CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4, 2025 - AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT AT THE MEETING: Mayor Boyd, City Manager, Lenessa Hawkins. Councilpersons, Sheila Baccus, Elaine Reed, Bryant Gardner, Angela McRavin, John Milling, and John Segars. Also present was Ms. Anna DeWitt, City Attorney Kevin Etheridge, Also present: Sheila Bryant, Linwood Epps, Evelyn J. Coe, James Jett, Joyce Thomas, Jannie Lathan, Sean Odom, Hunter Thomas, Anna DeWitt, Brendon Johnson, Steve Abbott, Beth Shealy, Rosa Hudson, Ernestine Lyde, City Attorney Kevin Etheridge, Pastor Waibel.

Mr. Stephen Drew from the News & Press was also present at the meeting.

Invocation was led by Pastor Waibel.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of our January 7, 2025, council meeting. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Reed, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion. Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes of our January 14, 2025, City council workshop meeting. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

RECOGNITIONS, REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Black History Month Recognition Proclamations-Jim Simon and Cecil Thomas - Councilwoman Angela McRavin

Councilwoman McRavin read the proclamation for Mr. Jim Simon who was the first African American to establish an award-winning animation studio. Mr. Simon has produced, directed, designed an animation for Sesame Street, electric company, vegetable soup, The brown hornet character for Fat Albert and Soul Train among many others. Mr. Simon has earned many awards throughout his career - seven from the animation society of international film animators and twenty-five domestic and international awards to include The USA Film Festival award. Mr. Simon's contribution to the fine arts continues today with a rejuvenated vision in animation, and using oils, pastels, charcoal, acrylic and watercolors on canvas. Mr. Simon thanked the Mayor and Council for recognizing him for his accomplishments as part of Black History Month. Mr. Simon brought pieces of his artwork that were on display in the council chambers. He also pointed out pieces of his artwork and the significance behind each piece. Mr. Simon said he also designs Christmas cards, but he does not sell them, and he also does portraits, and he has authored a book on Kwanzaa. They are for his pleasure. Mr. Simon said he had a class just

before Christmas and he saw two children that were talented and that inspired him. He said his intention is to open art classes here in Darlington. Not only for children but for adults as well. Councilwoman McRavin read the proclamation for Cecil Thomas who worked as an Investigator for the City of Darlington. Mrs. Joyce Thomas, along with her brother Charles Wingate, was present to receive the proclamation. The City of Darlington recognizes notable citizens who were invaluable and instrumental in public safety, general welfare, and community peace. Mr. Cecil Thomas faithfully served his community as a police officer for the City of Darlington. On November 1, 1976, Cecil Thomas was promoted to investigations because of his impartiality and ability to get along with everyone. The chief of police was quoted as saying he is an exceptional person and works hard. Mayor James C. Boyd, and the governing body of the City of Darlington and the entire city Council do hereby recognize the accomplishments and selfless service of Mr. Cecil Thomas, the fourth day of February 2025, as part of Black history awareness month. Mrs. Joyce Thomas said her husband Cecil Thomas served 23 years for the City of Darlington. Councilwoman McRavin said it wasn't mentioned that Cecil Thomas was Captain and back then, the captain was second in line to the police chief, and he was captain for almost 13 years. She said we appreciate his service in knowing that he was the first African American to raise to those ranks.

PRESENTATION - COUNCIL ON AGING REQUEST FOR SUPPORT - MS. BETH SHEALY

Ms. Shealy said she is the Director of Council on aging and has been in that role for about four months. She said she is applying for a grant from the state of South Carolina. The Department on Aging is a senior center permanent improvement project program grant. The grant will be for up to $350,000 to renovate 123 Exchange Street. She said one of the requirements for the grant application is to ask for a letter of support from the City of Darlington, so that is why she's here this evening to ask for a letter of support. She told the council, if they would do that, she would appreciate it tremendously so she can continue to serve here in Darlington and retire here. Mayor Boyd asked if there was a particular date she needed the letter. Mrs. Shealy said, "If I could, I would like to have it by February 7th". Ms. Lenessa Hawkins said, "I will get with you tomorrow if you all approve it.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Ms. Hawkins said Mr. Dana Chrisley from the Recreation Department was chosen as Employee of the Year for 2024. She said we had nominees from the Building Department, Fire Department, Police Department as well as the Recreation Department. Ms. Hawkins said some staff members were able to come up with Mr. Dana. She said we would get something for Mr. Dana and show recognition to him.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL ***(5 minutes per person, Maximum of 30 total minutes) Neither personal attacks nor disruptive behavior are permitted**** **Please sign in to be heard at this time.)**

Mr. James Jett said he's appearing before the Council as a City of Darlington property owner. He said he wants to know why he's being harassed about the upkeep of his grass at his property on 307 Joe Louis. He said "I've noticed that it's not visible unless you ride down Joe

Louis. He said there's buildings on the Square that've been burnt for years, and nothing is done about it. There's another building with an awning on the front hanging off of it and it needs to be repaired. He said the Chamber of Commerce has a window that's out. Mr. Jett said, we have citizens that travel through town looking at everything and seeing everything and I wonder if the owners of these buildings are being harassed like I'm being harassed about the upkeep of my grass. Mayor Boyd said, "when all these comments come up, Ms. Hawkins is going to take note, and she will contact everybody back.

