

**CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL
CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY JULY 12, 2022 - AT 6:00 PM**

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Sheila Baccus, John Segars, Bryant Gardner, Howard Nettles, and Elaine Reed. Also present was Mrs. Lisa Bailey, Police Chief Kelvin Washington, Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh, Codes Enforcement Officer Ms. Sheila Jones, W&S Superintendent Charles Shugart, Vondell Brockington Johnathan Boatwright and several other water department workers, Street & Sanitation Superintendent Alex Gainey, Mr. Steve Abbott, Ms. Rosa Hudson, Ms. Brook Sylvester, Ms. Carolyn Bruce, Teresa Samuel, Marshall Bruce, Ernestine Lyde, Ms. Gloria Hines, Mrs. McDowell, Ms. Jannie Lathan, Ms. Judy Alexander and other visitors.

Councilman John Milling was not present at the meeting.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Prayer by Mayor Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes from Budget Work Session on Wednesday June 1, 2022. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to approve the minutes of our Regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday June 7, 2022. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Gardner, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes from our Special City Council Meeting on Monday June 27, 2022. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve tonight's meeting agenda for July 12, 2022. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

DARLINGTON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION – LISA BAILEY

Report for Council – July 12, 2022

The DDRA continues the Bringing Downtown Alive! free summer concert series Saturdays on the Square presented by The City of Darlington. The Darlington Cruisers plan to continue their monthly car shows during the concerts, and we have a solid group of food trucks scheduled to attend. Thanks to Pepsi, Fiber Industries, Belk Funeral Home, and Wilson Senior Care, AND Thank you to the community for supporting our efforts! The slate of bands continued with The Saxxy Keyz (Jazz) on July 9 this past Saturday, The Rick Strickland Band (Beach Music Hall of Fame) on August 13, John King (Country – Songwriter for Hootie & the Blowfish in 2015) on September 10. Finally, Level 10 Band & Show will help us close out 2022 at the downtown New Year's Eve Party again this year! Businesses wishing to participate can contact my office. The DDRA continues our monthly Member Breakfasts at 8 a.m. on Thursday, July 28, 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 event, on the last Thursday of the month through October, allow our businesses to build connections and strengthen our local economy. We are also making plans to have a Halloween Decorating Contest for businesses with a top prize of \$1,000! Businesses do not have to be on the Square or members of the DDRA to participate, although we would love to have them join! Businesses must register by October 15 to compete. The public will select the winners through an online survey during the last week of October, in preparation for the Scare on the Square – set for the Friday before Halloween from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. We are mailing information directly to businesses, but, if you don't see it, you can download the registration form online at www.BuildUpDarlington.org/scare anytime. You can sign up to get this type of news directly to your phone by text or email at www.BuildUpDarlington.org/signup. We promote Darlington and its businesses on social media and through our News Alert System each week, and these alerts reach more than 2,700 people!

GREATER DARLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ms. Brook Sylvester said they recently had Freedom Fest and would like to thank the City of Darlington and Genesis Community Foundation for their contributions to Freedom Fest. Community Broadcasters will be having a Career Fair on Wednesday August 3rd from 11am-3pm at three different locations. Ms. Sylvester said they recently had a ribbon Cutting for The Throne located at 101 S. Main Street; Lilah B Boutique which is a children's boutique located at 1185 Harry Byrd Highway and Jumping 2 New Heights, a children's outreach center located at 116 S. Main Street. She said they will be having another Ribbon Cutting for Rush Fitness, but they do not have a date for that yet. Clemson University Extension will be hosting a virtual diabetes education and support group beginning Monday July 25th at 5:30pm. This is a 16-week program. Sassy Girl Vintique will be hosting a Business After Hours on August 11th at 5:30pm-7:00pm. They are located at 212 Pearl Street. Covered in Cotton will host a summer social on July 21st from 6:00pm-8pm at 2080 Society Hill Road. Darlington Raceway would like to invite all business professionals to their own Business After Hours on Thursday July 28th from 5:30pm-7:00pm. It will take place at the Champions Club located in turn 3 on the infield and you do need to RSVP. The Grand Old Post Office will be having the Danny Cohen & Friends: Sing the American Songbook & Broadway Tunes on July 30th with dinner at 6:00pm and the show will begin at 7:00pm.

