

**CITY OF DARLINGTON
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 11, 2017 – 6:30 PM**

PRESENT AT MEETING:

Mayor Gloria Hines, City Manager, Mr. Howard Garland and Councilpersons: Elaine Reed, Coleman Cannon, John Segars, Carolyn Bruce and Bryant Gardner. Also, present: Mrs. Lisa Rock, Mr. Alex Gainey, City Attorney Kevin Etheridge, Mr. Lee Andrews, Mr. Pat Cavanaugh, Police Chief Danny Watson, Mr. Norman Steadman, Ms. Jannie Lathan, Ms. Betty Jackson, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas C. Sawyer, Mrs. Harriett Hobbs, Mr. Kinsaul, James C. Stone, Ms. Karen Carroll, Ms. Joyce Thomas, Mr. Calvin Holloman, Ms. Roberta Balthrop, Officer Maureen Valazak, Mrs. Dyan Cohen, Mr. Curtis Boyd, Officer Dominick Robinson, Mr. Calvin Coefield, Mr. James Jackson, Ms. Evelyn Samuel, Mr. James Cooper, Officer Jimmy Davis and other visitors.

NEWS REPORTERS

Also present were News Reporters from the News & Press and the Morning News.

PRAYER

Councilman Coleman Cannon did the invocation which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion of Councilman Coleman Cannon, seconded by Councilman Bryant Gardner, to approve minutes of June 6, 2017 Council meeting, which unanimously carried. Councilwoman Elaine Reed said she wants to be able to add something to executive session. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to go ahead and move to executive session.** Councilwoman Reed said she wants to “add to” executive session. She said once we go into executive session they have to discuss what is approved on the agenda now and what she is trying to do is get something added before going into executive session. Mayor Hines said she’s been on Council about 16 years and there have been numerous times things have been added to the agenda the night of the meeting. Mayor Hines directed her question to Mr. Garland, but he said that would be a question

for the City Attorney. City Attorney, Mr. Kevin Etheridge said he does not know the answer off the top of his head. Mayor Hines said if it's not right it has been done in the past. Councilman Gardner said that's not an appropriate reason for doing it in the future. Mayor Hines said she sent Mr. Garland an email to add something to the agenda and he would not do it. Mr. Garland said the state ordinance was changed two years ago that says if you're going to add something to the agenda within a 24-hour period, you have a super majority of council to do that. Mayor Hines told Mr. Garland she sent him something Friday, but he told her she sent the email on Monday. Councilwoman Reed said all she wants to do is add to what they are going to discuss in executive session and that seems to be the only reason that you're making the motion that we go in now, so that she won't be able to add what she wants to discuss in executive session since the City Manager did follow what the Mayor requested. Mr. Etheridge said he was not aware of this and he can look up the law and have an answer by tomorrow. Mayor Hines said we will call a special meeting so we can have executive session. **Councilman Gardner restate his motion to go into executive session now. Councilman John Segars seconded the motion. Mayor Hines and Councilpersons Carolyn Bruce, Coleman Cannon, Elaine Reed vote against the motion. Motion Fails**

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A) DARLINGTON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION – MRS. LISA ROCK

Mrs. Rock said the DDRA welcomed Little Caesars Pizza to town this morning with a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony. The Beautification Board will present the Business Pride of Darlington Award to South of Pearl, 117 Edwards Avenue on Monday July 17, 2017 at 10:30 AM. She said they their biggest crowd ever for the Bringing Downtown Alive! Concert on June 9, 2017 with The Bout Time Band performing. Mrs. Rock said they will continue the free concert on July 21, 2017. She said the DDRA welcomes all members and businesses to join them for a Members Breakfast will be held on Wednesday, July 26, 2017, 8:00 AM at Takis Diner. She said the breakfast is free for members and a \$5.00 donation toward the meal for nonmembers who would like to participate. Mrs. Rock said any business, civic group, church or individual who would like to be a part of any of the events or projects can contact her office.

