CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY NOVEMBER 1, 2022 - AT 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager John Payne, Councilpersons Sheila Baccus, John Segars, John Milling, Bryant Gardner, Howard Nettles, and Elaine Reed. Also present was Codes Enforcement Officer Ms. Sheila Jones, St. & Sanitation Superintendent Alex Gainey, Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh, Assistant Police Chief Jimmy Davis, Ms. Vanessa Jackson, Ms. Jannie Lathan, Mr. Linwood Epps, Ms. Susan Rogers, Mr. Bobby Arnold, Ms. Merry Morgan Smith, Ms. Brook Sylvester, Mr. John Lewis, Ms. Teresa Lott, and other visitors.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Prayer by Mayor Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING ON OCTOBER 4, 2022

Councilman Howard Nettles made a motion to approve the minutes of October 4, 2022, Council Meeting. Councilwoman Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the meeting agenda for tonight's meeting November 1, 2022. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Gardner, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

a)DARLINGTON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION – MS. TERESA LOTT

Ms. Teresa Lott said she has the privilege of serving on the DDRA Board. Ms. Lott said they had two main events in October: Scare on The Square and The Business Decorating Contest. Scare on The Square was held on Thursday October 27th, and they would like to thank the Darlington Recreation Department because they went above and beyond to ensure this event took place and provide a safe and fun Halloween experience for our children and families. They also appreciate all of the businesses, clubs and other organizations that participated. DDRA also hosted a "Business Decorating Contest" to help make Darlington a festive place for Halloween and the fall season. Nine businesses and organizations participated. Voting was conducted via their DDRA Facebook page with first place being awarded to Dedicated Community Bank; Second place winner was Down by The Creek Boutique, and third place went to Southern Charm Restaurant. Cash prizes were presented on Monday, October 31st and photographs will appear in this week's issue of the News & Press.

b)GREATER DARLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – MS. BROOK SYLVESTER

Ms. Sylvester said Pat Conroy is an Author and will be at the Darlington Library this Saturday at 11:00 am and the event is free to the public. Darlington Community Foundation & Macedonia Life Skills Center will be having a free community workshop which will also be held this Saturday. Lamar will have their Annual Christmas on Main on December 3, 2022, from 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm and the Christmas Parade will begin at 5:30. There will also be pictures with Santa, and you can also go to the library for story time with Mrs. Claus. Covered in Cotton will have two events in November. The first is November 19th and it will be the Cotton Christmas Family Event which is targeted towards children. This is a ticketed event with a cotton craft, a picture with Santa in the Cotton field and more. On November 25th they are having their Black Friday Shopping Event from 6pm - 9pm.

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

***Neither personal attacks nor disruptive behavior are permitted**

Ms. Vanessa Jackson said she is a Community Health Navigator, and she works with CareSouth Carolina. Ms. Jackson said her job is to enroll clients into healthcare insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid. She said she's certified in doing all three. She said open enrollment started today and it goes through January 15th. Ms. Jackson said anyone that needs assistance with enrolling in healthcare, Medicare, or Medicaid, she has her contact info in the brochure. Councilman Nettles asked if this service is free of charge. Ms. Jackson said, "Yes, it's nonprofit so it's free." Councilman Nettles asked if this is something she has on a website. Ms. Jackson said, "You can go to CareSouth Carolina website, and you'll see all of the information there."

Mr. John Lewis said the reason he's up here tonight is he recently been informed there's some proposed changes coming …. Concerning the fact that changing when we can come up and speak before the council. Mr. Lewis said, "My understanding is the city ordinance is changing that to a Monday night and that we would not be able to speak on Tuesday nights." He said, 'Well I'm sorry. This is our city council; this is our opportunity to bring issues up before you, the mayor, the city council, and so other members of this city can understand what our concerns are". If we go on Monday night a lot of these people are not going to know what our concerns are, and I can only see two reasons for doing it. Number one is, you don't like how much time these meetings take on Tuesday night. Secondly, by doing this on Monday night, again not everybody knows what we talked about or what was discussed. I've heard that the reason for this is just so that you can respond back to us I'm sorry over 90% of the time that people get up here and speak there's never a response to their concerns but yet this council can give away money to everybody that comes in here and asks for a donation. Mr. Lewis said, "My second concern is our police department. Right now, we are seven police officers short in this town and the reason for that part of it, is the salaries of these police officers." He said some of them can go and work at these restaurants other places and make just as much money and not put their lives on the line. We pay our Chief of Police $101,000 or $102,000 a year for a community of 6,000 people when the average Chief of Police across the nation in a small town makes $63,000 a year. We pay our City Manager $104,000. The average City Manager's salary is $84,000. There are some higher in the State of South Carolina and there are some a lot lower,

