

**City Council Workshop**  
**September 26, 2017**  
**6:00 P.M.**  
**City Hall**

**Council Members Present:**

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Mayor Michael J. Heitzler; Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Phillips; Councilmember James (Kimo) Esarey; Councilmember Debra Green-Fletcher; Councilmember Brandon Cox; Councilmember Gregory Habib; Councilmember Kevin Condon

**Council Members Absent:**

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**Staff Present:**

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City Administrator Jake Broom; Assistant City Administrator Daniel Moore; City Clerk Kelly J. Lovette; Director of Public Works Steve Price; Assistant Director of Public Works Chuck Denson

**Staff Absent:**

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**I. Call to Order:**

Mayor Heitzler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Comments from the Audience:**

None.

**III. Business:**

**City Naming Policy Follow-Up: Portraits:** Mr. Broom reminded City Council of their last discussion with City staff at a previous City Council Workshop and stated City staff has clarified that living persons may be honored so long as certain criteria are met. He stated the original version stated the subject of the named had to be deceased and a section was added on the placing of plaques, portraits and statues and that section leaves the placement of same up to City Council. Mr. Broom stated City Staff was bringing it before City Council one (1) more time to see if there were any further necessary changes before taking it before City Council at a regular meeting for first reading. City Council discussed where certain portraits in the future should be hung and the possibility of naming a park, building or room after former City Councilman, Mr. John McCants, a long running member of City Council who recently passed away in 2017. City Council, decided, they would be the ones to make any decisions when it comes to naming a room, a building or a park after someone and that Mayor Heitzler could decide on where a portrait could be placed in the lobby/commons areas of City Hall.

**Chickens in City Limits:** Mr. Broom reminded City Council about discussions that had taken place at a previous City Council Workshop regarding chickens and he stated before them were the suggested changes they had made to City staff. He stated City staff had prepared a proposed Ordinance that will allow for: one (1) chicken per 2,500 square feet of lot, a maximum of four (4) chickens allowed regardless of size, roosters are prohibited, all chickens must remain in the back yard and stay on the property, pins and coops must be kept clean and be kept at least five (5) feet from any property line. It was discussed that a property owner is not required to keep the chickens in a pen, they can run freely on the owner's property. Councilmember Phillips did express his concern for chickens who may not have a coop to protect them from the elements in the winter.

**Beekeeping in City Limits:** Mr. Broom reminded City Council the subject of bees had been discussed at a previous City Council Workshop and City staff was presenting details that evening that would be presented in a proposed Ordinance at a future City Council Meeting. He stated the proposed Ordinance would stipulate how many colonies would be allowed depending on the size of the lot; for example, two (2) colonies would be allowed on one half acre or less, and there would be no restrictions if the property is over five (5) acres. He stated hives must be located at least twenty (20) feet from all property lines, the opening of the hives must be oriented away from adjoining properties, hives not being maintained must be removed, and hives within twenty-five feet (25) of a property line must have a barrier wall, fence, hedge or something that will prevent or discourage the bees from flying across the property lines. After some discussion regarding potential issues concerning code enforcement, Mayor Heitzler requested the City Administrator to move forward with bringing a proposed Ordinance to City Council at their regular meeting in November.

**Existing City Limits Signs:** Mr. Broom stated City staff was approached the week prior by a representative from the Vietnam Veterans of America about placing a placard on the City's green organizational signs. He stated there are two (2)

locations where the organizational signage is currently located, one (1) on south Goose Creek Boulevard and one (1) on St. James Boulevard near the Fairfax subdivision. Mayor Heitzler stated there are some organizational signs that could be removed because they don't meet anymore, but to go ahead and move forward with where he believes moving the signs at the entryways to the City would look best.

