

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
DARLINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DARLINGTON, SC

April 7, 2025

A Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the County Council of Darlington County was held this 7th day of April 2025, 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 Darlington County Government Building located at 1 Public Square in Darlington, SC.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A Notice of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 25-04 was published in the Hartsville Messenger and the News and Press on March 12, 2025. A Notice of Public Hearing for Ordinance No. 25-05 was published in the Hartsville Messenger and the News and Press on March 19, 2025.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Bobby Hudson, Vice-Chairman Marvin Le Flowers, Chaplain Dannie Douglas, Jr., Mr. Michael Kirk Askins, Mr. David Coker, Mr. Albert Davis, III., Mrs. Angie S. Godbold, and Ms. Joyce W. Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT

County Administrator Marion Charles Stewart, III, County Attorneys James H. Lucas and Adam Gainey, Clerk to Council J. JaNet Bishop, Central Communications Director Michelle Hall, Codes Enforcement Staff Mary Tunstall, Corrections Director Mitch Stanley, Emergency Management Director Molly Odom, Finance Director Sherman Dibble, Interim Fire District Chief John Shoemake, Human Resources Director Ginger Winburn, Assistant VA Officer Clarence Chapman, Jr., Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd Attorney Will Johnson, and others.

REPORTERS PRESENT

Mr. Stephan Drew News & Press and WPDE TV 15 (ABC) News Reporter.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance No. 25-04, An Ordinance To Amend The Agreement For Development Of A Multi-County Industrial And Business Park By And Between Darlington County And Marlboro County, South Carolina, Providing For The Development Of A Jointly Owned And Operated Industrial/Business Park So As To Include Additional Property In Darlington County And

Marlboro County As Part Of The Joint County Industrial Park, And Other Matters Relating Thereto - THIRD READING

Chairman Hudson declared the public hearing open at 6 p.m. to receive comments on Ordinance No. 25-04.

There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

Ordinance No. 25-05, An Ordinance Authorizing Darlington County To Accept Ownership And Responsibility Of Property Through The Buyout Program With South Carolina Office Of Resilience (SCOR), Group 1 - THIRD READING

Street Address	Tax Map/Parcel #
404 Watson Cir, Hartsville, SC	036-05-01-009
406 Watson Cir, Hartsville, SC	036-05-01-008
420 Watson Cir, Hartsville, SC	036-05-01-005
412 Watson Cir, Hartsville, SC	036-05-01-007
308 Kenwood Ave, Hartsville, SC	056-02-02-012
511 Kenwood Ave, Hartsville, SC	056-02-02-061
1236 Patrick Hwy, Hartsville, SC	054-16-01-076
107 Shoshone Dr, Darlington, SC	184-00-01-017
2425 Sampit Dr, Hartsville, SC	011-00-01-162
217 S Mary St, Hartsville, SC	056-04-04-040

The Buyout Project is funded in part by a US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant for Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) for the purpose of Darlington County acquiring property from voluntarily participating residential homeowners who are located in a floodplain and/or have suffered damages due to flooding during the 2015, 2016, or 2018 Presidentially-declared disasters and/or located in a program defined Disaster Risk Reduction Area.

Representatives for the South Carolina Office Of Resilience (SCOR) and the voluntarily participating residential homeowners have negotiated Contract(s) for Sale of Real Estate to be executed in the name of, and on behalf of, Darlington County. Darlington County anticipates receiving ownership of the properties at no cost and will be perpetually responsible for the maintenance of the properties.

The South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR) and Darlington County are acting in accordance with a Darlington County application for a Community Development Block Grant for Mitigation (CBDG-MIT) and a Grant Agreement executed November 21, 2022.

Chairman Hudson declared the public hearing open to receive comments on Ordinance No. 25-05.

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. Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

Personal Appearances - Mr. Ben Gore, Center Theater Building Commission Chairman - Renovations At The Center Theater

Mr. Gore presented information regarding the renovations at the Center Theater. He talked about and showed pictures of the facility before the renovations began, the current status of the renovations, and where it is going. He also presented the renovation timeline, projected completion time for various phases, progress in 2024, the flooring and lighting costs, the seating model, and the updated rental model analysis, which should make this a sustainable entity. Mr. Gore noted that before renovations began in 2022, the Center Theater raised \$1.6 million, and the City of Hartsville has committed to being financially involved with the Theater. Mr. Gore also presented a list of the renovations that have been completed and paid for. He stated that the Center Theater does not owe anything and has about \$200,000 in reserves in the bank as a contingency fund.

Mr. Askins asked about the amount of revenue the Special Purpose District receives from taxes.

Mr. Gore's response was approximately \$111,000 to \$112,000 annually from the county. He pointed out that the operational expenses for the remainder of the year will be about \$95,200, which the Theater has in reserves. Mr. Gore pointed out that the Center Theater still needs \$1.9 million for remaining renovations.

Mrs. Godbold questioned whether the Center Theater had applied for County Accommodations Tax funds.

Mr. Gore responded that he thinks they did.

Consent Agenda (Receive As Information)

Included in the Consent Agenda were the following:

- 6.A. Darlington County Humane Society Impact Report, February 2025
- 6.B. Economic Development Partnership Board Minutes, November 20, 2024
- 6.C. DHC&M Board Member Packet with Visitor Stats and Board Minutes - March 6, 2025

- 6.D. Pee Dee Regional Council Of Governments COGNITIVE Connections Monthly Newsletter, March 21, 2025
- 6.E. Library Board Minutes, January 15, 2025
- 6.F. 911 Call Volume Report, February 2025
- 6.G. Darlington County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Activities/Events, April 2025
- 6.H. Library System Calendar Of Events, April 2025
- 6.I. Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Meeting Notice
- 6.J. Fire District Call Volume Report, March 2025
- 6.K. Financial update through February 28, 2025

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Approval Of Minutes - Minutes Of Regular Meeting, March 3, 2025

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held on March 3, 2025.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinances

Ordinance No. 25-04, An Ordinance To Amend The Agreement For Development Of A Multi-County Industrial And Business Park By And Between Darlington County And Marlboro County, South Carolina, Providing For The Development Of A Jointly Owned And Operated Industrial/Business Park So As To Include Additional Property In Darlington County And Marlboro County As Part Of The Joint County Industrial Park, And Other Matters Relating Thereto - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 25-04. Mrs. Godbold recused herself.

The motion carried with Mrs. Godbold recusing.

Ordinance No. 25-05, An Ordinance Authorizing Darlington County To Accept Ownership And Responsibility Of Property Through The Buyout Program With South Carolina Office Of Resilience (SCOR), Group 1 - THIRD READING

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Douglas to approve third reading of Ordinance No. 25-05.

Mr. Davis asked whether the county would maintain the homes.

Mr. Stewart responded that the homes will be demolished, and the county will maintain the green space.

Ms. Thomas questioned how the drainage project was handled.

Mr. Stewart talked about how SCOR (South Carolina Office of Resilience) conducted their study, received public comments, held meetings, etc. Then Council received a report. He asked the Clerk to Council to provide Ms. Thomas with another copy of the report.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 25-06, An Ordinance To Amend Darlington County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 2 (Administration), Article II. (County Council), Division 3. (Meetings), To Allow Virtual Attendance At Council Meetings And To Establish The Effective Date Of This Ordinance, SECOND READING - CARRY OVER REQUESTED

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 25-06.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 25-07, An Ordinance Authorizing The Sale Of Property Near The Mozingo Building In Darlington - SECOND READING - CARRY OVER REQUESTED

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to carry over second reading of Ordinance No. 25-07.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 25-08, An Ordinance Authorizing Darlington County To Accept Ownership And Responsibility Of Property Through The Buyout Program With South Carolina Office Of Resilience (SCOR), Group 2 - SECOND READING

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Flowers to approve second reading of Ordinance No. 25-08.

The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 25-09, An Ordinance To Make Appropriations For Ordinary County Purposes For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025, And Ending June 30, 2026; To Provide For The Expenditures Thereof; And To Provide For Revenues For The Payment Thereof - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

Chairman Hudson read the title of Ordinance No. 25-09 for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 25-10, An Ordinance To Designate That Agency In The County For Alcohol And Drug Abuse Planning For Programs And To Make Appropriations Pursuant To Sections 6-27-40(B) And 12 -33-245(B) And (C) Of The 1976 Code Of Laws Of South Carolina, As Amended, For Darlington County For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025, And Ending June 30, 2026 - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

Chairman Hudson read the title of Ordinance No. 25-10 for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 25-11, An Ordinance Authorizing Darlington County To Accept Ownership And Responsibility Of Property Through The Buyout Program With South Carolina Office Of Resilience (SCOR), Group 3 - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

Chairman Hudson read the title of Ordinance No. 25-11 for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 25-12, An Ordinance Authorizing The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee Agreement By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Project Viper Providing For A Payment Of A Fee In Lieu Of Taxes, And Other Matters Related Thereto - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

Chairman Hudson read the title of Ordinance No. 25-12 for first reading. No action required.