so we're paying out a lot of money for two positions, but yet we've lost seven police officers. Mr. Lewis said, "We need to get these positions back in line, we need to get good, qualified police officers in this community, and we need to pay them." There is absolutely no reason why we should be here seven police officers short. It's now November 1st. At the end of December our police chief is retiring. Do we have any candidates yet for the chief of police position? Mr. Lewis said, "I think we ought to look in-house because we've got some well qualified people in here. We've got an assistant police chief that's been here most of his life and we need to make sure that we're fair and above board in selecting our new police chief". He said there are rumors going around here that that is not the case and I want to make sure that everything is done above board and that if our assistant chief of police or other officers are interested in that position they should get a fair chance for that position.

Ms. Susan Rogers thanked Mr. Payne about the bench and his time considering the animal control issue they discussed last week but said I'm here tonight for a different reason. Ms. Rogers said coming into Darlington on 401 at the Andrewsville Mall there's a sign erected out there that says "No thru trucks downtown Darlington ". She said she made some calls, and it was erected by the state of South Carolina, so I called SCDOT, and I asked them to please inform me where the other signs are- 52 North, 52 South, 34 North, 401. I said besides the side roads, where are the other signs that say no trucks through downtown Darlington? Ms. Rogers said, "The reason I bring this up is I sit on the square helping my daughter and I watch the 18 wheelers go around the Square constantly. They had eight bales of cotton going around the Square today. Where they were going, I don't know, but they made it around and went down Pearl, so they had no need of being on the Square, you have the rollover issue. She said those big trucks cannot see who's in front of them, or who's crossing the road in front of them." She said last week there was one that went around the Square the wrong way. Ms. Rogers said I know we're having construction on the Square. They have the courthouse being built and we have a need for 18 wheelers bringing in what they need for the bridge although it could be brought in another way. What they needed for the courthouse could be brought in and up the hill. It didn't have to come around the Square. I find this a dangerous issue. Ms. Rogers said, "I made two calls to traffic, but I don't get anybody to respond to my calls so that's why I'm here now." Ms. Rogers said a white Camry or Honda went around the Square the wrong way last week. She said they came in through 34, went around in front of the Mexican Restaurant and never stopped. She said this was during lunch time. He just got lucky and made it through traffic. Ms. Rogers said they go around the Square constantly, probably a minimum of one a day especially at night if you happen to be on the Square. She said I know we're shorthanded with police but that's going to be a deadly trap; it's just a matter of time before it happens. Ms. Rogers said, but if they're not supposed to be coming through downtown Darlington we need to find out where the other signs are. Were they taken down or just the rule not applied because you can't stop one and….I mean you can't pick and choose other than the fact to construction. Ms. Rogers asked that someone check into that and find out what's going on. She said maybe our one-way signs aren't big enough. Mayor Boyd told Ms. Rogers he will look into it and get back to her.

Ms. Jannie Lathan read a letter she wrote to address council.

Good evening Mayor, Council, Ms. Pridgen, and Mr. Payne. My comments are centers around primarily one issue and that is the proposed ordinance.

