

CITY OF BARNWELL, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES of the MEETING of BARNWELL CITY COUNCIL
September 9, 2024 – 5:30PM**

MEETING LOCATION:
130 Main Street, Barnwell, SC 29812

Barnwell City Council met in Regular Session with Mayor Still presiding.

Councilmembers Present: Mayor Ron Still, Mayor Pro Tem Peggy Kinlaw, and Councilmembers Louis Claytor, Alicia Davis, Ricky Dixon, Wanda Highsmith, and Jana Myers

Councilmembers Absent: None

Others Present: City Administrator Lynn McEwen, City Attorney Thomas Boulware, Clerk & Treasurer Kim Marie Vargo, Police Chief Michael Butts, and Public Works Director Philip Stanley

Mr. Jonathan Vickery from the People Sentinel was also present.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Still called the meeting to order. Councilmember Davis led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & CIVILITY PLEDGE

Council led the pledge of allegiance and the civility pledge.

SWEARING IN NEW POLICE OFFICER

Police Officer Johnnie Stephens was sworn into office by Attorney Thomas Boulware.

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Willie Walker said he was concerned with the way the neighborhoods are looking with abandoned houses and overgrown yards. He would like the City to do something about it.

Ms. Ada Chappel was concerned with houses in her neighborhood around Allen St. and Marlboro Ave. She would like the City to do something about it.

Mr. Chad Grumbling has the "Halloween House" on Marlboro Ave. He would like Council to consider keeping Halloween on the traditional date. He also thinks the porta-jons should be put back at Collins Park.

PRESENTATION FROM JLA ON FULLER PARK MASTER PLAN

Mr. Rett Harbison and Ms. Jillian Ready, landscape architects with JLA, gave a presentation on the Fuller Park Master Plan. They originally met with City Administrator Lynn McEwen and former PRT Director Kevin Roberts in April. They looked at what was existing, how the park operated, what was worth keeping, and how the amenities could be expanded. They met with local residents and organizations in June for public input. JLA took all of this into consideration and presented a Master Plan map and cost estimate for Council to consider. This was taken as information only.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 5, 2024, REGULAR SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Claytor made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2024, regular scheduled City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 12, 2024, SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2024, special council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024

APPROVAL TO MOVE FORWARD IN APPLYING FOR A PHASE 2 READY TO IMPLEMENT RURAL DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE GRANT FOR \$250,000 AS A TIER IV COUNTY SEAT

Administrator McEwen said the City has an opportunity to apply for this grant. The grant application is due September 30th and there is a 10% minimum match requirement. She would like to apply for the funds to use toward Phase 1 of the Fuller Park Master Plan. The \$25,000 matching funds can come from the Hospitality Tax Fund. Other funding sources for the Fuller Park Master Plan were discussed. Councilmember Claytor made a motion to move forward and apply for the \$250,000 grant. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Dixon and unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDED HOSPITALITY GRANT APPLICATION

The City received one Hospitality Tax Grant application. Administrator McEwen said she met with the PRT committee, and they recommend approving the Barnwell Sundial Festival's grant application for \$5,000. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to approve the recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Highsmith and unanimously approved. Grant applications are due by August 15th each year.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL TO PAY THE BALANCE OF THE WAY FINDING SIGNAGE FROM HOSPITALITY TAX FUNDS

Councilmember Davis made a motion to approve to pay the balance of \$4,477 for the way finding signs from Hospitality Tax funds. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers. Discussion followed. Administrator McEwen said she did not have all of the information for this project, and she would like to get it including an estimate before the City moves forward. Councilmember Myers said she reached out to two local sign companies for an estimate, but they did not feel that they could do the job due to SDOT requirements. She gave Administrator McEwen a copy of an estimate from a company that the County was using. Administrator McEwen reviewed the estimate and said that the sign mockups for the estimate were from the 2005 Master Plan and did not meet SDOT requirements. Councilmember Myers said Council needed to approve the estimate before the company could revise the sign mockups which would then be approved by Council. SCA will pay \$2,000 toward the estimate. Council voted unanimously to approve moving forward with the mockup and when approved to pay the balance of \$4,477 for the four signs.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF DATE FOR TRICK OR TREAT FOR HALLOWEEN

In 2022 Council voted to hold trick or treating on the last Saturday in October each year. There has been a request to revisit this decision. Discussion followed. Councilmember Dixon made a motion to observe Halloween on October 31st. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Myers and unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION OF THE NEW CITY OF BARNWELL SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT AND GUIDELINES

There has been an increase in the number of bigger events held in Barnwell and updated policies are needed. Administrator McEwen provided a preliminary Special Event Permit and Guidelines for Council discussion and review. Departments have already reviewed them and have given their input. She asked Council to review them and give their input so they can be finalized and approved at a later date.