Mr. Linwood Epps said, "I heard that at your meeting that someone made a comment that we, the citizens of Darlington, were getting something that we didn't pay for. I'd like to know what it is. They said it was trash pickup recycles. Where do we get the money to pay employees, the Easter bunny? How about our money that we have to pay FICA tax? Where do we get that money from the tooth fairy? Mr. Epps said, "We pay for everything that we spend money on in the city. We pay somebody to write a grant, or we pay the employees to go out and do the work. He said, "I am not aware of anything we get for free. Maybe you all can tell me later. We sure don't get water and sewer free. If that person thinks that then we have a problem. And I'm told that it was a department head. Mr. Epps said, "Ma'am you're gonna have a problem and if you have an employee that thinks that I feel sorry for you."

Mr. Boyd Jackson said he lives at 204 Pine Street, and he noticed that there is "brown stuff" that comes out of the manhole. He said at least 2 to 3 times a week there's water that comes out of that manhole. And on the side where the water treatment plant is there's this rust looking stuff so I'm wondering how that affects me and my family or the citizens and how many water treatment plants do we have in the city that also does that. Mr. Jackson said, Happy Black History Month to everyone. Mr. Jackson said I hope everyone knows about diversity, equality, and inclusion, that it's not a bad thing, it's a good thing. Mr. Jackson said, "I would like for you to look into that for me."

ORDINANCES

Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-01 Amendment to the Floodplain Ordinance – Mrs. Sheila Bryant

Ms. Bryant said, "This is Second Reading, and we have already gone through First Reading. She said we must change our Floodplain Ordinance to reflect a few changes that's required by FEMA & DNR because our new floodplain maps will be in effect March 25th. This is the Second Reading so that we can go ahead and get it approved and get it to the State before the deadline. **Councilman Gardner made a motion to approve Second Reading on Ordinance 2025-01 Amendment to the Floodplain Ordinance. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus, and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion and Approval of the remaining balance of Splashpad Project - Sheila Bryant

Mrs. Bryant said, "In accordance with the PARD Grant that we're going to be using for the remainder of the splash pad, anything over $25,000 we had to do a request for bids. We got two

bids - one from Evans Pavement Services - for $53,000 and the other one was from Industrial Paving, Inc. for $46,193. She said both organizations have the proper credentials to complete the work, and both organizations have completed quality work within our jurisdiction. My recommendation is to award the work to industrial paving, Inc. for $46,193. Ms. Bryant said this will include the 4-foot concrete around the splash pad to be DHEC compliant as well as the sidewalks to get to shelter so that we are ADA compliant. It also includes the parking lot so that it can be stabilized so people can traverse the parking lot as well as concrete the handicap spots and the pads next to it so handicap accessible citizens are able to also enjoy the splash pad. Councilman Milling asked if the $46,000 is for the parking and asphalting all the things that need to be asphalted? Mrs. Bryant said, "We are not asphalting it because that would be exponentially more. And we already have flooding problems over on that side, so we are going to do crush and run in the parking lot area to stabilize it. It will also stay an impervious surface so it can be drained out. **Councilman Milling made a motion that we approve the bid of $46,193 presented by Industrial Paving. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Reed, Baccus, Segars and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.** Mayor Boyd said, "We have the total of $53,000 grant that goes along with this and we get $44,000 …. but the other $22,000 from last time, correct"? Mrs. Bryant said, "The $22,000 that was previously approved by council… All of that information will be given for the PARD Grant and then after it has been funded by the city and presented with all of the documentation that we need; they will reimburse us." Mayor Boyd said, "So that everybody knows Senator Chaplin gave us a $53,000 grant and out of that we'll have to match 20%.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Approval of the Letter of Support of The Council on Aging's Funding Request
Councilman Milling made a motion to approve a Letter of Support of the Council on Aging's Funding Request. Councilman Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Segars, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion. Mayor Boyd told Ms. Shealy that the City Manager would have the letter to her by the seventh.

