



Richland County Council
Development and Services Committee Meeting
MINUTES
February 25, 2025 – 5:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Chakisse Newton, Chair, Jason Branham, Allison Terracio, Gretchen Barron, and Cheryl English

OTHERS PRESENT: Don Weaver, Tish Dozier Alleyne, Anette Kirylo, Patrick Wright, Ashiya Myers, Angela Weathersby, Lori Thomas, Michelle Onley, Kenny Bowen, Leonardo Brown, Aric Jensen, Jackie Hancock, Jennifer Wladischkin, Kyle Holsclaw, Stacey Hamm, Bill Davis, and Synithia Williams

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Chakisse Newton called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 PM.
2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR** – Ms. Terracio moved to nominate Ms. Newton for the position of Chair, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **December 17, 2024** – Ms. Barron moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Terracio moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

5. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- a. **Direct the Administrator to research and present to Council current law and benefits of enacting impact fees in Richland County. The purpose is to help reduce the tax burden on residents by not having to pay the complete cost of development in Richland County [MALINOWSKI/NEWTON, PUGH, and BARRON – January 3, 2023]** – Assistant Administrator Aric Jensen noted that impact fees could only be used prospectively. They are for new development, not correcting things in the past. He mentioned he wanted the committee to consider how the County would benefit from an impact fee.

- The process of creating an impact fee program and ordinance would have a significant cost and require substantial expertise
- Impact fee schedules are jurisdiction-specific; the process would produce different results in different communities

- To prepare an impact fee, you would need to analyze the service level, an estimated cost of applicable infrastructure based on the existing service level, and determine if infrastructure is cost attributable to new development
- The consultant recommended Council consider impact fees in the following categories:
 - Sheriff
 - Transportation
 - EMS
 - Fire
 - Solid Waste
 - Water and Sewer
- The consultant also identified the potential for a Stormwater impact fee but could not recommend it at this time because the County does not have a masterplan adequately identifying future needs
- Staff reviewed 11 jurisdictions that have impact fees in South Carolina
- The impact fee structures varied in the different jurisdictions
- There is no existing impact fee structure the County can “copy” – Richland County is unique
- Impact fees can only be used for infrastructure and to off-set the costs of new development
- Impact fees cannot pay for improvements over the base service level to “fix” or “raise up” existing areas to current standards
- Is it worth our time to take the next step? He indicated an impact fee studies will cost approximately \$100,000
- Impact fees would add costs to development

Considerations for the Committee:

- What services does the County provide?
- What services are impacted by new growth?
- How does the County fund service-related infrastructure?
- What effects could impact fees have on: Residential or Economic Development

Ms. English inquired if impact fees could be utilized to develop the 911 Center.

Mr. Jensen responded impact fees could pay for infrastructure retroactively if it is part of the impact fee program, and you have budgeted and allocated the funds. In other words, as new homes come on board, they could pay for their share of the 911 Center. He noted you have to include in your impact fee plan a specific project that states, “We anticipate it going to be this infrastructure, at this cost, and we are going to allocate “X” amount.” The fee has to recoup the actual impact of the development.

Ms. Barron asked whether these fees are being paid by the residents coming into the new development or by both the residents and the developer.

Mr. Jensen maintained it depends on how the developer and the County structure it. There are places where the impact is recouped through property taxes. The developer could also pay the impact fee when they get a building permit.

Ms. Barron noted that when she co-sponsored the motion, she did not intend for current residents to pay an impact fee but for the developer to absorb the costs. In addition, she inquired as to what infrastructure would qualify for impact fees.

Mr. Jensen assured Ms. Barron existing residents would never pay an impact fee. If you do not have an impact, the existing homeowners effectively pay for a part of the infrastructure cost. He indicated it has to be a capital item valued over \$100,000 (i.e., fire truck, police substation, etc.)

Mr. Weaver inquired if impact fees could be used to pay for bonds and if the funds could be mixed with other funding.

Mr. Jensen replied anything that qualifies as infrastructure under the State Code can be bonded, and the impact fees could be used to repay the excess capacity. He pointed out the mixing of funding is the norm. The impact fee usually pays a portion of the new infrastructure.

