CITY OF LAURENS  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
126 EAST PUBLIC SQUARE  
JUNE 15, 2021  
5:30PM

PRESENT  
Mayor Nathan Senn, Councilor Johnnie Bolt, Councilor Cassandra Campbell, Councilor Sara Latimore, Councilor Martin Lowry, Councilor Marian Miller, Councilor Alicia Sullivan, City Attorney Tom Thompson, IT Director Colby Rice, City Administrator Gary Coleman, and City Clerk Leslie Mattison

PRESS IN ATTENDANCE  
Iva Cadmus – WLBG and Kelsey Woods - GoLaurens

THE MEDIA WAS NOTIFIED BY AN EMAILED AGENDA.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION  
Mayor Senn called the meeting to order with Councilor Miller giving the invocation and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & HEARING

1. PUBLIC HEARING – BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022 – No one was present to speak at this hearing.

2. Mayor Senn recognizing National Junior Honor Society from Gray Court Owings Middle School. The leaders of this group are Joni Skinner and Danielle Hobson – Izaylen Williams, the newly elected SGA president for Gray Court Owings Middle School, was present at this meeting.

3. Public Comment – Bryson Schultz was present and wished to address council. She stated that she is a business owner and a landowner within the city limits of Laurens. The property she owns is on Bryson Drive which is located off of Anderson Drive and is the road that leads to Laurens Elementary School. She is present because she has been attending city council meetings as well as the county planning commission meetings. She is concerned about the number and style of houses being built in Laurens City and Laurens County as it relates to the cluster builds like the one council is set to approve at tonight’s council meeting. She stated that she wants Laurens to grow and she is glad the housing market in Laurens has made a turn toward positive growth. Her grandfather was sheriff of Laurens County for 28 years so seeing Laurens grow and prosper makes her happy. However, we need to look out for Laurens and keep the aspects that make it
unique and different from the counties around it. Having growth is wonderful, but having too much is not.

PROCLAMATIONS & COMMENDATIONS

1. Proclamation designating June 2021 as Alzheimer’s & Brain Awareness Month – Mayor Senn began by stating in his law practice and personal relationships, he frequently deals with issues raised by Alzheimer’s and he sees the effects that it has on families and on the individuals with this disease. He feels that it is necessary to call attention to this terrible disease.

2. Juneteenth Observation – Mayor Senn began by stating that, to his knowledge, he is the first mayor in the history of the City of Laurens to do a proclamation concerning Juneteenth. He stated that Juneteenth recognizes the end of slavery and the passage of the 13th amendment. He feels that it is important to show that it is a priority of this city to find common ground and to unite behind the things that are appropriate to unite behind.

Councillor Sullivan thanked Mayor Senn for his remarks. She stated that Juneteenth is a holiday that should be recognized more so than just issuing a proclamation. In 1865, enslaved people were proclaimed free and there is a historical marker off of Silver Street that talks specifically about Juneteenth as it relates to the City of Laurens. She voiced some concerns about rezoning and receiving information that were later addressed by Mayor Senn.

REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS

1. Judicial – Judge Jackie Williams began by thanking mayor and council for allowing her to serve as the city’s first full-time judge. She is excited about the opportunity and the growth of our community. She stated that Municipal Court has made a few changes since her position is now full-time. There are new operating hours, new court hours, and Fridays are now assigned for preliminary hearings and jury trial conferences. Judge Williams explained that the purpose of a jury trial conference is to attempt to resolve cases before the trial begins, which reduces the number of cases that actually go before a jury. She thanked City Attorney Thompson and Clerk of Court, Valerie McDaniel, for their hard work in assisting her during the transition period. They are working diligently to ensure the Municipal Court functions as seamlessly as possible.

2. City Councilor Reports – Councillor Sullivan Request for a City Redistricting Committee and Request for a Neighborhood Grant – Councillor Sullivan began by stating that the redistricting process should be in the beginning stages. She has not received any information concerning any meetings or workshops about redistricting. Mayor Senn informed council that redistricting cannot take place until Census results become available. Normally, these results become available by April of the year following the Census, but that timing is less certain this year. Covid disruptions in 2020 led to data
collection lasting three months longer than usual, leading to delays in processing results. Results may not be available until September 2021.
As it relates to the request for a neighborhood grant, she has been working on a proposal for low income and dilapidated homes in the City of Laurens. She stated that we are in the middle of working on new development homes, but we also have a lot of homes that are in need of rehabilitation. She recently requested to have a location to coordinate resources for grants that are already in existence. She stated that she didn’t get a response. Her question is she would like to see council work on homes in the City of Laurens for low income personnel by coordinating the weatherization program, the 501 Grant from USDA, and also support from the City of Laurens where the homes lack the remaining finances. She explained to Mayor Senn and council that tonight she is just giving information concerning a summary of it and in July she will have a completion of the adopted proposal that she would like to review.