Discussion of City's Warming/Cooling Shelter Needs for input and guidance - Councilwoman McRavin

Councilwoman McRavin said we previously discussed briefly about having a warming shelter during the snow. She said she has spoken with some nonprofits, and they are more than willing to staff that. She said she had spoken to the recreation department so the heat at A.W. Stanley Gym will be working again. She said a couple of things that would be needed. They are requesting that the facility have showers. She said she is trying to find out if the council is willing and if so, what temperature. Councilman Milling asked about the beds. I (Ms. Pridgen) told them I think they were donated and then they came back and got them. Mayor Boyd said, we just need to agree to make it a standard thing that when it reaches a certain temperature (whatever everybody agrees on) that we're gonna have that and there's no questions asked. Councilwoman McRavin said, "everybody will know … it can be properly advertised, and people will know that anytime these temperatures get this frigid that there is a place to go. She said there is a food bank that's willing to donate snacks and there's an organization that's willing to staff that we just need to get an agreement from the council that you are willing to do that and

utilize the gym. Councilman Gardner asked what organization has agreed to staff it? Mayor Boyd and councilwoman McRavin both said, Community connections. Councilwoman Baccus said, “I spoke with a couple of churches that said they would be willing to open up for a warming center.” Mayor Boyd said, somebody needs to be …like the lady did last time … so it needs to be where Ms. Hawkins knows, or we know that this one person is responsible for going to get the churches or going to get community connections.” Councilwoman McRavin said, all we have to do is make one phone call. Councilman Milling asked, “Do we have any sense from any other communities as to what the temperature is that they use”? There was discussion among the council as to what temperature they would like to agree upon. Councilman Gardner said, I think that’s something the city manager can research and look into what other communities do. He said I could guess at a temperature but I don’t know what’s appropriate so his suggestion would be to empower the city manager to do research and see what other communities are doing. He also wanted to add that we need to have a point of contact so if people want to volunteer and take the burden off of Community Connections so it’s just not that select group. Councilwoman McRavin said that’s information we can put on the website if you want to volunteer. Councilwoman Reed said, could this be utilized more than just for cold temperatures - emergency situations. Mayor Boyd said, “We can agree tonight to do it as an emergency situation and the city manager can make that call if it needs to be 30°, 32° 10° or if a bad storm is coming whoever she empowers to have that authority to go ahead and connect with the churches and community Connections. McRavin said there’s an issue with cooling. The warming center it’s going to be more at night, but cooling is a little different because it gets hot in the middle of the day and because that happens in the summer our gyms are in use by the recreation department and those facilities will not be available for cooling centers. She said we do have several properties that are vacant, and I wanted to see how you all feel about one of our properties on Exchange Street being utilized as a place for cooling. Councilman Gardner said we solved the cool issue at night and then if we want to discuss that at a work session later on, we can. Mayor Boyd said, we are just calling it an emergency situation right now then whoever she empowers to be the lead person they can still …if it becomes extreme hot temperatures …. Milling said, staffing may be more difficult in the middle of the day than it is at night. Councilwoman McRavin said, “They are prepared, they have volunteers. Mayor Boyd said when it gets to that point and they see it’s extreme, then they’ve got our permission and our blessing to go ahead and get whatever needs to be done.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT - CITY MANAGER HAWKINS

Ms. Hawkins said she was invited by Chief Cavanaugh to visit the Fire Department Training; She was invited to the DDRA meeting; She would like the Council to consider a 35% Fund Balance Policy and also a Purchasing Policy

REMINDERS

Tuesday, February 18, 2025, city Council Work Session 6:00 PM Tuesday, March 4, 2025, regular City Council meeting 6:00 PM
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EXECUTIVE SESSION

In accordance with SC code Ann. 30– 4–70 (a) (2) to receive legal advice protected by the attorney-client privilege concerning pending litigation (case No. 2024 –CP–16–00033) and discussions/negotiations incident to propose contractual arrangements with Applied Building Sciences, Inc.
In accordance with SC code, Ann. 30– 4–70 to (a) (2) receive legal advice regarding potential claims.
In accordance with SC code Ann. 30– 4–70 (a) (2) to discuss issues related to proposed sale or purchase of property.
In accordance with SC code, Ann. 30– 4–70(a) (2) to discuss employment of personnel.

The council may act upon closure of the executive session.

Councilman Milling made a motion to go into executive session at 6:46 PM, seconded by councilman Gardner. All approved the motion.

5-minute break

Councilwoman McRavin made a motion to end the executive session at 7:45 PM. Councilman Milling seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

<u>Adjournment</u>
Councilman John Milling made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus, Reed, Gardner and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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Clerk & Treasurer