



CITY OF CHARLESTON

City Council Meeting

March 12, 2024

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jackie Whiteside at 6:30PM. Councilwoman Monica Goodin, Councilman Rick Toon, Councilman Clark Dugan, Councilman Phil Halter, City Attorney Tabatha Graham, Chief of the Department of Public Safety, Robert Hearn, Jr., City Clerk Ali Morris, Director of Public Works, David Harris, and Department of Public Safety Officer Brooks Brockmire were present.

Consideration of Prior Meeting Minutes: Mayor Whiteside asked if all the council members had a chance to read over the previous meeting minutes. Councilwoman Goodin said she had a follow up question regarding the discussion last month about a historic building being torn down without a permit. Goodin explained that she thought a permit was required. Mayor Whiteside explained that the city does not require a permit to demolish a building. Councilman Toon made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024, meeting. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion passed and the February 13, 2024, meeting minutes were approved.

Report of City Business: City Manager, Greg Luehmann began his monthly report and explained he met with Mike O'Rourke regarding the Rural Fire District contract, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

A citizen came into City Hall and requested a sidewalk to be repaired at 405 and 407 Virginia Street. Luehmann explained that Public Works Director David Harris and his department had it replaced by the end of the same week.

The pastor from Shining Light called to ask who maintains the ditches and property on West Marshall to the end of the city limits. Mr. Luehmann said he and David Harris would investigate it and get back to him.

Mr. Luehmann reported that MODOT would be conducting a traffic study on Highway N between City Hall up to Plainview over the next 90 days.

Jeff Renaud called and discussed putting a gate up behind his office on Main Street and the pocket park. He explained that people leave broken glass and trash in that area, and he agreed to speak to the owners of the building adjacent to his to make sure everyone would be on board with a gate. The city would have a key to the gate for emergency purposes. Councilman Toon

asked if this would interfere if there were ever a fire to occur in that area. Chief Hearnese said that it should not be an issue. David Harris said the alleyway is not wide enough to get a vehicle through.

Next, the city manager mentioned that he met with Rodyn Mulloy, an agronomist from the University of Missouri Extension Office, along with Jennifer Hall to discuss the use of a recent donation to start a community garden. The garden will most likely be on the Byrd property behind the fire station. Councilwoman Goodin said that she has heard there is a lot of grant funding for such gardens and that it apparently is not that difficult to obtain as long as someone is willing to put in the work to apply for it.

Mr. Luehmann said he met with Mike Mueller from Day 3 Seeds to discuss the pallets in the park project and possible beautification of the highway exits. Councilman Halter asked David Harris if he remembered correctly that they have had a lot of issues with MODOT allowing them to mow and work around those exits. Harris said yes.

Luehmann then explained that he spoke to a representative from USDA to discuss grant funding for the purchase and installation of new storm sirens which was discussed in the most recent Mississippi County Hazard Mitigation meeting. This would hopefully be for three sirens with the possibility of a fourth that could be placed further at the end of town near the Waffle and Pancake House.

Mr. Luehmann said he met with the Animal Control Officer, Kelly Brown, to discuss a complaint about loose dogs on Cypress Street. Councilman Toon asked where we stood on traps for the dogs. Luehmann explained that traps do not work, but we now have access to the tranquilizer gun. It was not functioning properly when first received. It was sent off to be repaired and we are currently waiting to get it back. Councilwoman Goodin asked if it is legal to have pit bull dogs in the city limits. Chief Hearnese said no they are not supposed to be allowed and there is also an ordinance against vicious dogs.

An update was given regarding the Flock license plate reader cameras. Chief Hearnese said the cameras should be up and running by the end of this month.

The Chamber of Commerce, CHARM, and the University of Missouri Extension Office are working together on the upcoming solar eclipse event in April. The Chamber of Commerce and CHARM are also working on the upcoming Dogwood Azalea Festival.

David Harris and others from the Public Works Department have been working on the new dog kennel.

We have continued to work with our CPA, Ted Eftink, on the audit and are getting closer to completion. There are several grants that must be reviewed.

Members from Horner Shifrin Engineering are continuing to attempt to complete the first phase of the lead service survey inspections all over town.

Old Business: Consideration of **Bill NO. 3948 / Ordinance NO. 3089- An Ordinance Authorizing the City of Charleston to Enter into a Lease Agreement of a New Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper and a Buyback Agreement** was first on the agenda under old business.

