

REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2005
AT 5:30 P.M. AT CITY HALL. MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Alton McCollum.
COUNCILPERSONS: Buddy Sandifer , Frances Johnson, David Walker, Alex Boykin,
Jr., Betty Mack, and Nancy Foster. CLERK: Bruce Watson. VISITORS: Chief George
Morris, Phyllis Overstreet, Terry Price, Gene Mills, James Smoak, Dr. Webb Belangia,
David Horton, Ron Shatuck, Sheri Dorey, Jeannie Bellamy, Beth Pregnall, Jack
Steadman, Tony Kinard, and Craig Walker.

Mayor McCollum called the meeting to order and Councilman Boykin gave the invocation.

Clerk Watson took the roll with everyone being present.

Councilperson Johnson made the motion to approve the agenda as presented.
Councilperson Mack made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Mayor McCollum began the Public Hearing to receive public comments on proposed Ordinance 05-07 to rezone properties of Irene and Tony Kinard from R-2 to OI.

Mr. David Horton told Council he was a little concerned with the rezoning taking place next to his property. He said he had talked to Mr. Kinard and said most people he had talked to would be in agreement with the rezoning if they knew exactly what the property would be used for. He said most people had no problem with doctor offices in the area but they did not approve of apartments which would be allowed in the OI District. Mr. Horton said he and others would probably have no problem with the rezoning if they knew at a later date how the property was going to be used.

Clerk Watson explained the rezoning process.

Mr. Horton informed Council that Jack Padgett said he would also approve of the rezoning if the property was used for offices but not for other uses.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that the area to be rezoned was in his district and said he would like to hear from Mr. Kinard.

Mr. Tony Kinard informed Council that a doctor had approached him about purchasing the property for a doctor's office some time ago. He said since then the hospital has made plans to build a new unit elsewhere. He said any doctor would be sure the property was properly zoned before purchasing the property. Mr. Kinard informed Council that at present he had no intentions of selling the property. He said he would not agree with apartments being built on the property but reminded everyone that other apartments had been built in the area with no opposition.

Clerk Watson read the letter from Mr. Jack Padgett who said he would be opposed to the rezoning at this time since there was no definite plans for the use of Mr. Kinard's property.

With no further comments, Mayor McCollum brought the hearing to a close.

Dr. Webb Belangia asked Council for their support in recommending to SCDOT Officials that Trinity United Methodist Church be allowed to close a portion of Cannon Street off beside the church during church services. He explained that it had become very dangerous for the children and elderly members of the church due to the traffic flow beside the church especially in the evening hours.

Mayor McCollum asked which areas they intended to block off.

Dr. Belangia said he felt the members wanted to either block off the whole section of Cannon Street or just a portion of the street just to stop the flow of traffic. He said they planned to use signs to say no thru traffic allowed.

Councilperson Foster said the section of Cannon Street in question began at Highway 78 and ended on Midway Street. She said she felt it would not affect any of the neighbors.

Councilman Sandifer said he understood the safety concerns and said he agreed with Councilperson Foster.

Councilperson Foster made the motion to support Trinity United Methodist Church's request to block off Cannon Street during church services. Councilperson Johnson made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Mr. Ron Shatuck asked if any other times for closing the street would be anticipated?

Dr. Belangia informed Council that maybe during Bible School and other special events.

Mr. Craig Walker informed Council that he was born and reared in Bamberg and that after 20 years of living in California and serving in the armed forces the he had returned to Bamberg six months ago. Mr. Walker said he was here tonight to get Council's blessing to issue him a business license for his property which consisted of seven lots on Walker Street. Mr. Walker said he was aware of the past problems but said he could do something about the future. He said he would do everything possible to deter any illegal activities on the property and said he was working with SCDHEC to create a safe environment for his patrons. He told Council he was humbly seeking their support to move forward with the project.

Mayor McCollum informed Mr. Walker that since the property in question was located in a residential district that the property would have to be rezoned since the nonconformity had died since no business license had been acquired for the property since 1999. He said Council would consider the rezoning request once Council received public comments on the rezoning request.

