DARLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

Present: Mayor Boyd, Councilwoman Angela McRavin, Councilwoman Elaine Reed, Councilwoman Shelia Baccus, Councilman John Milling, Councilman Bryant Gardner, Councilman John Segars, Interim City Manager, Gloria B. Pridgen, Lacie Weatherford and a room full of visitors.

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Curtis Boyd led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Regular City Council meeting on August 14, 2024. Motioned by Councilwoman McRavin, seconded by Councilman Gardner to approve. All in favor.

Approval of Executive Session on August 20, 2024. Motioned by Councilwoman Reed, seconded by Councilwoman Baccus to approve. All in favor.

Approval of Executive Session on August 21, 2024. Motioned by Councilwoman McRavin, seconded by Councilwoman Reed to approve. All in favor.

Approval of Special Council Meeting on August 26, 2024. Motioned by Councilwoman Reed, seconded by Councilwoman Baccus to approve. All in favor.

Approval of Executive Session on August 28, 2024. Motioned by Councilwoman McRavin, seconded by Councilman Gardner to approve. All in favor.

Citizens Wishing to Appear before Council. (5 min per person)

Shawn Odom appeared before council with a brief statement. As a young person who lives in the city, I found it very disheartening that I haven't heard any Council acting directly, coming out publicly and talk about their ideas or thoughts of what to do about the young people in the city. Or about the homeless. Or about the elderly. And if I've been told correctly, it's going to take 60,000 more dollars for us to finish the splash pad up here. And I don't feel like that should even be done. From what I've been told, we didn't go through the correct channels. The contractors didn't do their job, but I just feel like it shouldn't be done. Thank you.

Ms. Deborah Jackson appeared before the council with a brief statement. I'm a resident here in the City of Darlington. I have been here about 18-20 years. Tonight, I wanted to introduce my organization to nonprofit. We had our ribbon cutting on July 21st. I didn't get to see everybody's face there, so I came to show up tonight. So, with this program, with this organization, we will be serving our young people, heard the gentleman said something about the young people, we also cater to our elderly. Our entity is a nonprofit and we are in need of some help tonight. We're here to make Darlington flourish, just like they have in Florence, flourish organizations. We want to help Darlington flourish as well. My background includes social work. I have a masters in gerontology and I'm working with my doctoral degree in traumatology. We need some help; we need some money. We want to be an asset to the city. So, whatever your needs are, we want to implement services to cater to those situations. Collaboration Together is the name and we're working together to serve everybody. Doesn't matter what age, what color, what creed. We're here to help and we want you all to know that we're located on 107 Russell Street in the City of Darlington. Ms. Jackson passed out some brochures about her organization.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Proclamation

Mayor Curtis Boyd presented the Castilian Club with a proclamation.

Whereas, the Castalian Club was established in 1924 and has been an integral part of the community for 100 years; and

Whereas, the twelve charter members, Mrs. J Warren Coggeshall, Mrs. Archie Dargan, Mrs. Keith Lockwood, Miss Louise McMaster, Mrs. W.H. McFall, Mrs. J.E. Norment, Mrs. J Lide Nettles, Mrs. J Lester Perkins, Mrs. J.S. Ramsey, Mrs. Charles Sligh, Mrs. Henry West, and Mrs. I.T. Welling, laid the foundation for this esteemed literary club; And

Whereas, the Castalian Club was named after Castalia, a sacred spring on Mount Parnassus in Greece, symbolizing the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment; and

Whereas, the club's mission to study current books and topics for the enrichment and cultural growth of its members has been steadfast throughout its history; and

Whereas, the current members, Lynn Barnard, Linda Beckman, Janice Bethea, Patricia Boatwright, Ronda Duke Brown, Linda Brunson, Julie Culbertson, Betty Gail Gandy, Mary Gettys, Linda Howle, Sue Kilgo, Lou Kirchen, Dannie McLellan, Doris Mimms, Ann Elizabeth Owens, Betty Privette, Joanne Robertson, Mary C Scott, Kathy Shuler, Debbie Spinazolla, and Adelaide Stokes, with honorary members, Sally Psillos and Nila Hood, continue to embody the spirit of learning and camaraderie within the club;

Now, Therefore, I, James C. Boyd, on behalf of Darlington City Council, and the City of Darlington, do hereby proclaim September 03, 2024:

Castalian Club Day

We commend the Castalian Club for a century of promoting literature, culture and fellowship within our community and we call upon all citizens to join us in honoring and celebrating the Castalian Club's remarkable legacy and contributions to the City of Darlington.

