

SPECIAL MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON COUNTY, SC

February 11, 2014

Darlington County Council held a Special Meeting on February 11, 2014, at 3 p.m., in the meeting room of Darlington Library, 204 North Main Street, Darlington, South Carolina, to consider the City of Darlington's request to transfer maintenance responsibility from Patience Street to the City of Darlington.

NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the meeting notice, giving the date, time, and place of the meeting was emailed to the local newspapers, persons requesting notification, and posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the County Administrator's Office and the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Wesley H. Blackwell, Vice Chair Mozella Nicholson, Mr. Robbin Brock, Mr. Marvin Le Flowers, Mr. Bobby Hudson, Mrs. Wilhelmina P. Johnson, and Mr. Robert L. Kilgo, Jr.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Dale Surrett, County Attorney James C. Cox, Jr., Clerk To Council J. JaNet Bishop, Darlington City Mayor Tony Watkins, and Roads and Bridges Director Bobby Richardson.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Ms. Samantha Lyles of the News and Press.

Call To Order / Invocation

Chairman Blackwell called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. Mr. Kilgo presented the invocation.

City of Darlington's request to transfer maintenance responsibility from Patience Street to the City of Darlington and annexation of this street

Mr. Kilgo indicated that Chairman Blackwell had received a Resolution approved by Darlington City Council. The resolution read:

"The City of Darlington requests that the responsibility for the care and maintenance of Patience Street, which is located behind the Food Lion Shopping Center, be relinquished by the County of Darlington and assumed by the City of Darlington which intends to annex the street into the City limits. The transfer of responsibility for the street is further intended to allow the City to change the ingress and egress traffic patterns of Patience Street where it

intersects with US Hwy 52, also known as South Main Street, so as to allow for the installation of a nearby intersection which has been designed to facilitate commercial development on the east side of South Main Street.

It is further requested that this transfer of responsibility for the care and maintenance of Patience Street become effective upon the approval by the governing body of the County of Darlington.

This resolution was approved in a regular Darlington City Council meeting held February 11, 2014.”

MOTION was made by Mr. Kilgo and seconded by Ms. Nicholson to tender ownership of Patience Street to the City of Darlington.

Mrs. Johnson said she was trying to figure out what would be done in the Patience Street area. She said the county had done much damage in the area, especially with the ditch on Pecan Drive. She said her topic for this matter would be “a pocket of shame and neglect.” Mrs. Johnson said that when Food Lion opened, all the water was going to flow on the people. Therefore, she promised everyone that during Food Lion’s Grand Opening, she would stand in the ditch with her boots on. She mentioned that progress was needed, but the property was not being dealt with.

Darlington City Mayor Tony Watkins handed out a map of the area and explained that in order for the City to do what was planned (to implement a right in and right out traffic configuration for Patience Street), the City would have to own Patience Street. He stated that an intersection had been applied for and necessitated by the fact that so much traffic would be entering the site of a tremendous amount of commercial development and would need an entrance. The South Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) was suggesting the installation of a new intersection near Patience Street. If the intersection were lined up with Patience Street, it would take the entrance through a proposed service station that would be built by the same developer, which would affect their bottom line. Mayor Watkins emphasized that the City did not want to affect the company’s bottom line because the company would be bringing 250+ jobs. Therefore, the City was trying to accommodate the developer. He explained that because Patience Street was so close to the intersection, the City was proposing an ingress/egress traffic pattern known as “right in and right out” instead of a road closure, which would require a prescribed set of steps including notifications and public hearings, etc. and would be a lengthy process. Mayor Watkins pointed out that the City has no intention for closing Patience Street. However, having Patience Street so close to the intersection would make it unsafe for motorists to make a left turn from Patience Street onto Main Street. He explained that upon receiving a permit from DOT, a concrete island would be installed to direct traffic to the right when exiting and entering Patience Street. Motorists would not be able to make a left turn from Patience Street onto Main Street or from Main Street onto Patience Street. They would have to use Franklin Street to make a left onto and from Main Street. This was the minimum disruption of traffic wherein permission could be obtained from DOT to install an intersection with traffic lights for the new commercial development. Mayor Watkins mentioned that DOT had indicated that Patience Street would have to be closed or the

“right in, right out” traffic design implemented to allow for the new intersection. Without the intersection, there would be no deal for any development, except O’Reillys. Mayor Watkins talked about the potential for other development in this area.

Mrs. Johnson talked about the county being responsible for the condition of Jewels Wood Drive, which she described as the worst spot in the world. She also questioned whether there were plans to widen Patience Street. Mayor Watkins responded that there was no plan or intention to widen Patience Street.

Chairman Blackwell called for the vote. **The motion carried with Mrs. Johnson opposing.**

Mrs. Johnson requested that the record show that she did not vote in favor of the motion and that there would be further action by her.

Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Flowers to adjourn the special meeting. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. JaNet Bishop, Clerk to Council

Wesley H. Blackwell, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of March 3, 2014.