

**MINUTES**

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of Walterboro City Council was held at City Hall on Tuesday, March 6, 2007 at 6:15 P.M., with Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr. presiding.

**PRESENT WERE:** Mayor Charles H. Sweat, Jr., Council Members: Charles Lucas, Bill Young, Johnnie Thompson, Ted Parker, Franklin Smalls and Mary Anne Cannady. City Manager Tuck McConnell, City Clerk Betty Hudson and City Attorney George Cone were also present.

There being a quorum present, the Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Council Member Smalls for the invocation and Council Member Thompson to lead the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

The Mayor then opened a public hearing to receive public comments on three items:

- 1) CDBG Needs and Priorities Hearing - a public hearing to solicit public input on community needs and priorities for housing, public facilities and economic development - by Michelle Knight, Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG).
- 2) Ordinance # 2007-02, to Amend Three Sections of the Zoning Ordinance relating to the placement of off-premise signs.
- 3) Ordinance # 2007-03, to Grant a Franchise Agreement between the City of Walterboro and WiCarolina Communications, LLC.

The Mayor then introduced Ms. Michelle Knight of the Lowcountry Council of Governments to conduct the CDBG Needs Assessment Hearing.

Ms. Knight stated that annually LCOG conducts a need's assessment public hearing to identify the needs and priorities for the City for the coming year, to be able to apply for Community Development Block Grant funds. As usual, this hearing was advertised in a local newspaper, with at least a seven-day notice prior to the hearing. A copy of the sign-in sheet for this hearing is attached as part of these minutes.

Ms. Knight stated that this year, the state has \$23.5 million set aside for the Community Development Block Grant Program to be utilized to meet particular economic opportunities and community needs in localities to benefit low-to-moderate income persons. The money is separated into 3 subsections:

- 1) Community Development Program - \$16 million
- 2) Business Development Program - \$6.1 million
- 3) Planning Program - \$500,000

The remaining funds about \$800,000 go toward state administration and technical assistance for the programs.

Ms. Knight explained that any project that the City submits would have to meet the following criteria.

- a) Benefit a majority of low-to-moderate income persons.
- b) Eliminate a slum or blight condition in a community.
- c) Meet some other urgent needs as defined by HUD. Situations in this category are natural disasters such as a hurricane, where there is an immediate need.

Also, as part of the requirements for the CDBG program, the City is required to make efforts to undertake activities that promote fair housing. As such, as part of the hearing, Ms. Knight reminded everyone that "we all have a right to be treated fairly in the sale and rental of housing and residential real estate transactions and in the provisions of brokerage service, regardless of our race, color, religion, sex, familiar status or national origin. We get

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those rights through Title 8 of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, otherwise known as the Fair Housing Act.”

Ms. Knight told the audience present at the meeting that if you feel you have been treated unfairly or have been a victim of discriminatory housing practices, there are avenues to address the matter. If you would contact someone at the Lowcountry Council of Governments, phone number 843-726-5536, we can discuss that matter with you.

**1) Community Development Program - \$16 million set aside**

The Community Development Program has a fall and spring round. There are three set asides for funds within this category:

- a) Community Infrastructure (spring round) - \$7 million available
- b) Hometown Investment (fall round) - \$3 million available
- c) Community Enrichment (fall round) - \$6 million available

Ms. Knight stated that all the programs have match requirements. The Community Infrastructure and the Community Enrichment Program have a 10% match requirement or a waiver of fees or a combination that totals 10% of the grant request. The Hometown Investment Program has a 5% match requirement. Ms. Knight stated that the City must show a commitment of the match at the time the application goes in.

In terms of general requirements for the CDBG Program, you are basically required to produce outcomes that improve the citizens' quality of life and create a competitive environment for businesses to address essential community development needs, particularly for LMI persons.

**a) Community Infrastructure**

In the Community Infrastructure projects, the City would have to address water, sewer drainage or road needs in an LMI community and create sustainable and healthy communities by alleviating documented threats due to access to some of those areas. In the Community Infrastructure Program, the City can apply for up to \$1,000,000 for a project.

