



GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes

Committee of the Whole

March 19, 2019

4:03 p.m.

County Square – Conference Room D

Council Members

Mr. Butch Kirven, Chairman
Mr. Willis Meadows, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Xanthene Norris, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Joe Dill
Mr. Mike Barnes
Mr. Sid Cates
Mr. Rick Roberts
Mr. Bob Taylor
Mrs. Liz Seman
Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr.
Mr. Lynn Ballard
Mr. Dan Tripp

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned Citizens.

Council Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Joe Kernell, County Administrator
Mark Tollison, County Attorney
Dean Campbell, Deputy County Attorney
Kim Wunder, Assistant County Attorney
Regina McCaskill, Clerk to Council
Jessica Stone, Deputy Clerk to Council
Paula Gucker, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works
Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer
Nicole Wood, Assistant to the County Administrator
Shannon Herman, Assistant to the County Administrator
Sarah Holt, Planning Director

Others Present

None

Knox White

Mayor
City of Greenville, South Carolina

Call to Order

Chairman Kirven

Invocation

Councilor Sid Cates

Item (3) **Approval of Minutes**

Action: Councilor Seman moved to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2019, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (4) **Greenville Conference Center Presentation** – *Introduced by Mayor Knox White, City of Greenville*

Mayor Knox White stated it was not too often that the County and the City had the chance to work together on a project; but, it was amazing what could happen when they did. Mr. White cited the Swamp Rabbit Trail as the prime example of such a collaboration.

A couple of years ago, Greenville County Council and the City of Greenville Council voted to hire a consultant to look at the possibility of a downtown conference center. Mr. White stated the idea had been around for a long time; it was very difficult to bring visitors, guests and businesses to the current conference center located on Highway 291. Mr. White stated the conversation started with Councilor Joe Dill. A few years ago, the South Carolina Association of Counties wanted to bring its annual conference to Greenville but were unable to due to the location of the current conference center and the lack of adjoining hotels and restaurants.

Mr. White stated that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Aughtry had agreed to donate both properties for the new conference center.

Mr. White stated this would not be the same as bringing the TD Center downtown. The proposed building would be much smaller than the TD Center and geared toward a much different mission. The center would be focused on bringing outside people and organizations to the area in order to trigger economic development. He stated GADC and other economic development groups would be the overseers of the center. Mr. White cited engineering automotive companies and groups as examples of the types of organizations the center would hope to attract as well as smaller, regional groups to which they may belong.

Mr. White introduced Phil Hughes.

Phil Hughes stated a downtown conference center was a long-standing opportunity he had dreamed of for a number of years. He added it was self-evident that Greenville did not have the right asset in the right location and the TD Center was not the right size any longer. While the functions worked fine at the TD Center, there were no hotels or restaurants around it. He stated the main goal in the economic world was doing things that were better, walkable, doable with synergy and activity. While the TD Center only offered one experience; downtown Greenville offered multiple experiences. Mr. Hughes stated that Greenville had gone from bad, to good, to great. He stated the addition of a downtown conference center would elevate the community and the state. He added they wanted to bring in the kind of resources that were value-oriented and efficient but were also design-oriented to have a "wow factor", an iconic design that would put a stamp on the community and the state. Mr. Highes stated that Bo Aughtry had been incredible to work with. They were both in the development business; it was plain to see that donating the land would get greater value everywhere.

Mr. Hughes stated the need for a downtown conference center had been unmet for too long and the study determined that the need was there. He stated they had talked to numerous people and support for the conference center had been amazing on the local level and even on the state level. Mr. Hughes stated the center would draw in multiple users; there were already two museums that had expressed a desire to be included. The proposed center was the type of thing that would change the dynamics of the community.

Mr. Hughes stated the proposed conference center would be located on River Street. A small piece of property had been identified as also needed; the owner, Mr. Edward Stall, did not want to sell but was willing to do so for a reasonable price. Mr. Hughes stated that Mr. Stall understood the magnitude and potential of the project. The air rights were also wanted for commercial development. Mr. Hughes presented renderings from ROAM Architects (New Orleans, La). Bob Jones Art Museum and Greenville County Museum of Art were willing to donate money for the project. Mr. Hughes stated they were hopeful that the State would be able to contribute as well. A total of \$400 million was the amount needed to fund the project; with fundraising and donated land, the amount needed would be decreased drastically, along with private investors.

Councilor Roberts stated he agreed that the area needed sites smaller than the textile center. He inquired what role the advisory group played in the project.

Mr. Hughes stated the advisory group would be asked to make sure that all details were covered. All the members of the group were involved in the community.

Chairman Kirven inquired about the timing of the project. He stated the effort for state funding was underway and there had been some good indications it was going well. The Legislative Delegation also appeared in support of the project as well as other legislative leaders. Mr. Kirven asked what could the County expect in terms of timing.

Mr. Hughes stated they had spoken to Mayor White and all the members of the City Council: there appeared to be strong support for the project. Funding was needed from the city, the county and the state. He added timing was important; if they did not act now, it was possible they could lose some of the funding.

Councilor Roberts inquired as to how "opportunity zones" played a role in the process.

Mr. Hughes stated that, for instance, if condominiums were developed on top of the center, the capital gains tax would be significantly reduced; the price of the units would be lower and would sell faster.

Chairman Kirven thanked Mr. Hughes and Mr. White for the presentation.

Item (5)

Board and Commission Application Reviews

1. **Planning Commission** (3 vacancies)

The following individuals appeared before the Committee of the Whole and gave their personal presentations:

1. Susan Allen - District 26
2. John Bailey - District 21
3. Paul Bourbeau - District 25
4. Heather DeJong - District 26
5. Deborah Drucker - District 21
6. Ramona Farrell - District 20
7. James Gilbert - District 28
8. Paul Harrison - District 22
9. James Hoard - District 21
10. Mark Jones - District 26
11. David Kelley - District 23
12. James Moore - District 26
13. Scott Park - District 22
14. Julie Turner - District 17

By ballot vote, the following individuals were elected to fill three vacancies on the Planning Commission: John Bailey, Ellis Forest and Mark Jones.

Item (6) **Executive Session**

Action: Vice-Chairman Meadows moved to go into Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the County in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the County of a claim.

Motion carried unanimously and the Committee of the Whole entered Executive Session at 5:03 p.m.

Recoverne

County Attorney Mark Tollison reported the Committee of the Whole out of Executive Session stating no action was taken during that session. The regular Committee of the Whole meeting reconvened at 5:23 p.m.

Item (7) **Colonial Pipeline Company v. SCDOR**

Action: Vice-Chairman Meadows moved to direct the County Attorney to undertake all necessary actions to intervene on behalf of Greenville County in the Colonial Pipeline SCDOT litigation.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item (8) **Adjournment**

Action: Councilor Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina G. McCaskill, Clerk to Council