Ordinance No. 25-13, An Ordinance Authorizing The Execution And Delivery Of A Fee Agreement By And Between Darlington County, South Carolina And Project Joint Providing For A Payment Of A Fee In Lieu Of Taxes, And Other Matters Related Thereto - FIRST READING - BY TITLE ONLY

Chairman Hudson read the title of Ordinance No. 25-13 for first reading. No action required.

Resolutions

Resolution No. 796, Proclamation For National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 13-19, 2025

Mr. Flowers read the resolution in its entirety.

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Coker to approve Resolution No. 796.

The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports.

Other Items

Appointments To Boards/Commissions/Committees

Economic Development Partnership Board. **MOTION** made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Donald Bockoven to the Economic Development Partnership Board. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Bockoven will serve a second term commencing July 1, 2025, and extending through June 30, 2029.

MOTION made by Mr. Coker and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Ms. Brianna Douglas to the Economic Development Partnership Board. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Douglas will serve a full term commencing July 1, 2025, and extending through June 30, 2029.

Board of Fire Control. **MOTION** made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Coker to reappoint Mr. William Coates to the Board of Fire Control. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Coates will serve a second term commencing July 1, 2025, and extending through June 30, 2029.

Airport Commission. **MOTION** made by Douglas and seconded by Mr. Davis to reappoint Mr. Alton Jeffords to the Airport Commission. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jeffords will serve a third term commencing July 1, 2025, and extending through June 30, 2029.

Board of Assessment Appeals. **MOTION** made by Ms. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Coker to reappoint Mr. Robert Shortt to the Board of Assessment Appeals. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Shortt will serve a second term that commenced July 1, 2024, and extends to June 30, 2028.

The remaining appointments/reappointments were carried over.

Administrative Update - Mr. Charles Stewart, County Administrator

Mr. Stewart reminded Council of the Special Meeting and Budget Worksession scheduled for Wednesday, April 16th, at 9:30 a.m. at Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments Conference Center. The purpose of the Special Meeting will be to give first reading to an ordinance amending the Fees Ordinance. The Budget Worksession will begin immediately after the Special Meeting.

Requests / Comments - Members Of Council

Mr. Davis thanked everyone for attending the meeting and Mr. Gore for providing the update on the renovations at the Center Theater. He also commended the volunteers who worked during the race.

Ms. Thomas thanked everyone for supporting County Council. She solicited suggestions for anything that Council can do better and for volunteers.

Mr. Askins thanked Mr. Gore for the update on the renovations at the Center Theater and commended the events and uniqueness of the building. He stated that the amount collected from the Special Purpose District does not cover the Theater's operational cost. At the next meeting, he would like County Council to discuss using Hospitality Tax dollars to complete the renovations.

Vote For Executive Session - Discussion Regarding Personnel Matters Related To Employment Of The Darlington County Economic Development Director and Discussion Of Matters Relating To The Proposed Location, Expansion, Or The Provision Of Services Encouraging Location Or Expansion Of Industries Or Other Businesses In The Area Served By The Public Body - Project Viper (Ordinance No. 25-12) And Project Joint (Ordinance No. 25-13)

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas to vote for executive session for discussion regarding personnel matters related to employment of the Darlington County Economic Development Director, and discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body - Project Viper (Ordinance No. 25-12).

The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session - Discussion Regarding Personnel Matters Related To Employment Of The Darlington County Economic Development Director and Discussion Of Matters Relating To The Proposed Location, Expansion, Or The Provision Of Services Encouraging Location Or Expansion Of Industries Or Other Businesses In The Area Served By The Public Body - Project Viper (Ordinance No. 25-12) And Project Joint (Ordinance No. 25-13)

MOTION made by Mr. Flowers and seconded by Mr. Douglas for Council, the County Administrator, the County Attorneys, and Haynesworth Sinkler Boyd Attorney Will Johnson to go into executive session for discussion regarding personnel matters related to employment of the Darlington County Economic Development Director and discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body - Project Viper (Ordinance No. 25-12).

The motion carried unanimously.

Council and the named individuals went into executive session at 6:35 p.m. and reconvened at 7:03 p.m. Upon reconvening, Chairman Hudson announced that no action was taken in executive session.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Mr. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Thomas to adjourn the meeting. There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Janet Bishop
Clerk to Council



Bobby Hudson, Chairman
Darlington County Council

Approved at meeting of May 5, 2025.