At this point, Ms. Knight noted that downtown streetscapes have now been added to Community Infrastructure, so if the City wants to pursue a streetscape project, this will have to be done in the spring round with the infrastructure projects.

**b) Hometown Improvement**

Hometown Investment is what used to be the housing program. At this point, we can still use the money to support development and safety in affordable housing, either by housing rehabilitation, or new construction of affordable housing. Ms. Knight pointed out that the new spin on this program this year, is that you would have to basically work in areas where there is in-fill work within an in-town neighborhood that's near a business center. So, scattered site projects are not allowed any more. Basically, you would focus on development activities of vacant land or redevelopment of blighted areas within the City that are appropriate for revitalization. With this program, you can apply for up to \$500,000 for a project.

**c) Community Enrichment**

The Community Enrichment Program is a new program set aside. Basically, this program is designed to provide streets and water infrastructures to support education and resource development programs. These projects should be tied to workforce development centers and affiliated with technical colleges or WIA programs basically in counties where there are no technical colleges currently or where the satellite office is or satellite facilities of the tech college are inadequate to support the need. The focus of those projects and facilities would be to improve workforce skills and not necessarily to offer a degree to

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people who would utilize the facilities. They can be used to develop non-credit and credit courses in career preparation areas, in addition to adult literacy and GED programs and skills training.

**2) Business Development Program - \$6.1 million set aside**

This program has no application deadline. The City can apply for up to \$1,000,000, but it's based on a 10,000 per job requirement. So, in order to get \$1,000,000, you have to have 100 jobs at least. There is a 10% grant match requirement. It's basically the same as in the past, where you're providing public infrastructures to a business that is coming in and either expanding and providing significant investment and creating jobs. This is for an existing business that is expanding or a new business that is coming in.

**3) Planning Program**

This program is basically regional planning grant money that is given in \$50,000 increments to each of the ten Councils of Government, to help communities to be able to develop projects for the other rounds.

Ms. Knight then gave the following statistics for the City of Walterboro per the 2000 census data:

City Population - 5,153  
Low-to-Moderate Income - 2,031 (which is approx. 42%)  
Total Households - 2,084, of which 1,322 is owner occupied and 762 are women.  
Median Housing Values - \$74,500  
Median Rent - \$448.00 per month

Ms. Knight reminded Council of the identified priority needs that were set for the City last year, which were:

1. Infrastructure.
2. Community facilities.
3. Economic Development.
4. Downtown Revitalization.
5. Housing.

At this point, Ms. Knight opened the floor to answer any questions or receive comments from the public.

Ms. Knight stated that there were changes to the program. Last year, we had a catchall category, which we could put in things that would fit the LMI criteria that would not fit in any other program or set aside. The round dates for Infrastructure projects are:

	<b><u>Request Deadline</u></b>	<b><u>Application Deadline</u></b>
Spring Round	March 16 <sup>th</sup>	April 16, 2007
Fall Round	August 24 <sup>th</sup>	September 24, 2007

Mayor Sweat then asked Council to identify any priority needs.

City Manager Tuck McConnell reported that the City has a water looping project around the Lincoln Apartment area and the Springwood Drive area that would help the water supply and fire flow in that area considerably. This is our top priority. Utilities Director Wayne Crosby added that staff has been working on this project and has cost estimates.

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Council Member Bill Young asked if the other water looping project around the Hiers Road area would be an eligible project. City Manager McConnell answered that it would not be eligible. He stated that staff looked at all the prospects and believes this is the only one that would qualify for this program. Ms. Knight added in regard to the Hiers Road project, if it's close to the interstate, if you have a prospect in, and it was a water and sewer user, we could probably do that as an Economic Development project or look at it as one.

Ms. Knight then asked if there were any comments concerning streetscape projects. Mayor Sweat answered that the City is looking at a looping project and a streetscape project in the next year's budget.

