

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

July 1, 2024

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 1st day of July 2024, at 6 p.m., at the Courthouse Annex/EMS Building, 1625 Harry Byrd Highway (Highway 151), Darlington, South Carolina.

NOTICE OF MEETING

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, a copy of the agenda providing the date, time, and place of the meeting was emailed to the local newspapers, persons requesting notification, and posted on the county's website and on the bulletin board in the lobby of the courthouse.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A Notice of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 24-11 and Ordinance No. 24-12 was published in the Hartsville Messenger on June 12, 2024, and in the News and Press on June 19, 2024.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. Michael Kirk Askins, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III., Mrs. Angie Stone Godbold, and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT

Vice-Chairman Marvin Le Flowers.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, County Attorney James H. Lucas, Attorney Adam Gainey, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Codes Enforcement Director Terri Cribb, Economic Development Director J. Lewis Brown, Emergency Management Director Molly Odom, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Fire District Chief Ricky Flowers, Human Resources Director Ginger Winburn, Library Director Jimmie Epling, Sheriff James Hudson, Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

News & Press.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance No. 24-11, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Pit Stop Solar, LLC, A Project Formerly Known To The County As Project Scout, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem

Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters

Chairman Hudson declared the public hearing open at 6 p.m. to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-11. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 24-12, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto. (Project Scout/Pit Stop Solar, LLC)

Chairman Hudson declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 24-12. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

REGULAR MEETING

Call To Order / Invocation / Pledge Of Allegiance

Chairman Hudson called the meeting to order. Mr. Douglas presented the invocation and Mr. Coker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens' Comments

Mr. Scott Stroup talked about his disappointment in how Darlington County Humane Society was treating Ms. Crystal Odom who was trying to get her dog back from the animal shelter. Ms. Odom's sister surrendered the dog to the Humane Society when Ms. Odom became ill and was hospitalized. Her sister did not realize that when you surrender an animal to the Humane Society, you are at risk of not being able to get the animal back. The Humane Society was refusing to return Ms. Odom's dog. Mr. Stroup stated that he realizes that Darlington County Council, the county, nor the City of Darlington control the operation of the Humane Society, however, he was hoping that since County Council is the leader and has a greater voice, that County Council would contact the Humane Society to express its disagreement regarding their decision to keep Ms. Odom's dog. He asked the Council to contact the Humane Society regarding this matter.

Mrs. Nancy Stroup also spoke on behalf of Ms. Crystal Odom. She talked about how Ms. Odom loved her dog, but when she became sick and was hospitalized, her sister surrendered the dog not realizing the extent of what she was doing. Mrs. Stroup believes there were miscommunications, and she had spent the last six months trying to get help to get the dog back to Ms. Odom. She was begging the county to give Ms. Odom her dog back.

Mr. Brady Hill mentioned that last month the shelter tried to take one of his dogs, but he was able to get the dog back. However, he felt that the County Codes Department was retaliating against him by issuing stop work orders and requests for building permits for a portable storage building that he had placed on a lot several months ago. The storage building has no power, no water, etc. Mr. Hill said the Codes Department keeps referring to the storage building as commercial. However, he could not pull a building permit for a

commercial building because he was not a general contractor. He contacted Councilman Dannie Douglas and found out about square footage regulations for buildings, which could open a can of worms because there are portable buildings everywhere without building permits. Mr. Hill stated that he wants to be treated fairly. If he has to get a building permit, everyone else should get one, too. He asked County Council to change or remove the square footage requirements for portable buildings from the codes. Mr. Hill felt that the Codes Department was retaliating against him because the building was there for months, and nothing happened until he appeared before Council and complained about the dog catcher.

Ms. Lucinda Hubbs commented about the skate day event recently held in Hartsville. She also wanted to continue the conversation about better animal welfare laws although there has been positive progress toward the goal of doing better for animals. She hopes that County Council does not lose interest in this topic just because there are not as many people present at the meetings as before. Ms. Hubbs welcomed Council members to visit the animal shelter.

Ms. Debra Wilkes, sister of Ms. Crystal Odom, reported that she surrendered her sister's dog to the animal shelter but did not know that what she signed would keep Ms. Odom from ever getting her dog back. She explained that when the emergency arose, instead of leaving the puppy unattended at home, she turned the dog in. A volunteer at the animal shelter told her that they would help her with the puppy. Therefore, she thought she was doing the right thing by going to the animal shelter. Ms. Wilkes now feels that there is a personal vendetta because the dog has not been adopted and several other people have applied to adopt the puppy, but the animal shelter will not let them do so. Ms. Wilkes stated that she made a mistake on January 8, 2024, by surrendering her sister's dog.

Ms. Shaye Duffey talked about the condition of several animals that were rescued and the need for an ordinance that specifies what is adequate. She said animals should not be left out all the time and should have a proper doghouse.