6a. First Reading on Ordinance 2024-07 – Adoption of Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance

Ms. Merry morgan explained that Mr. Bill Eubanks was here to speak for the first reading and to do a brief presentation for that. He would also answer all your questions and any other questions during the public hearing that would be held after the presentation.

Mr. Eubanks addresses council. Good evening, hope you all are doing well. So, you remember in the spring you guys adopted the Renaissance master plan and it was determined that one of the most important things to start implementing that master plan was to look at major renovations to your zoning. The recommendation that came down from to y'all from the Planning Commission ranked that as the most important thing to do, and so I commend you all for letting us take on that effort. So tonight, we're going to do a first reading. We met with the Planning Commission a couple of weeks ago. Their recommendation to council. It was a unanimous recommendation that we repeal the existing zoning ordinance and replace it with this new zoning ordinance. So, I know a lot of you all have gotten into this deeply. I've met with a lot of you one-on-one, but I'm going to kind of just walk through the ordinance very quickly. So there were several things about the ordinance, your existing ordinance, that kind of restricted your growth and any kind of movement forward as a city. So we wanted to kind of correct those. We also used this as an opportunity to combine the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations so that someone is only coming to one place for all the information that they need. If they want to do a project, it was also one of our goals to make this a user-friendly document very easy to navigate, easy to find things. So, I've set this up so you can kind of flip through your document as we go. If you brought the whole ordinance with you or have a copy of the handout, if you'll flip over to page 2, that's where we list the primary zoning districts. So, we've made some changes

there to just try to kind of clarify things high density is now HD medium density as MD low density as LD. We sunseted in some districts that we didn't need any more that weren't really serving a useful purpose and would create a couple of new districts and combine the industrial into one just also for simplification. And then on Page 3, you'll see that we kind of defined what those different districts are and then that goes through the next few pages. So, on page 4, plan developments, your plan development regulations we're incredibly hard to follow before and we've kind of streamlined those. We've made it make more sense. You don't have any planned developments right now, but should that happen, we wanted it to follow more closely with what the enabling legislation what requires for PD's and also just make it easy for everyone to understand. Easy to enforce, easy to implement. Mr. Eubanks explains that this is a plan development, just so everyone understands you have different zoning districts that are kind of your standard zoning districts. You know the residential commercial and industrial districts. A plan development is a special project where it doesn't fit any of the standard zoning regulations. Council and Mr. Eubanks continue to go over many questions and concerns about the new proposed Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. Councilman Milling said they need to schedule a workshop in regard to the ordinance. To make changes and clarify the ordinance before the final reading. Motioned by Councilman Gardner to approve the First Reading on Ordinance 2024-07 – Adoption of Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance, seconded by Ms. Reed. All were in favor.

Mayor Curtis opened the public hearing on First Reading on Ordinance 2024-07 – Adoption of Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance.

Ms. Rose Pruitt chairman of the Historic Landmark Commission addressed council. Ms. Pruitt wanted to know what happens to the Darlington SC code of Ordinance. She stated we operate under 2 sets of ordinances here in the historic Landmark Commission, Chapter 50, which is part of the municipal code and then of course, this. This zoning ordinance, and there's some overlap, so this is not impacting anything with the municipal code ordinances is that correct? Does anybody know? Ms. Merry-Morgan said no, but you still will review this through the Historic Landmarks Commission, so that we can streamline those things, and there has been

in addition to where there will be no overlap between the two boards that has been corrected. In addition, not allowing city employees to serve on a board, those things are not allowed by state statue. Ms. Pruitt asked for some clarification about the tree ordinances. Those are for new developments, right? This is not something that's been applied to the entire existing residential area. Mr. Eubanks stated that yes it would apply to residential properties. Ms. Pruitt said so now it would be mandatory for homeowners who want to remove a tree to go through all this. Mr. Eubanks said yes if it's a tree that's 24 inches DBH and up. Ms. Pruitt said she was not sure that all the homeowners in Darlington are going to be fond of that part.