Council then agreed by consensus to keep the same identified priority community needs as last year, being:

1. Infrastructure.
2. Community facilities.
3. Economic Development.
4. Downtown Revitalization.
5. Housing.

Next, the Mayor asked for any comments on proposed Ordinance # 2007-02, An Ordinance to Amend Three Sections of the Zoning Ordinance relating to the Placement of Off-Premise Signs, and for comments on Ordinance # 2007-03, An Ordinance to grant a Franchise Agreement Between the City of Walterboro and WiCarolina Communications, LLC. No comments were received.

**The public hearing was then closed and the regular meeting began.**

There were no Minutes before Council for approval.

A proclamation designating March 2007 as American Red Cross Month and March 23<sup>rd</sup> as Hometown Heroes Day was adopted on the motion of Council Member Thompson, seconded by Council Member Parker and passed unanimously.

Under Old Business, Ordinance # 2007-02, An Ordinance to Amend Three Sections of the Zoning Ordinance relating to the placement of off-premise signs, was adopted on Second and Final Reading upon motion of Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Cannady and passed unanimously.

At this point, Mayor Sweat introduced an add-on agenda item - Second and Final Reading of Ordinance # 2007-03, An Ordinance to Grant a Franchise Agreement Between the City of Walterboro and WiCarolina Communications, LLC. He noted that a public hearing on this ordinance was just completed and a copy of the franchise document was distributed to Council.

A motion was made by Council Member Cannady giving Second Reading and Adoption to Ordinance # 2007-03 with the changes as submitted in the document made by the City Manager. Council Member Parker seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Next, Mr. Thomas Angell, Chairman of the Municipal Planning Commission, appeared before Council. Mr. Angell told Council that at the January meeting, the Planning Commission set out an ambitious set of goals. Some are mandatory and some are want to do items. We are asking Council for guidance in achieving those goals, which are:

- 1) Set aside funding to update the Comprehensive Plan and the Walterboro Zoning Map. The Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1997 and was to

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be looked at again in 5 years, but must be revised every 10 years. So, this fiscal year, we need to redo the Comprehensive Plan for the City. The Zoning Map was recently redone, but it needs to be updated. The chief reason is that the world is going with GIS and our county is moving in that direction. We want any revisions to the Zoning Map to be up with the latest technology. We also see a huge advantage to being able to underlay the property lines with the map.

- 2) We also want to make ongoing corrections to the Zoning Ordinance. As we have tried to use that document, there are some mistakes, things have come up. You just made the fence changes. The Planning Commission is willing to work the kinks out of the ordinance, and it's something that needs to be done.
- 3) We would like to make the effort as the City Planning Commission to coordinate with the County in some kind of way. We understand that Phillip Slater is needing to update the County's plan this year, as well, for the 10 year deadline. We are in receipt of a letter from Peden McLeod to the County expressing the interest of the Economic Development Commission in trying to coordinate with the County. If both plans are being updated this year, we would like to try and interface with the County, in particular as it relates with the interface between the two groups. Mr. Angell stated that the Planning Commission wants Council's guidance and support in expressing our continued interest in trying to work with the County.

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In summary, Mr. Angell stated that he did not have any estimates on updating the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan, but we know there will be a cost. Years ago, there was a separate committee formed to work on the first Comprehensive Plan and it was opened to public hearing. He said, I am not sure that the Planning Commission is willing to take on that task. We would like help with all these tasks. Before, Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) helped with the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Map. One thing we really need to do is get the GIS data from the county which they have available. We need that information as the basis to update the Zoning Map.

On a question by Council Member Young, Mr. Angell explained that the GIS is basically aerial and property data and other tax map data, all digitally available. There is a huge advantage in updating the Zoning Map, for instance, being able to show the property lines underneath. Also, you can click on a certain parcel and get the tax map number and other data that goes with it.

Mr. Angel informed Council that this is a pretty big effort, but it would pay off. In summary, he asked for Council's support and that funds be set aside in the City's budget to fund these efforts by the Planning Commission.

