CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE COURTROOM/COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY APRIL 9, 2024 - AT 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Boyd, Interim city Manager Mr. Bill Taylor, Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Milling, Segars and Reed. Also present, Anna DeWitt, Steve Abbott, Gloria Hines, Jannie Lathan, Hunter Thomas, Merry Morgan Smith, Rosa Hudson, Shawn Odom, Alex Gainey, Pastor Kevin Cauley, Sheila Jones, Dyan Cohen, Robin Griggs, Melissa Altman, Maxie Hunter, Jonathan Boatwright, Charles Shugart, Bill Eubanks, Hunter Parker, Sharon Blakney, Chief Jimmy Davis, City attorney Kevin Etheridge and others.

Councilman Bryant Gardner is not present.

INVOCATION
Pastor Kevin Cauley did the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
Mayor Boyd led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES MARCH 5, 2024; MARCH 20, 2024 & MARCH 26, 2024,
Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes from our regular council meeting on March 5, 2024. Councilman John Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Angela McRavin made a motion to approve the minutes from our March 20, 2024, Special Council Meeting. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of our March 26, 2024, Special Council Meeting. Councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR
Mr. Adrian Street said I personally think the decision on Brunson-Dargan was garbage and wasn't made in the citizen's interest and more self-interest. I think that St. John's is next, and I think everyone is going to be compliant. I think our old courthouse should be made into the old historic Darlington hotel which burnt down. I think our courthouse is ugly, but that's why we pay y'all to make it prettier, but it seems like all the solutions aren't for the citizens' interest. He said try to be better and be unique. Adrian said, I heard that South Carolina found $1.8 billion. I think you all should tell our representatives to invest in Lake Darpo and St. John's which would actually utilize …(muffled) St. John's has theaters which we could open back up and bring the

public back alive. I think there's all kinds of ideas …. Lake Darpo could be made into a water park. I think if we were smart we would request the citizens to bring their scrap and we would discount them on tickets and everything we sell there. Adrian said, we're getting a new courthouse so we could rotate the old courthouse where we could have the horse show around the old courthouse and the new courthouse we could use St. John's parking lot, fill in with some fun activities for the community. There's been a lot of shootings lately and it doesn't seem like nothing is being done about it. Adrian said somebody came to his nonprofit with counterfeit cash last week. He said, I made a statement to Chief Jimmy Davis, but he said he wasn't a collection agency and if anything, he could get him for not having a yard sale license. So, why would I pay for a yard sale license when they can't stop the criminals? Adrian said, I've got the guys' information, the name and everything, but I'm screwed out of my money. A lot of other people have the same issues and when they go to call the cops, the cops come and pressure them about it. Adrian said, "But I ain't going to comply with it. I ain't getting that yard sale license and I told him that".

Mr. Adger Watkins said he owns Venue 151 and the city's land joins his land and if the city has any idea at all about selling pieces of it, he would be interested in buying some. He said he can't afford to buy it all but whatever the city would be willing to cut out. He said he would be able to make his venue bigger.

Mr. Alex Gainey said he owns a lot at 405 Second Street, and he is looking at building a house on that lot. He said he spoke with Sheila Jones some months ago about building a house and she said they couldn't do it because it's a 40-foot-wide lot. I know that the master plan is supposed to be addressing some of those issues, but I didn't know exactly when that was going to take place. Alex said he talked with Sheila and asked her what his options were. Sheila said we could go before BZA. He said they paid their $300 and went before BZA last month and presented it to them and they approved it. He said he called Sheila the next day to find out what they needed to do to move forward and was informed that it was an illegal meeting. He said my understanding was the agenda wasn't post at 24 hours in so my question was it's been three weeks and we're ready to move forward with building the house we were approved by BZA to build on the lot … and I don't understand it's in the master plan, but I don't know how long it's going to take for all of that to happen if the problem was posting the agenda 24 hours in advance. Why don't we post a new agenda for 24 hours and let's have another meeting if that's what we've got to do. We've paid our $300 … I spoke with the chairman of the BZA, and he said they are willing to have another meeting, but I feel like we need to be moving on with it. We're trying to build a house and we're being held up. Alex told the council he came before them tonight to see if they could try to do something to get the process moving.