Director of the Public Works Department, David Harris, has projected spending between \$20,000-\$25,000 this year on repairs for the current street sweeper. If we enter into this agreement, we can save that money. Councilman Halter asked when the city would receive the new equipment. Harris said it would be mid-summer. Councilman Halter then made a motion to approve Bill NO. 3948 / Ordinance NO. 3089 to enter into the lease agreement for a new street sweeper and approve the buyback agreement. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion passed and the ordinance was approved.

Next on the agenda was consideration of the Rural Fire District Contract. Mr. Luehmann said he and Councilman Halter had spoken to Mike O'Rourke regarding the contract back in November. The district ended up approving our proposal of \$62,000 for a three-year period.

Bill NO. 3949 / Ordinance NO. 3090- An Ordinance Approving a Three-Year Contract with the Mississippi (Scott) County Fire Protection District for Fire Protection Services for an Annual Fee was next on the agenda. A motion was made by Councilman Halter to approve both the contract and the Ordinance. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the Rural Fire District Contract and Bill NO. 3949/Ordinance NO. 3090 was approved.

The next item on the agenda was an update on the Lead Service Survey. The Director of Public Works, David Harris explained that 1,005 households and/or businesses have been completed. 582 have not been completed due to either being vacant or no answer at the door. 64 have denied access. So far, no lead content has been found. At this time, they are simply identifying the service line to the houses. Harris explained that hopefully there will be more grant money for the next phase as there will likely be some lead found in the goosenecks. We are only required to have 25% of the project completed by October 31st, but Harris explained that he would like to have as much of this out of the way by then as possible. Harris said he has provided a list of those who have yet to be inspected to Ida Williams for her to begin attempting to contact them in order to get an appointment set up to inspect. Harris explained that if the residents do not feel comfortable with strangers having to enter their home, he would be glad to go with them to explain. Councilman Halter asked if it had been discussed to pay Horner Shifrin for their work on the survey so far. Mr. Luehmann said they have not submitted a bill to us yet.

Next on the agenda was an update on Land Clearance Development. The city manager announced that he had just received a firm commitment from the Byrd Foundation for a donation of \$200,000 to be used for existing buildings and structures that need to be torn down or demolished. City Attorney, Tabatha Graham explained that the city has an existing LCRA that is not being utilized. They need to have a plan of action regarding blighted areas. The council would then need to hold a public hearing, view the redevelopment plan issues and once the plan passes, the city could move forward with demolition. Councilman Halter asked how many houses are currently on the Code Enforcement Officer's list that need to potentially be torn down. Mr. Luehmann said there are about 8-10 and there may be more by the end of the year.

Councilman Halter asked if we have shortened the process to take down houses. The City Attorney explained that we have to follow the process in place and there are no shortcuts. Mr. Luehmann mentioned there may be some cases where if a house burns, the owners do not have the funds to clean it up themselves and this will help with that also. Councilman Halter said the city would then have to go out for bids on the demolitions and the city attorney agreed. At this time, Councilman Halter made a motion to accept the donation from the Byrd Foundation to the city. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The donation was approved.

The final item under old business was an update on Chapter 353 and vacant buildings. Councilman Toon asked Mr. Kenny Hulshof if he was still working with the city attorney on these items. Mr. Hulshof said yes. Mr. Hulshof explained that getting the vacant buildings ordinance passed for commercial buildings would probably be faster and more effective to do first. Councilman Halter asked if we could please get that ordinance prepared for the next meeting. Chief Hearnese said that the current business license code and ordinance says that code enforcement is authorized to go into commercial buildings to inspect at any given time. However, that most likely does not apply to vacant buildings.

New Business: Mr. Mike Mueller was on the agenda to give an update from the Ministerial Alliance and Day 3 Seeds. Mr. Mueller began by stating that he was there, along with Reverend Steve Betts to represent the Ministerial Alliance and that they recently received a gift from the Byrd Foundation, and they are putting it to use in conjunction with the school district. "Bright Blue Greeters" is a new project for the dads, grandfathers, and men of the community who are positive role models, to provide words of encouragement while wearing bright blue shirts to greet the kids at the entrance of the school at the beginning of each week. There will be a two-month test run in April and May and then the project will be evaluated by parents and teachers. They will be staying within the elementary level at this point and then may pursue going to the next level. The Ministerial Alliance will pay for the shirts, and they are being printed now.