Clerk Watson explained the zoning guidelines as well as the rezoning process that pertained to the property.

Mr. Walker said he only intended to get Council's up and down on the issue before moving forward with the rezoning.

Councilperson Johnson told Mr. Walker that Council could not give him a feel on his request tonight since they needed to hear from the residents in the area during a public hearing.

Mr. Walker said it just didn't make sense but that he just needed a general consensus tonight.

Councilman Boykin said the zoning process would work and went on to say Council needed the neighbors input.

Councilperson Mack urged Mr. Walker to apply for the rezoning and said Council would move forward with the needs of the public.

Councilman Boykin said if there was no public opposition that he could not image any tremendous opposition from Council at this point.

Chief Morris voiced that there would be tremendous opposition all the way down the line from the Police Department. He said he couldn't put his stamp of approval at all on the rezoning. He said law enforcement would not support any efforts to rezone the property.

Mr. Walker informed Chief Morris over and over that he could not do anything about the past.

Mr. Gene Mills and Terry Price contactors for Bell South informed Council that Bell South was flexible with their easements. Mr. Mills informed Council that Bell South needed a ten foot easement for a fiber optic line through the Ness Park down Rhoad Park Street. He explained that the easement would allow many things except the placing of a building over the fiber optic line.

Mr. Price explained the fiber optic line was needed to create a loop of service for Bamberg to prevent any phone outages in the area. He said the line would be buried ten feet deep.

Councilman Sandifer suggested that Council have their attorney review the easement at this time.

Council agreed to have their attorney look at the easement in order to move the request forward.

Mayor McCollum recognized Chief Morris to discuss with Council the retirement of an officer.

Councilman Sandifer, Chairman of the Police Commission, informed Council that this was the first time he had heard anything concerning an officer retiring. He said he and the Police Commission needed more information on the matter, Councilman Sandifer said he and the Chief had a gap in communication.

Councilman Walker made the motion to table any discussion at this time until the Police Commission could discuss the matter before hand.

Chief Morris said there were no secrets and that he was only there to present information to them.

Mayor McCollum told Chief Morris he had rather the Police Commission hear him first and for them to come back to Council at that time with the information.

Chief Morris saying this was a democratic society told Council they should not be holding any secret meetings.

Mayor McCollum voiced that the Police Commission meetings were open to the public and that he could come back next time once the Police Commission had been informed.

Councilperson Foster made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2005 meeting as presented. Councilperson Johnson made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

The Budget and Finance Reports were received as presented.

Under Commission Reports.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that the Police Department had received a new car and that Officer Chapman had left the department. Councilman Sandifer said the department was advertising to fill his position.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that Miss Dowling had been asked to advance travel money to two officers for out of state training in which she told the officers that only the police Commissioner and Council could approve such a request. Councilman Sandifer said Council needed input into any out of state training since overtime would be paid to cover the training time.

Councilperson Johnson made the motion that no out of state training be approved unless it came before Council. Councilman Walker made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Councilman Sandifer told Council he hated to bring this report to Council tonight. He said he had only been the Police Commissioner since April but that he could not seem to please Chief Morris and the Department. He said Chief Morris was not pleased with bringing in the cars, keeping maintenance records on the cars and with the numbering of the cars. He quoted the Chief as saying “you need to park all the cars and we can walk to do our Jobs”.

Councilman Sandifer told Council we have a fine Department. He said some officers work with us and some do not. Councilman Sandifer told Council that Chief Morris’s decision to scrape two police cars should have been made by Council. He said employees don’t make such decisions.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that during the Police Commission meeting with the Chief last week concerning the use of the fuel cards that the Chief became upset with the Commission. Councilman Sandifer asked how do you bring anything before Council without upsetting the Chief? He said the problem was with the Chief’s attitude.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that parking assignments would be made to the officers next week. He informed Council that the Police Commission and Chief Morris had agreed on how the fuel cards would be used and the reprimands that would be given up to discharging someone if they were used improperly.