Ms. Gloria Hines said her address is 901 S. Main Street and she has been there for thirty years and for 30 years they have been picking up my trash. I only have debris maybe three times a year. Right now, I'm only working four days a month, so my trash pickup is only once a month and I'm paying $58.60 a month. I was told in December after 30 years that they don't pick up debris. I put debris out but it's such a little bit, they pass it by every time. I want you all to consider that because I'm paying for it. Jacqueline DuBose said she wanted to talk tonight about

respect. Respect for each and every one of us. We all deserve this regardless of what stage of life we're in; whether we're rich or poor. It's just common respect. Even in a meeting, having that common respect…not to over talk somebody and not to put it out on Facebook because they are watching you all and they are taking it to heart how to conduct themselves as they grow older. Jacqueline said, as Vice President of DDRA I do share a concern for the city. I want the city to grow and be productive and prosperous. She said I ran for school board in 2022 and my platform was "Lead to Serve". You have to be a leader to serve everybody regardless of race, gender, nationality, and their position in life. Ms. DuBose shared a childhood story with everyone. Councilwoman Sheila Baccus said, I've been getting several phone calls from citizens about trash, debris, things that they're putting out on the street to be picked up and when they're calling the street and sanitation department they're getting a response back from the person answering the phone that, "we don't pick that up". We don't pick up limbs, or items you put on the street. Well, I want you to know …. And this council needs to … not consider but uphold what we actually voted to do in 2020. (She passed out copies of the minutes from 2020 to Council and Shawn Odom passed them out to those in the audience) Councilwoman Baccus said, I'm going to hand this to every council member, so you can read it for yourself because we did vote for citizens … for this trash to be picked up. Now, whether they changed it; whether the city manager actually did his job and changed the ordinance or not, the citizens are paying to have this trash picked up. On April 13, 2020, when we did our budget, Alex Gainey, which is sitting at the back of the room, was over Street and sanitation department …. Councilwoman Baccus read a section from the minutes where it was stated yard debris would be picked up. She said, now the street department young lady is telling citizens we're not going to pick up your debris, we're not going to pick up your trash when you're already paying for this to be picked up and the city needs to honor what we voted on. The prior city manager did not do his job and changed the ordinance. You can't enforce the ordinance when we voted on it and just because they didn't change it doesn't mean it's not so. And we're taking people's money, we're obligated to do what we said we were going to do.

NEW BUSINESS

Proclamation Recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Ms. Robin Griggs said she's part of the Pee Dee Coalition. Ms. Griggs gave council brochures about what they do at the Durant Center which is a child advocacy center and with Pee Dee Coalition which deals with domestic violence and sexual assault (I was not given a copy of the brochure). She said they are doing free therapy for kids that have been abused or neglected. Ms. Griggs said this is also Child Abuse Awareness Month and Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Mayor Boyd read the proclamation.

FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION APRIL 2024

Mayor Boyd read the Fair Housing Resolution designating April as Fair Housing Month. (Copy of Resolution Attached)

APPROVAL OF DARLINGTON RENAISSANCE MASTER PLAN - BILL EUBANKS

(PowerPoint Presentation) Mr. Eubanks said, they are excited to present the Masterplan tonight for approval. He said, "I know you all are very well acquainted with what's in the master plan.

You've had it for a couple of weeks now, but you've also come to several of our meetings and participated and they've had really good input throughout the community. Mr. Eubanks said he will quickly go over the goal statement, the concept statement, the guiding principles, the overarching recommendations and then he will get to the top five priorities as they were expressed to them by the Planning Commission. He said they met with the planning commission a couple of weeks ago and they forwarded a recommendation to council to adopt the master plan, but they also wanted you all to know some of the things that they thought were most important in the Masterplan. He said, so we're going to tell you what their top five priorities are and then he's going to tell you what the team's other five priorities are. Then they will talk about a couple of special projects. Mr. Eubanks said he is very pleased and proud of what they have come up with for the City of Darlington. He said if you follow the master plan, you will have success in your city. He said the goal statement that came out of the first workshop was to intentionally foster a progressive, unified, vibrant, and safe community with a variety of places to live, housing, shop and play, recreation, with walkable neighborhoods, beautiful parks, and supported schools. Out of that, they came up with a concept statement in their design charrette, which supported that which was to develop a long-term vision for the community with the focus on a strong public realm, parks, trails, and streets, cohesive neighborhoods and the economic vitality of the core while also looking for short-term reachable victories. Mr. Eubanks said through the design charette they came up with twelve guiding principles which he is not going to go over because they have seen those. He said the guiding principles became the building block of the master plan. From the guiding principles, they went onto the overarching recommendations, which they go into in great detail in the master plan document. The top five priorities, as expressed by the planning commission, were #1 major revisions to the zoning ordinance; #2 Hire a city engineer; #3 establish a main street program and hire a manager; #4 establish a parks department and hire a director; #5 implement a strategy for annexation. Major revisions to the zoning ordinance - we've already outlined several things that they've identified that need to be changed in the zoning ordinance. He said you heard one of those in public comment tonight dealing with the non-conforming lots. He said granting a variance for one non-conforming lot is really not an appropriate thing to do. It doesn't meet the hardship definition. Changing the ordinance so that all of those nonconforming lots are conforming is the thing to do. He said they are going to be meeting with the planning commission next week to look at modifications to the zoning ordinance to accommodate that. He said they have identified several things that need to happen in the zoning ordinance. A lot of those are fairly simple fixes and I think it's only a few months process to have the entire ordinance revised. The second thing was to hire an engineer. Mr. Eubanks said you guys do have a consulting engineer that works with the city, but we feel like it's important that we actually have a city engineer on staff working for you day in and day out. Once you get that engineer on staff we think it's really important that you develop a water and sewer master plan and develop a stormwater master plan. As you're looking at growth in your community, those are two things that you've really got to take a hard look at and understand. The next thing was establishing a Main Street Program and hiring a Main Street Manager. You all have seen the success that Florence has experienced with their Main Street program and the changes that have happened in that city. I think that can happen here but it's not a quick fix. He said it's a long haul, it takes years to do, it takes being diligent, but you've got to start somewhere. Starting a Main Street program bringing on a Main Street

