CITY OF LAURENS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
126 EAST PUBLIC SQUARE
JULY 20, 2021
5:30PM

PRESENT
Mayor Nathan Senn, 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

ABSENT
Councilor Johnnie Bolt

PRESS IN ATTENDANCE
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 Sullivan giving the invocation and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & HEARING
None

PROCLAMATIONS & COMMENDATIONS
None

REPORTS & COMMUNICATIONS
1. Administration – City Clerk Leslie Mattison began by stating the administration department is running smoothly, as always. She explained to council that redistricting can begin as soon as census results are available, which should be by September 30th. The redistricting process will need to be completed by the next election that will take place in March of 2023.
She continued by explaining the Business License Standardization Act. The act restructures the business license process, creating the same process across the state. She informed council that they will see an updated business license ordinance closer to the end of this year that will put the City of Laurens in compliance with this new law, effective January 1st.
City Clerk Mattison concluded by updating council on retirement rate increases. The increase was effective July 1, 2021 and only affected employers, not employees. The employer rate for the South Carolina Retirement System rate increased from 15.41% to 16.41% and the Police Officer Retirement System rate increased from 17.84% to 18.84%. Mayor Senn stated that one of the things we should be proud of in the City of Laurens is that we have managed our budget to accommodate continual rising costs (such as the retirement rate increase) without passing the expense on to our taxpayers.

2. City Council Reports – Councilor Sullivan explained that this is the continuation of her proposal from June’s council meeting. She is calling it the “Adopt A Home Campaign” and she is requesting dates to use the City Hall Community Room to coordinate grants. She is also asking for the city’s help in fixing up dilapidated homes and cutting dying trees for personnells that can’t afford it. Councilor Campbell began by stating that District Three, as well as the city in general, is excited to be bringing the Neighborhood Watch Program to the City of Laurens. There was a meeting on June 19th where Chief Chriissie Latimore and Lt. Shane Martin shared some good information on how to get this program started. Councilor Campbell explained that we want this program to bring our communities together and create an environment where we are taking care of one another. Nearly 30 people attended the meeting and Chick-Fil-A was gracious and provided a meal for everyone. Certain people have been identified as block captains and the next meeting will be in August. They are looking forward to getting to work.

Councilor Miller stated that she is thankful for the litter ordinance recently passed by council. There was a community clean up on Saturday where several councilors, Streets & Sanitation Director Kerwin Tribble, and members of the public attended. Councilor Miller stated that she can’t believe how bad the city’s litter problem is. Both trash and tires are a big problem. Citizens need to be more aware of the litter issue in our area. Mayor Senn stated that there is a city-wide clean up planned for September. Also, the city is working with the county to place more garbage dumpsters/receptacles in strategic locations throughout. This should aid and make it more accessible for citizens to properly dispose of waste and garbage. These receptacles will only stay in one place for two weeks to a month and will be cycled around to different locations. Hopefully, this will help the city address some of the problem areas.

3. Mayor’s Report – Mayor Senn reported that the July 3rd festival was a great success. There was an enormous crowd and he thanked everyone who helped with the event. If you look at the pictures, it is very evident that Laurens can draw a crowd. He was proud that Laurens took a leadership role in the upstate in staging this event.
Also, Mayor Senn and council head to Hilton Head this week to the Municipal Association’s Annual Meeting. They head down there knowing that the City of Laurens will receive several statewide awards for the work that has been done here recently. Laurens is growing by leaps and bounds in ways that concentrates on building our community. He thanked everyone for their help and support for making Laurens what it has recently become. It's a team effort.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of the July 20, 2021 Council Agenda
   A motion was made by Councilor Lowry and seconded by Councilor Miller to approve this agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of the June 15, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes
   A motion was made by Councilor Lowry and seconded by Councilor Miller to approve these meeting minutes with one correction pointed out by Councilor Campbell. The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

1. City Attorney Tom Thompson presenting second reading Ordinance 6-21-02 Providing for the Annexation & Zoning of Certain Real Property – City Attorney Thompson stated that this is an 81.2 acre tract (Tax Assessor Map Number 354-00-00-002) located between Valley View Road and Bryson Drive. The owner is asking that it be zoned R3. This property is set to be part of a subdivision that is up for approval in tonight’s meeting.
   A motion was made by Councilor Miller and seconded by Councilor Latimore to approve Ordinance 6-21-02. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. City Attorney Tom Thompson presenting first reading Ordinance 7-21-01 Providing for the Exchange of Real Property – City Attorney Thompson explained to council that this will be an even trade of property and that no money will change hands. The exchange will consist of the city-owned property that is located at the end of Exchange Drive with Jamie Dominick for his private property near the entrance of South Harper Street just off East Main Street. This land is currently occupied by Dominick Motors. Councilor Sullivan asked if Mr. Dominick is in agreement with this exchange. Mayor Senn explained that he is in agreement and that Mr. Dominick believes that it is good for Dominick Motors and good for the city. Mayor Senn stated that he will announce plans soon for what he hopes the property will be used for.
   A motion was made by Councilor Latimore and seconded by Councilor Lowry to approve Ordinance 7-21-01. The motion was approved unanimously.
2. **Building & Zoning Director Jeremy Hudson presenting project subdivision Gibson Grove for approval** – Director Hudson began by reading the Letter of Recommendation from the Planning Commission. Lexi Chickoree was present to answer any of council’s questions about the plan for the Gibson Grove development. There will be green spaces, a swimming pool, a pavilion, walkways, and sidewalks. She also explained that this development will take six to ten years to complete. The entrances will be well-landscaped and traffic studies will be conducted once school is back in. Mayor Senn explained to council that there are two developers. D.R. Horton will be the builder on the left side of the subdivision. They build approximately ten homes at a time and sell those before building anymore. Ryan Homes will be the builder on the right side of the subdivision. They build homes as they are bought. The mayor also stressed that no entrances into this subdivision will be located on Bryson Drive.

Councilor Latimore asked if the blue spots located around the subdivision on the map are pools. Ms. Chickoree explained that these will be constructed as storm water retention ponds.

Since the first approval motion came from the Planning Commission, council approved the motion unanimously.

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**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