

BLYTHEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
JOINT MEETING
SPECIAL CALL MEETING

THE MANOR
100 ALVINA HAGOOD CIRCLE
BLYTHEWOOD, SC 29016
MONDAY FEBRUARY 06, 2023
5:30 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor Franklin
Councilman Baughman
Councilman Brock
Councilman McKenrick

Staff Present

Carroll Williamson, Town Admin
Pete Balthazor, Town Attorney
Sharon Durst, Town Clerk

Members Absent

Councilman Sloan Griffin

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. ROLL CALL OF TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor Franklin called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

B. NOTIFICATION AND POSTING OF THE MEETING AGENDA

Town Clerk confirmed notification and posting of the meeting agenda.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilman McKenrick made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Motion was seconded by Councilman Baughman. **All in favor; 4-0**

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Brock led the Pledge of Allegiance.

E. INVOCATION

The invocation was led by Councilman Brock.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION Per Section 30-4-70

- A. Discussion of proposed purchase of property
- B. Receipt of legal advice subject to attorney- client privilege regarding claims and potential claims by and against the Town: MPA Strategies

Councilman McKenrick made a motion to go into executive session. Councilman Baughman seconded the motion. **All in favor: 4-0.** Town Council went into executive session at 5:33 p.m.

III. RECONVENE

Mayor Franklin resumed open session at 6:08 p.m.

IV. ITEMS REQUIRING A VOTE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Receipt of legal advice subject to attorney – client privilege regarding claims and potential claims by and against the Town: MPA Strategies

Councilman McKenrick made a motion for the Town of Blythewood to affirm its current agreement with both the Shannon Burnett Law Firm and Nexsen Pruet to continue handling all affairs related to MPA Strategies , any counterclaims and any future counterclaims that may arise or be served as it pertains to MPA Strategies and the members of Council. The motion was seconded by Councilman Baughman. **The motion passed with a 3-1 vote with Councilman Brock abstaining.**

V. ROLL CALL OF PLANNING COMMISSION

A quorum was established. The following members were present: Chairman Malcolm Gorge, Marcus Taylor, and Jamaal Mosely. The following members were absent: Vice-chair Ed Kesser, Erica Page, Ken Coleman, and Martin Wells.

Mayor Franklin made note that Commissioner Martin Wells will be resigning.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEM

- A. Town Council Goals for 2023-24

On January 06,2023 Town Council held a goal setting session. The attendees were:

Mayor Bryan Franklin, Councilmember Edward Baughman, Councilmember Donald Brock, Councilmember Rich McKenrick, Councilmember Sloan Griffin, Town Administrator Carroll Williamson, Municipal Association of South Carolina Field Services Manager Charlie Barrineau (facilitator)

Goals :

- Communications Strategy
 - Document stakeholders match to Town goal/priority
 - Assignment councilmember and/or staff to stakeholder
- Engage lobbyist/advocacy firm (possibly in conjunction with regional municipalities)
 - Focus on strategic goals
- Events (Goal #2 and #6 2021)
 - Quality or quantity
 - Decide who manages
 - How to fund? (hospitality tax or general fund)
- Veterans Park (Goal #1 2021)
 - Town currently has budgeted \$40K in 2022/23 budget of an estimated \$260K cost
 - Seek other funding partners, grants, etc.
 - Privately raised support?
- Transportation/Connectivity (Ties goal #3 and #9 from 2021)
 - McNulty Street and Creech Rd have been modernized and are now the new Blythewood Town Center District reflecting creating the circular town center of Blythewood our historical culture.
Quarterly engagement with RC, SCDOT, GOV Office, State House/Senate
Planning Commission Comp/Master Plan rewrite
 - Plan design and implement streets, sidewalks and I-77 bridge fencing
Planning Commission Comp/Master Plan rewrite
Quarterly engagement with RC, SCDOT, GOV Office, State House/Senate
- Annexation strategy (Goal #4 2021)
 - Consider engagement of consultant
 - Budget funding for support 2023/2024 budget
- Industrial park (Goal #5 2021)
 - Annex northwest portion
- Development of multipurpose civic center (Goal #7 2021)
 - Bethel-Hanberry Elementary School gymnasium
- Premier sports venue (Goal #8 2021)

- Acquire land
- Engage designer and develop master plan
- Advocate for funding and seek funding opportunities
- Environmental Stewardship (Goal #10 2021)
 - Town has purchased 4 acres
 - Seek funding to construct (multi-year)
 - Ensure that community input is sought (livability)
 - Traditional Recreational Open Space Zoning
- New revenues (Goal #11 2021)
 - Reallocation within current budget
 - Strategic use of hospitality taxes

After reviewing the goals a member in the audience expressed concerns of raising revenues needed to implement the goals by imposing property taxes.

Mayor Franklin stated that he would never support a millage while he is mayor of the town. Mayor Franklin said that the town pays its fair share, however it's not receiving a return on investment. He stated that the Town of Blythewood is the fourth or fifth fastest growing municipality in the state of South Carolina according to the last census and the Town still have the same baseball fields that he grew up playing on. He does not think a millage is the answer.

Commissioner Mosely of the Planning Commission asked Mayor Franklin in reference to goal #8 sports venue: is the intention to generate revenue for the town or solely as free area for those to come and enjoy.

Mayor Franklin stated that it would be leased out for income generating.

Chairman Gorgdge expressed concerns for Goal #4 Veteran's Park and asked if detailed discussion could be put on hold. He stated that the Blythewood Historical Society at the next Town Council meeting to give updates and more clarity for development of the Veteran's Park.

Mayor Franklin approved Chairman Gorgdge's request. Mayor Franklin also announced that Chairman Gorgdge is the new president of the Blythewood Historical Society.

Mr. Andrew Gajadhur expressed his interest of the civic center. Mr. Gajadhur stated that he had been inquiring about the gymnasium previously. He also stated that he has several different events that could benefit the Town of Blythewood. One being an event for the film event which he would rather have in Blythewood and not go to another area of SC to host the event. His request would be that the Council keep him abreast on the development of the civic center.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

February 06, 2023

There were none

VIII. OPEN CITIZENS COMMENTS

Mr. Charlie Bagne addressed the Council with concerns of Mount Valley road on which he lives. Mr. Bagne stated that the road is an unapproved dirt road and in its current condition will not be able to withstand a heavy amount of traffic. He stated that as of late he has been some land sold amongst a few other things being done on the road. His request for the Planning Committee would be to make contact with Richland County and inform them of the condition of the road, so it would be a red flag when developers come before them for future projects along this road. His concern is the road needs to be paved to withstand heavy traffic.

Following open citizen's comments and before officially adjourning Mayor Franklin read a statement from the attorneys stating:

"A new complaint was filed against the town by MPA Strategies and Ashley Hunter on January 30th. The Complaint pleads multiple causes of action against the Town and Mayor Franklin. These claims were expected as they relate to the town's counterclaim against MPA and Ms. Hunter. A full copy can be found on the Richland County Public Index. The Town plans to vigorously defend itself against these baseless allegations made in the complaint. The Town will continue to pursue all avenues to protect its citizens and continue serving the citizens of Blythewood with excellence. Any further questions about this lawsuit should be directed to the Town's outside litigation counsel Mr. David Black.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman McKenrick made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Baughman seconded. **All in favor: 4-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Durst

Sharon Durst, Town Clerk