



## **Economic Development Virtual Committee Meeting**

July 13, 2020

6:30pm

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **I. Call to Order**

Mayor Pro Tempore Angela Douglas called the meeting to order at 6:30pm via Zoom webinar. Attending were Committee Member Councilman Carlos Williams, City Administrator Stephanie Jackson, and Mayor Wanda Stringfellow. There were no identified public members on the Zoom session.

#### **II. Old Business**

##### **1. City Administrator's Report and Planning Documents Updates**

Ms. Jackson noted that the vendor for the Opportunity Zone Prospectus, Parker & Poe, were paid in full. She further noted that the City would apply for the \$20,000 reimbursement from the SC Department of Commerce Opportunity Zones Prospectus Grant awarded to the City last year. She said she has been conversing with about 4 individuals who have heard about Chester from the prospectus.

Ms. Jackson updated the committee on her conversations with the Catawba Regional Council on Government (The COG) on working on a Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) grant to assist with stormwater drainage and flooding issues. The areas identified mirrored the three sectors of the City pitched (but denied) for the capital sales tax projects. However, because some areas may have had public funding before or due to our lack of matching funds, she suggested only one area, Forest Drive/Memorial Drive area near the Old Fairgrounds, this grant opportunity. Yet, the matching funds may be realistically between \$60,000-\$80,000. The City's budget only covers up to \$25,000. The committee encouraged seeking additional grant opportunities that could be used for the required match and possibly additional qualified areas to maximize this initiative. Notably, the heavily traveled Saluda Street corridor was mentioned as a priority. Mr. Williams offered to meet with Ms. Jackson to discuss this matter further as he toured several troubled areas with the former public works director and the engineers. Ms. Jackson noted that we have not heard anything further from the Governor's Floodwater Commission.

According to Ms. Jackson, the Chester Historical Society Executive Director, Liz Anderson, suggested to let them take care of (and pay for) the Wayfinding Signs

– Historical Markers. With the remaining capital sales tax project (1-cent sales tax) funds, it was suggested to provide wayfinding signage for additional historically significant locations, public buildings, and public parks, as possible. Ms. Douglas noted that Eat Smart Move More Chester had applied for a grant to purchase wayfinding signs as part of the walkability plan. They would give distance between particular features that are part of the plan (i.e., Agribusiness Center, parks, etc.).

2. Business Resource Website

The committee revisited the idea of developing a resource page for businesses on the City's website. It would be a sort of Business One-Stop for new and existing businesses in the City of Chester. The committee developed a list that will be shared with the Council for approval and additional ideas. Some features would include:

- Information about inspections, permits, business licensing, and zoning
- City Plans: Opportunity Zones, Economic Development Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan, etc.
- Resources for obtaining capital and fundraising
- Business Profiles – highlights (i.e., New Businesses, Expansions, etc.)
- Resource Profiles – highlights (i.e., Agribusiness Center, Workshops)
- Affiliate Links: Chamber of Commerce, SBDC, SBA, SC Works and more
- Chester Live – Events and Happenings
- Helpful Guides: How to Get Started, Government Contracting, Marketing, checklists, etc.
- Opportunities: partnerships, mentorships, real estate/office space, business development, workshops, etc.
- News: COVID updates/recommendations, relevant info, etc.

3. Bailey Bill Elements

The Committee discussed the elements highlighted by the City Attorney to develop a Bailey Bill ordinance. The committee recommended the following:

- Follow the same definitions as Richland County's ordinance for eligible or qualified rehabilitation expenditures.
- Utilize the Historic Preservation Committee as the committee certifying the compliance of the ordinance. Additionally, they would approve and recommend the initial work plans to qualify for the program.
- Designate properties within the Historical Districts (notably the downtown Historical District) as the eligible structures for the special assessment.
- Require an investment of 20% of the to qualify.
- Ask Council to consider 15 or 20 years as the length of time for the special assessment.
- Formalize a request to the County Council to pass an identical ordinance.

The Economic Development Committee will offer applications and examples of the proposed applications needed for the ordinance in the Council's package as supplemental information.

III. New Business

1. Face Mask Drive

This matter was highlighted as a way to support small businesses with soliciting masks on their behalf (for customers and clients). Discussion did not reveal a drastic need so individual contributions are welcomed. No face mask drive was deemed necessary, at this juncture.

2. Committee Comments and Announcements

Ms. Douglas: State Baptist Convention and the Sandy River Baptist Association-Lower Division announced a fresh fruits and vegetable box giveaway for Tuesday, July 14, 2020. Please share especially our elders and sick. The CPD eldercare team had been notified.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:52pm.