Mayor Sweat then thanked Mr. Angell for bringing this information to Council.

Under New Business, Mr. Mike Benton, Executive Director of the Nails In Hand Board, on behalf of the World Changers Organization briefed Council on the purpose and efforts of the organization and provided Council with a packet of informative materials. He told Council that a group of volunteers are available to come to Walterboro-Colleton County to help our most needy residents with basic home repairs. These volunteers help upgrade housing conditions where the basic quality of life may be in the form of safety and health. They come in, pay their own way, and we select some projects, like handicap ramps, repairing roofs, porches, etc. to upgrade their home. There are a number of persons in the community who are veterans of the World Changers Organization. He told Council that in 2008, his organization could bring in about 250 or 300 volunteers to work for one week on homes in the Walterboro-Colleton County area. What is needed is funds to pay for the materials needed for this project. He told Council that his organization has a budget set of \$40,000, which will cover about 20 projects. He noted that they are asking both the County and the City to contribute. He then asked the City of Walterboro to support the project by providing \$5,000 in funds for the purchase of materials to be used specifically for home repairs undertaken in the 2008 World Changer project. He explained that numerous support had already been received from other organizations and individuals in the community, including a number of churches to provide meals. The sponsoring organization, Nails in Hand, has a special account set up at the bank, where the funds received for this project "World Changers 2008", would be kept just for expenditures for the projects.

Councilman Thompson asked what is the criteria for a home to qualify for the program. Mr. Benton answered that the home sites are preselected. There is a method used by Nails in Hand to qualify a request, which comes through people like DSS, Council on Aging, United Way, LCOG, churches or word of mouth. We do qualify the resident and the need. There is also a template that World Changers uses for the larger projects. He noted that Mr. Wayne Lake, City employee and seasoned veteran of Nails in Hand, has been a construction/project coordinator locally. He goes out reviews the site to see if we can handle it and if it is something we can finish in the time involved.

Council Member Young asked if the volunteers would be here prior to June 30 or after July 1. Mr. Benton responded that a firm date had not been set at this point. Council

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Member Young explained that his concern was whether the city had one year or two fiscal years to cover the request.

Councilman Smalls asked if a repair request could come from an individual for a project. Mr. Benton responded affirmatively and stated that it would be handled the same way with a site visit.

Council Member Cannady then thanked Mr. Benton for bringing the information to Council. She stated she probably jumped the gun on this project because she thought the City could use CDBG funds, but now we can't, so we have to put it in the budget for 2008. She stated, we will let you know what happens after the budget is completed. No action was taken on the request and was accepted by Council as INFORMATION.

Next, the Mayor announced the following vacancies on the City's boards and commissions:

- 1 vacancy on the Building Board.
- 1 vacancy on the City Appearance Board.
- 2 vacancies on the Economic Development Commission.
- 1 vacancy on the Great Swamp Sanctuary Commission, and
- 1 vacancy on the Tree Protection Commission.

At this point, the Mayor stated that he wanted to ask Council to create a new committee, which is to be named "The Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary". He proposed that the committee would be composed of 10-15 members. He explained that we are getting to the time in the GSS project, that we need the grass root efforts to help with a lot of things this committee could do, such as help solicit sponsorships and donations, help solicit individuals to work with volunteer programs to help the Education Director when this person is on-board.

A motion was then made by Council Member Cannady to create a new committee to be named the "Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary" Committee as requested. Council Member Thompson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mayor Sweat then suggested that Council appoint to this new Committee the following persons: Kathy Benton, Celeste Stone and Barbara Kim Miller who had requested to be placed on the Great Swamp Sanctuary Commission. The Mayor also requested that the new committee be advertised to solicit additional members in our local newspaper and be placed on the City's website.

Council Member Young then requested that Council defer appointment to the Tree Committee. He stated there are other considerations we must look at. Council also agreed by consensus to defer the appointments to the Great Swamp Sanctuary Commission at this time.