B) GREATER DARLINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE –MR. NORMAN STEADMAN

Mr. Steadman thanked Mayor and City Council, Fire Department and everyone that participated in Freedom Fest to help make the event happen. He said unfortunately the storm cut the event short and prevented the fireworks from being launched. Mr. Steadman said the Chamber is in the process of collecting orders for “I Heart Darlington” banners. He said these banners will be provided by a chamber member business at a bulk rate in order to maximize participation. He said it will be low cost for businesses to chip in and get one to hang in front of their business. Mr. Steadman said the Chamber is proud to support the “Cooling Project” being put on by the Darlington Sheriff’s Department. He said the Chamber will be a drop off point for fans, a/c units, and cases of bottled water until Friday. Mr. Steadman said the Sheriff’s Department is giving a flat screen TV if you donate at least one box fan and one case of water. He said the Chamber will add to prize pool and give away a pair of Southern 500 tickets.

CITIZENS WISHING TO SPEAK BEFORE COUNCIL

A MS. ANNA DEWITT – DARLINGTON RESCUE SQUAD

Ms. Dewitt said she is a member of Darlington Rescue Squad and during the past several months several organizations have questioned the liability of the Darlington Firemen’s Rescue Squad. Ms. Dewitt said she wanted to appear and present a few facts and answer any questions Council may have. She said Darlington rescue was formed in 1956 to answer the need of emergency care in our town. During the 1970’s Darlington Rescue Squad formed its own paid service and they moved to the roller back-up service. She said it’s a volunteer organization and they do not staff their building or ambulances until there is a need for their services. Ms. Dewitt said their members receive an incentive pay per call, but it’s maxed out at \$599.00 per year. She said they voted in a new Board Director in January and the Rescue Squad has seen new growth. In 2014 they answered 316 calls, in 2015 they answered 298 calls and in 2016 they answered 252 calls. As of May 31st of this year they have responded to 105 calls. She said there are calls that are paged out that no one can respond to because some of them work at jobs that will not allow them to leave in order to respond to a call. Ms. Dewitt said Darlington Rescue Squad gets \$9,000 a year from the County to run three ambulances. She said Darlington County EMS has a budget of \$3 million to run five ambulances. She said they have to pay for medical supplies, insurance, building and ambulance maintenance as well as their mortgage.

She said they do bill the patient's insurance, but if they are not covered, they do not participate in debt collection. Mayor Hines asked Ms. Dewitt what she wants Council to do and she said this is just for information only. Ms. Dewitt said Darlington Firemen's Rescue Squad is reliable and they plan to be around for the next 60 years.

B) MR. ALLEN TISDALE – EMS

Mr. Tisdale said there is a huge shortage in Darlington County and it's not because of money. He said they just approved a budget to pay \$6,000 more to paramedics. Mr. Tisdale said the problem management and the lack of leader. He said the Director allowed her certification to lapse back in March and they paid her for over a week while she had no certification. Mr. Tisdale said numerous constituents have to wait thirty plus minutes for an ambulance in this County which is unacceptable. He said they are getting substandard service by an advanced EMT or lower that's coming to them that cannot provide them with the medications and treatments that are necessary to revive them in cardiac arrest. He told Council he wanted to bring this to their attention and reach out to fellow council members.

C) MR. KEN HOWLE – DITCH

Mr. Ken Howle appeared before Council to ask their help with a problem ditch that he has in his neighborhood. Mr. Howle said this is not the first time this has been addressed to Council. He said Ms. Tina Mahoney came before council years ago about this problem, but it has progressively gotten worse and worse over the years. Mr. Garland asked Mr. Howle if he had pictures and he said he did and he also had a drawing. Mr. Howle said there's an overflow pipe that hardly has any water that moves through it. He said underneath that is another pipe and when they ran the sewer line, they ran it through the pipe, so it is completely blocked. He said as a result of this, it's never dry any more. There's stagnant water standing. Mr. Howle said with the flooding over the past years has contributed to debris piling up in the ditch. He said he has a brick wall that sits on the side if it and it's going to eventually fall in because the foundation is shot and it's cracking and separating in numerous areas. He said the drainage just doesn't work efficiently. Mr. Howle said he and his neighbor have lost part of their yard into the ditch. He said it's a safety concern for children that play in the neighborhood and it poses snake and mosquito issues. Mr. Howle asked Council for any help that can solve this problem. Mr. Garland said Mr. Howle came to him approximately 2 ½ years ago and he asked Mr. David Brown to go look at it and give an estimate on repair costs and Mr. Brown