MAYOR BOYD PRESENTATION

Mayor Boyd read a congratulatory letter to Ms. Shelia Jones from Representative Robert Williams (the City of Darlington Codes Enforcement Officer & The City Building Inspector) for her successful completion with certification by the International Code Council. Mayor Boyd said this certification will ensure the continued professionalism and skill and performance of Ms. Jones' job duties and responsibilities as she serves the citizens of Darlington. He said we are grateful for her hard work and time and efforts she commits to code enforcement and building inspection. We wish her continued success and send our appreciation as she is dedicated to serving the City of Darlington. Mayor Boyd said Ms. Jones has gone through a lot of work and effort to pass everything and she can now inspect residential and commercial and everything.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL (5 MINUTES PER PERSON 30 TOTAL MINUTES MAXIMUM)

*Disruptive behavior is not permitted

Ms. Carolyn Bruce said, "I stand before you as a concerned citizen tonight but more importantly, I stand before you as an angry daughter, sister, and aunt. Angry because on June 22, 2022, my two sisters, my 79-year-old mother who suffers with dementia and my four-month-old niece encountered an enraged man in the parking lot of Walmart gas station. Angry because my sister felt their lives were in danger because of this man's hostile behavior towards them and his choice of words calling my sister bitches and niggers. Angry because this man decided to follow my sister to IGA even when she finally got away from him at Walmart. Angry because once the police got involved this man's hostile behavior did not stop and he had no fear that he would be arrested. Angry because the police officers on the scene failed to do their job. Angry that once my sister filed a police report on the day of the incident she received a text two days later on June 24, 2022, at 4:40pm from Investigator Melton with the Darlington Police Department. That text reads: Ms. Samuel (this is my sister), this is Investigator Melton with the Darlington Police Department. Just wanted to let you know that the guy from the other day that followed you and Ms. Bruce has been arrested and is currently at the Darlington County Detention Center. He has his bond hearing tomorrow at about 12 o'clock. Ms. Bruce said this was on Friday and according to this text, his bond hearing should have been about 12 o'clock on Saturday. Angry because no one in authority cared enough about the safety of my family members but more concerned about the fact that this man can throw out John Payne's name, the city manager at the drop of a dime and now this man becomes privileged. Privileged to the fact that once he was arrested two days later on June 24th at 4:00pm a phone call is made that same day on his arrest and this man is given a special bond hearing and released from jail at 6:51pm. (Ms. Bruce has a copy of his report) She said two hours and 11 minutes from the time my sister received the text from Investigator Melton. Ms. Bruce said, "And I have a few questions. I know you can't answer these, but I'm going to throw these out. Mayor Boyd, Is this procedure that is followed for all citizens when they are arrested? Do we all get to drop the name of a person in power and a phone call is made and we are released from jail? What happened to the bond hearing according to Investigator Melton's text message to my sister that was scheduled at 12pm the following day? How many other inmates were admitted on the same date, at or after the time at 4:15pm when this man was and was given a special bond hearing and was released from jail? She said, "You can't answer that, but I can answer that for

you. Zero". Ms. Bruce said, "Nobody else was given a special bond hearing. I've done my homework. I've contacted the sheriff's department. She asked, "Are our police officers so afraid to do their jobs because of the powers that be"? Maybe that's why this man wasn't arrested at the scene on the day of the incident. Ms. Bruce said, "John Payne, Mr. City Manager, is this what you tell your inner circle to do when they are approached by the police, just use your name, no worries? Obviously it worked because he had no problem using your name on that day with my sister and also telling the officers that he just had lunch with you. She said I know these questions and many more that my family have can't be answered tonight, but we will seek these answers through the proper channel. She said most of you on the council I served with you for four years and you know that I'm not one to play the "race card" but tonight, I truly believe that if this was a black mayor's actions towards three white women and a white baby, the police officers would have done their jobs and at the very least he would have been arrested on the scene and I know he wouldn't have been given a special bond hearing to be released from jail in two hours and thirty six minutes. Ms. Bruce said, "Lastly but not least, Councilwoman Baccus I want to publicly thank you so much for your care and concern you have shown towards my family since this incident. My family and I greatly appreciate it.