Personal Appearances

There were no Personal Appearances.

Consent Agenda (Receive As Information)

Included in the Consent Agenda were the following:

- 6.A. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Meeting Minutes, January 17, 2024
- 6.B. Beaver Management Program Report, May 2024
- 6.C. Library Board Meeting Minutes, March 27, 2024
- 6.D. Darlington County Humane Society Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, May 13, 2024
- 6.E. Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments COGNitive Connections, June 2024
- 6.F. Rubicon's FY25 County Plan

- 6.G. 911 Call Volume Report, May 2024
- 6.H. Darlington County Historical Commission & Museum Board Member Packet with Visitor Stats and Board Minutes
- 6.I. Financial Report Through May 2024
- 6.J. Darlington County Fire District Call Volume Report, June 2024
- 6.K. Darlington County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Activities, July 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Douglas to receive the Consent Agenda items as information.

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes – Minutes Of Regular Meeting, June 3, 2024

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on June 3, 2024.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances

Ordinance No. 24-11, An Ordinance Authorizing Pursuant To Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The Code Of Laws Of South Carolina 1976, As Amended, The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Agreement, By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Pit Stop Solar, LLC, A Project Formerly Known To The County As Project Scout, As Sponsor, And One Or More Sponsor Affiliates To Provide For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Incentive And Certain Special Source Revenue Credits For The Benefit Of A Project In The County; And Other Related Matters -THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-11.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-12, An Ordinance Authorizing The Enlargement Of The Joint County Industrial Park Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Florence County, South Carolina; And Other Matters Related Thereto. (Project Scout/Pit Stop Solar, LLC) - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 24-12.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 24-08, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article IV. (Boards, Commissions, And Committees), Section 2-201 (Membership) To Clarify The Definition Of Membership For Appointments By County Council To A Board, Commission, Or Committee Enumerated In Section 2-204; And Division 5 (Economic Development Partnership Board) To Restructure The Economic Development Partnership Board; And Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 24-08.

Mrs. Godbold expressed opposition regarding the changes to this ordinance. She stated that the Economic Development Partnership Board had been functioning and she did not see that it was necessary to make changes. Mrs. Godbold stated that economic development is vital for the county. However, the county's population has been decreasing because there are no jobs, no new developments or businesses except for solar farms and they do not create jobs for people. Mrs. Godbold was concerned that the changes would take a lot of the accountability from County Council and give it to the County Administrator. She also stated that the Council does not receive updates and over 14% of the county's population is in poverty because there are no jobs.

Chairman Hudson called for the vote. The motion carried with Mrs. Godbold opposing.

Ordinance No. 24-13, An Ordinance To (I) Amend The Existing Joint County Industrial And Business Park Agreement Effective As Of November 17, 1997, As Amended, Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Marlboro County, South Carolina, Providing For The Development Of A Joint County Industrial And Business Park So As To Include Additional Property In That Portion Of The Joint County Industrial And Business Park Geographically Located In Darlington County, South Carolina; (II) Amend The Existing Fee Agreement By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Nucor Corporation Effective As Of July 1, 2019 To Include Additional Real Property And Extend The Investment Period; And (III) Other Matters Relating Thereto - FIRST READING

The title of Ordinance No. 24-13 was read for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 24-14, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article II. (County Council), Section 2-31 (Compensation Of Council Members And Officers), To Increase The Compensation Of Council Members And Officers And Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance - FIRST READING BY TITLE ONLY

The title of Ordinance 24-14 was read for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 24-15, Authorizing An Amendment To The Agreement Governing The Joint County Industrial And Business Park By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Marlboro County, South Carolina, In Order To Expand The Boundaries Of The Park To Include Certain Property Located In Marlboro County And Other Matters Related Thereto - FIRST READING

The title of Ordinance No. 24-15 was read for first reading. No action required.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 783, Identifying A Project To Satisfy The Requirements Of Title 12, Chapter 44 Of The South Carolina Code, So As To Allow Investment Expenditures Incurred By A Company Known To The County As Project Rob, Its Affiliates And Related Entities, To Qualify As Expenditures Eligible For A Fee-In-Lieu Of Ad Valorem Taxes Arrangement With

Darlington County, South Carolina; Providing For Other Related Economic Development Incentives, Including Special Source Revenue Credits; And Other Matters Related Thereto

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve Resolution No. 783.

The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Other Items

Appointments To Boards/Commissions/Committees

Councilman Flowers' appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals and the Alcohol & Drug Citizen Advisory Committee was carried over in his absence.

Mr. Coker carried over his appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals, the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals, the Historical Commission, and the Alcohol & Drug Citizen Advisory Committee.

Chairman Hudson carried over his appointment to the Alcohol & Drug Citizen Advisory Committee.

Ms. Thomas carried over her appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals and the Planning Commission.