came back in May, 2015 with a price of \$45,000 to repair the ditch. Mayor Hines asked Mr. Garland if he can ask somebody else other than Davis & Brown to give us a price on it. Mr. Garland said we'll get another quote. Mr. Howle said it wasn't an issue until the sewer line was put in the pipe. Mr. Garland said that was done 30 years ago, but Mr. Howle said it wasn't that long. Mayor Hines told Mr. Howle that Mr. Garland would check on this. Mr. Garland told Mayor Hines since Mr. Kinsaul was present at the meeting, let him give an opinion too. Mr. Kinsaul said the estimated cost to clean out the ditch on the other side of the road and to pipe the section by Mr. Howle's house be no less than \$50,000. Mayor Hines wanted to know if the city workers can do any of this work and Mr. Kinsaul said, "No", it will take equipment that we don't have and we just don't have the grading experience. Mr. Garland asked about taking the sewer pipe out. Mr. Kinsaul said you can take it out, but you can't move it; the only thing we can do is adjust the storm drain. Mr. Garland and Mr. Kinsaul both said they will have to investigate this further. Mr. Howle said his understanding is that the ditch serves the purpose only for rain runoff, so his thinking would during periods of hot weather it would be completely dry, but it's never dry. Mayor Hines told Mr. Howle that Mr. Garland will check on this.

D) MS. ROBERTA BALTHROP – DEMOLITION

Ms. Balthrop said 117 Farm Street has been targeted for demolition almost two years now. She said it is definitely a health hazard. Ms. Balthrop said she has rental property next door to this house and rodents are coming from that house to her rental property and the house on the other side of her. She said she has to keep spending money to make sure she has pest control. She said for years this house had a farm in the back yard. She said there are a lot of snakes and pests that are coming from that house. Ms. Balthrop said she needs assistance from the City because it's in her pocket now to try and keep her rental house in repair. She wanted to know how long will it be before the house is demolition. Mr. Gainey said the house has been added to the list, but as it stands, we have a lot more property in the City that needs to be torn down than we have money to tear down. He said we will have to prioritize everything, but he will take a look at it and see. Mr. Gainey said the property will eventually be taken down. Ms. Balthrop said there are young children that lives in her rental house next door to that property and in the event, something should happen she will be held liable and she will hold Council liable as well.

E) MS. ERNESTINE LYDE – POTHOLES

Ms. Lyde said she's been coming before Council a long time now about the potholes on her street. She said Mr. Garland did call to check on it, but nothing has been done. She said the potholes are not getting better nor has the smell from the Oil Mill gotten any better. She said she is constantly coming back for the same thing over and over and nothing is being done. Ms. Lyde said the potholes are so bad she can't even drive through there anymore because it will mess up her car. She said snakes are coming from the Oil Mill. Mr. Garland said this is a State road. Mr. Garland said we did some weed eating and cleaning up. Mr. Garland said the Cotton Mill is closing so the smell will go away. Mayor Hines said the City can only do patching, but SCDOT will have to do the paving. Mayor Hines told Mr. Garland maybe we can send someone out to do some patching. Mr. Garland said if we patch a State road, we are responsible for it unless it's a problem we created. Mayor Hines said we've filled in potholes on other streets that were State roads and Mr. Garland said sometimes it's because the postman comes through and leaves a rut in the road and then we'll go through and put in fill dirt. Mr. Garland said the best thing to do will be for us to call SCDOT and ask them if they will do it or put it on their list to do it. Mr. Garland said he will call SCDOT. Councilwoman Carolyn Bruce asked if a citizen can call SCDOT because it might be more effective. Mr. Garland said, "Sure" and he gave Ms. Lyde the phone number.