manager is the first step toward that. There are a lot of other things in the Masterplan that can happen as a result of that action. He said they also talked about how the Main Street Program could be housed in the Old Carnegie Library building. It's on Main Street and the Main Street Program needs to be on Main Street. The fourth thing was to establish a parks department and hire a director. Mr. Eubanks said this is not a Parks and recreation Department; this is a parks department. He said the county does a fantastic job with their recreation program and we're not wanting to take away from that, but there are some unusual things that are going on between the city and the county as far as the maintenance of your existing parks. I know the city provides staff to the county to help maintain parks, so what we would like to see …. And also, great respect for the recreation program, but they are not really interested in maintaining passive parks. They're interested in maintaining sports fields, so there's a difference in when you're talking about a parks department and what they would be maintaining. He said the County had never done a parks and recreation needs assessment study. We would like to see you all partner with the county to have that kind of study done once you have somebody on board. Then things like maintenance of the streetscapes and your entrance signs could then go to the parks department instead of as it is right now being a part of the street and sanitation. The last thing they talked about was implementing a strategy for annexation. He said, "Do you want Darlington to grow but you want to have control over that growth and as long as things are in the county, you don't control them. He said you have some large parcels primarily on the southeast side of town and in the east side of town that we think are prime for development and we would like to see those under the control of the city. You also have a lot of residents who live primarily on the north side of the city and on the west side, they live in established neighborhoods and communities, but they are in the county. Adding those neighborhoods to the city would be a great benefit to everyone. Mr. Eubanks said the team also had a few things they felt like were also priorities. #1 is to do a housing assessment, affordable and attainable housing in this community is a real challenge. It is something that needs a lot of attention, but until you do the housing needs assessment you really don't know the depth of that need and you really can't address that need specifically until you have this housing assessment done. The other thing is historic preservation. In the master plan, they talk about the creation of some new historic districts and expansion of some historic districts. #3 property acquisition he said he would love to see the city develop a strategy and develop a budget so that you can proactively acquire property. It may be property to use for Parks, for infill housing or other needs that the city may have. #4 New Fire station. He said he met with the fire chief, and he toured the facility, and it needs to be replaced. It's old and he can barely get his equipment in those bays. Mr. Eubanks said he asked the Chief if he wanted two fire stations and he said, "No. one is all he needs to cover the city". He said they have identified a site on Orange Street a couple of blocks from here that they think would work great. Mr. Eubanks said, "We would love to see you all pursue a new fire station. At some point and time after you have the new fire station we would love to see y'all replace city hall. This building has served its purpose and I think it's time to move on. Having better council chambers for public meetings would be great, having better office space for your staff would be great. We would like to see that new City Hall built on this same site. You need to be part of your core; You need to be part of your downtown; you need to be visible in the community. Mr. Eubanks said they did a lot of assessments themselves of the neighborhoods and they found a lot of shortcomings in those neighborhoods, and they need to be addressed