Ms. Janie Lathan, 141 Oak Street stated that her question is, is Mr. Eubanks, or anyone going to give the public a presentation like was given to Council at this public hearing so that we have an understanding. Unfortunately, we don't have copies of anything and it's just a matter of protocol. It might be worth considering having a public hearing before you take a vote, at least you would be able to get some of your constituents' comments. Is anybody going to present this to the public so that we have an understanding? Most public hearings are not just does anyone have any comments when nothing has been presented to us like it's been presented to council. It's very unorthodox and especially when these ordinances are going to affect our communities and our lives. I think that's something that will be done here tonight. You know even a handout to say these are the pros and cons and what's being changed. These are things that are going to affect us. I think I heard some of the zoning classifications are going to be changed. What are they? I mean, we have nothing. And then you asked us to comment with literally nothing. So, I would ask the Council to consider how we're handling our public hearings so that the public really has an opportunity to participate as we should in public hearings because it could be bad.

Council agrees that they should get out more information regarding these public hearings. Ms. Merry-Morgan suggested a public workshop be held for this new Ordinance to give the public more insight. Councilman Milling stated that council has not seen any proposed zoning maps yet and that they were not going to do anything until they have seen those and worked

through them to see how it all fits together. He also stated that there would be some opportunities for the public before the council acts. Councilwoman Baccus also agree that the public should be given some sort of hard copy on issues during a public hearing. Council to determine a date for the public hearing on the Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance and a workshop on later date.

Motioned to exit public hearing on First Reading on Ordinance 2024-07 – Adoption of Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance by Councilman Gardner, seconded by Councilwoman Reed. All in favor.

C. APPROVAL OF DEMOLITON CONTRACTOR – Ms. Shelia Jones

Ms. Shelia Jones stated she put out a notice to receive bids in the News & Press, and that she received 3 bids that came in at $23,400-$29,000. Mayor Boyd wanted to know if they were all bonded and Ms. Jones said that they were all bonded and have general liability insurance. Mayor Boyd wanted to know what happened to Bacote Street. Ms. Jones stated that she only chose three properties to bid on and not the whole list. She said Bacote Street is still on the list and whoever wins the bid will get the whole list and any added through June 30, 2025. Councilman Gardner expressed his concern for not doing houses in just one specific area. Ms. Jones assured Councilman Gardner that she does hop scotch around. Goldman Services had the lowest bid. Motioned by Councilwoman Reed to accept the lowest bid from Goldman Services for $23,400 seconded by Councilman Gardner. All were in favor.

D. PRICES FOR HYDRANT REPLACEMENT

Mr. Boatwright with the Water and Sewer Department stated there were several hydrants that needed repair. He stated that Fire Chief Pat Cavanaugh came to him with a total of thirteen and out of those they have fixed three. He said the rest are missing or need investigation to find out what size main they are on and what size leg they have. Mr. Boatwright passed out three quotes for 12 hydrants and the legs. Mr. Boatwright said that there are 10 that aren't operational. Four of those are missing and six

of them aren't working. Mr. Boatwright explained that its not just as simple as going n there and replacing a hydrant. He explained that these hydrants need to be in a six-inch main. He said the new laws require a six-inch main and a six-inch leg. Chief Pat Cavanaugh said that now they have 10 and still have over a hundred left to do. He said ordering them by the case of 12 was cheaper. Councilwoman Baccus ask Ms. Pridgen to have Mr. Shugart at the next Council meeting to answer all their questions. Councilwoman stressed her concern for these hydrants being fixed. She stated that they had talked about this a month ago and how many more months were going to talk about before someone's house burns down, and you get sued because there is no water. She said she thinks we should make this a priority and approve the purchase of hydrants. After much discussion about purchasing fire hydrants for the city and many alarming concerns. Motioned by Councilwoman Baccus to purchase the fire hydrants from Ferguson for $52,488, seconded by Councilman Milling. All I favor, except Councilman Gardner, he voted no.

E. PROPOSAL FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OF DANIEL STREET – LUCAS REED & HARRY COOK

Mr. Lucas stated that it was brought to his attention, this portion of Daniel Street is a city owned street. It has not been maintained in decades. The property has recently been purchased by Mr. Harry Cook on Daniels Street. One problem they are having is being able to access it for their future project. I'm coming to y'all to pretty much get permission to start accepting bids to clear Daniel Street and open it back up since it is a city street. Since it is a city street, it should be maintained, and it is heavily overgrown. Which means we currently do not have the capabilities or the equipment to open it back up so. He wanted to get councils approval to get bids so he can get the part Daniel Street that is owned by the city, operable and functioning.

Mr. Harry Cook was present at the council meeting and gave a presentation. He wants to be able to build a housing complex on Daniel Street. He would only be able to do this is the street is opened up. Council instructed Mr. Lucas to get bids to do this.