Mr. Mueller continued to explain that there will be a Community Good Friday observance held at the United Methodist Church on Friday, March 29th at 6:00PM along with a Community Easter Sunrise Service held on Easter Sunday at 6:30AM in the Clara Drinkwater Newnam Auditorium at the Charleston High School. The sunrise service will also include a complimentary breakfast afterward.

Mr. Mueller explained that Day 3 Seeds received a grant to use in multiple ways. Funds have been set aside for 10 homeowners for home beautification via flower beds. A coupon for \$250 will be provided to 10 homeowners, which will be good toward a selection and purchase of plants from the greenhouses at Mueller's at Day 3 Seeds. Pallet planters will be placed around town at local congregations in areas to benefit from more landscape color. Mueller explained that adding color promotes a more positive attitude while driving down a street.

Mueller then added that he has noticed a lot of trees being cut down in recent years, along with trees that are deteriorating. One area in particular being Oak Grove Cemetery, Mr. Mueller said will end up being "Lonely Grove Cemetery" if some of the trees are not replaced there. Mr.

Mueller said he would like to push to have staple trees planted all around town for the next ten years. Councilwoman Goodin said that Arbor Day would be a good place to start, even though the trees are small.

Mr. Mueller mentioned D3S Demonstration Garden at 303 Place. The plans are to have a garden plot in the middle of the property to attract people to stay and not just simply drive by. The purpose is to display several methods of gardening and sharing of knowledge.

The Community Harvest Initiative will be utilizing two acres of land to grow vegetables and unify and encourage gardeners.

Mr. Mueller said the Community Market is doing well along with the Dinner and A Story events, which is very encouraging. Councilwoman Goodin mentioned that she has attended several of the events and that they are very entertaining, and the food is great.

At this time, Mr. Mueller pointed to a few examples of the artwork in the room to be used on the pallet planters. There will be eight total planters spread throughout four different parks.

Mayor Whiteside told Mr. Mueller that he appreciates all he does for his “adopted home” of Charleston and his upbeat energy.

Cal Coleman told Mr. Mueller that he is sure the Bright Blue Greeters program is a good program, but he had some questions regarding the background checks. Mr. Mueller explained that it is a “soft check” just to run the potential volunteers’ names and social security numbers before allowing them to participate. Coleman said if they were to use that criterion, it would cut out a lot of people that want to help out.

The last item on the agenda was to discuss naming the park at Plainview after the Byrd Foundation. Councilman Halter said that park has never really had a name and it would be a fantastic idea to name it after the Byrd Foundation after all they have donated and done for the city and parks. Councilman Dugan noted that the ground in Plainview was donated to the city at some point by someone, and that it would be nice to look into that person or persons before naming the area after someone else. The rest of the council agreed to table the idea and topic until that information is provided.

Mr. Halter reminded the city manager and council that the budget was not discussed during the meeting and that there is only one scheduled meeting between now and the end of the fiscal year. Revisions for the current budget will also need to be made.

Recognition of Visitors: Mike Mueller, Todd Clodfelter, Talisha Mays, Kenny Hulshof, Reverend Steve Betts, Tiffany Shankle, Sheila Shankle, Cal Coleman, Dave Manker, Quender Jackson, and Quenita Jenae Goodin were all present.

Mayor Whiteside explained if anyone had anything to say, they had three minutes to do so.

Talisha Mays asked if Plainview Park was a city park. Councilman Halter responded, yes.

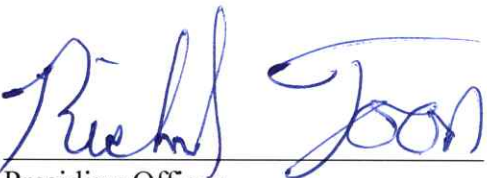
No one else had any questions or comments.

Adjourn: Mayor Whiteside asked if there was a motion to adjourn the open session meeting and go into closed session to discuss personnel. A motion was made by Councilman Halter to adjourn the open session meeting. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. The open meeting was adjourned at 7:31PM.

ATTEST:



City Clerk



Presiding Officer



City Clerk



Mayor