

**CITY OF LAURENS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MUNICIPAL CENTER
250 WEST LAURENS STREET, LAURENS, SC 29360
JANUARY 28, 2025
5:30PM**

PRESENT

Mayor Nathan Senn, Councilor Johnnie Bolt, Councilor Cassandra Campbell, Councilor Sara Latimore, Councilor Martin Lowry, Councilor Marian Miller, IT Director Colby Rice, and City Clerk Leslie Mattison

ABSENT

City Administrator Eric Delgado and Councilor Alicia Sullivan

PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

Judith Brown – The Advertiser

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 HEARING

Marvin McCall and Rivers Stilwell were both present to address council. Mr. McCall was concerned about a 55-acre tract of land he owns on Mill Street. The new ordinance zones it as a Conservation District. Mr. Stilwell, attorney for Debbie Buckley, stressed Ms. Buckley's concerns about her property on Todd Avenue Extension.

MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Senn began by stating the MLK Weekend Celebration was a great success. The City of Laurens partnered with Sanders Alumni Association to host a parade, essay contest, and a luncheon.

Mayor Senn stated that he wants to take a moment to highlight the journey of updating the City's Land Use Ordinance. The process has been two years in the making, marked by thoughtful collaboration and shaped by the invaluable input from the community. The journey has centered on public engagement with workshops, town halls, surveys, and community sessions providing opportunities for residents to share their voices and priorities. This ordinance reflects the collective vision and effort of the people of Laurens. He announced that there will be two Town

Hall Meetings before the second reading for the community to have a chance to ask questions or voice concerns.

Mayor Senn also informed everyone of upcoming events.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the January 28, 2025 Regular Meeting Agenda and December 17, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes - A motion was made by Councilor Lowry and seconded by Councilor Campbell to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. ORDINANCE 01-25-01: AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL CHAPTER 44, REPLACE IT WITH ORDINANCE 01-25-01, AND ADOPT THE REVISED OFFICIAL CITY ZONING MAP DATED JANUARY 10, 2025

– Mayor Senn stated that this has been unanimously passed by the Planning Commission. He stated that the input the city received through the comprehensive plan process, plus the main issues presented during the election cycle, was people asking, “What will the future growth of Laurens look like?” City residents voiced concerns about the possibility of fast, unplanned growth that appeared to be on the horizon as developers began buying property. Ordinance 01-25-01 is a response to those concerns.

The current land use ordinance for the city was adopted in 1995. It allows for fast growth that gives a great deal of freedom to developers who may not have Laurens’ interest at heart. City council has agreed that a new land use plan is necessary to prevent traffic, sprawl, and poorly built housing which often occurs from unplanned development.

The new ordinance encourages neighborhood style zoning which allows for residential and commercial retail businesses within the same area. Mayor Senn explained that this is how many neighborhoods in Laurens originally developed. The new ordinance also calls for “infilling” which encourages new development where the utility infrastructure is already in place. Infilling also encourages renovation of existing homes rather than tearing down and building new ones on site. It also includes “Community Overlay” districts to help encourage new builds that will fit with the existing styles of the buildings already in those areas.

Councilor Lowry stated that this is just the first reading and there will be a second reading.

Anyone who is concerned about not having their voice heard at the previous town halls, will have an opportunity to voice it at the upcoming town halls and at the second reading. Mayor Senn stated that while he hopes that the work product contained within the ordinance is something that everyone is proud of and guides the city in the right direction, it is not permanent, it is not chiseled in stone, it is something that can be modified if need be if it’s in the city’s best interest.

Councilor Miller stated that council wants the people to be happy and wants what is best for the future of the City of Laurens. Councilor Lowry and Councilor Miller encouraged the community to attend the upcoming town halls for clarity and understanding of the new land use ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilor Latimore and seconded by Councilor Bolt to approve Ordinance 01-25-01. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. ORDINANCE 01-25-02: AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR TO NEGOTIATE AND ENTER INTO AN OPTION AND GROUND LEASE AGREEMENT WITH DIAMOND TOWERS V LLC FOR A CELL TOWER

– Mayor Senn stated that this is a proposed cell tower that would be located on city property at the West Main Street Fire Department. Because it is a city owned property, any lease of that property requires passage of an ordinance by city council. He explained to council that City Administrator Delgado would normally be the one to discuss this in more detail, but he is out with the flu. Councilor Lowry stated that he doesn't mind taking it through first reading, but more information and answers are needed so this will not be an eyesore. Mayor Senn stated that he agrees and that the new land use ordinance, if passed on second reading, has some guidance about that.

A motion was made by Councilor Miller and seconded by Councilor Campbell to approve Ordinance 01-25-02. The motion was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Bolt and seconded by Councilor Latimore to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

APPROVED:



NATHAN SENN, MAYOR

ATTEST:



LESLIE MATTISON, CITY CLERK