Ms. Gloria Hines said, "I believe protocol has already been established by Ms. Bruce. There's no need for me to say anything about the situation no more than we have a city manager that a man that did what he did to the Bruce family that can sit up and call the city manger and say I just had lunch with him. That's very disturbing. That makes me wonder, where do you stand. Ms. Hines said I've never known Darlington to be this racial as it has become in the last few months. She said there are a lot of things that have been happening around Darlington that are very racial. Ms. Hines said, "I'm black, I'm light skinned and by looking at me you know I've got white blood in me, but I love everybody. I'm for what's right.....and I don't like the way this city is going. It's very disrespectful for somebody to say, I know John Payne we just had lunch together and then for him to go...not stay in jail two hours. Not even get locked up because the paperwork said he didn't even go to jail...and then he gets out....privileged. Ms. Hines said and there were other people that were locked up that didn't get the privilege to get out. He wasn't supposed to get out until the next day at 12 o'clock when they had the hearing. We need to get this together. We don't want you to be labeled as a bad city manager but right now you are and that's not good. Mayor Boyd said, "We're not going to have derogatory remarks toward people. Say what you want to say....Ms. Hines said, "Ok, it's the truth". Mayor Boyd said, "I said we're not going to have derogatory remarks toward people". Ms. Hines said, "When you do wrong, you do wrong". I know you got something against me but that's alright". Mayor Boyd said, "No ma'am I don't have anything against you". Ms. Hines said, "Anyway it don't make no difference. When you're doing wrong it will catch up with you because God is still on the Throne.

Teresa Samuel said enough has been said so she didn't speak

Mrs. McDowell said I have a few questions I would like to ask our counsel one of the definitions that I have been playing with ever since I've been reading the ordinance on vacant property and that is the word "fee". The word Fee means I'm paying for a service and what I have received I have not seen what I'm paying a fee for if I have vacant property. Mrs. McDowell, asked can

somebody answer that for me? Mayor Boyd told Mrs. McDowell to go ahead and give them the info. Mrs. McDowell said, the second is on vacant property. Why must I pay the city a fee because I don't want anyone to live in my vacant house? She said it's her house and she worked hard for it. She pays taxes, I keep it up; no illegal activity is going on there. No break-ins are going on there. No vagabonds are hanging out but I must meet very strict codes according to your ordinance. Mrs. McDowell said, what disappoints me the most about this council at this particular time is that you are elected to bring a new vision to Darlington, SC. Ask yourselves does this ordinance brings a new vision to Darlington South Carolina. Can anybody answer that? no answers OK. It seems to me that beautification takes priority over people struggling to put food on the table, put gas in their cars to get to a job that may be closing today if I go there. She said healthcare, we do get sick you know. Medication is expensive. I'd like for you all to revisit when you get a minute your property plan #2 on property maintenance and verification and inspection. Ridiculous, I've never seen anything so ridiculous in my whole life. What does it do for a new vision for Darlington? The council seems to be disconnected with some of our residents. I want you to take a look at the areas that are affected by this ordinance and the age of the houses that you are looking at. In closing I would like to say I thought your goal as I said before was to bring a new vision to Darlington without putting a financial burden on the citizens and that's what you've done. You passed a fee for what? my house? When did you become the owner of it and when did you pay the taxes? We're suffering. Think about this ordinance again, think about what you were doing to your citizens at a time like this and we are struggling from unemployment under employment and we're also struggling from disappearing jobs and businesses that are closing. Mayor Boyd said, Mrs. McDowell we're not really here for a discussion but I would like to answer a couple of your questions so we won't be here all night. I was letting you speak. Mayor Boyd said, I'll ask you a question: do you have power on at the vacant house?" Mrs. McDowell said, of course I do. Mayor Boyd said, "The vacant ordinance building code is for the betterment of Darlington. Sheila is over the codes department and if she goes to your house and the home has power on it, there's not supposed to be a fee or a fine. The purpose of this ordinance and I can give you the betterment of it, ok. I can give you, I know two, automatic examples. At the corner of the four-way stop and Washington and Broad Street a man was given the same ordinance and he decided he didn't want to pay that fee. He wasn't using the building and it hadn't been used for years. He decided he wanted to give the building away so he gave it to a church and the church is going to try and use it for a soup kitchen. Dixie Federal credit union Georgia Pacific was given that same ordinance for a white trailer that's been sitting there for years not being used. They decided they didn't want to do anything with it. They decided they wanted to get rid of the building so they went in and tore the building down. Now that eyesore is gone. The purpose of that ordinance is not to affect people like you you've got a house sitting there you're saying it's cleaned up, it's tidy looking and they sent you a letter all they should do is come to you then and say there's nothing wrong with your house, it's perfectly fine, you shouldn't owe us anything. If the house is just sitting there, it's abandoned, you're not putting any power on; it looks rough, it makes the neighborhood look rough, then the next thing you know the house is torn down and then we're over at Elaine's place over there because the yard is all grown up and everybody's neighborhood looks bad, that's what we're trying to prevent. There are buildings downtown down Main Street (I can call out 10 of them real quick if you need me to) that are just sitting there, people from inside the city, people