over time. A lot of that has to do with substandard housing, vacant lots and those things that need to be addressed. Mr. Eubanks said two other special projects that they wanted to talk about …these are things that the city doesn't control per se because it's not our land. Brunson Dargan as you all know, it's gone now. Mr. Eubanks said they met with the school board, and they met with the school superintendent about ideas for the redevelopment of Brunson Dargan. He showed a concept that they did and was blessed by the school board. This approaches Brunson Dargan from the viewpoint of a pocket neighborhood. These are small lots, single family detached homes. They have about twenty-two acres, 138 lots with 50% open space. Mr. Eubanks said because they are clustered together around usable open space, what the school board would like to do if they would like to be able to own a few of these homes. Most of them would be sold, some at workforce rates, some at market rate, but some the school board would actually own so they can rent them to teachers at much reduced rates, which would really help them with recruitment and retention. But it also provides a really good solid new neighborhood in the City of Darlington. Mr. Eubanks said, "The thing is you can't build this neighborhood in the City of Darlington right now. Your zoning ordinance doesn't support it. So, one of the things in looking at the rewrite of our zoning ordinance is to allow developments like this to happen. The second thing is St. John's. As you all know, St. John's is going to stop being a school after this term. He said it's a beautiful set of buildings. It's historic there on the national register, they need to stay. They need to be adaptively reused. We also met with the school board about this. Mr. Eubanks said the concept shows repainting all of the buildings except the cafeteria which is not on the national register. He said it does some things for the campus once it's gone. It's a building that would be really difficult to reuse because of the ceiling height and column space. He said they see several possibilities for adaptive reuse, so in the Masterplan they were not very prescriptive because they did not want to rule out any possibilities. Mr. Eubanks said they would like to see a portion of this turned back into a city park. Historically, it was a park, and we'd like to see that again. Mr. Eubanks said I want you all to really do what you can to cooperate with the school board and to be a help to them to help move these two initiatives forward. Mr. Eubanks said, "I'm looking forward to you all voting to adopt the Masterplan. Mr. Eubanks said there will be a companion document to the Masterplan coming out in the next few weeks. He said their partners on this will be working on another document that's going to outline possible funding opportunities, grant opportunities, things like that to address things in the Masterplan. It's not part of the Masterplan Per se but it's a tool for you all and staff to use as you move forward to implement the Masterplan. **Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to adopt the Darlington Renaissance Masterplan. Councilman John Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted to adopt the Masterplan.**

CONTRACT AMENDMENT FOR ZONING ORDINANCE OVERHAUL - BILL EUBANKS

Mr. Eubanks said in conversation with Merry Morgan through this process and also the fact that the Planning Commission stated that their top priority was changes to the zoning ordinance and realizing that you all have issues that need to be addressed sooner rather than later. Mr. Eubanks said Merry Morgan asked him for a proposal that could be done as an amendment to our existing contract to go ahead and immediately start looking at a rewrite to our zoning ordinance. He said because we've already done the front-end work, we already know a lot of

the things that need to be changed, we already know the city, we already know the staff, we know you all so there is a lot of front-end work that we would not have to do. Mr. Eubanks said, so we prepared a contract amendment. Mr. Eubanks said, “If you all remember in the original contract, they set aside $15,000 if it was hourly not to exceed for Bealle Engineering who is a transportation planner just because of the way things went with the Masterplan we did not need to use Beale Engineering as part of the Masterplan so that was $15,000 of the Masterplan fee that was not spent. Councilman Milling asked if things like signage fall under the zone. Mr. Eubanks said, “about the only parts of the ordinance we won’t touch are communication towers and sexually oriented businesses”. Councilman Milling asked, what is left that would not be encompassed in the zoning ordinance? Mr. Eubanks said, “One of the things we talked about incorporating into the zoning ordinance is some very clear-cut process guidelines for when things come before the planning commission; when things come before the BZA so that the processes are clearer. He said that is something that they would adopt as part of it. They would also look at things that may be part of your subdivision regulations that may be happier living in the zoning ordinance. Mayor Boyd asked Mr. Bill Taylor if at this rate are we required to have initial bid since it was already in there before … Mr. Bill Taylor said, No, you’re fine with that”. **Councilman John Milling made a motion that we amend the existing contract that we have with Bill Eubanks and the others organization and funded SGA/NW and amend that contract to include the revisement of the zoning ordinance for an additional sum of $15,000. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Mr. Eubanks said we will start on that process immediately.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CITY LOGO Mayor Boyd said there are multiple logos out there and he wanted to see if the Council could agree on what they would like so they can be consistent. Mayor Boyd said Mr. Eubanks brought it up at the meeting that there are different city logos and we’re going to be putting out more information, so we want to make sure the website is the same, the trucks are the same. Mr. Eubanks said the difference is there are some older versions where it says the “City of” is included or not included and it may be above the logo, or it may be below the logo. He said the mayor is correct. Anything that we do whether it’s on a truck, on a door or on a sign, it should be consistent. Mr. Eubanks said, the one that says “The City of Darlington and then South Carolina in script below the oak seems to be the one in most common usage. Mr. Eubanks said the logo on the city trucks is different in variation. Councilman Milling asked, “Do we need to come up with something new? Do we need to say something like “*It’s a great day in Darlington*”, or anything else that might be appropriate”. Mr. Eubanks said, “I think developing a different brand is a separate process that actually needs a lot of in-depth study and a lot of public input. I would defer that decision until you have your Main Street program up and running and let the Main Street program be part of that process. Councilman Milling asked, “With where we are, do we need to spend money changing a few trucks to get to uniformity or do we need to wait until we’ve got a proposal for a logo? Mr. Eubanks said, “I can’t really answer that question because I don’t know how much decals cost, and I don’t know your city budget. He said if it’s not very expensive and you’ve got the money in your budget, I think it would be great to have that consistency. Mayor Boyd said, “My question was not to run out and change every truck right at this moment, every sign at every entrance

