? For what purpose? Councilman Gardner said, “so we’ll get out of here before 9:30 and 10. Councilman Milling said, “I didn’t bring it up, but I’d like to start at 6:00 just so I can get out of here earlier in the evening which is the same amount of time to discuss something and if we run over we’re not so late at night when we get home and that’s the general reason for doing it at 6:00 instead of 6:30. Mr. Payne said, “Mr. Mayor, I looked at other municipalities around the area. The City of Florence does theirs at 1:00 in the afternoon; The City of Hartsville starts theirs at 5:30. Councilwoman Baccus said, “And what does that have to do with Darlington. Mr. Payne said, “I am just giving an example of other areas of when they start their meetings. Councilwoman Baccus said, “It’s just a question. I just want to know why you all want to go to 6:00, it’s just a question. Mayor Boyd said, I’m fine either way. I’ve got all day and all night”. Mr. Payne said, “All I need is some direction and you’ll need an ordinance to change it”. Mr. Payne said with majority of council’s approval I will do that at the next meeting.

d)DISCUSSION OF 207 SISKRON STREET – JOHN PAYNE, CITY MANAGER

Mr. Payne said, “Mr. Mayor we had an appraisal done of the old Po Boy’s restaurant and it was the opinion value was $45,000. Mr. Payne said administration is asking for guidance on what you may want to do with this property; do you want to repair it and use it, do you want to lease it, do you want to sell it. Mayor Boyd said, “The appraisal is just the property around it up to the asphalt driveway”? Mr. Payne said, “Yes sir, not any of the parking beside it on the right”. Councilman Gardner said, “I’m comfortable with it as long as it stays as is. He said but as long as it’s just the building, he’s fine either way. Councilman Gardner said, “Obviously I’d like to lease it out but if somebody

wants to sell it….Mr. Payne said, “we’ve had several interested parties come forward and said they would be interested in buying it”. Councilwoman Reed said, “And what reason that we wouldn’t consider that”? Councilwoman Reed said, “I thought that was always the case”. Mayor Boyd asked, “Are we talking about leasing it or selling it”? Mr. Payne said if you lease it you don’t get the tax revenue because it’s still owned by the city. You get the business license and water & sewer. Mr. Payne said, “If you sell it, you’ll get the sale of the property, and you don’t have to potentially do the repairs unless that’s included. He said there’s a roof problem and there’s some ceiling issues going on with this building. He said if you sell it to an individual or business it goes back on the tax rolls and then you get the property tax and you get the water and sewer as well. He said if it’s a restaurant, you get the hospitality tax as well. Mayor Boyd asked if everyone is ok with Mr. Payne putting it out for sale. The majority said, “Yes”. Councilman Milling said, “In looking at the tax map you’ve got it highlighted in blue and identifies it as parcel #4. He said parcel 4 makes reference to: on the northwest by the seaboard railroad right of way and/or armory wholesale company for a distance of…and when I’m looking at the map it looks like this area here is probably where the old railroad was and so I want to make sure there is no confusion with whoever we deal with that this is not included”. Mr. Payne said, “No Sir, it’s just the property of the restaurant”. Councilman Milling asked, ”If we get a buyer, we’ll get a plat”? Mr. Payne said, “Yes Sir”.

REMINDER

Tuesday April 5, 2022 - monthly meeting Darlington City Council 6:30 PM

ADJOURN

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 PM. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of motion.

_____

Mayor

ATTEST:

_____

Clerk & Treasurer