

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

August 5, 2020

6:00 PM

Virtually Via ZOOM

Instrument Book Page
202000003542 OR 1830 270

The Edgefield County Council held a virtual meeting at 6:00 PM Wednesday, August 5, 2020 via ZOOM. This meeting was also streamed live on the Edgefield County Government YouTube page. Notice of this meeting was provided to The Edgefield Advertiser and others as requested.

Members present (virtually)

Scott Cooper, Chairman
Albert Talbert, Vice Chairman
Arthur Biggs, Councilman
Dean Campbell, Councilman
Dr. Jacqueline Kennion, Councilwoman

202000003542
Filed for Record in
EDGEFIELD COUNTY, SC
CHARLES L. REEL, CLERK OF COURT
10-01-2020 At 10:00 am.
Notice nochs .00
OR Book 1830 Page 270 - 277

Others present (virtually)

Tommy Paradise, County Administrator
Dana Waters, Finance Director
Andrew Marine, County Attorney
Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council

Chairman Cooper called the meeting. Councilman Campbell gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was then recited.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the July 7, 2020 County Council minutes (Regular Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Guest Speakers

None

Comments from the Public – Read by Jennifer Gilley

1. Linda Anderson – Item #6 Suspend Further Land Management Ordinance Development
Until January 1, 2021. I understand this need as requested. As a citizen who has closely followed this process from the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan to its conclusion and have attended meetings of the LMO up to and including the final scheduled LMO Steering Committee meeting as was held. As stated on the agenda: This resolution would not restrict staff from meeting or talking with individuals or small groups to provide information regarding the LMO. It would also not restrict staff from reviewing the current draft for mistakes and possible recommendations to the planning commission for improvements. My question then becomes how citizens will have access to these meetings and discussion as it goes forward in order to stay informed.
2. John Pettigrew - Item #6 Suspend Further Land Management Ordinance Development

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Mr. Chairman and members of Council. Thank you for the opportunity to address you briefly tonight concerning Item 6 under New Business which would suspend the Land Management Development Ordinance. I support this suspension to allow time and consideration by the public of this very important matter.

I have attended 2 of the steering committee meetings and there has not been the opportunity for public comments since before the unveiling of the draft zoning map. I understand that the full planning commission will schedule at least 2 public hearings in the future and expect these will be well attended if the virus situation allows. The proposed zoning map makes drastic changes to our current zoning and I feel it is imperative to allow ample opportunity for public review and discussion.

Along those lines, have you also considered a moratorium on new subdivision developments until the final passage of the new zoning ordinance? Recently a number of new subdivisions have been approved in the Merriwether area of Edgefield County. Some developers may have sought approval prior to new more restrictive zoning guidelines and requirements were passed. A temporary pause may be in order to allow adequate time to fully evaluate the impact of these 1500-2000 homes on our infrastructure such as roads, schools, water and sewer, etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Reports

There was no discussion nor questions on the reports.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Cooper asked Council if there were any items that needed to be removed from the Consent Agenda to allow discussion. There were none. Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Consideration of Appointment to the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) Committee.
Dean Campbell.....Edgefield County
2. Consideration of Appointment to the Planning Commission.
Joel PresleyAt-Large

Consent Agenda Ends Here

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing of Ordinance Number 19-20-770, "An Ordinance to Impose, Subject to Referendum Approval and Pursuant to the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, a One Percent (1%) Sales and Use Tax (The "Tax") within Edgefield County for not more than Eight (8) Years; To Order A County-Wide Referendum on the Question of Imposing the Tax and to Prescribe the Contents of the Ballot Question; to Specify the Purposes for Which the Proceeds from the Tax are to be Used, the Maximum Time for the Imposition of the Tax; and to Provide for Other Matters Relating Thereto.
 - Linda Anderson

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County Council and the CPST commission determined there is a critical need for a new Law Enforcement Center. The projected cost will be upwards of \$27,000,000. As written in the agenda requesting the 1 % sales tax referendum question be placed on the November 3, 2020 ballot, the proceeds are to be used for the following purposes or projects: Constructing, acquiring and equipping a portion of a new County Law Enforcement Center with detention facilities, including land acquisition, not to exceed \$10,097,269. What this indicates is there will remain a balance of approximately \$16,902,731 that is more than half the projected cost. Therefore, we can assume that property taxes will need to be raised to cover the remaining balance. The question then becomes why limit the revenue generated from this sales tax to \$10,097,269 rather than utilize all revenue generated from this tax to cover the cost of the LEC reducing the need for property tax increase as much as possible. Any overage generated will be given to the County Council to determine the use which would not be in keeping with the intent of the citizens' approval for the tax to fund the center. Therefore I am requesting that Council consider an amendment that simply states any and all revenue generated through this tax be utilized to fund as much of the LEC as possible and that any overage beyond the cost of the center can then be placed in reserve for other needs.