3. Mayor’s Report – The mayor began by recognizing the city’s new intern, Jacob Tillman. He informed everyone that Jacob is a junior at Presbyterian College and will be helping with the organization of city documents and information.
Mayor Senn was proud to announce that the Midtown Building (beside City Hall) has received the Ganes Jontz Rehabilitation Award. This is a statewide award that is given by the Main Street Organization and it recognizes excellence in creative rehabilitation and revitalization of historic property.
Also, he wanted to remind the public that there is an art competition going on. This is something he started a couple of years ago to encourage the young artists of Laurens to spend their summer doing a little artwork and they will hopefully submit pieces for this competition. The winner’s picture will hang in the mayor’s office.
He informed council that funds have been received from Prisma in the amount of $27,000 for the use of the Ridge as a vaccination center.
This past month, Mayor Senn hosted a group of upstate mayors in the City of Laurens. He is pleased to report that there are some jealous mayors in the upstate. It’s nice to see other people taking note of all of the great things happening here.
We continue to have discussions with others regarding multi-family housing. While single-family homes and new neighborhoods are important, it’s also important that we have multi-family housing for workforce housing. The struggle that we see across the nation today is, in part, you have people that have well-paying jobs, but they may not have enough for an initial down payment or they don’t have credit that would allow them to qualify for a loan. We don’t want them to be stuck in a situation where they live in substandard housing. We need to bring this apartment style housing to our workforce, students, recent college graduates, and a variety of people.
Planning is underway for the 20th annual Squealing on the Square. Last year would have been the 20th year, but it was cancelled due to Covid. As it is the 20th year, it is time for creative and fresh thinking and we hope to work together with Main Street to give this festival a new look.
There is a tremendous public celebration planned for Independence Day. Mark your calendars for July 3rd. There will be fireworks and some new special elements. A press
conference regarding the events of the evening will be held on June 22nd. This celebration will be fun for the whole family.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the June 15, 2021 Council Agenda
   A motion was made by Councilor Bolt and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve this agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of the May 18, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
   A motion was made by Councilor Bolt and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve these meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

1. City Administrator Gary Coleman presenting second reading Ordinance 5-21-01 Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 – City Administrator Coleman stated that the total operating budget for fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 is $7,652,100. The budget ordinance calls for a general fund budget of $7,002,100 and a hospitality budget of $650,000. This is an increase over last year’s budget of $178,800. The FY 2021-2022 budget includes a pay raise for city employees.
   A motion was made by Councilor Lowry and seconded by Councilor Miller to approve Ordinance 5-20-01. The motion was approved 5 to 1 with Councilor Sullivan voting no.

2. City Attorney Tom Thompson presenting second reading Ordinance 5-21-02 To Establish Regulations of the Control of Litter Within the City of Laurens, South Carolina; and all Other Matters Pertaining Thereto - City Attorney Thompson began by reminding council that this is the first time for any anti-littering ordinance to be presented to Laurens City councilors. This ordinance requires those who litter to be fined or sentenced to public service.
   A motion was made by Councilor Miller and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve Ordinance 5-20-02. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Building & Zoning Director Jeremy Hudson presenting project subdivision Laurens Station for approval – In the May council meeting, council received the plan for Laurens Station, which will be located on the corner of East Main Street and West Farley Avenue. The plan includes a maximum of 153 homes provided by Ryan Homes and it includes green space and sidewalks which will connect to those already in use by the city. After several concerns were expressed, Mayor Senn explained that the city hit its population max around 1980 at 10,000 citizens and since then there has been a 16 percent decline. This project is in line with the community and we want to have work force residents being able to afford a home of their own. There is a market for these houses and that the lot sizes are typical for this type of subdivision.
   A motion was made by Councilor Bolt and seconded by Councilor Lowry to approve the Laurens Station subdivision. The motion was approved unanimously.
4. Building & Zoning Director presenting Barrett Holmes to serve on the Planning Commission — Building & Zoning Director Hudson explained that Mr. Holmes owns several downtown buildings which he has renovated and is in the process of renovating. He will be an asset to the Planning Commission.
A motion was made by Councilor Bolt and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve Barrett Holmes serving on the Planning Commission. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS
1. City Attorney Tom Thompson presenting first reading Ordinance 6-21-02 Providing for the Annexation & Zoning of Certain Real Property — City Attorney Thompson began by stating that the owner of an 81.2 acre tract (Tax Assessor Map Number 354-00-00-002) has filed a petition with the city for annexation. Council will have a copy of the petition, a plat, and an aerial photo showing the location attached to the ordinance. The owner is asking that it be zoned R3. This property will be part of a subdivision that council will have to approve in the near future.
A motion was made by Councilor Lowry and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve Ordinance 6-21-02. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT
A motion was made by Councilor Miller and seconded by Councilor Lowry to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVED:

\[Signature\]
NATHAN SENN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

\[Signature\]
LESLIE MATTISON, CITY CLERK AND TREASURER