way or … and turn the whole basket upside down. If you go to change something or post something on social media or you print something from here out until we decide to change it, which one would you like to use". Mr. Eubanks said, "We think the most important thing is from this point forward, it's consistent". **Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion that we be consistent with the logo that we have that says, "with the tree" and under the tree, City of Darlington, SC. Councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

REQUEST FROM THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WITH THE 2024 FIREWORKS FOR FREEDOM FEST Ms. Amanda Boykin said she is the current Chairperson for the Board of Directors for the Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Julia Gainey, the new Executive Administrative Assistant, passed out folders to the council members only. Ms. Gainey said Freedom Fest is the Darlington Chamber's largest event and it's very well attended. She said there were an estimated 5,000 people that attended Freedom Fest last year. She said their mission is to provide entertainment, rides, T-shirt's, and fireworks a show free for all ages. This year's event will be held on June 29, 2024, on Darlington Square. In the past few years, the City of Darlington has contributed funds for the fireworks. The community and residents would appreciate your generosity again this year to ensure we can continue to hold this event free of charge. Ms. Boykin said, "It is my understanding, if I remember correctly from last year, that it was supposed to be added as a line item to your budget so that we wouldn't have to continue to ask for the funds every year. I may have been mistaken about that, but I thought that that's what came from our executive director last year". She said I believe it was Mr. Payne and he is no longer with you guys. Councilwoman Baccus said, "If I remember correctly, didn't we create a committee that's supposed to handle this, and all these bids were supposed to go into that folder for the committee to go over"? Councilman Milling said, "We have created such a committee, but also last year I think the city did it as part of its budget process. So, at this point and time we aren't on the budget yet". Councilwoman Baccus said, "I don't think we did it as a part of our budget because we bought it separately afterwards". Councilman Milling said, "I know we gave $12,500". Councilwoman Baccus said, "That was after the committee did their job and issued the money and then they came back afterwards and asked again for additional funds. Councilman Milling said they didn't apply to the committee because they came straight to the city. Ms. Boykin said, "We have previously gotten money from H-Tax but because of all of the hoops and things that we've had to go through, it was made a decision two years ago that that money would no longer be coming from any kind of tax fund, but rather would come from the city directly. Mayor Boyd said, it'll come from our H-Tax. He said the difference is that the committee that we chose to allot so much money for them to give out the Chamber is a different entity. DDRA is a different entity. The only purpose of the Chamber is to support the City of Darlington . The only purpose of DDRA is to support the City of Darlington. The Pilot Club has a different group out there. When they come and ask for money for the pageant they aren't here to support Darlington they're here to support the pageant. Mayor Boyd said, the only thing that you all work on is to help us and that's why they weren't put in that list of money. Councilwoman Baccus said, "The Chamber was in that list and if the city manager can go back and find that list of people we gave a donation to, the Chamber was a part of that list because I remember questioning it when we gave it the second time". Ms.