outside the city are sitting and holding the buildings and not doing anything with it. No power on it and they let the buildings grow up and the buildings deteriorate and look bad. There's one downtown with water in it and it needs to be...they need to go after that building, not that we want the building, but we want somebody to do something with that building because it's affecting the buildings beside it. It's affecting our town so that was the purpose of the ordinance. Like your home. If it's got power on it, you're saying it's clean but if it's clean and it's got power on it, all she should say is you're fine, there's no fee. The City of Darlington and this council is not here to try to hurt the citizens, we are here trying to make the betterment so that we do have a vision of making our city a beautiful place that when people come by they don't go by and say as the man drove by our town and called our town the worst place to live in South Carolina which I totally disagree because I love my town. Again, there's a lot of eyesores that need to be cleaned up. There are fifteen lots in one section of town that's grown up and I'm begging to get them cleaned up. Not to hurt the people...Mayor Boyd said is it worded completely correct maybe not. We may need to go back and tweak it but again it's all in a variance of the city codes person. Councilwoman Reed thanked Mrs. McDowell for coming. Councilwoman Reed said she spoke with Mrs. McDowell and asked her to please come and let folk know. Councilwoman Reed said they met with the Codes Director, and they are making some changes to it so it will not affect a person that maintains their property as you do. Councilwoman Reed said, "Not only you, but the way the ordinance is written now it does generate that would indicate that you should make a fee. That is being changed. As the mayor has indicated, if you maintain the power, keep it clean there should be no reason for you to get a letter requesting a fee". Mayor Boyd said, "Again, you might get a letter because it was vacant, but if there's power and stuff on it they should say everything is fine". Councilwoman Baccus said, "And on top of that, that ordinance also says, and we were discussing it with Sheila, I don't see a purpose in a citizen having to have lights and water on that property. It doesn't make no sense. It needs to be changed". Councilwoman Reed said, "That's the change...Councilwoman Baccus asked Sheila Jones to come up and explain. Sheila said, "The way our ordinance is currently written for the vacant property registration is, if it's vacant. If it's vacant, you have to pay a vacant property registration. There are provisions in it for it to be reduced if there are no code violations in it...an inspection is done with no code violations in it. Having said that, I have been talking to Ms. Elaine. I spoke to Ms. Baccus. Mr. Milling has come into my office and Mr. Bryant has talked to me in regard to other provisions that are necessary for our community. That being if there are utilities; some council people say should be. Some council people say shouldn't be. Ms. Sheila Jones said, "My position is this, pass the ordinance how it is. We're going to come in August and talk about it and the council can decide how they want to proceed. I am going to give my suggestions on what it should be if it's maintained...anyway council will talk about it and make a decision". Sheila said the ordinance wasn't designed to make it a hardship for our community. We do have dilapidated homes. There are homes that are blighted that need to be taken care of. We don't want to hurt people that are trying to maintain their property so if you call me and get a letter, I'll go out there and see what's going on. If it's not a problem we can reduce it or waive it depending on what's going on. Sheila said the letter is generated because it is vacant. We go by how it looks from the outside, we go by whether or not there are utilities on it and then a letter gets sent. If you feel like your property is maintained and you shouldn't be charged this, call my office. Nita will