F. APPROVAL FOR PURCHASE OF WATER METERS WITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS – JONATHAN BOATWRIGHT

b. Approval to move forward with USDA grant for equipment purchases. The application requires signatures from all council members.

c. PO Approval for Ferguson (Sensus) RNI SAAS Fee - $9670.00

Councilwoman Baccus and Councilwoman McRavin expressed their concerns that Mr. Shugart needed to be there for clarification. Councilwoman McRavin stated that they are getting mixed information and constant need of money. Money, she wants to know in what direction were headed in and where it is going because we are spending ot money but not getting clarity because poor Jonath here doesn't have the information, and he is doing the best he can. He doesn't have the answers to the questions that we are asking. I guess you could say that's above his pay grade. She explained she needed the answers to the questions she is asking. Councilwoman Reed explains to Councilman Gardner that what they are telling him is that the director is never here. Councilman Gardner states that just for clarity we know why the director is never here. He stated that it is his understanding that we can't attack the director so we found the person that we can get along with more, lets me clear. Councilwoman states that she asks questions, that she ask everybody questions. She said its not her fault that he don't want answer and tell the truth. It's not her fault, y'all want to have everything one way, that's why we ask questions. Councilwoman McRavin explains that if you are a manager in a managing position you need to know how to handle manage and handle people. You won't get along with everyone and if your way of dealing with conflict is to avoid then maybe a management position isn't what you need. We need to be here; the department heads need to be here to come and answer questions. Jonathan unfortunately doesn't have all the information. We were totally told something different months ago when the director was here because he told us back then he was already buying parts and that that and the third but now were getting information contradictory to what he previously said. That's why I am questioning this. I just want to speak to him and him come and explain this because I'm just seeing money being requested and some things are different than what we were previously told. I just want some clarity but not just him, any manager needs to be able to manage and learn how to deal with various personalities and if you're

not able to do that then management might not be for you. We deserve and have the right as a governing body to hear from people that we put in these positions, that's all, and be able to get a clear explanation. Mayor Boyd stated that we also have the right not to attack our department's head also. Councilman Gardner stated that how he sees the situation. He states that he sees the situation as if a Council member, let's just use me, for example, I attack another Council member or a city employee, that's not a working relation. That has legal terms to it. So that's the difference that I see in this situation, not that he doesn't have the ability. Not that he doesn't have the ability to communicate with differing personalities. It's the ability to be able to sustain personal attacks constantly and just trying to keep them out of an environment so we don't find ourselves in another lawsuit. Mayor Boyd stated that it is harassment, and bullying is what it is. Ms. McRavin stated that couldn't he have just came to us? Councilwoman McRavin explained that Councilman Gardner knew why Mr. Shugart wasn't here and she wasn't privy to that information. Councilwoman Baccus stated he wasn't here because they in the good ole boy system and they want to hid and do dirt, that's what it's all about. (Brief argument between Councilmen Gardner and Councilwoman Baccus, they both are saying one another attack each other and Ms. Baccus Claims that why Councilman Gardner got sued and Councilman Gardner states he never got sued. Mayor Boyd tries to bring the meeting to a calm by loudly proclaiming COUNCIL, COUNCIL, COUNCIL. Councilwoman Baccus turns around and tells the Mayor Boyd I don't care about you yelling you tried to attack me too. Mayor Boyd says stop and Councilwoman Baccus says you stop, you aren't going to attack me either, that's why you got sued, y'all the ones who attack and try to that dirt behind closed doors, that why you threw away 700,000 thousand dollars on 151, got a splash pad you can't even use because you didn't follow the law, now DHEC wants another 60 70 thousand on the splash pad because you can't follow the law, you can't follow the law! Mayor Boyd tells Councilman Baccus that she is out of line and Councilwoman tells Mayor Boyd you're the one out of line, that why that splash pad can't get opened. Now let's tell the truth, let's tell the whole truth, y'all the one trying to attack me.)

Motioned by Councilman Milling to table Section F until next council meeting, seconded by Councilman McRavin. All in favor.

G. APPROVAL OF BEAUTIFICIAN BOARD STREET BANNERS – HUNTER THOMAS & ANNA DEWITT

Mr. Thomas stated that hopefully they have these two sheets of paper he had given out. He explained that each year the Beautification Board typically has one major project that they do.