I do not support approval of the 1st Reading of the proposed Ordinance # 2022-19, to Amend Public Comment. I do not support this Ordinance because it would not "Amend " How the Public makes comments during our City Council Meeting. Instead, this ordinance would remove Public Comments from the City Council meetings, all together. This ordinance, if approved, would remove all the citizens of Darlington ability to come and make public comments during its city council meeting. The citizens' ability to make public comments have not been removed from the City of Hartsville's, the City of Florence, or Darlington County Council Meetings. So, why is that this Mayor and Council want to remove the citizens of Darlington ability to make Public Comments during our City Council meetings. Your proposed ordinance as it stands now, propose to have the mayor and all the Council members come back here each Monday before our Tuesday Council meeting to receive public comments. Why should each of you and the citizens of Darlington have to take their time and resources to come to a separate city council meeting when this can be handled during our regular council meeting, the way it has been handled for decades? Why? Citizens do not want to have a dialog with council members, as may be suggested, we just want to have some questions answered, and to provide comments and input to how our government is being run. It's our democracy. I think it would be more prudent to table this 1st Reading and consider other options to truly "Amend" our Public Comments. As Mr. Lewis stated, I think there is a concern that our meetings do run long. These options should include 1) reducing the time for each citizen to speak from 5 minutes to 3 minutes 2) And requesting Stated/Public comments also be made and delivered in writing, and lastly, that our City Manager respond to the public's comments and questions in writing before or during the next meeting. As Mr. Lewis said I think this is the biggest concern. Citizens have come before this mayor and council month after month; now year after year and we've presented comments and input and recommendations as it's almost like it's falling on deaf ears. As, this is certainly part of his job/responsibility as our City Manager. This ordinance in my assessment is very restrictive and will but all eliminate the citizens of Darlington the ability to provide public comments. Because I can assure you, all of us that's here tonight is not going to be showing up twice a month to meet. Once for the only 4 or 5 citizens to provide public comments and then again for our City Council Meeting. I don't think you mayor, or the city council should be subjected to that, so I strongly urge you to reconsider moving forward. So, if you want to eliminate the citizens' ability to provide comments then vote to pass this ordinance. If not, this 1st Reading should certainly be tabled. Thank you.
November 1, 2022

NEW BUSINESS

a)1ST Reading Ordinance No. 2022-10, Amend Public Comment – Curtis Boyd, Mayor

Mayor Boyd said this was my idea. He said as I listen to the comments I hear tonight, to me I hear talking out of both sides of the mouth. I could care less if this passes or doesn't pass. My purpose behind this ordinance tonight was that every time somebody comes up they ask for us to be able to talk back to them; to have a dialog; to talk back; whether it's a short dialog or a long dialog. Mayor Boyd said, "My proposal was that we do this as a public forum open to the public to come in and speak one Monday night before. He said then there's a comment back and forth; dialog back and forth between us. Some of us have sat here and constantly be accused that we don't want to talk to you because we do want to talk to you, and we do answer you back. Mayor Boyd said I try to answer you back and I try to call people back. He said I can't answer for everybody else, but I know I do. Mayor Boyd said, "but I would like to be able to have

a dialog. I will do this if it's just me by myself if it doesn't pass I will have a public open forum for you to come and speak to me publicly because I'm willing to give more than one night a month. He said if the rest of the council doesn't want to, they don't have to and that's why we're proposing this as "open to everybody speaking." He said if everybody votes for it, fine. He said as I spoke with a couple other city council members about it, I am open to still comments on Tuesday nights. He said some of them didn't want to have the comments on Tuesday nights that why it's open tonight for us to discuss. Mayor Boyd said, "My proposal was that we do the open "comments" on Tuesday nights as "comments" and some people seem to have a hard time understanding that you just give us comments and we're not here to have a dialog. And now I want to give you a time to have a dialog back and forth with you to discuss things so I can answer your question back immediately so you won't have to wait a week or whatever else and get it back to you in writing and so forth so that we can have a public comment back and forth and a discussion about whatever your issues are so we can go ahead and bring it to council the following week and go ahead and put it on the agenda. Mayor Boyd said, "I am open for whatever you would like to do but 1) I am open and honest, and I am here to try to provide everything I can for the public to give us your feedback. He said some of you out there on Facebook can contest that I will answer your call 24/7 and I will email you back and forth to try and make sure everything is taken care of. Mayor Boyd said the purpose of this is not to stop the public, but to add to the public to be able to have additional time to talk so it's up to the council if you want to do this. Councilwoman Reed said, "Mayor, I truly appreciate you making that clarification but as the proposal came to us, it said to remove that and that is the issue that….and I wanted to make sure that our citizens understood that that would definitely be something that I would not go along with. She said, "If that were something that you would want so that citizens can have a longer dialog, I don't see any problem with that being, but I don't see an ordinance need to be with that because we can do that now when it's not requiring all of us to be there. And you know if three of us happen to show up at any one of those of those things, it has to be documented so t hat would cause another problem. Mayor Boyd said, "I think that we had to have an ordinance to change to be able to say….my first thought was that I would show up but then I said some more council members might want to show up so then we were trying to prevent it to where if four if us showed up, then we've got a quorum and the public does not know about it that we would go ahead and put it as a public notice that if one of us is here, fine and if all of us is here, fine; and then it would be notified to the public so the public would know ahead of time. Councilwoman Reed said, "I don't know about anyone else on council but the way it's being proposed it is being proposed that we eliminate this, and I am not about that at all. She said if that is something that….and I want that to be perfectly clear that we should not ever do anything that would limit the participation of our citizens. Councilwoman Reed said, "And that's what it appears to be because….it appears, and I want to take all of that away from this council because there has been more participation. Councilwoman Reed said, "During my service that is one of things I've done which is to encourage folk in my ward to please come to the meetings regardless of what it is, and I don't want them to feel that now that we are getting people to come to our meetings that now we want to limit what they say; we are already limiting the time". Councilwoman Reed said, "If it is something that we want to just have another avenue or forum

