



**SPECIAL MEETING/WORKSHOP OF CITY COUNCIL
AUGUST 24, 2017 - 4:00 PM
MUNICIPAL COURTROOM
GEORGETOWN, SOUTH CAROLINA**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Notice of this meeting has been made in accordance with the 1976 Code of Laws of South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Jack M. Scoville, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tempore Brendon M. Barber, Sr.
Council Member Sheldon A. Butts
Council Member Carol R. Jayroe
Council Member Al Joseph
Council Member Edward S. Kimbrough, Jr.
Council Member Clarence C. Smalls

ALSO PRESENT

Ms. Ann U. Mercer, City Clerk
Miss Suzanne Abed-El-Latif, HR Manager
Mr. Orlando Arteaga, Engineer
Mrs. Debra Bivens, Director of Finance
Mr. Tim Chatman, Streets and Sanitation Manager
Mr. Will Cook, Water Utilities Director
Mr. Glen Dixon, Fleet Superintendent
Mr. Alan Loveless, Director of Electric Utilities
Mr. Rick Martin, Building Official/Zoning Administrator

ABSENT

Mrs. Elise Crosby, City Attorney
Chief Charlie Cribb, Georgetown Fire Department
Mrs. Gloria Bromell-Tinubu, Economic Development Director
Chief Kelvin Waites, Georgetown Police Department

MEDIA

Georgetown Times - Mr. David Purtell
GAB News - Mr. Scott Harper

2. ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Mayor Pro Tempore Brendon Barber called the Special Meeting/Workshop of City Council to order at 4:00 PM and requested all cell phones or electronic devices be turned off or placed on mute so as to not interrupt the meeting.

Council Member Butts Sheldon asked to render an invocation.

Mayor Jack Scoville arrived at the meeting at 4:02 pm.

3. LIONS CLUB PRESENTATION

Mrs. Debra Bivens recognized Mr. Andy Friedman with the Georgetown Lions Club. For their Legacy Project, the Club is offering to provide a minimum of 13 park benches to the City. This would allow the City to repurpose the current benches located throughout town. The Lions Club has authorized an \$8,400 budget for the Legacy Project. There is a separate budget for plaques for the benches the Club would like to purchase and install. They would like to assist in assembling and locating the benches. Mr. Friedman stated if Council approves, the Lions Club would like to move forward as quickly as possible to preliminary discussions with Mrs. Bivens. The consensus among Council was to move forward and work out the details with Mrs. Bivens.

4. WORKING WATERFRONT COALITION PRESENTATION

Mr. Edwin Jayroe thanked City Council for allowing him to speak about an opportunity to solve a serious challenge to the Working Waterfront and Georgetown's status as a Maritime City. He presented the following.

To maintain Georgetown's status as a Maritime City, action must be taken to increase the water depth of the Harbor, eliminating the silt that is clogging our waterway. Georgetown has a maritime heritage and it is important to protect and enhance that legacy. Failure to maintain our navigable water access poses a major threat to our historic maritime culture and way of life, as well as causing significant negative impact to the local economy. The threat is the silting of the Georgetown Harbor and Sampit River which will inevitably lead to the loss of Georgetown's core natural assets and wealth.

Georgetown is the second oldest port in the state, dating back to 1732 and the third oldest city. It has a rich maritime history and culture that has thrived because of available transportation on the rivers for locally produced materials (rice, wood and nautical supplies), ocean access, commercial and recreational fishing and maritime boating activities. It is essential to preserve Georgetown as a maritime community because that is a core resource that enables tourism and a maritime industry to thrive. Without a thriving waterfront Georgetown loses its unique personality and appeal.

Maritime activities are a major contributor to the economic vitality of Georgetown. Tour and fishing boats, ship repairs and marinas are dependent on having safe tide-independent water access to and from their places of business. The loss of access will impact waterfront businesses and jobs throughout the community as well the tourists that make Georgetown a destination to enjoy the history and waterfront atmosphere. Without a vibrant and accessible waterfront the very essence and nature of the City will be lost. In addition, access to convergence of the five rivers with the ocean will be significantly diminished.

Tourism is a key industry that contributes to the vibrancy of the City and to economic development and job growth. Visitors to our City are drawn by a riverfront town filled with history and culture dating back to the 1700s. Seeing and experiencing history is like going to a restaurant. It is more than just about the food; it is also about the setting and presentation. Mystic, Connecticut and Annapolis, Maryland have restaurants and shops but tourists visit there because of the history and maritime atmosphere (working fishery, waterfront scenery and water accessible activities). That is what cannot be lost to our community.