Boykin said we only received money one time for $12,500. She said there could have been two payouts. Ms. Boykin said what we've done in the past two years was we have already paid for half of the fireworks right now we have already paid $6,250 and you reimbursed us for that previously and then when we get ready to pay the remaining balance you paid them directly for us if I remember correctly. Mayor Boyd said, ""Every year I've been here we've given them money". The council discussed how the process should have been done and how it was done last year. **Mayor Boyd made a motion to approve $12,500 for Darlington Chamber of Commerce for the 2024 fireworks. Councilman Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Reed, Milling voted for the motion. Councilwoman Baccus voted against the motion because she said it wasn't done properly.**

RESOLUTION UPDATING THE CITY OF DARLINGTON EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK - INTERIM CITY MANAGER MR. BILL TAYLOR

Councilman John Milling made a motion to modify or update the City Employee handbook to add as additional holidays Presidents' Day, Juneteenth Holiday, and Veterans Day. Councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

PROPOSALS FOR RECRUITING NEW CITY MANAGER - INTERIM CITY MANAGER BILL TAYLOR

Mr. Taylor said he is trying to lead us in the direction of trying to hire a new city manager. He said it's a very timely issue and there is always a time when you lose your leadership and you're looking for new talent. He said there is a lot of young new talent in this whole state. Mr. Taylor said you may have ideas on individuals that may be interested in this position because Darlington is a very unique community, and you offer a lot. Just because you have somebody in mind, I don't want you all to be tunnel vision and short sighted by overlooking people that might be out there that might suit your needs. Mr. Taylor said one of the things he tried to do was to give us some options. The main thing is to develop a recruitment plan. You've got to decide where we are going to advertise. Are you going to just advertise locally? How do you source and recruit this? How best are we going to screen these candidates and once we screen them and identify them, how are we going to interview them and then select them and make an offer? Mr. Taylor said there are a lot of executive management consulting firms out there where they will actually help recruit executives for local, city, county type managers. These come at a cost, but they do have a broad range of people who are looking for these types of positions. He said they will probably cost approximately $20,000 to do that. He said he listed some options for advertising in the handouts he gave them. Mr. Taylor said local and state newspapers, the Municipal Association of South Carolina website, the Municipal Association and the county Association offer a website at no cost to the town. There are also some online places like Indeed.com. Mr. Taylor said, "I've given you some proposals from the executive search firms but what I would like to propose is a very aggressive timetable for this. He said the timetable he's looking at if council approved we would post this notice on the International City and County Management (ICMA) site, which is another site that offer postings for free along with the Municipal Association site and the County Association. He said we could start that as early as next week. He said we would probably set a due date for mid to late May, like May 22nd where

we would get resumes and applications. Mr. Taylor said when he worked at the association they had several city managers on staff, and they were asked occasionally by different cities that were recruiting if we would review those applications. He said they don't recommend individuals, but they will go through those applications and narrow it down to the few that meet your qualifications and standards and we would tell you that these are the people that you should interview. Mr. Taylor said if you did that, (the county association will do this as well) but since I'm more familiar with the Municipal Association, I know that we could review those, have those reviewed with recommendations coming back to the council and then by mid to early June you could actually do the interviews. Once we get to the interview stage, however you choose to do that (whether it's the entire council, committee etc.), but let's just say it's going to be the council. You do the interviews, and you make the offer and hopefully you'll have somebody in here by late summer. He said I know this is a very aggressive time frame but I just wanted to lay this out for you so you can look at it and see if you thought that might work. Councilwoman Reed said, "I was looking at all of the organizations that does the recruitment. I like the way we did it before. We sent it to the Municipal Association and had them vet it and sent it back to us without the cost". Mr. Taylor said, "and they will do that again". Mayor Boyd said, "I agree with you. I think we would be best to do it that way and then if it comes out empty or a bunch of bad applications then we can then pursue a consulting company that we may have to pay". Mr. Bill said the next to the last line on the second page on *deadline to apply*, we list in here the position is open until filled. Mr. Bill Taylor said, "I want you to understand what you're trying to do is set the tone for this city moving forward. I would encourage you to look at some of the younger candidates out there. They are trained, there're dedicated, and willing to be a part of your community. Mr. Taylor asked if there is any direction from the mayor and council on this. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion that we accept the proposal for recruiting a new city manager that was submitted by Interim city Manager Bill Taylor. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion**.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW – SHEILA JONES, BUILDING & CODES OFFICIAL

Ms. Jones said in her postage line item, she increased it because right now the line item has $1,000 by they have spent close to $2,500 so that needs to increase to $3,100. Ms. Jones said if they take down everything on the demolition list you would need to put $106,000 in that line item. She said when you all decide on how much you're going to put in that line item, if it's less than $106,000, everything is not coming down. She said there are about eight residential properties and it's approximately $5,500 to get the houses taken down so a large chunk will come from the two commercial properties that are on there. One of the properties they have already done the asbestos testing so it would be the abatement of that, and then the actual demolition of that structure based on the test that we did for the one commercial property, and I guesstimate it how much it would be to do the asbestos testing on the second property. Mayor Boyd asked Ms. Jones if she would use the whole $50,000. Sheila said, "No we did not use the entire $50,000. We stopped when we got to $20,000 because there was talk about the old Exxon building and taking that down and then I was told not to do anything until a decision was made about that. No decision was made so that money is still sitting there". Mayor Boyd asked,