Councilman Sandifer told Council that we now have four unmarked cars and four different speed limits in Bamberg. He said Chief Morris was a good man, that he respected him greatly but that he hoped their line of communication would improve in the future.

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that the Bamberg City Economic Development Commission was recommending that a person be hired to promote economic development for the City. He said he was just planting a seed here tonight for thought.

Councilperson Foster asked if the Southern Carolina Alliance participated in the BCEDC meetings?

Councilman Sandifer informed Council that the SCA participated in the BCEDC meetings. He told Council that he was sorry for such a report tonight.

Officer Smoak asked Council why the officers were being asked to park on the north side of the building when response time was so critical?

Councilman Sandifer informed him that only off duty officers would be asked to use the parking at the north end of the building. He explained that on duty officers were free to park anywhere.

Officer Smoak asked about the progress of the new parking area between the Police Department and the Rescue Building?

Councilman Sandifer said the project died when Council decided not to use public money to develop parking on private property.

Councilperson Johnson thanked Councilman Sandifer for such a good report. She said as previous Police Commissioner she received no respect from the Chief and said he would not listen to her either. She urged Councilman Sandifer to stay on.

Councilperson Johnson informed Council that batteries had been stolen from two vehicles at the Sanitation Dept. shed.

Councilman Walker informed Council that everything was running well in the Fire Department.

Councilman Boykin informed Council that he was looking forward to working with Bell South on the easement for the Ness Park.

Councilperson Mack informed Council that workers compensation premiums would be increasing by 15% this year due to medical and legal costs within the industry. Clerk Watson explained the reasoning for the increase and said this would mean a \$3,000.00 increase in premiums this year.

Councilperson Foster informed Council that delinquent business license holders would now be turned over to the Chief for enforcement.

Mayor McCollum, informing Council that he had another important meeting to attend, passed the gavel to Mayor Protem Sandifer.

Under New Business.

Councilperson Mack made the motion to accept the recommendation from the Planning Commission in which they recommended that Ordinance 05-07 be adopted at his time. Councilperson Johnson made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Mayor Protem Sandifer asked for a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 05-07 to rezone properties of Irene and Tony Kinard from R-2 to OI. With no motion coming forth from Council, the adoption of Ordinance 05-07 died from lack of a first reading.

Councilperson Foster made the motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 05-08 to amend the Zoning Ordinance to read that the County Building Inspector would administer the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for the City of Bamberg. Councilperson Mack made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Councilperson Johnson made the motion to approve \$400.00 for the Wild Game Banquet this year. Councilperson Foster made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

Mayor Protem Sandifer appointed Councilperson Foster, Mack and Johnson to serve as the Christmas Diner Committee this year. He appointed Councilperson Johnson as Chairperson of the committee.

Councilman Boykin made the motion to approve Resolution 2005-5 to consent to the construction and improvements for the 301 Widening Project. Councilperson Johnson made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

During questions from the press and audience, Phyllis Overstreet asked if there was any policy concerning the disposing of City property.

Clerk Watson explained that City ordinances dictated how City property was to be disposed of but said the police cars had not been disposed of but that parts had been removed to place in other patrol cars.

Mr. Ron Shattuck, informing Council that he was from the Washington area, told Council he had moved to Bamberg because of the area. He urged Council to be considerate of the Historical District and especially the revitalization and renovation efforts for downtown. He said the downtown area was the focal point of town and that it needed to be pedestrian friendly. Mr. Shattuck said many other people would be looking to relocate in the Bamberg area in the future.

Mrs. Sheri Dorey said destroying downtown would stagnate the area and kill the soul of Bamberg. She asked if the agendas could be posted in the paper?

Clerk Watson explained that there was not enough time permitted to place the agendas in the paper but said future plans were to display them on a designated channel provided by the cable tv provider.

With no further business, Councilman Boykin made the motion to adjourn. Councilperson Johnson made the second. All approved. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

Clerk

Mayor