A motion was then made by Council Member Cannady to approve the three appointments as suggested by the Mayor - Kathy Benton, Celeste Stone and Barbara Kim Miller to the new committee named the Friends of the Great Swamp Sanctuary Committee. Council Member Lucas seconded the motion that passed with all members voting in favor.

A motion ratifying the acceptance of a Grant Award Agreement between the City of Walterboro and the SC Department of Commerce for \$125,000 for the Exxon Pump Station Project (Grant # WTS06150207) was unanimously approved on the motion of Council Member Lucas and seconded by Council Member Young.

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Next, a motion was made by Council Member Smalls, seconded by Council Member Cannady, to adopt the 2007-2008 Budget Calendar as submitted. The motion passed with all members in favor.

Next, the Mayor announced that the City had received a request from County Council to approve a curb cut on Walters Street to allow them to access the new parking area to be built on the courthouse grounds for the judges, which will be set with security and a wrought iron fencing. He stated that Mr. Kenny Blakeney had a copy of the proposed plans. Mayor Sweat stated that the County is also asking for two additional parking spaces on the street - one for the Family Court Judge and one for the Probate Court Judge. The Mayor told Council he had looked over the request and believed that the City could adjust their requested space to cut down on the impact it would have on our parking spaces on that street. He reported that Mr. Shoupe has agreed to make considerations for us on that.

Council Member Cannady then asked where do we stand with the legalities of Walters Street. Attorney Cone reported a phone call was made to the office of Special Referee Walters Sanders, who was in conference. Mr. Sanders has this matter under consideration and Attorney Cone will call him back again concerning the matter. Attorney Cone pointed out that the conflict of who owns Walters Street is not really relevant to any questions because the Highway Department has a right-of-way easement, which they subsequently transferred to the City of Walterboro. So, we have right-of-way easements for both Washington Street and the other street that extends to the back of the sidewalk. Now, the judge will have to determine ownership of it. Attorney Cone also explained in response to a question by Council Member Smalls, that a lawsuit was filed to establish the ownership of the land. Regardless of whether the County owns it or not, the part from the sidewalk into the road, they've given a right-of-way for the construction and operation of a sidewalk and roadway to SCDOT and signed by the county supervisor when the project was done. Subsequently, the Highway Department transferred that easement right-of-way to the City. Attorney Cone stated he believed it did not matter who owns the footage, because the City owns the right-of-way.

A motion was then made by Council Member Parker to approve the request by the County to construct a curb cut for courthouse parking on Walters Street. Council Member Smalls seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, Council agreed to amend the motion to include that the City will negotiate the exact spacing of the curb cut and two additional parking spaces, subject to review by the City Attorney. **The motion then passed unanimously as amended.**

Next, the Mayor announced that a letter was received from the Leadership Colleton class regarding a proposal for plantings at the old water tower. The Mayor felt that a few questions needed to be answered regarding this project. He stated that the City Manager wanted to know if the group had looked at the additional properties related to the tower and the property lines. Mayor Sweat noted that the group had received permission from Strickland Cleaners to plant; however, he would like to see a copy of that agreement. The Mayor then deferred this item to the next City Council Meeting.

Next, a request by Ms. Jackie Dasen, wife of Lt. Ken Dasen, was approved to display a banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing National Law Enforcement Week beginning May 11<sup>th</sup> through May 21<sup>nd</sup>. The **MOTION** approving the request was made by Council Member Smalls, seconded by Council Member Parker and passed unanimously.

Lastly, under Old Business, a request to place a banner across Jefferies Boulevard announcing the Annual Business Expo on March 9<sup>th</sup> through March 16, 2007 was unanimously approved on a motion by Council Member Cannady, seconded by Council Member Lucas and passed unanimously.

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The meeting then adjourned to an executive session to hear a personnel matter.

The meeting returned to Open Session and there being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Parker, seconded by Council Member Cannady and passed unanimously. The Mayor adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:55 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Respectfully,

Betty J. Hudson  
City Clerk

**Approved April 10, 2007**