Old Business

1. Consideration of Approval of Third Reading of Ordinance Number 19-20-770, "An Ordinance to Impose, Subject to Referendum Approval and Pursuant to the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, a One Percent (1%) Sales and Use Tax (The "Tax") within Edgefield County for not more than Eight (8) Years; To Order A County-Wide Referendum on the Question of Imposing the Tax and to Prescribe the Contents of the Ballot Question; to Specify the Purposes for Which the Proceeds from the Tax are to be Used, the Maximum Time for the Imposition of the Tax; and to Provide for Other Matters Relating Thereto."

Mr. Paradise said that he wanted to note the \$10,000,000 figure came from the financial advisor and that Council has to either vote in favor of or allow the questions to fail as it has been presented. He said Council cannot amend the question as presented. He also noted the bond doesn't have to be paid off within 8 years.

Motion to approve third reading of ordinance number 19-20-770 was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. This entered Council into discussion.

Councilman Campbell asked if this would be listed as one or two questions on the ballot. Mr. Marine said this would be listed as one question. Councilman Campbell asked if there would be a question listed for the bonding. Mr. Paradise said that a bond would be passed separately.

Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Consideration of Approval to Authorize the County Administrator to use up to \$5,000 from the 2005 General Obligation Bond approved by Ordinance No. 04-05-564 for the Construction of a 9-hole Disc Golf Course at Bettis Park.

Mr. Paradise told Council that in 2005, Edgefield County issued a bond for \$765,000. He said this bond's purpose was to pay for a security system for the County Courthouse; acquiring and installing GIS software, include tax assessor digital mapping; acquiring and installing a records management system for use by the Clerk of Court's Office; constructing and equipping a new

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recreation facility and other capital projects as may be approved. He said the bond has been paid off and has a balance of \$33,502 remaining. Mr. Paradise said that if this is passed it would authorize \$5,000 of the remaining balance to be used to establish a 9-hole disc golf course at Bettis Park.

Motion to authorize the County Administrator to use up to \$5,000 from the 2005 General Obligation Bond approved by Ordinance No. 04-05-564 for the Construction of a 9-hole Disc Golf Course at Bettis Park was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of Approval to Authorize the County Administrator to use funds not to exceed \$30,000 from the 2015 Vehicle Bond to purchase a truck for County Maintenance.

Mr. Paradise said the truck used by Joe Simpson for maintenance work around the county has approximately 350,000 miles. He said the vehicle has previously been repurposed from Emergency Management. Council was told at the July meeting the funds will be utilized to obtain a used truck from State Surplus Program. He said that in conversations with State Surplus staff found that the vehicles available would be in the low \$20,000 range with about 100,000 miles. He went on to say staff located a new truck on state bid for \$26,215 which staff believes would provide for a longer life expectancy for the vehicle and be a better long-term value. He also noted the 2015 Vehicle Bond has a balance of \$104,507.

Motion to authorize the County Administrator to use funds not to exceed \$30,000 from the 2015 Vehicle Bond to purchase a truck for County Maintenance was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of Approval of First Reading of Ordinance Number 20-21-771, "An Ordinance to Approve the Policies for a Spay/Neuter Program for Edgefield County and Other Matters Relating Thereto."

Mr. Paradise said in 2014, Edgefield County began a Spay/Neuter Program for animals of low income families with the service provided by the SPCA Albrecht Center. He said staff has recently been notified by SPCA Albrecht Center that the cost for these procedures will increase to \$55 for cat spay, \$40 for cat neuter, \$80 for dog spay, and \$55 for dog neuter. He said the proposed revisions allow for these increases as well as allows the opportunity for veterinarians in private practice to participate in the program.

Motion to approve first reading of ordinance number 20-21-771 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Campbell. This entered Council into discussion.

Councilman Campbell asked if this would allow for any/all existing or future Veterinary Clinics to participate in the program as long as they are located in Edgefield County and wish to participate. Mr. Paradise said that is correct.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Edgefield Veterinary Clinic.