DISCUSSION OF YIFTEE GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Councilmember Myers said the Yiftee gift card program was referred to her by another municipality. She has had discussions with PRT and Downtown committee members. The goal of the program is to show City support for local businesses. It is a free program. Administrator McEwen gave her some information from the MASC on a similar program - We Shop SC. Discussion followed, and it was decided to get more information on both programs and to see if local businesses were interested in this type of program.

COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Water and Sewer (Councilmembers Claytor & Myers) – Public Works Director Philip Stanley said work has started on the sewer rehabilitation project funded through the SCIIP grant. They have done manhole inspections and are cleaning lines and running cameras to see if there are any problem areas. They will also be doing smoke testing of the lines.

Sanitation and Streets (Councilmembers Davis & Myers) – Public Works Director Philip Stanley said most of the neighborhoods in the City have been fogged for mosquitos. If anyone is still having problems, they can contact City Hall. The department is renting a street sweeper for the month of October. Councilmember Kinlaw said the Barnwell County Transportation Committee is asking SCDOT to do a study to see if a traffic light is needed on Allen St. and Main St. by the new Dollar General. Councilmember Myers and Davis met with the CTC. The CTC is going to

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024

get with SCDOT to have the crosswalks by CVS and other sections repainted. Councilmember Myers said the estimate to repave the brick pavers on the Circle and repaint the white crosswalk lines is \$224,000. SCDOT said they would be looking at some of this next year, so she is getting more information. They also want SCDOT to look at other crosswalks at traffic light intersections to promote connectivity.

Parks, Recreation and Tourism (Councilmembers Dixon & Highsmith) – Council was provided with a report on monthly activities. Committee met to get flags to put up on the Circle for special events to show the City’s patriotism. Mayor Still thanked Barbara Christianson for leading the 911 remembrances.

Police (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Dixon) – Police Chief Michael Butts gave an update on monthly activity. He addressed some of the comments about his department on Facebook. He supports his officers 100% and the police department cannot respond to a problem if they are not notified.

Fire (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw and Councilmember Claytor) – Council was provided with a report on monthly activities. The fire station dedication was a success, and thanks were given to all involved.

Finance and Salary (Mayor Pro Tem Kinlaw & Councilmember Davis) – No Report

Building and Planning (Councilmembers Claytor & Highsmith) – No Report

Downtown Revitalization (Councilmembers Dixon & Myers) – Councilmember Myers gave an update on the mural. The Youth Advisory Committee has been invited to continue attending committee meetings to give their input. The committee is looking into temporary art installations and interactive sculptures.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

-The City has been selected to join the Resilient Coastal Communities Collaborative Program through the SC Office of Resilience. The program will assess specific vulnerabilities and identify resilience projects at the local level.

-The Chamber will host the First Annual Public Service Banquet at the new fire station on September 28th from 5-8 pm. The Chamber will be honoring the dedicated men and women of our community’s law enforcement, EMS, first responders, and firefighters.

-The Barnwell homecoming parade will be held October 25th with lineup at 3:30 pm and parade at 4:00 pm.

-The City is applying for an RIA Planning Grant. There is no required match. The grant is based around our older sewer systems to help us identify breaches in our system that need to be repaired.

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024

- We have signed the Kayak RentFun agreement. We will schedule the placement with the company once the location has been determined and the \$18,000 fee has been paid.
- Southeastern Housing & Development Corp has spent \$95,000 of the \$100,000 given to them for the Blight Program. They have completed nineteen residential housing projects.
- We are aware of the issues with people hanging out at Fuller Park. Citizens should call the police if they see any suspicious behavior. We are working on updating ordinances to help alleviate the problem.
- New Veteran's flags are available for purchase until the last Friday in September. These flags will be displayed on Veteran's Day and Memorial Day.

Mayor Still said that if anyone has any questions about the Capital Projects Sales Tax Referendum that will be on the November 5th ballot they can attend one of the following scheduled meetings that will begin at 6:30-Williston September 12th, Hilda September 19th, and Barnwell October 3rd.

ADJOURN

Councilmember Dixon made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Davis and unanimously approved.

Submitted by:



Kim Marie Vargo, Clerk & Treasurer

Barnwell City Council Meeting Minutes
September 9, 2024