where they can come and talk further about an issue because the young lady Susan Rogers she needs….and I want to know where the signs about those things….I didn't know that trucks couldn't go around the Square and if there is that. To me I would like to see an answer to that myself so further dialog is ok but not in an ordinance that….the way they've got this proposed. It should not be. It should have a little more thought and maybe a suggestion or something else. Mayor Boyd said, "My suggestion was and me and you talked that we would do about 2 minutes or 3 minutes or whatever. He said if the comments were cut off we're not eliminating people from coming to talk, we're giving them more time to talk, but I am fine with giving them both times to talk. Mayor Boyd said, "But again I would like to have a time that I can have an open discussion and if more than one person shows up or more than one council member shows up then they know in advance." Councilwoman Baccus said, "I'm in agreement with Elaine. I don't see no purpose in…I mean if you want to have a special meeting on a Monday night for citizens, if they ask a question on Tuesday and you want to follow up on it to set a date to have to follow up on the questions that they asked, then yes, that's understandable. But this ordinance said to remove this from the monthly meeting, "No," I don't think that's necessary." She said I think the citizens should have a right to come to council meetings and ask any question or make statements they want to make. Our council meetings are publicly broadcast Facebook live or whatever social media we use, so if a citizen comes and ask a question on Tuesday everybody who's listening or watching gets to know what questions the citizens asked. If this is moved to a Monday night and two people show up, only those two people knew what happened or one person show up to ask a question, citizens not going to come here…come to no meeting on a Monday night to see if John Doe is coming to ask a question. They're not gonna do that. That don't even make sense. Councilwoman Baccus said, "It makes more sense to leave it like it is and then if you want to set a Monday night and inform the citizens on that Tuesday that they came to council meeting, we will have a response back for you on the following…whatever Monday it's going to be. Then they can come back again and then the get the answer that they're looking for, which makes more sense." But just to try and eliminate the citizens from publicly knowing what's going on in the city and only one or two people ask a question and only those two people know the answer, doesn't make sense". Councilman Gardner said, "I'm at a loss for words. I have fought against this for two administrations. We tried the…Gloria Hines tried to do this, and the previous administration and I fought it. I think this came up in this new administration and I fought it, but I am saddened for the state of our community and our ability to work together and have a fair debate". Councilman Gardner said, "I'm not sure if I truly believe that citizens' comments are doing our community the best it could in the manner that we have been doing it as a community. I do not believe that taking citizens' comments away does our community good. I believe that we as a community have to figure out a way to work together and I hate to say that I do believe that everything the ladies have expressed could be accomplished on the Monday before." Councilman Gardner said, "I do believe it will actually give our administration the ability to answer those questions and to work on those. I don't know what to do as a community. I know that in a lot of ways, we as community members and we as leaders and we as a greater society in America right now have to figure out how to come together, how to communicate on subjects that we do not get along on." Mayor Boyd said, "I'm fine with making a proposal that we keep it and that…again, this is all I was asking for." Mayor Boyd said, "Again, I brought this up. I wanted to be able to come in and have a meeting, a public