create an inspection report and we'll go out there and we'll figure it out. Sheila said there was a policy that she put in place that if you were going to sell it if you're going to fix it if you were going to do all these things we put you on a 90-day hold. She said I'm all about communication. Communicate with my office and say I'm going to fix my house. I'll ask how long it's going to take. If you tell me it's going to take five years chances are you're going to pay a vacant property registration, but if you tell me something that's going to be reasonable then we'll work with you. We want you to fix your house. We want you to be able to rent it to someone. if it's vacant and you don't plan on living in it, fix it, rent it and that will be income for you. We put people on 90 day holds so that people can get it right, waive it or reduce it but we are with council right now trying to figure out how we can change the ordinance, so it's better suited for our community. Ms. McDowell said, But I still don't know what \$400 is for. For letting you come in my house? Sheila said that part...Ms. McDowell said, No, \$25. Sheila said, here's the other thing I didn't write the ordinance I only enforce the ordinance so what the fees are and why they are in place yes they were that would be something for Lisa Bailey who is the Planning Director/Economic Director who brought this to the council and I can only talk to you about how it's enforced. Mrs. McDowell said, if I pay you all \$425 that could be something I could use in order to upgrade my house if it need to be. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The ordinance needs to be revisited and some adjustments need to be made because we're already raising the water bill ridiculously and the street and sanitation fee so it's constantly just building up and adding more and more things to the citizens which is ridiculous. Mayor Boyd thanked Mrs. McDowell.

MS. JANNIE LATHAN said she's really saddened tonight just listening, learning, and observing how our city is being run of late. When I decided to move back home I decided to live in Darlington. That's over fifteen years ago and this last administration has taken more action than any administration in the fifteen years that I've lived here. That has in fact created hardships and burdens for the residents, all residents in the middle of a pandemic. This mayor and administration raised our water and sewer rates to the highest percentage rate in the city's history in the middle of a pandemic. And then when the federal government acted to send funds down to municipalities throughout the United States to help citizens deal with the financial burdens imposed by the pandemic I came before this council like others and asked if we could take some of that money, put it in the water and sewer budget and reduce the water and sewer rates. Nothing was done with that. I was never given any responsible answer. Ms. Lathan said, "What I was told is we can't do that if you can raise our water and sewer rates you can lower it, and you had the funds to do that. She said, "So yes, this mayor and administration has done a lot to hurt us. As far as this vacant house, I read the ordinance; I have seen the letters that are sent out. My recommendation would be that we need a city manager who has experience in running municipalities. We all know that of all the applicants, this mayor and some of the council members hired the least experienced of all. How do we know? Because the resumes were published. We know. So, if this is what we're going to deal with then this mayor and city council has to hold our city manager accountable for being effective in running our city because that city manager has that responsibility especially now. Ms. Lathan said, "We really need to take action and as far as this tax (it really is a tax). I've read the ordinance and I have seen the letters. In my assessment and from a legal opinion I received I think it's illegal. I doubt seriously if we've had our city attorney review this ordinance before...I doubt seriously if we've done that. So, yes

this administration has created a lot of financial hardship. Ms. Lathan said, I came to this special meeting, and we were supposed to have a public hearing. And the mayor will say we are very transparent. We didn't have a public hearing. This mayor and council with exception of two, just voted to increase our water and sewer rates again and I can assure you that most citizens in Darlington are totally unaware of that. Ms. Lathan said when I came three minutes late the public hearing was noted as an agenda item. Since when do we have public hearings as an agenda item? I saw no agenda for the public hearing. I saw no presentations for the public hearing. We tried to answer questions. I was able to ask two questions and then it was like if you're going to say anything else, if you want any more information about how we're going to raise these rates then maybe we'll get the police chief to have you escorted out because you know, you can't be asking these questions out loud. You're out of order. Ms. Lathan said, "I appreciate the fact that you took off the agenda that we can't ask you questions, but at some point and time maybe we should have a public forum so the citizens can tell you how they are feeling and the financial burdens that are being imposed".

NEW BUSINESS

a)PROCLAMATION FOR TONY PARROTT JOHNSON FAMILY REUNION – MAYOR CURTIS BOYD

City Manager John Payne read the proclamation that Mayor Curtis Boyd presented to Councilwoman Elaine Reed. The Tony Parrott Johnson Family Reunion will be held in the City of Darlington July 15th - July 17th, 2022.

