CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD IN THE OLD COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT
400 PEARL STREET, DARLINGTON, SC
TUESDAY JULY 1, 2025 - AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:
Mayor Curtis Boyd, City Manager Lenessa Hawkins, Councilpersons Baccus, McRavin, Gardner, and Reed. Councilman Segars arrived at 6:07 PM. Also present was Hunter Thomas, Steve Abbott, Gloria Hines, Anna DeWitt, Linwood Epps, Katrienne Ham, Ernestine Lyde, Sean Odom, Shameeka McKoy, and others.

Councilman Milling was not present at the meeting.

Mr. Stephan Drew from the News and Press was present at the meeting.

Mayor Boyd took a moment of silence to honor the two Darlington County officers that were shot this morning. One passed away while the other is in hospital being treated. Mayor Boyd asked everyone to remember the Mason family (the officer that died) and the Heatherly family (the one that was shot as well but survived) as well as the entire Sheriff department as they go through this trying time.

Invocation was by Mayor Curtis Boyd followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of our regular city council meeting on June 3, 2025. Councilman Angela McRavin seconded the motion. Councilpersons Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to approve the minutes from the City Council Workshop meeting on June 17, 2025. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.

Mayor Boyd made a motion to amend the agenda for tonight to add on Item #4 below "Recognition, Reports & Presentations", Mrs. Hyler to speak on behalf of the Forestry Commission. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Baccus and Reed voted in favor of the motion.

RECOGNITIONS, REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

USDA -Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program - Shameeka McKoy (MCL JASCO) (Ms. McKoy passed out copies of her presentation.

Ms. McCoy said she is a retired Military Air Force and now farmer. She said she partnered with MCL JASCO and NRCS to go around North Carolina and South Carolina ….one of the many programs that USDA offers ….Ms. McCoy said right now this program is funded so I will try to reach out to limited resource type towns. She said this Emergency Watershed Protection Program does not have to be declared by the State or by the Governor to be eligible, so in the event of a natural disaster that happened within 60 days, you guys would submit a formal request to the NRCS office and then they would send out an engineer to assess the project. If it's deemed eligible …it is a cost-share program so depending on how your budget looks and how you all allocate that, they could approve up to 90%, but typically it's 75% that they will cover. The city will cover 25% of the project and also be the sponsor. There is a timeline within 60 days from the natural disaster that you have to submit your request, but typically it could take up to one to three years for the project from start to finish. Ms. McKoy said it can't be anything military related or something that has already been fixed twice within the last two years. She said the brochure includes info about what MCL JASCO does. She said in regard to any citizens, this project or program is only eligible for private.

Ms. Anne Hyler – S.C. Forestry Commission

Ms. Hyler said they provide assistance, they provide grants …. Ms. Hyler said she is here to present Darlington with the "Tree City" award. She said it's been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation for achieving their 27th year as a "Tree City". She said to be eligible to be a "Tree City" you have to have a tree ordinance which goes through city council, you have to have an official tree board and spend more than $2.00 per capita on tree issues and celebrate Arbor Day. The city also received their first year as a "Tree Growth Award." This is where the cities do above and beyond "Tree City." They got an Urban Tree Canopy Assessment that won them all the points, and this is because they received a grant in 2023-2024 from the Forestry Commission to help with their urban trees. Ms. Hyler ended her presentation, and a photograph was taken of her, along with Ms. Hawkins, Mayor, and council, presenting the city with their awards.

CITIZENS WISHING TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL

Councilwoman McRavin wanted to thank everyone who participated in Freedom Fest over the past weekend. She thanked the city manager for giving them a budget that she could explain. She said I appreciate the time and effort that she put into explaining how she came up with numbers. We were the governing body that was here and can't explain what happened last year, but the fact that she could give me information about how she came up with the numbers … I do want to let you know that you are appreciated and I thank you for that. Ms. McRaven said our hearts are heavy and we mourn the loss of one of our very beloved … our very own officers here within the county. She thanked all of the first responders, city police, our county sheriff and fire department. She said they are selfless individuals who go out not knowing what they will encounter each day. Keep Officer Mason in your prayers and the other officer that was injured. Let's make certain we are praying daily for all of our first responders and law enforcement personnel.