Mr. Askins carried over his appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Mr. Douglas (Council District 2), **MOTION** made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Kevin Long to the Construction Board of Adjustment & Appeals.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Long will serve a second term commencing July 1, 2024, and extend through June 30, 2028.

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Kevin Brown to the Planning Commission.

The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Brown will serve a third term commencing July 1, 2024, and extend through June 30, 2028.

Award For Darlington County Economic Development Strategic Plan

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to award the contract, in the amount of \$84,830, to RKG Associates, Inc. to complete an Economic Strategic Plan for Darlington County.

Mrs. Godbold wanted to know who was appointed by Darlington County Progress and Darlington County Economic Development Partnership to serve on the committee to review the Request for Proposals for the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Mr. Stewart's response was Sonoco's Vice President Roger Buckley and Duke Energy's Nuclear Plant Vice President Laura Basta.

Mrs. Godbold asked whether the panel reviewed any type of portfolio, references, etc. from the companies.

Mr. Stewart confirmed the information that the Committee reviewed before selecting the top three candidates to interview. The Committee's proposal was then submitted to County Council for consideration.

Chairman Hudson called for the vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Addendum To Employer Resolution For Participation In The State Insurance Benefits Program Regarding County/Municipality Council Member Coverage

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the Addendum to Employer Resolution for county council members to continue receiving insurance benefits under the State Health Plan.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Stewart noted that each Council member needed to sign the Addendum document and the staff would submit it after the meeting.

Administrative Update

Opioid Fund Usage Public Hearings. In referring to a postcard that was placed on Council's desk, Mr. Stewart explained that the postcard lists the dates and locations for four public hearings that will be held throughout the county in August to receive public input regarding the usage of the Opioid Fund. Rubicon was awarded the contract and will conduct these meetings/public hearings where different entities, law enforcement, hospitals, pharmacists, etc. will discuss possible usage. The postcards will be distributed this coming week.

Status Of The New Courthouse. Mr. Stewart announced that as of today, the Clerk of Court was operating in the new courthouse. The first term of court is scheduled to begin on Monday, July 8, 2024. A date for the courthouse dedication will be forthcoming.

Request For Financial Support For Darlington City's New Sports Complex, Darlington City Mayor Curtis Boyd. Mr. Stewart reported that Mayor Boyd came to him with a proposal and rather than presenting it, he invited Mayor Boyd to appear before Council to present it. Council members were given a handout showing the layout of Blue Street Athletic Complex.

Mayor Boyd reported that the City of Darlington had been working to build a new sports complex since the 1990s and finally broke ground on an \$8.5 million project off Blue Street in Darlington. However, the City was \$450,000 short. He stated that in seeking additional funds, Senator Malloy suggested that he ask County Council. Mayor Boyd described the layout of the sports complex and pointed out that the tennis court area would have to be deleted until the City can obtain additional funds. To complete the project with the tennis courts, the City was seeking additional financial assistance and would need to know within a month or so to finalize the project. It was noted that the City of Darlington

invested \$5.5 million, Darlington County School District invested \$1.4 million, and Senator Malloy secured \$1 million for the project. Mayor Boyd also stated that it was his understanding that the City has always owned the ballfields, however, county residents do play on the fields. He mentioned that the same contractor that was building the new elementary school for the school district was building the sports complex.

Ms. Thomas asked about the status of the project or whether it was held up due to the lack of funds.

Mayor Boyd said the ballfields should be complete by the first of the year, but the tennis courts had been cut off until additional funds are obtained.

Mr. Stewart mentioned that questions could be submitted to the Clerk to Council and/or the staff and they would submit them to the City.

Ms. Thomas talked about seniors not knowing what is going on and the need for more advertising. She asked whether COG (Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments) provided funds for this project.

Mayor Boyd responded, "No." The project received funds from the City of Darlington, Darlington County School District, and Senator Gerald Malloy.

Requests / Comments - Members Of Council

Mr. Davis thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked everyone to pray for each other.

Mr. Douglas asked about the size of buildings that would require inspections/permits.

Mr. Stewart responded that this would depend upon the building's use (commercial or residential), etc. He did not know the exact square footage without looking at the Codes. However, there are certain square footage for residential purposes that would not require a permit and a certain size for commercial purposes that would require a permit. Mr. Stewart stated that he would provide detailed information later because he could not do it publicly since a lawsuit had been threatened in an email making this a legal matter. However, Council could schedule an executive session during the next council meeting to review/discuss all the details.

Ms. Thomas mentioned that Senator Gerald Malloy had been very generous with money, and she had been working with him and PDRTA (Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority) on the South Darlington Transportation Improvement Project to install sidewalks for seniors and those with special needs to use to go to Wal-Mart and around town. She commended the library for its summer resources but stated that more advertising was needed.

Mrs. Godbold and Chairman Hudson thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Vote For Executive Session

There was not a vote for executive session.


Adjournment

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to adjourn the meeting. There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of August 5, 2024.