Councilwoman Baccus said, "Curtis I need to say something before we get to the end of this meeting because I just can't sit here and not make a comment. I understand the rest of this council because they are so one sided for lack of a better word but the fact that this council and this city manager....let me rephrase because I don't even know where the council stands on the issue. I'm sure they knew about it but this city manager who's promoting, for another lack of words, citizens who are going around calling other citizens niggers and....Mayor Boyd said, we're going to cut that off right there..... Councilwoman Baccus said, "No we're not, I'm going to speak.... Mayor Boyd said we're going to cut that off....Councilwoman Baccus said, "Citizens calling citizens names....Mayor Boyd said we don't know what the situation was. We're not doing that.... Councilwoman Baccus said calling citizens names is not fair to citizens and it's not fair to the public. No citizen should be called niggers or b's or anything in this city. Mayor Boyd kept trying to tell councilwoman Baccus that there will be no badgering in the courtroom. Councilwoman Baccus kept talking and Mayor Boyd said we're not going to play that game tonight, ok. Councilwoman Baccus said, and the fact that this citizen feels like he can use the city manager's name and get away with this is not right. Mayor Boyd said if you'd like to talk afterward.... Councilwoman Baccus said, and the fact that we as this council is going to promote this is wrong. And of course, you've got a mayor who definitely promotes it. You see how he's trying to hush it up. You see how he's trying to hide it. They don't want the public to know what's going on. You see he's trying to shut the public up. He don't want nobody to know. He's trying to cover it up. Mayor Boyd said, I don't know anything about the situation....Councilwoman Baccus said, "Then be quiet then...she said the fact that this name can be used is promoting racial hate". Councilwoman Baccus said, "Now let me explain this to

you, and you, and you, and you, and you...that same black woman sitting there got a black husband and a black son and nobody is going to put up with that foolishness". Mayor Boyd said, "I wouldn't put up with it". Councilwoman Baccus said, "So you better understand and go back and tell Thomas Casey Benton that nobody is going to put up with it and the city manager can try to hide it all he wants but nobody is gonna put up with it. Now when them bullets start flying because black people are not going to tolerate that, don't act like this council don't know. Mayor Boyd said nobody is involved in that. Mayor Boyd said, number one my name was caught up in it. Don't call my name in it because I don't know the person if they walked in the door. Mayor Boyd said, Ms. Bruce I'll be more than glad to talk with you afterwards. You know I love you to death and I'll do anything for you but we're not going to put up with this in this room tonight. It's not about racial. If that was racial the other day, that was the other day. We had nothing to do with that. I didn't call anybody, I didn't know anything about it, ok. Mayor Boyd said we're not here to conduct that situation tonight. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The city manager knew about it". Mayor Boyd said my number is available 24/7 and I help everybody. Councilwoman Baccus said, well you've got a judge who run to do a special bond to let somebody out in two hours. The city manager knew about it. Mr. Payne said, I'm going to take my friend Elaine Reed's advice and I normally wouldn't do this, but this is a weak and feeble attempt to paint me as something I'm not. He said I know this person, but I know probably half the people in this town. I have never ever told anybody to drop my name and to insinuate that I did is a bald face lie. I did not know about this arrest until hours after it. I did not know about this release until hours after it. I don't know anybody at the detention center. I have called nobody. I am not involved in this whatsoever. So, any attempt to sully my name based on this is lazy and it's irresponsible. I have had nothing to do with this. This gentleman.... I wasn't there. I have purposely, you can ask Chief this, I have purposely not watched the body cam video of this because I don't want to have any connection to it whatsoever. This person, no matter what happened, deserves his day in court. He is innocent until proven guilty no matter what people say, but I have had nothing to do with this and I will have nothing to do with this". Ms. Carolyn Bruce said, "You're talking to the wrong person City Manager, you need to be talking to your friend that's dropping your name". Mayor Boyd said, "That's enough, ok".