**Non-Construction Dumpster Regulations (From Planning Commission):** Mr. Broom stated back in February 2017, the Planning Commission voted to recommend a proposed Ordinance to govern dumpsters. He stated their version included two (2) sections, one (1) for construction dumpsters and one (1) for non-construction dumpsters and in error, only the portion regarding construction dumpsters made it to City Council. He stated this was the timeframe Mrs. Hanson retired and it was City staff's fault only half of what was being proposed made it to City Council. Councilmember Phillips stated the definition for a non-construction dumpster would include a residential homeowner who was performing their own renovation and who would not require a permit. Mr. Broom explained the difference between the two (2) types of dumpsters and stated if someone had a dumpster to clean out their garage for the weekend, the City should not give them a permit to have it there for thirty (30) days. Councilmember Habib inquired if this has been a problem. Mr. Broom stated there have been dumpsters in various locations that have been there for years. Councilmember Esarey inquired from Mr. Alan Wall, Chairman of the Planning Commission. Mr. Wall stated the purpose was because sometimes a person may not want or need to hire a contractor, they want to perform the renovation themselves and complete the task within fifteen (15) days. Mayor Heitzler inquired if City Council was ready for Mr. Broom to bring the proposed amendment to City Council. City Council agreed.

**Home Telecom Easement Request:** Mr. Broom stated Home Telecom approached City staff about building a hut on the property owned by the City North of the Goose Creek Community Center. Councilmember Esarey inquired if Home Telecom will present a drawing to the City as to how it will look. Mr. Broom stated they would and the IT Director is in favor of the request because having a hut close to the City will be helpful as it should reduce downtime as there is a generator on site. Councilmember Habib inquired if Home Telecom is the City's current provider for internet. Mr. Broom stated yes. Mr. Broom stated a secondary benefit to having a hut so close is it will allow Home Telecom to reach more areas in the City, thus giving our residents more options. Mr. Broom stated this will be brought before City Council at the next City Council Meeting if Home Telecom is prepared with a survey.

**2017/2018 Strategic Planning Schedule:** Mr. Broom stated last year City Council held the Strategic Planning retreat on October 18<sup>th</sup>; however, the plan was not passed until April 25<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Broom inquired from City Council as to how they envisioned this year's timeline as an election is scheduled in April 2018. Mr. Broom inquired if City Council wished to wait until after the election, and if so, he requested to schedule the retreat for the month of May 2018, so the Strategic Plan could be incorporated in the 2019 Fiscal Year Budget planning process which begins in June 2018. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips stated it should be earlier. Mayor Heitzler stated the Strategic Plan should be done in plenty of time before the budget is conceptualized. Mayor Heitzler inquired as to why the election would determine when the Strategic Plan would be scheduled. Mr. Broom stated the composition of City Council may change and the new Council may have different ideas. Mayor Heitzler instructed Mr. Broom move forward to have plenty of time for the strategic planning and not allow the election to hinder the planning process. Councilmember Esarey stated the earlier the better so it can be used as a planning tool when the proposed budget is reviewed. Mr. Broom inquired if starting in early January or February 2018, would be an appropriate time. City Council agreed.

**FY 2018 Budget Update:** Mr. Broom presented an update regarding contracting and outsourcing certain responsibilities of the City's Maintenance Department. Mr. Broom stated two (2) separate bids were submitted from the Director of Public Works Steve Price and Assistant Director of Public Works Chuck Denson; the first for maintenance and the second for ditches. He stated the cost estimate City staff presented was based on South Carolina Department of Transportation's (SCDOT) numbers last month of \$230,413, not including ditches. He stated the lowest landscaping bid received was \$247,060, and the lowest ditch maintenance received was \$14,700, for a total annual cost of \$261,760.

Mr. Broom presented the impact on the sanitation and maintenance budgets should City Council accept the bids. He stated the sanitation budget would increase by \$153,000, and the maintenance budget would decrease by \$370,000, for a total net savings of \$217,000. Mr. Broom presented how this decision will affect the General Fund overall. He stated the that was presented in the City Council Workshop had a reserve of \$60,520. He stated the second version where ditch maintenance and landscape maintenance are privatized has a proposed General Fund of almost \$278,000. Mr. Broom stated privatizing would save money and in the first year it would save \$217,000, to which that number will grow every year as the cost to keep the Maintenance Division and staff in house will continue to increase. He stated privatizing also increases flexibility of other divisions within the Public Works Department, as some city staff would be moved from the Maintenance Division to the Sanitation Division. He added that another pro with the lowest bid was that it was from a local business that recently moved to the City limits.