forum, but if somebody else came in, me, you and Elaine showed up, great, but if all of a sudden four or five showed up, then we would need to have an agenda and it needs to be publicly announced." Mayor Boyd said, "I am fine with keeping the comments. I would like to keep the comments maybe to three minutes, but again I'm fine with keeping the comments to five minutes". Mayor Boyd said, "I would like to have this ordinance that we can have this meeting on Monday nights and I'm fine with adjusting it to whatever time you want to frame it on the comments on the normal meeting night." Mayor Boyd said, "On Monday night if none of you want to show up…I come in and there's nobody here to talk to me, I'll go home." Councilman Nettles said, "So, two people that spoke tonight are two people, who most of the time, want to have dialogue." He said Ms. Lathan is shaking her head no. Councilman Nettles said, "But when you all come up, and I'm not saying it's a bad thing, I'm saying it's a thing, you engage somehow you will ask direct questions to different people who then tell us they need to respond." Councilman Nettles said, "So I don't have a problem if we truly are doing what Ms. Jannie Lathan said to do, was to just allow expression of your ideas, your thoughts, and your concerns without looking for a dialog at that time, but maybe some sort of written response at a later time and limiting the minutes to maybe three (3), I'm ok with that thought process". Councilman Nettles said, "What I don't want to happen is, (to the mayor's point) if we open up something on Monday night and it's open to the public and people don't come, then whose fault is that? It's the people's fault and not ours for not having it. He said it's not to say people don't have jobs and maybe can't make it, but he's willing to take the opportunity to at least engage you with your ideas because we lose control of these five (5) minutes all the time and only in the past few minutes or the past few meetings have we not had that issue, so I see where he's coming from. Councilman Nettles said, "I don't want to cut out the five minutes or the number of minutes that people can express themselves as long as it is kept that… an expression, a concern, or a notation of something. But when it gets back into these meetings…Mr. Lewis has done it. You've asked about potholes…. You get very engaged with that and you've asked for responses on the spot. Councilman Nettles said, "Is it always possible, no it's not. He said, "So what I'm trying to say is I would support it if we wanted to do something so that Monday is open to the public if they want to come speak to the mayor and whoever else on council wants to be there. I don't want it to necessarily be removed from the meetings, I think I'm kind of on the fence on that, but I don't want to take away anyone's right to come in and express themselves or give their concerns. Mr. Lewis asked, "Mayor may I respond since my name was brought up"? Mayor Boyd said, "No, not yet." Councilman Milling asked, "May I make a comment first Mr. Lewis"? Mr. Lewis said, "Absolutely, as long as I'm given the opportunity to respond." Councilman Milling said, "I went out of town Thursday, so I didn't see the proposed ordinance until Sunday night when I got back in town." He said I've got some concerns about turning this thing into an ordinance. There's been expressions by a couple of people, and I haven't thought about it from that standpoint that coming twice a month as opposed to once a month could create a problem as to how many people would be participating if we kept things in place and set up." Councilman Milling said, "I do think that if we were going to have a Monday meeting it ought to be, as I understood it, the Monday of the week before the Tuesday meeting and not like Monday and then Tuesday. Councilman Milling said, "If we were meeting today November 1st, we would have met on Monday of last week and the comments could have been incorporated into the thought process for the agenda for this Tuesday". He said that's something that can be