There is a real and imminent threat to the City in that the harbor is silting over at an alarming rate and is in danger of becoming an oxbow lake with Goat Island at its center. Without action, shrimp and recreational boats will avoid the harbor due to the potential for running aground at low tide due to on-going silting. Intra-Coastal Waterway (ICW) traffic flow into the Georgetown harbor is affected because of silting which limits boat sizes and mooring opportunities. Some portion of the recreational traffic can only enter and leave at high tide. Returning water flow and removing the silt in the river and harbor can provide beneficial environmental impacts to the region.

Georgetown County in recent years has raised over \$40 million from a voter approved sales tax for infrastructure improvements and repairs. This investment fund includes resources for dredging.

Mr. Jayroe stated precedent exists for our request. County Government allocated \$10.3 million to dredge Murrells Inlet. The City of Georgetown should request that the County allocate funds for both an immediate study of the silting problem and a mitigation strategy and a 'way-forward' to establish future mitigation funds. Mitigation of the silting or channel diversion should be studied and actualized to determine appropriate water depth (channel, Sampit River and Georgetown Harbor) for recreational, commercial fishing and deeper draft ships, as appropriate.

Residents of Georgetown contributed to the aggregation of these funds by paying into the sales tax fund. Requesting a fair share return of these funds to solve a fundamental problem that can cause long term harm to the City is both prudent and good government.

Mayor Scoville asked how we make the request to the County. Mr. Jayroe said County Administrator Mr. Sel Hemingway met with the group and told them the City needs to contact the County. Council Member Butts said he attended a meeting recently and this was one of the main topics. He said in order for the allocated funds to be used for something other than the original purpose, the County and City would have to come to a consensus by vote. Mayor Pro Tempore Barber advised the City Administrator and City Attorney to research this before any action is taken.

Any project currently on the books has to run its course. When that comes to an end, a request can be made for any surplus funds available. Discussions followed. The consensus of Council was to look into the matter.

5. CODE ENFORCEMENT

A proposal was presented for code enforcement inspections on rental properties within the City. Mr. Martin said the process would include identifying all rental properties in the City, sending letters to property owners informing them of plans to inspect their rental property and the requirements. Some problems with rental properties include cracked and broken windows and leaky roofs. Formal letters will then be sent to owners listing any issues that need to be corrected. Staff has discussed allowing owners 90 days to become compliant before citations are issued. A leaking roof or electrical issue must be corrected within 15 days. He estimated 300 to 400 rental properties are located in the City. Plans are to begin this process after the first of the year. Currently if a renter calls his office, Mr. Martin will go inspect the problem and notify the owner. Council Member Kimbrough stated this will be a huge undertaking. Mr. Martin said staff wants to insure owners are aware of the inspections and minimum standards. Currently a citation for code violation is \$1,086. Mrs. Janet Grant, the City's Code Enforcement Officer, is retiring next spring and Mr. Martin would like to have her replacement employed before she leaves. Mayor Pro Tempore Barber noted many rental properties have mold infestation. Mr. Martin stated this problem continues to be addressed. Mr. Barber said we need to address allowable housing, particularly multi-family. This can offset some of the sub-standard rental housing. Council Member Butts asked if this includes trailer parks. Mr. Martin said this includes any habitable rental property. Mrs. Bivens said staff hopes to have some town hall meetings with the landlords. She said the utility billing system has all rental properties in the City. Mr. Martin said the South Carolina Disaster Recovery Office is working on approximately 25 houses in the City of Georgetown and applications are still being received.

6. HARBORWALK ASSESSMENT

Mr. Orlando Arteaga presented results of a harborwalk structural assessment performed by Collins Engineers. This was an above water inspection. Considering exposure to the elements and the age of the harborwalk, it is in decent shape. The last major renovations were in 2010 with replacement of the decking using Ipe wood. As listed in the handout timber piles, pile cap, stringers, decking, connection hardware, fender pile connection hardware and cross bracing were observed. There were concerns in isolated areas where there were split beams and corrosion on the metal hardware. This can be addressed in upcoming budgets. The wood is in good condition. The last full (above and below water) inspection was performed by Collins Engineers in 2009. Mr. Arteaga recommends this type of inspection every 10 years. This monitoring will allow for repairs to be budgeted. Mrs. Bivens stated repairs will be included in next year's CIP.

Mayor Scoville said the Eclipse on Monday was a huge success. He thanked staff for their efforts in helping to organize the event.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Scoville adjourned the Special Meeting/Workshop of City Council at 4:44 pm.

Ann U. Mercer
City Clerk

Date Approved: 10/19/17