F) MS. PATRICIA WILLIAMS – MUSIC ON SQUARE

Ms. Williams said if someone had answered her call when she was trying to find out about the bands, she wouldn't be at the meeting tonight. Ms. Williams wanted to know why there aren't any Black bands that perform at the functions on the Square. Mrs. Lisa Rock said she has asked for opinions and band names from people across the community and she gathered the local bands that she got numbers for and calls back for. She said they have several concert committee meetings and she invited various people to the meetings, which some showed up and some didn't. Mrs. Rock told Ms. Williams if she has contacts, especially with local bands, to give her the information and she will try to work them into the schedule for next year. Mrs. Rock said if anyone has a band name and a phone number let her know and she will contact them. Ms. Williams told Ms. Rock she will start making some contacts and when she gets the information she will contact her.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A) SECOND READING ON ORDINANCE 2017-22 TAX LEVY

Upon motion of Councilwoman Reed, seconded by Councilman Cannon, Second Reading on Ordinance 2017-22 Tax Levy, which unanimously carried.

B) SECOND READING ON DEMOLITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – MR. ALEX GAINEY

Mr. Gainey said what is being proposed is to provide assistance demolition assistance program to remove unsafe, uninhabitable and dilapidated buildings. Mr. Gainey said they want to assist low-income property owners to remove blighted buildings while retaining ownership. Mr. Gainey said qualifying property owners will pay a minimum fee of \$500.00; the City of Darlington would remove the structure from the property and the property owner would maintain ownership of the property during and after demolition. Mr. Gainey went over the requirements for the program as well as the benefits. He said we are all here to help the citizens of the City of Darlington and that's why he came up with the Demolition Assistance Program to try and assist low-income property owners that can't afford to take the property down. Mayor Hines said from what she's understanding is that the City will absorb anything over and above the \$500.00 fee and Mr. Gainey told her she was correct. Mayor Hines wanted to know what happens at the end of the year if a person does not pay their taxes. Mr. Gainey said it goes through the process as it does now. Mayor Hines said she doesn't see much benefit in that because the only difference she can see is the \$500.00. Mr. Gainey said \$500.00 is the minimum fee, but it's based on the sliding scale. He said a person could pay \$1,500. Mr. Garland said the selling point from Mr. Gainey's point of view on this is if \$500.00 is paid out the demolition costs are not put against the property when the demolition is done by the City. Mayor Hines said some might not have \$500.00 at the time. Mr. Gainey said if they don't have the \$500.00, we will have to move forward with the regular procedure. Councilman Gardner said this program seems to be something that can help disadvantaged citizens. Councilwoman Bruce said if we don't adopt this at some point, the City will get this cost anyway and Mr. Gainey said, "Yes". Mayor Hines said there's property on her street that she complains about every year and the person who owns it does nothing with it. She said something needs to be done about that and we can't even take care of that. Mr. Gainey told her if it's the one that she reported to him has sent him a letter and the property owner has cut it two or three times this year. Councilwoman Reed said there's a home on Jefferson Street that needs to come down, but she thinks it's heir property. She said

she doesn't know how this program can help that situation. Mr. Gainey said the new properties haven't been identified yet. He said doesn't think letters have been sent to any of the property owners on Jefferson Street yet. Mayor Hines said if we do this, who will be in charge of this. Mr. Gainey said they have to finish compiling the list and once we do that he will come back to Council and if they decide to put it out for bids then that's what we will do. Mr. Garland told council this has come before them for three consecutive months. Councilman Segars called to question for a vote. **Councilman Segars made a motion to accept Mr. Gainey's proposal to adopt the Demolition Assistance Program. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. All voted for the motion except Mayor Hines.**