considered. Councilman Milling said, I don't know that we need to create an ordinance that says that council and the public will have to do it on this day and this day alone. I think that can create some problems. Councilman Milling said, I think that we can have special meetings if something in the way of a public comment at a regular meeting generates a need for a special meeting then we can notice and have a special meeting. He said I don't want to take a chance and some of you might not want to take a chance of if it's "come if you want to" and hear what people have to say…I think all of us on council would be apprehensive about not coming for fear somebody might accuse us of not having any interest in that meeting so it's going to be an additional meeting that council members would go to. Councilman Milling said, "At this particular point in time I would just have a special meeting if a special meeting seemed to be necessary rather than creating an ordinance that mandates that we have special meetings the Monday before a Tuesday meeting or the Monday of the week before the Tuesday meeting." Councilman Milling said, "As this is drafted, I would not be in favor of it." Councilwoman Baccus said, "The reason we are at this point is because the citizens are always asking for input, and we seem to have a… this council and the city manager seem to have an attitude that we don't have to respond back to citizens." Mayor Boyd said, "No ma'am, not correct." Councilwoman Baccus said, "That needs to change. we need to respond back to citizens in writing." Mayor Boyd said, "Council does not agree with that." Councilwoman Baccus asked Mayor Boyd did she interrupt him when he was talking. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The City Manager needs to respond back to citizens in writing and I think the information needs to be put on the city's web page. She said if there are questions asked by citizens, the information or response back is put on the city's website then any citizen would know what was asked. She said we have had citizens like Mr. Lewis, Ms. Lathan, Gloria, and other citizens have come and asked the same questions five or six times with no response and that's what's upsetting the citizens. She said we don't respond back to them, or we think we don't have to respond back to them so I think some of this could be solved by putting the answers back to them in writing and on the city page. Councilman Gardner said, "I've never had the community come to me with that concern. The concern I've had the community come to me about is our inability to work together." Councilwoman Baccus said…we don't work together….councilman Gardner said, I'm still speaking." Councilman Gardner said, "The public comments are not a right, it's a privilege and I don't think we're being good servants to our community right now and if you all feel differently please help me understand how you think that we should better communicate as a community because that's the real issue. This Subject has come up three times with administration… twice with this one and once with the previous one… all for the same reason." Councilman Gardner said, "We can act like it isn't because your side is not winning right now, but it's all for the exact same reason." He said at the end of the day, are we going to start working together, are we gonna treat each other appropriately? Councilman Gardner told Councilwoman Baccus, I called you a couple days ago to try to work with you, but you never answered, so answer the question. Councilwoman Baccus said, "You know why we don't work together. We're not invited to y'all little secret meetings you all have behind my back and Elaine's back"…. Mayor Boyd hit gavel to get the meeting back in order. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Payne, "If I call a special meeting to have a meeting each Monday of the month, we just have to let the public know ahead of time and if I have more than three (3) show up then is there an issue with that"? Mr. Payne said, "To cover yourselves, if you have four or more do you have a quorum." Mayor Boyd said, "I'm saying if we

call a special meeting and I'm going to have a public forum… Mr. Payne said, "You will have to post an agenda 24 hours in advance". Mayor Boyd said, "No one else is required to show or they can show." Mr. Payne said if you don't have a quorum, you don't have a meeting but that doesn't preclude you in an unofficial capacity to speak with the public. Mayor Boyd said, and if more than three show up….Mr. Payne said, then you have a meeting. Mayor Boyd said, do we have to have additional note taking? Mr. Payne said, "Yes sir, it's a meeting." Mayor Boyd said, but I can still call a special meeting without having to have an ordinance. Mr. Payne said, correct**. Mayor Curtis Boyd made a motion to table (First Reading Ordinance 2022-10) this because that's all he was trying to accomplish.** Councilwoman Reed said, "This is what I call working together. He has an idea he said put it on paper and we will consider it. We've had pros and cons and a decision is being made. This is what our community wants to see that each one whether it's for or against, that it is being considered and it is transparent." (Mr. John Lewis tried to speak but the mayor moved on) **Councilwoman Baccus seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Reed, Gardner, Milling and Segars voted for the motion to table First Reading on Ordinance 2022-10.**

b)1st Reading Ordinance No. 2022-11, Annexation of Lochend Drive – Sheila Jones, Codes Enforcement

Ms. Sheila Jones said the property owners of what is now Patriot Chevrolet are coming into the City of Darlington and want to annex the entire property into the city limits. Mayor Boyd said, "I am more than pleased that someone is going to be annexed in, but I do ask that, for example, these people have asked for that line to be fixed out there and they are coming into town, so I asked that we make sure that that drain line out there for safety reasons is also fixed". **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve First reading of ordinance number 2022–11 annexation of Lochend Drive. Councilman Howard Nettles seconded the motion.** Councilman Milling asked, "have we had Lochend Road, or Lochend Drive deeded back to the city." Ms. Jones said, yes. **Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of annexing Lochend Drive into the City of Darlington.**

c)1St Reading Ordinance 2022-12, Zoning Designation for Ordinance 2022-11 – Sheila Jones, Codes Enforcement