b)RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A CITY GRANTS COMMITTEE - JOHN PAYNE CITY MANAGER

Mr. Payne said earlier in the year I recommended, so that you as a council, do not continue to get requests for hospitality tax funds throughout the year. I recommended that we set up a committee that will do the work for you basically. They will hear from interested parties who want to get H-Tax funds, or any other city fines. They will do the work they will vet them they will look through their financials and make a recommendation to Council. In order to do that we need to create this grants committee and that's what this resolution does. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to establish a City Grants Committee. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

c)WRAP FOR CITY VEHICLE- LISA BAILEY, PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Mrs. Lisa Bailey said she was asked to bring these examples again. Mayor Boyd said I asked her to come to see if we could get a vote on this tonight to make one of the trash trucks look good, to see if we can improve the City of Darlington and see if we can start getting some attention to see if other people will want to advertise on it. Mayor Boyd asked if it was a total of \$960. Mrs. Bailey said at last meeting you mentioned doing two trucks. Mayor Boyd asked how much if we do one truck. Mrs. Bailey said, it will be half that amount. Mayor Boyd asked council if they would be willing to put one or both of these on the side of one of the trash trucks to make it look good and make the City of Darlington dressed up and see if we can get some attention out there for other people who want to advertise on it. Councilman Nettles said, I'm for the idea in theory but I know that somebody needs to take the first step. We've heard how much money we've spent and how we've raised things and increased things. Councilman Nettles said, "I think we should have someone like Lisa who heads this up to actually go after some bigger sponsors and maybe get them to see if they are willing to do it first. He said I don't know if we need to jump out there and spend the money, it's not a lot of money but I don't know that we need to jump out there and spend it just to set a tone when we've got businesses who have the financial means to get started". Councilwoman Baccus said I don't think a reputable business is going to put their name on the side of a trash truck. Councilman Nettles said we are doing ourselves an injustice if we don't at least ask them. Councilwoman Baccus said this started over a year ago originally promoting this, I don't know what Lisa advertised or what she did to put it out there. Councilwoman Baccus and Councilman Nettles asked Lisa if she solicit....Mrs. Bailey said we had it on the website and things like that. Councilwoman Baccus said, "And nobody replied, right"? Mrs. Lisa Bailey said, "But nobody said anything to me about it". Councilwoman Baccus asked Councilman Nettles, "Ok Genesis got a million dollars would Genesis put their name on the side of a trash truck. Councilman Nettles said, "No but we might put it on the side of a regular truck". Councilman Nettles said, "I probably would not make that decision to do that from a business standpoint". Councilwoman Baccus said, "Ok, so you think any other reputable business is going to do it"? Councilman Nettles said, "I can't speak for other reputable businesses but I....Mayor Boyd said you got the City of Darlington's name on the side of the vac truck that sucks stuff out of the sewer drains. Mayor Boyd said we're trying to make stuff look better. Councilwoman Baccus said, "Ok, why don't you put fitness world gyms on the side of the trash truck. Mayor Boyd said, "Because then I'll be accused of trying to....Councilwoman Baccus said, "Pay the regular money just like everybody else and put your name up there, your gym up there. Councilman Nettles said, "I understand what you're trying to do, and I don't disagree with trying to clean up the city some, but I get tired of being beaten up for spending money for things that maybe we don't need to be the trial starters for. Councilman Nettles said, "So maybe we could just again, have Lisa or maybe I could make some phone calls to see if there's a general interest versus waiting on somebody". Councilman Nettles said, "If I waited on somebody to read something that I put out there for Genesis everyday without putting somebody behind it to push it, I'm never going to get anyone to read it, so I've got to go out into the community and introduce myself and say "Here's what we're trying to do. What are your thoughts"? He said it may be a negative comeback, but it may not be, but I think we need to start somewhere other than council spending the money to do it. Councilwoman Reed said, "why don't we table since there is...just table it. Since we did not get any responses for the advertising on the city trucks. Councilman Nettles said, "I'll take it to our board and....I make the

decisions basically on what we do for advertising, but this is a different circumstance. He said I have no problem taking it and I'll talk with Lisa about it and take it to our group and see if they would consider it. Councilwoman Reed said, "You make a valid point. Every issue that we've heard today has been about spending money and things like that and we're looking for others to help us to help the city run so we shouldn't be using the money to advertise. She said when I say table it as far as the city making that decision going along with what you're saying, but you can seek sponsors if that's what you want...if you want to continue with this idea."