Councilwoman Baccus says the saying the Ku Klux Klan. Ms. Anna Dewitt proclaims she just called me the Ku Klux Klan.

Ms. Baccus stated that she didn't call Ms. Dewitt anything.

Ms. Dewitt states that it is on her video.

Motioned by Mayor Boyd to adjourn meeting, seconded by Councilman Segars. Councilman Gardner voted yes. Councilman Milling, Councilwoman Baccus Councilwoman McRavin and Councilwoman Reed voted no. Mayor Boyd, Councilman Segars and Councilman Gardner exit the courtroom.

Councilman Gardner apologies for leaving but stated that he refused to stand there, listen to people and our citizens who are working so hard for our community to get attacked by walking to the microphone and be called the Ku Klux Klan. We must learn how to communicate even if we don't like each other.

Ms. Baccus asks, “are you serious? She's been attacking me for years and years on her page.

Mr. Thomas continues to explain that there are 16 banners they want to put up around the square area. There would be two different designs, one of them would be a holiday design and then another one would have some kind of design with that city logo. They do have this money in their budget. I think they have $7000. This would be roughly 3500 depending on what size the board chooses.

Motioned to approve the street banner purchase by Councilman Milling, seconded by Councilwoman McRavin. All in favor.

7. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Reed explained that any of these directors that need to show whether he presents or not, need to be here. We all have been attacked at one point and or another. I'm not saying I'm sanctioning anybody's behavior, but as a Council member trying to sit up here and make the policies that will improve this city that keep us running, one of the main things is our staff. We can't do it without them. So many of our residents have voiced their issues about the water department and the problems that they are incurring. Because of that we cannot ignore it y'all, so that's why we are asking that all our department heads to at least be here. Just be here.

Councilwoman McRavin said she is trying to make every effort to make certain that we are working together whether we like each other. I think that has to be something that we all commit to. There is a civility act that was signed and is posted on the door that was signed prior to my coming to council where the governing body said that they agreed to work together. It is important that whether we agree or disagree that we work and we stay to do the work until it is completed, regardless of personal feelings, we have to stay and do the course because we are not here for ourselves. It's not just about me, it's about the citizens of our city. The 6000 plus citizens that elected us to govern their city and to look out for their best interest and in order to do that we have to put aside personal issues and work towards making the city better by whatever means it takes, and sometimes that might require biting our tongue or whatever, but we need to make certain that we are working together and that we stay to do the work that's required. I am glad that we have Council comments again. I do want to see and hear going forward, a monthly report from all our committees, whether it's historic, beautification, planning, all of them need to come to us and let us know what's going on. Our department heads need to come and let us know what's going on because of our understanding of their situations, they may not be able to be present at every meeting, but when you are presenting items and requesting funds, we need to hear from you. We need

you here to answer those questions. If you're not on vacation then we need you to be able to answer questions, especially when you're requesting large funds. Just so we can get the necessary questions. Taxpayers, I think, expect us to work for them and to spend their funds wisely. We have the weight of the city on our shoulders and have to work with the budget that we have, and we can't just spend money frivolously, because basically, when a citizen isn't going to come and talk to the Water department director, when they have a problem or the next citizen, they're going to end up coming to each one of us, we're going to get the phone call about, well, why did you do this? I need to have an answer so I'm not here to incite anything. I was simply making a statement. If some feathers got ruffled, then I hate that happened but there is protocol that needs to be followed, and we need to be able to get the necessary questions addressed in the in the right manner. So, I'd like to see going forward, our committees and our department heads here at a Council meeting so that they can give us their report and keep us in the loop. Transparency is very important and as well as open communication. Thank you for your time.

8. Executive session in accordance with SC Code 30-4-70 (a) which allows us for a closed meeting for discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline or release of an employee, or the appointment of a person to a public body.

Motion to go into Executive Session Councilwoman Baccus, seconded by McRavin. Councilman Milling and Councilwoman Reed in favor.

Motioned to exit executive session Councilman Milling, seconded by Councilwoman Reed. Councilwoman Baccus and Councilwomen McRavin in favor.

Motioned to schedule executive session on September 10, 2024, to discuss contract negotiations by Councilman Milling. Seconded by Councilwoman Reed. Councilwoman Baccus and Councilwoman McRavin in favor.

Motioned to adjourn meeting by Councilman Milling, seconded by Councilwoman Reed. Councilwoman Baccus and Councilwoman McRavin in favor.

Mayor

Lacie Weatherford, Secretary