Mr. Paradise said Edgefield Veterinary Clinic has indicated a desire to assist Edgefield County with the Spay/Neuter Program. He said this MOU will authorize staff to send citizens to either the

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SPCA in Aiken or the Edgefield Veterinary Clinic in Edgefield to receive these services. Edgefield Veterinary Clinic will utilize the same rate scale as authorized by County ordinance. Chairman Cooper called for a vote and this item of business passed unanimously.

5. Consideration of Approval of Resolution Number 20-21-1128, "Calling on the Citizens of Edgefield County to take Recommended Precautions to Prevent the Further Spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic."

Mr. Paradise explained that in the past month, Edgefield County has seen a significant increase in the number of Covid-19 patients, with 44% of the total cases being within the last 14 days. He said the Presidential Coronavirus Task Force and Governor McMaster have recommended social distancing, wearing masks, and other ways to prevent the spread of Covid-19. He said the proposed resolution is requesting that the citizens of Edgefield County take the recommended precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.

Motion to approve resolution number 20-21-1128 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Consideration of Approval to Suspend Further Land Management Ordinance Development Until January 1, 2021 or such other Time as Determined by Council.

Mr. Paradise said the Social Distancing Policy due to Covid-19 has caused severe limitations to Public Hearings, which are required, and important for the successful execution of Edgefield Counties Land Management Ordinance (LMO). He said in order to be proactive and ensure the most participation from Edgefield County Constituents, this resolution would suspend further public hearings and approvals of the LMO until January 1, 2021 and provide time for the Covid-19 impact to lessen. He said Council may extend or reduce the suspension based on impacts of Covid-19 and that this resolution would not restrict staff from meeting or talking with individuals or small groups to provide information regarding the LMO. He also noted this would not restrict staff from reviewing the current draft for mistakes and possible recommendations to the Planning Commission for improvements.

Motion to Suspend Further Land Management Ordinance Development Until January 1, 2021 or such other Time as Determined by Council was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. This entered Council into discussion.

Councilman Campbell said that he had a comment related to the public comments that were read regarding this item of business. He said if small groups met with staff and found errors or something that needed to be corrected/edited and it would be brought to staff's attention, the document wouldn't be changed. He said staff would just make those notes so that when this does come back up to the Planning Commission, those items can be addressed at that time. Mr. Paradise said that is correct, this would not allow for anyone to make changes to the LMO until they got to the Planning Commission for approval. Mr. Paradise did say the contract would also probably need to be amended for the extension and this may cause additional costs. Councilman Campbell said he just wanted to be sure that the public knew this would remain transparent. Councilwoman Kennion said she would like clarification on why the extension of the contract would cause the need for additional funding. Mr. Paradise said that even though the consultants wouldn't be making changes to the LMO, they would still be speaking/meeting with staff, be available for questions and continuing to review the LMO for possible edits/changes. He said nothing would

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be changed without approval from the Planning Commission but that the consultants would still be working on the ordinance. Chairman Cooper said that the funding could probably come from Council Contingency. Mr. Paradise said that money could also be taken from the Storm Water Account if Council wanted to do that instead. Councilwoman Kennion asked for an estimate of what this might cost. Mr. Paradise said a loose estimate would be \$8,000-\$10,000. Councilman Talbert said that is a large amount of money and he would like to see staff keep that number as low as possible to save the taxpayers' money. He also noted that COVID-19 is beyond everyone's control but that he doesn't want it to affect the taxpayers unnecessarily. Councilman Biggs said that he understands having to allow for additional compensation since we are asking them for additional time. He said he wants to keep it as low cost as possible but that the public input is the most important factor here. Councilman Campbell asked if the document is frozen, then would the consultant actually need to be compensated for additional time. Mr. Paradise said that he believes this will allow for staff to reach out to the consultants as they get comments and questions from the public so that at the end of the four months, there isn't a large number of things to look at and consider but that they would be handling those as staff gets the comments. Councilman Cooper asked Mr. Marine what his thoughts were regarding the moratorium comment from Mr. Pettigrew in the public comments section. Mr. Marine said that he would need to research those options. He said currently the ordinance is not pending so a moratorium can't be put on at this time. Mr. Paradise said the county is getting manageable growth as of right now and he'd like to see that momentum continue rather than halt that progress with a moratorium. Councilman Biggs agreed with Mr. Paradise.
Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

None

Comments from the Public

1. Linda Anderson – Regarding Councilman Biggs

I would just like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Art Biggs for his representation of the Merriwether District #2 citizens. I wish to extend well wishes and congratulations on his and his wife's opportunity to move closer to his family and share with them quality time. God's speed Art and Dottie and carry with you thanks from grateful citizens and fond memories. I would also like to take this time to say congratulations to Tiffani Ireland who will take up the challenge of representing District #2 in January.