“Could that be taken down out of this budget year now and taken off of this”? Mayor Boyd said, “If you were saying there’s $30,000 in the budget now and this is what you’ve allocated for the next budget year so could we not take it off next budget year, go ahead and have it done this year, and this would drop from $106,000”? Sheila Jones said, “Sure. I don’t know what the bottom-line numbers are and where we are financially as a city. That is something we can look at and talk about in a budget work session”. Councilman Segars asked if we are getting reimbursed for the houses that we are demolishing. Sheila Jones said we are billing for that, and we have received several properties and paid it off. Council asked about several properties to be Councilwoman Reed asked Ms. Jones, what does the council need to do. Ms. Jones said this was just for information.

DISCUSSION OF VACANT BUILDING ORDINANCE - SHEILA JONES Mayor Boyd said the last time Ms. Jones brought this up, she asked everybody to decide so she would have a clear-cut view of what to say and what to do. Ms. Jones said I have been getting some variations in the last couple of days. Ms. Jones said Ms. McRavin requested some information, so the information was sent to all of the council. Ms. Jones said, “But in looking at the vacant property registration the biggest concern that people have had is the residential side. So, two different options have been thrown out there. Number one is to remove the residential portion of the vacant property registration. The other side is to keep the residential but separate it from the commercial. So, you’d have requirements for the residential side with its own set of fees and the commercial side, with its own set of fees and requirements. Part of that reason is the commercial side they need to get it filled, we need to get it rented, we need to get it renovated, we need to revitalize part of that Masterplan to revitalize our city. On the residential side, some of it is heir property and they are keeping it up. While it may not have utilities, the grass is being cut, it doesn’t appear to be vacant. She said Councilman Gardner had mentioned getting into it to inspect it for safety reasons and so I explained to him that if there’s no utilities …. Because Part of the vacant property registration that didn’t actually get into the ordinance but was talked about was if it has utilities and the grass is cut, then it’s not considered vacant even if it’s not occupied. I think that a commercial structure if it’s not occupied, it’s not occupied, it's vacant. Ms. Jones said that’s something for the council to decide. She said if you guys could seriously take a look at what kind of fees because the fees are a little steep. Mayor Boyd said, “We’ll, the fees need to be steep because these people are allowing these things to just sit here. Mayor Boyd said, we tore a house down and from the front it looked good and from the Internet it looked good, and I got ridiculed for tearing it down, but it had holes in it, and it was just wasting away. If it had electricity and power on it and water on it and everything else then you would stand a better chance of that house being maintained. But if the person is just cutting the front yard and not worrying about putting anything inside of that house then you’re going to have another house that’s continuing to decay. Ms. Jones said, something that Councilman Gardner said, is that one of the things that needed to be looked at as far as inspections goes is if you do have power on it that it could be a safety issue because if there’s exposed wires and such as that ….and so I told him but if you guys aren’t considering it …depending on how you want to define it, if it doesn’t have electricity on it, it doesn’t matter if it has exposed wires because there’s no juice going to it so it’s not a safety issue from that point. Ms. Jones said, “but to have an inspection in order to look at it from a structural standpoint, and whether or not it’s a safety

issue from a structural standpoint is certainly important". The discussion that was had said if it has power and if it has utilities and the grass is cut, then it's not considered vacant and the answer to that was, that's correct. It's not considered vacant. Ms. Jones said they need to come together as a council and look at the ordinance as it's written, look at the fees as they are and decide how much they want to charge. Mayor Boyd said this can be discussed in a work session. Ms. Jones said, "Mayor Boyd mentioned having it as a work session to come up with an idea, so I'm asking for you all to figure out what criteria would you all like for residential buildings? What criteria would you like for commercial buildings to be defined as vacant and also what fees would you like to go along with those criteria". The council continued discussion of the vacant properties. Ms. Jones said the reason why this ordinance has been put on hold as a whole is because every time I try to enforce it I had somebody come to my office and we shouldn't do it for this one, or this one is for that one or this one is for this one and that one is for this one and I can't do an ordinance that way. It either is or it isn't. We either are or we aren't. We are going to either enforce the ordinance we have on the books, or we're not going to enforce the ordinance that's on the book. But, if we have an ordinance and we are going to enforce it, we are going to enforce it across-the-board. That's why I'm coming to the council to say let's look at the ordinance. Let's get everyone on the same page. Let's figure out what criteria we're going to go by, let's get the fees into the ordinance. Let's get it all….how it's going to most benefit the jurisdiction and the citizens. Ms. Jones said, "Get that passed so when I enforce it you guys can't support what it is that I am enforcing". Councilwoman McRaven said that we as a city has to be aware that we are contributing to the vacancy because we own several buildings ourselves that have been vacant for years. Unless we are planning on charging ourselves we need to really look closely at this. Mayor Boyd said we'll come back at the workshop and hash this out.