Ms. Katrienne Ham, who lives at 133 Jefferson Street, said when we come to these meetings, we come hoping to get some results. I don't understand why things are still the same. I know it takes time, but how much time? I still haven't seen or heard from anyone since the last meeting. The streets are still the same and for the 4th of July our street is going to look terrible while Broad Street, Spring Street, Cashua Street, Orange Street, and downtown look great while we are living in the jungle. This is a land that time forgot. Can somebody enlighten me about this? Mayor Boyd said this is when you bring your comments; it's not for discussion, unfortunately. Councilwoman Reed said, "I sat with Miss Ham. And I always encourage her to please come and express her concerns. I explained what the city is doing and how we sent out the letters for those that are cleaning it up, but we're limited as to how far we can go onto private properties. And this is one of the main problems on Jefferson and Tallulah Streets. The private owners are not keeping up the part that the city is doing. I know that with the city every grown-up lot on Jefferson Street a letter was sent. We only had one to respond and that was the owner of the Harrison property. The gentleman who brought the property came and put a fence up as a result of the letters that we sent. We are trying very hard to get the private owners to respond.

Unfinished Business

Credit Card Processing for the Building and Codes Department

I spoke with Ms. Sarah Cole with Catalyst. Catalyst actually has the brand that we use for nCourt. We are already in agreement with them for our utility billing and for our court services for processing payments. So, after playing phone tag for about two to three weeks now, she let me know today that we can renew the utility billing. The processing agreement that you already have along with the nCourt for our court ticket fee is up for renewal anyway. So, we had an agreement with nCourt, but we don't have one with Catalyst. So, it is on their To Do List when those older ones expire to bring us under the Catalyst brand name. There would be no problem, no cost currently and the most it could cause the city is $350.00 if we had to purchase the cost of a card reader. The only other thing we would need to do is have a Wi-Fi connected device like a desktop that can be connected by USB port to the card reader. The training and setup are free, but for the most part it would be at no cost. But if not, it would be $350.00. The processing fee would be passed on like they do for the court system and for the utility billing and it could be up to 5%. Ms. Cole could not do our agreement because it wasn't available to her. Ms. Cole said her supervisor was not available to give her that information. She recommended that we would have a live call agent where the citizen or the business owner would dial the 1-800 number if they didn't want to go online or pay at the office. Ms. Hawkins said Ms. Cole will be waiting for us to tell her what we want; whether we want to be able to pay at the counter and also the telephone line as well as a link to pay where they can just click it and make their payment. The council discussed some of the features of the credit card system. Everyone seemed to be onboard, so Ms. Hawkins said, "I'll take that as it's okay to proceed."

Discuss Golf Cart Ordinance – Councilman Gardner

Councilman Gardner passed out a copy of the proposed "Golf Cart" ordinance to councilmembers. He said what we have is what the General Assembly used to regulate golf carts. They have sent it back to the municipalities so that the municipalities can regulate it. Mr. Gardner said he, Chief Davis and the City Attorney took the ordinance that North Myrtle Beach

uses and that's what we have here. There are no real changes from the state ordinance as it was in the past, besides three different things. One of them is that children under the age of 12 years of age now have to wear a seat belt. The second one is hours of operation. It will be changed from, I believe, from sunup until midnight. If the golf cart is equipped with lights, headlights, and all that, they'll be able to drive. Chief Davis was asking about the speed limit requirements and so we limit that down to 30 mph. Some of the new lithium battery golf carts can get rather fast, and so he's just worried about them tearing through the community. And the last change is the roads that they're allowed to drive on. If it's a 35 mile per hour road or less, then they'll be allowed to access it. Councilwoman McRavin asked if they're comfortable with age 12. Councilman Gardner said, "So the state law requires age 12 and under to wear the seatbelt, and so that's what North Myrtle Beach and everybody else has adopted. So that's just what we're wanting to adopt. Councilmembers discussed the age limit for golf cart drivers. Chief Davis said, "As for the seat belt, we can raise it to anybody under the age of 14 is required to wear a seat belt, but I think we may get into the same thing as Myrtle Beach when they required motorcycle riders to wear helmets in Myrtle Beach and then later they had to go back and give back all the fine money because the State says you cannot do that. I don't think we can go to the age of 14. We have to leave it at 12, but we can reach out to somebody for a stronger opinion than mine. Councilwoman McRavin asked, "Does the side by sides and work horses fall under "golf carts" or is that totally different"? Chief Davis said That's totally different because of the engine size and the speed that they will be able to get up to. Councilwoman McRavin had concerns about driving the golf cart after dark and up to midnight. Councilman Gardner said, "One of the worries that he had with that was a lot of golf carts before they actually got headlights, they put light bars. So. That's. His worry? He wants traditional headlights, taillights. and it's going to look like a car, just a mini version. He said, right now we have a ton of people in the community that drive around at night on golf carts in their neighborhoods, going from one house to the other. And they're technically breaking the law. So, this is just trying to bring it in and give people the ability to go from one neighbor to the other. Councilwoman Reed asked, So the only place they can drive the golf carts are on roads that are 35 mph? Chief Davis said there are just a few places that are above 35 mph. Councilman Gardner said, they'll stay off Highway 52. It's going to be only allowed on roads 35 mph. **Councilman Gardner said, "I'll make the motion for First Reading of the Golf Cart Ordinance on the revised Chapter 82. Councilman Segars seconded the motion. Councilpersons McRavin, Reed, Baccus and Mayor Boyd voted in favor of the motion.**

Boards & Commission Appointments (None)

City Manager's Report – City Manager Hawkins

Miss Hawkins said over the past few months there have been several exciting activities taking place in and around the City of Darlington. While there are many items and situations that need addressing, the Pearl is being noticed by people near and far. The Pearl would be featured on the National Cable Food Network, particularly featuring our beloved Public Square. Starbucks opened in April. Ms. Hawkins said today I received one positive message among many that may not be so positive. We received through our contact page from February 1st a myriad of things. A citizen complimented our Streets and Sanitation Secretary for being helpful, and pleasant to

talk to. It was a delight to receive positive feedback. Just a few weeks ago in May, we had one of our own go to the aid of a citizen in distress. We have great women and men serving the Pearl and I salute them all. If you see an employee doing an outstanding job, please let them know and let me know as we want to recognize them. We're going to be working on doing more positive recognition this fiscal year. As you know, our budget passed on Thursday evening and it will be posted to the website soon. Our 2024-2025 audit started last month. Ms. Hawkins updated the council on work that was done on Cashua Street & North Street. She said there were emergency sewer and water line repairs on Brittain Road and Kirven Street. One line repair on Brittain Road was repaired last week and one line on Brittain Road was repaired today. She said repairs at 305 Wells Street began this morning. Creekside Apartments repair has been delayed. Ms. Hawkins said what we have to remember is if there is a non-compliant issue that comes up, we have to stay compliant to go see about that non-compliant issue and get it to where South Carolina DES would be satisfied. So that may mean we leave it here and get it where it's not affecting lives or property loss and then we go take care of that issue and then come back to fix this. Ms. Hawkins said a few meetings ago we introduced the Brightly Software. The staff is looking forward to the myriad of benefits this software will offer so no one is forgotten. Hopefully once we get going. We all know and keep track of every complaint, every recognition. Every thank you and job and project. That we have going on in the city as it relates to water, sewer, streets, and sanitation. She said as a reminder, the staff is here to help. Please reach out by telephone and/or e-mail us using the contact prompt on the city's website. I just want to say good job to all the staff for 2025-2026. When you see us doing well, compliment us on that. You are holding our feet to the fire for the things that we might not do so well, but just remember we have great people working for the city and I just want you all to keep that in mind.

Councilwoman Baccus said, "And I would like to just say thank you for giving an accurate budget. Thank you so much for showing us and presenting to us the true facts of what's going on in the city of Darlington. Thank you for doing that so the citizens themselves can also know what's going on.

Mayor Boyd said, "We can postpone the executive session because they asked to wait until August or September to discuss it." Ms. Hawkins said Mr. Zeigler forgot us. It didn't make it to his office calendar, but he will be here on the 29th.

Executive Session

In accordance with SC Code 30 – 4–70, (b) (2) Discussion of negotiations incident to propose contractual arrangements and propose sale or purchase a property, the receipt of legal advice, where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim, or other matters covered by the attorney, client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency, and other adversaries situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim. ***(The council may act following the Executive Session)*** (To be on the agenda for August 29th)

Reminders / Announcements

Friday July 4, 2025 – Independence Day - City Offices Closed

Wednesday July 16, 2025 – MASC Annual Meeting – Hilton Head, SC
Tuesday July 29, 2025 – City Council Work Session at 6:00 PM
Tuesday, August 5, 2025 – National Night Out from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Adjournment

Upon motion of Councilman Gardner, seconded by Councilwoman Reed the meeting adjourned at 6:42 PM. All approved the motion to adjourn the meeting.

_____
Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Clerk & Treasurer