County Administrator's Report

Mr. Paradise started his report by giving the following update on Mill Creek Drive and Scenic Drive:

Last Council meeting I reported to Council about flash flooding that day in the Merriwether area of the county. Since then EC has worked with the CTC and have made significant progress on repairs on Mill Creek Drive and Scenic Drive.

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EC obtained permission from property owners and the Forestry Service to build a temporary road for the isolated portion of Mill Creek Drive. This was started the day after the flood and was usable two days after the flood.

The CTC has authorized funding for repairs to Mill Creek Drive and Scenic Drive and declared them an emergency. This declaration allows for expedited bidding. The engineering work is complete and bids were due by 5 PM today.

Each of the new culverts are being designed to handle a 100-year flood. The culvert under Mill Creek Drive requires a size increase to what the engineers originally planned and will be a 25-foot-wide by 11-foot-high arch culvert. The culvert will take approximately 1 month to manufacture and have been scheduled

I would like to than all of our partners who assisted in the response and recovery of this event, including the Merriwether Fire Department, SCDOT, SC Emergency Preparedness Division, S.C. National Guard, and the U.S. Forestry Service in addition to the private land owners that provided access to the residents on Mill Creek.

Mr. Paradise continued his report by announcing free Covid-19 testing would be held on August 12th at the old Satcher Ford dealership in Johnston from 9 AM to 1 PM and on August 26th at Bettis Academy Park from 9 AM to 1 PM. He said these would be first come first serve, no appointment needed and are offered by Self Regional Healthcare. He also noted that an additional testing opportunity was earlier in the day at Piedmont Technical College in Edgefield.

Mr. Paradise moved on to say staff has received delivery of the Areo misting disinfectant machine and EMA staff is using to sanitize the high hazard area for the public and employees.

Mr. Paradise told Council staff is in the process of upgrading all of the Xerox copy machines and have completed 12 with an additional 7 to come. He said these will be able to print in color and are connected to the network. He also explained this should reduce the need for color, ink jet printers and reduce costs overall.

Next Mr. Paradise said the Sweetwater Community Center has reopened. He said that in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders capacity is limited to 50% and all users should wear masks.

Mr. Paradise finished his comments by saying the football board has recommended that Edgefield County not have football this season because of Covid-19 concerns.

Comments by County Council Chair

Councilman Cooper thanked Councilman Biggs for his dedication to Edgefield County. He also presented Councilman Biggs with a plaque recognizing his tenure with Edgefield County. Councilman Campbell spoke about all of the things Councilman Biggs worked on in the county. Councilman Campbell told everyone that Councilman Biggs accomplished many things while he was here but the reduction of litter was one of his largest feat and he made a significant impact on lessening the litter in the county. He went

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on to say that he was happy to have met Councilman Biggs through Council and he believes Edgefield County is better off due to having Councilman Biggs in Edgefield County.

Chairman Cooper was excited to announce that Tiffani Ireland would be representing District Two effective January 2021. He said he knows she has a great passion for Edgefield County and he can't wait to work with her.

Chairman Cooper also told everyone that he, Councilman Talbert and Tommy Paradise had breakfast with the Road Department to thank them again for all of their hard work with Mill Creek Drive.

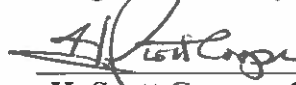
Chairman Cooper closed his comments by saying that he and Councilman Talbert attended the South Carolina Association of Counties Conference where they attended several classes that were very educational.

Councilman Biggs thanked everyone for their kind comments. He said he'd had many phone calls receiving best wishes on his next chapter.

Adjourn

Councilman Biggs made the motion to adjourn at 7:13 PM, seconded by Councilman Campbell. Motion passed unanimously.

Edgefield County Council



H. Scott Cooper, Chair

ATTEST



Thomas L. Paradise, County Administrator