d)CITY SQUARE PARKING ISLANDS BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT – LISA BAILEY, PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Mrs. Lisa Bailey told council they have in their packet a picture by picture of the parking islands. She said The Beautification Board would like to redo all of the parking islands in terms of landscaping. They look dated as they are in that kind of style of when they were put in. Mrs. Bailey said this project would be done by the end of the year and would coincide nicely with the CDBG Streetscape project. Mrs. Bailey said the front page shows a map of the different islands. The first bed is in front of the Veterans Memorial, and they have taken out a tree so you can see the memorial better. They want to switch out the flowers to a white drift rose instead of the red. Bed #2 is in front of the McClellan Building and in front of the public walkway. They will be removing all of the existing plants except the tree. They will trim the tree and add variegated liriop. Mrs. Bailey said these will all be low-maintenance plants. These are not bushes we will have to trim every year or every other year. Bed #3 is in front of the Mexican Restaurant. They will be removing all of those bushes, installing four abelias and 15 daylilies and trimming the tree. Mrs. Bailey said the Beautification Board went with a contractor around the Square to investigate the floral types, the shade, the sun, because each island has different conditions. Bed #4 is in front of the Old Wells Fargo building. They will remove existing plants and install 1 coral bark maple tree and ornamental grasses. Bed #5 is where you turn from Cashua Street onto the Square. They will be removing everything that's there because that tree is dying and replacing it with ornamental grasses and another tree that may be better suited. Councilman Nettles asked if the trees are all non-root invasive. Mrs. Bailey said, "Correct". Bed #6 is at the Hewitt Alley Entrance. Mrs. Bailey said this is where some of the projects for the downtown streetscape project will be done so this would complement that nicely. She said they will trim that tree heavily because it hasn't been trimmed in a while and take out all of those bushes and plant some daylilies and abelias. Mrs. Bailey said they are also sending all of these plant choices to the engineers who are working on the downtown project so that they can tie in some of these types of plants that will work well in our conditions downtown. The last Bed #7 is the mural parking lot, and they will be adding some rose creek and dwarf butterfly shrubs. Mrs. Bailey said most of this stuff is going to be lower to the ground except for the trees and we're going to trim those up, so we'll have more visibility. Mrs. Bailey said, "the Beautification Board has asked me to ask you all for this funding through the hospitality tax fund because the estimate they were given was \$6,450 to do all of the work. She said this includes removing all of the soil that's there and replacing all of the mulch/soil, getting everything prepped. They would start getting everything prepped in August/September and then plant in October and November. She said based on the 2022-2023 budget this would take up just about every dime they have so they are asking if Council will use hospitality tax funds to accomplish this project. Council

Nettles asked, "Have they sought private funding"? Mrs. Bailey said, "They frequently seek private funding. This seems to be more of a maintenance type issue. That is a little harder to get private donors to commit. Councilman Nettles asked what's the time frame they want to do it? Mrs. Bailey said, "It will all be planted in the fall because now it's way too hot, but they would prep the soil and remove everything in August". Councilwoman Reed asked, "How does the streetscape stuff fit into that"? Mrs. Bailey said, "It's related but this is not...the streetscape project is specifically looking at Hewitt Alley, The News & Press parking lot and the parking lot behind the Wells Fargo building. Councilman Nettles said, "Can I ask that we maybe give it one month to reconsider and here's why. We have some streetscape funds that maybe I can help with. Mrs. Bailey said we certainly appreciate this. Councilman Nettles said, "I'll ask about it because we need it, but again if we can get investments from the people in the town that helps get their buy in. He said if we could maybe consider that. Councilman Nettles asked, "So is it ok that we do that"? Councilman Gardner asked, "We're just taking this as information then"? Mr. Payne said you can table it until next month. Mayor Boyd said, "I would make a suggestion on Bed #4 though. I wouldn't put a tree there in front of Wells Fargo because the county just put a sign there and there's a light there also. He said if you put a tree there it will be in front of their sign and it's going to be right beside the light.

REMINDER

Tuesday August 2, 2022, at 6:00 PM - Regular Monthly Meeting of Darlington City Council

ADJOURN

**Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM.
Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars, and
Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion to adjourn the meeting.**

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer