

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

July 3, 2018

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

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The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Thursday, July 3, 2018, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield, SC. Notice of this meeting was provided to Edgefielddaily.com, The Edgefield Advertiser and others as requested.

Members present

- Dean Campbell, Chairman
- Arthur Biggs, Vice Chairman
- James Bibbs, Councilman
- Scott Cooper, Councilman
- Albert Talbert, Councilman

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Others present

- Tommy Paradise, County Administrator
- Bruce Cooley, Assistant Administrator/Finance Director
- Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council
- and others as per list attached

Others absent

- Andrew Marine, County Attorney

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Pastor Bruce Cooley. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was then recited.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the July 3, 2018 agenda was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Cooper. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the June 7, 2018 County Council minutes (Regular Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Bibbs. Motion passed unanimously.

Guest Speakers

None

Comments from the Public

None

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing of Ordinance Number 17-18-742, "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 34 of the Edgefield County Code."
There were no comments regarding this public hearing.
2. Public Hearing of Ordinance Number 17-18-743, "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 42-61 of the Edgefield County Code."

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There were no comments regarding this public hearing.

3. Public Hearing of Ordinance Number 17-18-744, "An Ordinance Calling For a Referendum at the Next General Election to Determine whether the South Carolina Department of Revenue may issue Temporary Permits to Allow for the Sale of Alcohol Beverages for On-Premises Consumption and Beer and Wine at Permitted Off-Premises Locations on Sundays in the County of Edgefield."
There were no comments regarding this public hearing.

Old Business

1. Consideration of Approval of Second Reading of Ordinance Number 17-18-742, "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 34 of the Edgefield County Code."
Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Paradise if anything had changed with this ordinance. Mr. Paradise said nothing had changed in this ordinance. There was no discussion.
Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 17-18-742 was made by Councilman Bibbs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Consideration of Approval of Second Reading of Ordinance Number 17-18-743, "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 42-61 of the Edgefield County Code."
Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Paradise if anything had changed with this ordinance. Mr. Paradise said nothing had changed in this ordinance. Chairman Campbell said Summers Pendarvis, who originally asked commercial properties be covered in this ordinance, asked about the over-seeing party regarding these tax breaks. She suggested there may be a better State organization that could oversee these projects and give their approval. Chairman Campbell said he would like to see the County give the final approval but the overseeing party would have the expertise regarding different time periods and historical replication of certain time periods to be sure the projects meet the qualifications. He said it may be better to amend the ordinance to include the County and some of what Mrs. Pendarvis suggested to cover everyone's needs. Councilman Cooper asked if other counties use non-government organizations (NGO) to review these projects. Mr. Paradise said he isn't sure but if this ordinance was amended to include the County and the NGO, it would protect both groups. Councilmen Talbert and Biggs agreed. Mr. Paradise and Mr. Marine will bring back recommendations for the amendment at third reading.
Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 17-18-743 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Cooper. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Consideration of Approval of Second Reading of Ordinance Number 17-18-744, "An Ordinance Calling For a Referendum at the Next General Election to Determine whether the South Carolina Department of Revenue may issue Temporary Permits to Allow for the Sale of Alcohol Beverages for On-Premises Consumption and Beer and Wine at Permitted Off-Premises Locations on Sundays in the County of Edgefield."
Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Paradise if anything had changed with this ordinance. Mr. Paradise said nothing had changed in this ordinance. Councilman Biggs asked about the permits. He asked if a business would have to purchase a permit every Sunday. Mr. Paradise said that a business would have to purchase a permit for every Sunday, but a business can buy up to 52 permits at one time not to extend past the expiration of their alcohol sales license.

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Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 17-18-744 was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Cooper. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of Approval of Third Reading of Ordinance Number 17-18-740, "An Ordinance Calling for a Referendum to be Held on Election Day, November 6, 2018, on Whether Terms of Office for Edgefield County Council Members shall be changed from Two Year to Four Year Staggered Terms." Chairman Campbell said that he'd noticed one small typo in the ordinance. He said it wouldn't change the intent of the ordinance but that it would fix a mistake. The ordinance said that three counties have the 2 year terms, but it is really two. He asked that staff make this change.

Chairman Campbell then gave him comments regarding this ordinance. He said:

We are considering changing the terms of County Council seats from 2-year terms to 4-year, staggered terms. If County Council passes this ordinance tonight, then it will be on the ballot in November for voters to decide the matter.

Here's where we stand: Right now, all 5 County Council seats are 2-year terms. This proposal would change that to, not just to 4-year terms, but stagger the terms so that every 2 years three seats are up for election and 2 years later the other 2 seats are up for election.

When this topic comes up, we invariably ask ourselves: What's better: 2-year terms or 4-year terms for County Council? It's a question worth asking ourselves.

Only two counties in South Carolina – Anderson and Edgefield Counties – have 2-year terms for County Council members. In 2016, York County voters approved making their County Council terms 4-year, staggered terms instead of 2-year terms. They are the most recent County to make the change, leaving the two counties as the only ones that don't do that.

We should also ask ourselves: The other 44 counties in our state have 4-year staggered terms for County Council members. While being in the minority doesn't make us wrong, does it make us right? What do the other 44 counties know that we don't know?

Let me share some ideas on that topic.