Mr. Broom thoroughly reviewed with City Council the cons of privatizing these areas of responsibility and stated it would decrease accountability and flexibility regarding scheduling grass cutting. Mr. Broom presented an example as the Recreation

Department held a movie night to which the Recreation Director contacted the Maintenance Division manager and asks them to cut the grass for movie night, a contractor may not be that flexible regarding their schedule. Mr. Broom stated the City's Maintenance Division also maintains ditches and stated a few days before a storm the Maintenance Division clears them and added that he feels this is the reason the City does not suffer the flooding that other cities do during hurricanes. Mr. Broom stated our Maintenance Division also responds to a lot of work orders and that residents call and ask for the ditches behind their homes to be maintained a few times a year and if they are not satisfied with the normal rotation, a contractor is not going to be as responsive to individual requests. Mr. Broom stated the bids include less frequent mowing than the current schedule, every two (2) weeks, for cutting the City's Right of Ways and the contractors will be every three (3) weeks. Mr. Broom stated he believes that some homeowners will be uncomfortable with contractors cutting ditches behind their homes as they will not be wearing City uniforms. Mr. Broom stated currently the City's Maintenance Division picks up litter every Friday on St. James Avenue (Highway 176), South and North Goose Creek Boulevard (Highway 52) and Red Bank Road, and the bids received do not include that service. He stated he wished he had more time to put together the bid project to receive solid numbers, as he was still receiving adjustments as of 4 p.m. that day. Mr. Broom stated his final concern is that the estimations for the two (2) bids received for ditch maintenance is significantly different wherein one bid totals \$14,000, and the other \$541,000. Mr. Price stated he estimated the cost for ditch maintenance to be around \$150,000. Councilmember Cox inquired if the low bidder has past performance in ditch maintenance. Mr. Broom stated no. Councilmember Habib inquired if the high bidder had a clear understanding as to the scope of the job. Mr. Price stated the high bidder would be sub-contracting the ditch maintenance. Councilmember Esarey stated he did not feel there was a rush to eliminate the Maintenance Division and accept the bids. Councilmember Esarey requested Mr. Broom to look at next year to figure out an actual cost since Mr. Broom has concerns the cost may change. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips and Mayor Heitzler agreed with Councilmember Esarey.

Councilmember Habib stated he inquired at the last City Council Workshop if City Council requested City staff to put in the work to obtain these bid, would there be a chance the rest of City Council was going to agree to privatize. He added that City Council agreed that City staff should put in the work for these bids. He stated it was his opinion that City Council had just asked City staff to waste their time as some members of City Council were not actually interested in outsourcing certain responsibilities. Councilmember Habib stated City Council raised this issues because of the need to increase taxes and that City Council wanted to devise a plan to not raise taxes. He inquired if anyone had any other ideas on how to save money. Mayor Pro Tem Phillips stated buying less police cars was a way to save money. Councilmember Habib inquired if law enforcement and the quality of their fleet was more important than grass cutting. Councilmember Cox stated if City Council was not going to accept the bids then they were acknowledging the fact the millage rate was going to increase. Mr. Broom stated his plan was to bring the proposed budget before City Council in October for first reading; however, there was now two (2) versions. Mr. Broom requested guidance on which to bring before City Council and stated the first version was the one presented to them in the City Council Workshop and the second would have the Maintenance Division contracted costs. Mayor Heitzler stated he would like for Mr. Broom to present the version that was presented in the City Council Workshop. Councilmember Cox thanked Mr. Price and Mr. Denson for gathering the information so quickly.

#### **IV. Comments from the Audience:**

Mayor Heitzler recognized Mr. Allen Wall who stated City Council was given a letter from the Planning Commission. Mr. Wall stated the Planning Department was hurting from a standpoint that it does not have enough staff. He stated the minutes are late and phone calls are not being answered. Councilmember Esarey inquired if interns could be hired from local colleges. Mr. Broom stated he discussed this with the Planning Director; however, there is not a clear plan as to what this person would do or where they would have space to work. Mr. Broom stated the Assistant City Administrator could assist with the work load, as he had recently assisted the Planning Director. Councilmember Habib stated he felt this was an issue for the City Administrator to handle at a staff level and he did not believe it was appropriate for the Planning Commissioner to come to City Council and tell City Council that the City Administrator needed to hire more people.

#### **V. Adjournment:**

Councilmember Esarey made a motion to adjourn. All in favor, non-opposed. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Date: November 14, 2017

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**Kelly J. Lovette, MMC**  
**City Clerk**

*A copy of this meeting's agenda was sent to the Post and Courier and The Goose Creek Gazette; it was posted in City Hall 24 hours prior to the meeting.*