NEW BUSINESS

A) MR. KRIS WHITESIDE – ENTERPRISE FLEET MANAGEMENT PROPOSED VEHICLE LEASE

Mr. Whiteside said over the past few months he has met with Mr. Garland and some of the department heads to discuss a fleet leasing program. He said they out the same program in place for Kershaw County and Wilson Senior Care and a couple other government agencies. He said their proposal is to save the city resources and budget hours through a managed vehicle program. He said the program will allow the City to accomplish three goals 1) to reduce average age of the fleet from 19 years to 5 years 2) reduce the maintenance cost by about 70% over a 5-year period and 3) with newer vehicles we will see an increase in fuel economy. Mr. Whiteside provided a 10-year plan to show what the program would look like when it's fully implemented, but he is proposing a one-year proposal for us that can be adjusted throughout the period. Mr. Garland said we desperately need this program because it's an economical way to replace our aging fleet. He said it's needed for the Street & Sanitation vehicles, the Recreation Department, Water Department and we need a new vehicle for the Codes Department. Council continued to discuss. Council agreed to accept this as information and study it a little more before making a decision.

B) ENTRANCEWAY MAINTENANCE BID APPROVAL – MRS. LISA ROCK

Mrs. Rock said the Beautification Board and Council has come to them several times to address the entrances at the following locations: this was put out for bid for the entranceway areas located at: Verizon Corner, the islands near Sav-Way, the island in front of Mitchell-Josey Funeral Home as

well as several other areas. She said it was put out for bid in May, but they didn't get any responses so it was put out for bid again in June and they received four responses. Mrs. Rock said areas that will be maintained in this project will be the Indian Branch Road entrance, the entrance at US 52 Bypass (Auddie Brown side), Verizon Corner to Express Lane, the islands on SC 34 near 151, the islands in front of Mitchell-Josey Funeral Home, the entranceway at McLeod, entrance at Washington Street, the Psillos Garden and the Rose Garden between City Admin Building and the Council on Aging Building. She said four bids were received- BJ's Landscaping in Florence, SC with a bid of \$24,752; Taylor Garden & Gift Shop of Florence, \$10,680; Moore's Landscaping of Darlington, \$12,000 and Chad's Lawn Service of Bennettsville for \$35,000. The low bid came from Taylor Garden & Gift Shop, \$10,680 and that is the Board's recommendation. **Upon motion of Councilman Segars, seconded by Councilman Gardner, to accept the low bid of Taylor Garden & Gift Shop for \$10,680, which unanimously carried.** (Mrs. Rock said this includes weeding pine straw, maintenance, trimming, etc.)

C) TONYA FLOWERS – (NOT PRESENT)

Info Only: Mr. Garland said Mayor and Council came up with a new format for the community promotions line item. He said each Council has \$1,000 to designate to a non-profit community organization or community event. He passed out the guidelines to each member.

D) FIRST READING ON ORDINANCE 2017-26 (909 PEARL STREET – 165-05-01-065) PURCHASE \$25,000

Mayor Hines said this is the property where Gray's Automotive was located and the City needs this property for the Storm Water Project. Mr. Garland said the storm water drain runs directly under that building and we need it as a part of the storm water project. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion to approve First Reading on Ordinance 2017-26 (909 Pearl Street), for \$25,000. Councilwoman Carolyn Bruce seconded the motion. All approved the motion.**

E) BOARDS/COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Rock said Mr. Parker Howle wishes to serve on the Williamson Park Committee and they propose that he be added. **Upon motion of Councilman Bryant Gardner, seconded by Councilman Segars, to appoint Mr. Parker Howle to the Williamson Park Committee, which**

unanimously carried. Mrs. Rock said Ms. Rhonda Brown would like to be appointed to the Tree Board. Upon motion of Councilman Gardner, seconded by Councilwoman Bruce, to appoint Ms. Rhonda Brown to the Tree Board, which unanimously carried.