Ms. Sheila Jones said this is to piggyback on ordinance 2022-11. Our zoning ordinance allows for us to do it at the same time. It's the zoning designation to make the property that we're getting ready to annex into the city as General Commercial (GC) which is in keeping with what is already out there. Councilwoman Baccus and Mayor Boyd both asked what the property is zoned now. Ms. Jones said, it's not zoned. Darlington County does not zone. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve first reading ordinance 2022-12 zoning designation for ordinance 2022-11 to (GC) General Commercial. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

d) Introduction of New Planning and Economic Development Director – John Payne, City Manager

Mr. Payne said we have interviewed and hired Merry Morgan Smith to be the new Planning & Economic Director. Mr. Payne said Merry comes back to Darlington, she was educated in Darlington and graduated from St. John's High. She has lived in a number of states across the country and brings to us a lot of experience. She's a graduate of St. John's High School, College of Charleston and she has a Master of Science in architecture from Virginia Tech University. She has experience in historic restoration renovation, and she has drafted plans and maps for campus renovations at Virginia tech. Merry has been the manager of The National Main Street program under the South Carolina Municipal Association and she won an award for Best façade rehabilitation. She has experience revitalizing festivals and has already been integral in helping revitalize some of Darlington's latest improvements around the Square and up Pearl Street. Merry has already hit the ground running. Today is her first day but she started working last week. She is working on updating the planning department and planning functions as well as initiating more economic development plans. Merry Morgan said she is delighted to be here and happy to be working with such a great team at the city of Darlington. Merry said I know I can work with them and make a concerted effort to perform for the citizens and electives of Darlington. She said one of things I have been working on will come to fruition the week of the 13th of November. We are going to have a Kool-Aid color powder party at the Grove Street back lot and that's going to be from 1 PM to 4 PM. On November 16th we have an artist and a curator from AfriCOBRA Movement who is coming to speak to the students that have been engaged in a mural competition since school started and that will be hung on the building on the corner of Grove & Pearl streets next week. They will award the children cash prizes for each high school student who is involved in the winning mural. On November 17th at 6:30 pm the art curator from Chicago who curated AfriCOBRA showed both in Venice and North Miami in the last three years is going to speak about Black art and artists at Macedonia Baptist Church. and that's in conjunction and supported by the Macedonia life Skills Center. The mural project was underwritten by Kistler-Hardee Funeral Home and we're working on the underwriting for color powder hero party on the 13th.

e) Allocation of Community Promotions Funding – John Payne, City Manager

Mr. John Payne said, in the past we had line items under item 550 community promotions and this year I took out the line item and just left the dollar amount of $18,000. Mr. Payne said I have a recommendation but it's ultimately up to you how we spend these dollars. Mr. Payne told counsel they have in their packet a spreadsheet that lists the prior year contributions and the recommended amount for the current year he said most of them are the same as last year with one reduction in Christmas parade reduced from $556.87 to $500. Mr. Payne said there's one addition, which Ms. Rogers brought to his attention unwanted animals that are behind her restaurant. Ms. Rogers told Mr. Payne that they have taken care of that problem. Mr. Payne said, "Anyway, I have added a line item to Darlington County humane Society for $250". Councilman Gardner asked, "Where is this"? Mr. Payne said this was in the budget in the past and you had line items that show these. Councilman Gardner said, I thought we handled this a couple of months ago with the committee we formed. Mr. Payne said, "No, those were grants, those were hospitality tax, this is budgeted funds." Councilman Gardner said, "I'm sorry. I want to be clear. I thought when we formed that committee that this was all kind of going together". Mr. Payne said, "No, that committee just handled the hospitality end of it, this is budgeted".