First, think about the other elected officials on our ballot in the General Elections. All of them in Edgefield County are on 4-year terms – School Board seats, every Mayor, every Town Council seat, every county-wide office (Sheriff, Clerk of Court, Treasurer, etc.). There's a reason for that.

I'll give you a few examples of why I believe changing terms of office is important.

Having 2-year terms means that you're asking elected officials to always look to the next election. I believe the temptation is there to make bad decisions because the next election is "right around the corner." Also, you have a chance to have a complete turnover, not just in the Council, but in County Staff, much of which County Council has to approve. If that happens, citizens are at a greater risk for

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bad decisions and, as a result, higher taxes and other problems, because nobody will know how County Government operates and maintains no institutional memory.

In addition, 4-year terms don't protect incumbents. How do I know? I see them voted out in every election. Voters have no trouble figuring out who they want in office, particularly on the local level.

Having 4-year staggered terms add stability to the County. When business and industry look to come to our County, one of the items they look at is our local governments and assess if we are doing a good job. If we leave 2-year terms in place, we are adding one more stumbling block to our County's pursuit of jobs. Business and industry want to know you have a stable County government because we are who they deal with.

Finally, you may ask yourself: If 2-year terms are good enough for the U.S. House of Representatives and S.C. House of Representatives, shouldn't they be good enough for County Council? The U.S. and South Carolina House terms are set under the federal and state constitutions. That was the way the founding fathers ensured that the federal and state elected officials would go back home to connect with the people, instead of staying in Washington, DC, or Columbia.

I contend that the County Council is closer to the people than those who serve in the U.S. House and S.C. House. Every day, County Council members live in the districts from which we are elected. We are here all the time, and you can find us easily. You see us in the post office, in the grocery store, in church, and at the gas station every day.

How much closer to the people can we be?

All I ask is that you consider these facts. The final decision is up to the voters through a referendum in the November 2018 election, as it should be.

This concept has already been endorsed by the Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce and the Edgefield Town Council.

I recommend that County Council not only approve it, but ask that the voters approve it as well so we can continue to move our County forward.

Councilman Cooper and Biggs both agreed with Chairman Campbell's comments.

Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 17-18-740 was made by Councilman Cooper, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Consideration of Approval of Third Reading of Ordinance Number 17-18-741, "An Ordinance to Zone Certain Previously Un-zoned Property Located in Mount Vintage Plantation and Shaw Estates to be Zoned Residential Development (RD)."

Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Paradise if anything had changed with this ordinance. Mr. Paradise said nothing had changed in this ordinance. There was no discussion.

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Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 17-18-741 was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Bibbs. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Consideration of Approval of First Reading of Ordinance Number 18-19-745, "An Ordinance to Amend Section 18-134 of the Edgefield County Code Designating Lands Which are Applicable to the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance."

Mr. Paradise explained the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has updated the maps identifying areas that have a special flood hazard. He said Edgefield County will need to adopt the updated maps to remain compliant with the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 18-19-745 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Bibbs. Motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Public

1. Fred Peterson

Mr. Peterson stated that he is not satisfied with the traffic code enforcement in the County. He said he believes there is a need for more deputies and State Highway Patrolmen to enforce traffic code violations in Edgefield County. He said he would like to see the Sheriff's Office setup more license checks to interact with the community.

County Administrator's Report

Mr. Paradise started his report by saying Edgefield County Recreation hosted the 12 and under Ozone District All-Star tournament. He said seven teams participated in the 7 day event.

Mr. Paradise said staff has been reviewing the conduct policies for youth recreation. He explained that in the coming seasons coaches will sign an ethics pledge similar to one used for Dixie Youth Baseball.

Mr. Paradise then told Council, staff is working with the Sheriff's Office and the SC Department of Corrections to increase the litter control activities in Edgefield County.

Next, Mr. Paradise said Edgefield County has partnered with the Economic Development Partnership and the Edgefield County School District to have the University of South Carolina Office of Economic Engagement conduct a county-wide broadband access evaluation. The cost of this study is \$7,500 with Edgefield County's portion being \$1,875 and it will be paid from the Economic Development Fund.

Mr. Paradise told County Council the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation study will begin on July 10th with a meeting of key staff members. He went on to say he believes this will take a lot of time from staff and Planning Commission members in the coming months to achieve a completion date of March 2019.

Mr. Paradise then said the SC Office of the State Auditor has completed an audit of the Magistrate's Office and Victim's Advocate accounts. The audit confirmed Edgefield County staff remitted the required funds to the state and are using the funds as allowed by law. He did say two slight math errors were discovered and that they have been corrected.

Mr. Paradise said staff is following the Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) class action court case that has come about from a decision from Kane County, Utah. He explained this case involves the calculation of the payment to the counties for federal land in counties that are not taxed and may lead to Edgefield County being able to collect additional compensation for past years.

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Mr. Paradise finished his report by saying staff has started the new fiscal year and Finance is closing out FY 2017-2018.

Councilman Biggs said there is a State number to contact regarding litter. He said he plans to call that number and find out their plan and/or timeline to start trash pick-up around the State and when they may be coming to Edgefield County.

Comments by County Council Chair

Chairman Campbell wished everyone a safe and happy Fourth of July.

Executive Session

None

Adjourn

Councilman Biggs made the motion to adjourn at 6:42PM, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Chairman

ATTEST



Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council