F) FIRE DEPARTMENT HVAC BID APPROVAL – MR. GARLAND

Mr. Garland said he received two bids to replace the HVAC on the roof at the Fire Department. He said we have been working on a borrowed compressor for a while now. He said we will take the funds out of the general obligation bond. Mr. Garland said the low bid is from Quality Service Company of Florence, SC for \$10,350 and he recommends we proceed with them. **Councilman Bryant Gardner made a motion to approve the Fire Department’s HVAC bid for \$10,350. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. All approved the motion.**

G) DARLINGTON MULTI-USE TRAIL SYSTEM – CENTRAL PARK SOUTH – MR. LEE ANDREWS

Mr. Andrews said he has spoken with people in the community about playgrounds, green space, etc. and in talking with Mr. BoBBY Ross and Councilman Gardner, he and Mrs. Rock put together a map of what they possibly can do with a trail system in Darlington. (Mr. Andrews showed Council areas on the map of what he would like to have done or what can be done). He said he would like to see Williamson Park expand to an area we have already asked the School District to give us (Brunson-Dargan School property). Mr. Andrews said he talked with Dana Flowers at Bristow Oil Company about them possible selling the property to the City of gifting it to them and place a park there. Mr. Andrews said Councilman Gardner has been pursuing getting easements to do the trail system along certain areas. Mr. Andrews asked Council’s feeling on a trail system in Darlington to see if this is something that they want him and Mrs. Rock to actively pursue to see about getting easements and making it become a reality. He said his dream is to extend Central Park South trail all the way out to the race track. Councilman Segars asked Mr. Andrews if he’s proposing extending Williamson Park from Spring Street over to the Bristow property or further. Mr. Andrews said he wants to go further. Councilwoman Reed said we’ve got the property approved from the School District to start Virgil Wells Park Complex. She said we’ve got plenty of space for kids to play, but it’s not being developed. Councilwoman Reed said why not start the trail where we are proposing the recreational complex. Councilwoman Bruce said they had the community meeting about the Virgil Wells Stadium and it sort of fell off

there and now we're talking about this property. She wanted to know where they are at on the Virgil Wells property. Mr. Andrews said the property is being surveyed and the school district wanted us to bring them the footprint that we wanted at Virgil Wells. He said they should have everything on Virgil Wells by the end of the week (the drawings & everything), and then he can take that to the school district and have them approve what we are turning in. Mr. Andrews said once this is approved we can start the process of building the recreation complex at the Virgil Wells. Councilwoman Bruce told Mr. Andrews that he mentioned there's a lot of visitors from out of town that use Williamson Park. She said she had driven through there on a regular basis, but she doesn't see where there's a big use. Mr. Andrews said there's a lot of out-of-towners that come to bird watch. Councilman Gardner said this is not asking them to move forward with the project, this is asking the City Administration to have the right to be able to go get the answers. Councilman Gardner said a couple of citizens are present at the meeting and they see an interest in this, one being Mr. Curtis Boyd. Councilman Gardner said he would like to turn over his time to Mr. Boyd and let him speak. Mayor Hines told him he cannot do that. Mr. Garland also said he didn't think you could do that, but that the Chair can. Councilman Gardner asked Mayor Hines if Mr. Boyd could speak and she said not tonight.

REMINDERS

Tuesday, August 1, 2017 at 6:30 PM-Regular Monthly Council Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hines said there was a need to go into Executive Session for matters relating to economic development, recreation, and possible property purchase. **Councilwoman Reed made a motion to add to our executive session pursuant to Section 30-4-70 of the S.C. Code of Law to discuss personnel matters involving employment, discipline or potential release of an employee of the City (Police Department) and Administration. Councilwoman Carolyn Bruce seconded the motion. All approved the motion except Councilmen Segars & Gardner. (Motion Passes)**

Upon motion of Councilman Cannon executive session ended at 10:11 PM.

Councilwoman Elaine Reed made a motion to allow Genesis Healthcare to purchase property at 410 Pearl Street for \$100,000 and have first

option on the Council on Aging Building once it vacant and when it comes up. Councilman Bryant Gardner seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

Councilman Gardner made a motion that we pursue the easements with relations to negotiations and to find out the prices for the easements. Councilwoman Elaine Reed seconded the motion. All approved the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion of Councilman Gardner, seconded by Councilman Segars, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 PM.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk & Treasurer