Councilman Gardner said, “I think this all needs to be a part of the community grants committee that we formed and next year this all needs to be one budget number.” Mr. Payne said, “We can do that, but that was specifically for hospitality tax.” Councilman Gardner said, “It’s all money at the end of the day.” Mr. Payne said this is budgeted money not hospitality tax money. This comes from the general fund. Councilman Gardner said it’s still Darlington city money. Councilman Nettles said, “So, is what we gave last year equivalent to what we just gave to those entities, and this added to it”? Councilman Nettles asked, “So what you’re proposing here, if you add that to what the committee just gave us and we approved, is it the same thing that we spent in total last year”? Mr. Payne said, “This is actually a little less. Last year it was a little over $20,000 in the budgeted item and when we were writing the budget it was reduced to $18,000”. Mayor Boyd said the hospitality tax we gave out this time was $35,000 which was less than what we gave out last year and this is a little less so altogether it’s less. Councilman Nettles said, “I just want to make sure…. it just looked like we were double dipping in some way, and I just want to make sure we’re all on the same path.” Mr. Payne said, “Well, it’s to different entities, but again this is budgeted from the general fund and the other was hospitality tax.” Mayor Boyd asked if we could put it all together? Councilman Gardner said that’s irrelevant. Mr. Payne said, “Going forward I can add them together, but I wanted them distinct because they are from two pots of money.” Councilwoman Reed said, “What I’m understanding you were saying Howard is that because we didn’t have the grants committee the monies we spent that… the same thing we gave money out.” Councilman Gardner said, “I want to make it clear for the future budget year because we’ve got a lot of stuff we need to fund; every dollar counts.” Councilman Nettles asked, “Are you asking us to approve this tonight”? Councilwoman Reed said, “It’s already done right”? Councilman Gardner said, “We’ve already budgeted it, we just need to approve the…Mr. Payne said, “No, the $18,000 has been budgeted it’s not divvied up. There's a lump sum sitting there. Mr. Payne said, “Most of these I could have…. the $500, the $200; I had the authority to do that, but I did not have the authority on the PDRTA because that’s over my signature authority”. Councilman Nettles said, “In my opinion, whatever the outcome of the vote is, I just think that next year we need to make sure that we’re at a point where it’s all combined in some capacity with one group of recommendations from the committee. Mr. Payne said, “And ultimately you don’t have to spend any of it if you don’t want to, but this is what we’ve done in the past.” **Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion that we approve the allocation of the community promotions funding that’s outlined in the document presented by the city manager. Councilman Bryant Gardner told Councilwoman Elaine Reed to read the names of the entities given the funds and the amount which are as follows: Darlington Chamber of Commerce-$500; Darlington Memorial Cemetery-$200, PDRTA-$15,850; Miss Darlington Pageant-$500, Free Clinic-$200; Christmas Parade-$500 and Darlington County Humane Society-$250. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

f) Water & Sewer Department Purchase Order – John Payne, City Manager

Mr. Payne said, Mr. Shugart and some of his employees are at Myrtle Beach for annual training and he asked him to handle this for him. Mr. Payne said this is an annual expense RNI SAAS the Sensus Meter Reading. Mr. Payne said, it’s the equipment and we have to update it each

year and it allows us to do meter readings electronically. Mr. Payne said the total is $9,125 which is above my signature authority and he's asking for permission to pay this. Councilwoman Reed said one of the previous meetings they were discussing monies for the water department and one of the things brought out was that they were self-sustaining. Councilwoman Reed wanted to know why they can't buy this. Mr. Payne said, because it's above my signature authority. He said it's coming out of the water and sewer budget. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the quote for RNI Analytics for $9,125. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons Nettles, Reed, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Executive Session: Pursuant to SC Code of Laws 30-4-40(5) for proposed contractual arrangements. Council may or may not act following Executive Session.
Councilman Nettles made a motion to go into executive session at 7:05 pm. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilman Nettles made a motion to end the executive session at 7:34 pm. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted to end the executive session.

Back In Session

Councilman Gardner made a motion to purchase an easement at 209 Spring St. for the purpose of a multi-use trail for the price of $5,000. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

REMINDER
Tuesday December 6, 2022 - Regular Meeting of Darlington City Council, 6:00PM

ADJOURNMENT
Councilman Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 pm. Councilman Nettles seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the adjournment.

_____
Mayor

ATTEST:

_____

Clerk & Treasurer