APPROVAL OF BIDS FOR PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF THREE INSERTA-VALVES AT THE CORNER OF PEARL STREET & EDWARDS AVENUE - CHARLES SHUGART, UTILITY DIRECTOR Mr. Shugart said a repair is needed at the intersection of Pearl Street and Edwards Avenue. He said the old valve that is there is leaking, and they can't get it to stop. He said they asked several companies for bids on insertion valves. Those are the valves that are inserted into lines that are under pressure. Mr. Shugart said Jonathan Boatwright received three bids. Johnathan Boatwright said they received three bids from contractors with the lowest bid coming from Holliday Utility Services, LLC for $26,766.27. Jonathan said they can't repair those lines because they can't turn them off. He said it's a 6-inch line with a 4-inch line teed off of it and the valve is bad, so they have no way to turn the water off. He said it's too much water to try to fix live, so they need to get someone in to insert a valve in a live line to isolate the 6-inch line and the 4-inch line in order to remove the leaking valve. Johnathan said they are planning to do this at night. He said if he can get the contractor to agree to it they will start around 6 or 7 on a Friday night. The two other bids received were from Chlorinator Solutions for $31,395.11 and M and J Service Company for $29,881.51. Wells Mechanical Services LLC was not interested in providing a quote for the project. **Councilman John Milling made a motion to approve the contract with Holliday Utility Services LLC for the installation of the two 6-inch insertion valves and one 4-inch inset valve for the sum of**

$26,766.27. Councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Baccus, Reed, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTRACT TANK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM WITH SOUTHERN CORROSION, INC. - CHARLES SHUGART Mr. Shugart said, "You all may remember a few meetings ago that Mr. Daniel Wilson came and spoke with us about maintenance on our elevated water tanks and offered a bed when doing so. At that time, we decided not to vote on it because we couldn't get other bids. He said Mr. Boatwright had gone out and found other bids. He said this is an item that they desperately need. Mr. Shugart said this is a way to finance all the service that needs to be done to the tanks and there are certain timelines that DHEC requires for washouts and for painting and for resurfacing the interior of the tanks and certain inspections that have to be done annually and at other intervals. Mr. Shugart said they want to add this to the budget for next year's Capital item. Mr. Boatwright said they were short two bids for this project the last time. He said he received one other bid and got a "no bid" from another contractor. Jonathan said Southern corrosion was still the low bidder with a bid of $38,605 per year. Councilwoman McRavin asked how many tanks that is for. Johnathan said, "Two". Jonathan said we have a ground storage tank also but Southern Corrosion only service elevated tanks. Councilwoman McRavin said, 10 years from now if we have to get another tank would that be included in this price. Mr. Shugart said, "no it's not but again a new tank adding a brand-new tank to a service contract I assume is a lot less expensive than adding a forty-year-old water tank. Mr. Daniel Wilson said, we are assuming all of your risk for that tank short of catastrophic acts of God, but outside of that we are assuming all of your risks on a new water tank. Councilwoman McRavin asked, "So if we decide that we don't want the standard white paint and we want to use our water tank like some towns and have "Pearl of the Pee Dee" or whatever we decide we want is that an additional fee or is that something you all would do"? Mr. Wilson said, "it depends. If I'm changing colors, it's whether or not it will coat over it without having to do excessive work. If we paint the same colors it's included. Four colors that would cover those colors…. Sometimes you may have to put three or four coats of paint on one, yes that's additional. He said logo changes are additional and especially if they are in between coating cycles. It's significantly more expensive to get rid of the existing logo than to put on a new logo. **Councilman John Milling made a motion that we approve the contract with Southern Corrosion Engineered Tank Care for purposes of our two water tank towers on Pine Street and North Main Street as proposed on January 9, 2024, submittal for the sum of $38,605 with subsequent premiums to be increased by the CPI. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

REMINDERS

April 16, 2024, at 6:00 PM Work Session
Tuesday May 7, 2024, Regular Meeting of Darlington City Council 6:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to adjourn the city Council meeting at 8:23 PM. councilwoman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Milling, Baccus, Segars, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer