

Regular Council Meeting
July 15th, 2024
Council Chamber – Clemson City Hall

Call to Order: Mayor Robert Halfacre at 6:40 p.m.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance: Council Member Smith

Members present: Mayor Halfacre presiding, Council Members Boatwright, Brookover, Ducworth, Fulmer, Smith and Watt.

Absent: None

Notification emailed: July 11th, 2024 to the Greenville News, the Journal, the Independent Mail, the Post and Courier, the Pickens Sentinel, the Easley Progress; WSNW Radio, WYFF, WSPA, and Fox Carolina.

Oath of Office: Parking Enforcement Officer Lennie Roper

Public Session: Mayor Pro Tem Alesia Smith presiding – Ric Ware, 100 Holiday Avenue West, spoke about social media comments by City Council. Robert Lee, 113 Pressley Drive, spoke about the equity framework posted on the city's website. MyCivic Comment from Nanda Edgerton about the One Clemson Development.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from July 1st, 2024 were approved as presented.

Reports/Discussion

Recreation master plan presentation. – Parks and Recreation Director Jay Bennett gave a brief introduction. Austin with Zec Eight Insights presented the findings. Key findings increases in trail connections, indoor recreation space, family programming, and diverse funding sources. Other key findings include increasing staff levels, enhancing the “Town and Gown” relationship, and Lake Hartwell as a possibly underutilized resource. The last recreation master plan was completed in 2012. The benchmark data showed that we are significantly understaffed with the city having one half to one third of staffing levels depending on the metric used to peer communities. Over 500 people engaged with the project overall. Zec Eight Insights created a 5 year plan with a 3 tiered approach to the proposed capital improvement plan having different areas of Critical, Sustainable, and Visionary. Council Member Watt asked about what the group didn't get an answer for. Austin's answer was recommending the 12 mile park site getting a site specific master plan and maintenance plan. One of the findings was that personnel was not growing with park system growth. Council Member Brookover highlighted staffing levels at 1/3 what is needed and thanked staff for their hard work. Council Member Smith asked about demographics of the survey data.

Receive a Clemson Park Update from the Russell Design Office. – Paul Russell from Russell Design Office presented. He collaborated with Spohn Ranch from California about the skate park design. The planned size of the skate park footprint is 6000 sqft. Stormwater is a huge issue with the site that they have worked on mitigating. The next step is to get construction documents and RFP development. They will then be able to get a contractor for cost check on the project. The goal is to start in January 2025 with an 8 to 10 month construction timeline. Additional upgrades include adding ADA bathrooms, kitchen space for rentals, a shade structure, and a new splash pad near the existing building.

Discuss the city's current FOIA policy and provide staff and legal counsel guidance on any desired amendments. – City Administrator Andy Blondeau gave some background then asked Municipal Clerk Jeremiah Jackson to explain our current FOIA process. Currently we receive a completed FOIA request form by email, and it gets routed to either Police, Planning and Development, or the Municipal Clerk for everything else. Once received it gets emailed out to the various departments asking for the information along with a request for a quote estimate if it will take significant staff time. A response is given within the required ten days including a quote for the time. If the requestor wants to move forward, they must pay a 25% deposit. Once the deposit is received, the request must be fulfilled within 30 to 35 days depending on the age of the records. Once the search is complete, the requestor is notified with the balance due based on actual hours worked. After payment is received, the material is sent over. Much of the FOIA policy is based on state law, so City Council is limited in what changes that they can make. One of the changes that was suggested is to replace the \$15 per hour flat rate that was implemented in 2018 to what state law allows, which is the pay rate of the lowest qualified employee. Council Member Boatwright wanted to focus on the portion of the policy discussing redactions. Another issue discussed is the size of recent requests, one with over 2,000 emails and another with over 13,000 emails. City Administrator Andy Blondeau stated much of the recent FOIA requests have been regarding the HUB project and made a two part recommendation to council. The first was to release the redacted version of the FOIA request and post it on the website for everyone to view. The second recommendation was to also post a copy of a timeline document to help people understand the process. IT Director Lowell Arwood spoke about potential new FOIA software and the need for it from staff. Attorney Chris King commented on the attorney redaction piece of the FOIA request and referenced a recent court case involving a county attorney doing redaction. Council Member Ducworth recommended two agenda items: one discussing the new FOIA software and the other one discussing the FOIA policy.

Staff Reports: Big Al Couch from the Sanitation Department passed away Saturday. The preconstruction meeting of the new pickleball courts will be held at Nettles Park at 3pm on Wednesday. The MASC Annual Meeting is this week in Greenville.

Policy Action

Ordinances:

Consider 2nd reading to enact the Seventh Supplemental Bond Ordinance for the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds. – City Administrator Andy Blondeau spoke about the 3 projects these revenue bonds would fund. The first is the wastewater treatment plant of which our portion will be around \$18 million. The second project is \$3 million for 10,000 new advanced metering infrastructure water meters that allow usage to be read remotely. The third project is \$8.5 million for replacing pump stations 5 and 7 along with the interceptor line between them. The Moody bond rating we received was AA2 which is the third highest available rating. Council Member Ducworth made a motion, seconded by Council Member Boatwright, to

approve 2nd reading to enact the Seventh Supplemental Bond Ordinance for the issuance of water and sewer revenue bonds. Vote on this motion was unanimous.

Consider 2nd reading of an ordinance to amend City Ordinance Section 4-6 Cruelty to Animals. and Section 4-31 Outside shelter requirements for Dogs. – Police Chief Jorge Campos presented that everything was the same as the last reading. Council Member Smith made a request regarding section 4-6 to change “is in violation of this section” to “may be in violation of this section” to allow leeway for officer discretion. Chief Campos recommended making the change to “is in violation of this section and can be charged”. Robert Lee, 113 Pressley Drive, spoke about the focus being to protecting the animal being abused. Council Member Brookover made a motion, seconded by Council Member Watt to approve 2nd reading of an ordinance to amend City Ordinance Section 4-6 Cruelty to Animals. and Section 4-31 Outside shelter requirements for Dogs making the change in the language recommended by Chief Campos of “is in violation of this section and can be charged.” Vote on this motion was unanimous.

Other Policy Action:

Consider approving the construction contract with Harper Corporation for the construction of the Pendleton/Clemson Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion contingent upon the anticipated approval SC Rural Infrastructure Authority – Utilities Director Benjie McGill presented this item. Council Member Watt made a motion, seconded by Council Member Boatwright to approve the construction contract with Harper Corporation for the construction of the Pendleton/Clemson Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion contingent upon the anticipated approval of SC Rural Infrastructure Authority. Vote on this motion was unanimous.

Mayor-Council reports/comments/new business

Mayor Halfacre: Attended Rural Transit Day and announced that Catbus received a 4.7 million dollar LoNo grant for new CNG buses and supporting equipment.

Council Member Ducworth: Pop in the Park had good participation and Art Center Director Joan Rossini did a good job.

There being no further business, a motion was made, duly seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremiah Jackson, MBL

Approved

By: _____
G. Robert Halfacre, Mayor