Mr. Branham mentioned that at a previous committee meeting, the consultant indicated that more revenue would be generated from non-residential development. We also discussed running some numbers to see what would be generated based on land disturbance.

Mr. Jensen pointed out that the PowerPoint presentation table(s) are based on the fee schedules from the 11 jurisdictions utilizing our 2023 permit fee data.

Ms. Terracio inquired if it is common to see impact fees in other South Carolina counties and municipalities.

Mr. Jensen stated he does not believe it is common for South Carolina counties or municipalities to utilize impact fees. Counties that have experienced growth are more apt to have undertaken the effort than those that have not.

Ms. Newton noted some jurisdictions have so much leverage they do not need impact fees. She presented the following scenario and asked if impact fees could be used this way. "If the level of service on the road is 'B' and you want to bring in a development, then the level of service must remain a 'B.'"

Mr. Jensen maintained the general idea of impact fees is to do exactly what Ms. Newton described: establish a baseline service level and maintain it at that level.

Ms. Newton asked if impact fees could cover neighborhood issues and address Countywide issues.

Mr. Jensen responded the impact fees could address issues that are adjacent, nearby, far away, or even all three.

Ms. Barron stated, for example, we would have our impact fee structure in place so that when a new development is proposed, we can assess them based on what they plan to build.

In response to Ms. Barron's example, Mr. Jensen stated an impact fee has to be set in advance and be fair and equitable across the board. He noted impact fees are typically proactive and used for water and sewer infrastructure, while roads are usually more reactive.

Ms. Newton inquired if the committee wishes to pursue hiring a consultant to assist in preparing recommendations on impact fees and, if so, if we are planning to budget for it this year. In addition, does the committee feel like this item needs to be held in committee for further discussion?

Ms. Barron moved to hold this item in committee, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Ms. Newton requested the Clerk of Council to email the other Council members to request their feedback on the consultant's report before the committee agenda deadline.

Ms. Terracio pointed out that the committee needs to be mindful of the budget timeline to ensure this matter is included in the FY26 budget process.

Mr. Leonardo Brown, County Administrator, indicated if the committee were unable to decide whether to include the matter in the budget, any Council member could make a motion to include it.

6. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- a. I move to direct the Administrator to draft a moratorium ordinance and bring back to Council – Ms. Synithia Williams, Community Planning & Development Director, noted they are working on drafting the requirements for the Olympia Overlay District. At the same time, they are working on the language for the moratorium ordinance, which would slow down development in the Olympia area during the

drafting of the overlay district. She indicated a draft moratorium ordinance has been forwarded to the County Attorney's office for review.

Several meetings have been held in the Olympia area. Most of the feedback is related to internal processes and procedures and how the overlay would be implemented. The goal is to present the feedback to the Planning Commission at their March meeting.

7. **ITEMS PENDING ANALYSIS**

- a. I move that County Council direct the County Administrator to research and provide to Council (1) ways to secure title to subdivision roads that were developed but never had ownership transferred to the County and (2) to recommend changes to county ordinances and/or protocols to better assure that future development of subdivision roads includes conveyance of title to the county (unless there is an understanding between the developer and the County that the subdivision roads will intentionally remain privately owned and maintained.) [BRANHAM, ENGLISH, and NEWTON – July 2, 2024] – Staff from Community Planning & Development, Public Works, and the County Attorney's Office met to discuss the various ways to handle conveyance of the roads back to the County. The team agreed the next steps should be:

- Finalize the list of roads that need to be conveyed to the County
- Continue to research legal obligations of the owners of road parcels
- Once the list is complete, notify the owners of those roads of their responsibilities as the owner of a road and make the offer to transfer that responsibility to the County
- Consider possible condemnation based on the number of roads

The Department of Public Works is compiling the list of roads to be accepted. Once this is complete, the team will discuss options with the County Attorney's Office.

Ms. Barron stated as the County grows, having this structure in place will help us move forward.

Mr. Patrick Wright, County Attorney, indicated that some of these roads are in litigation, and the County does not want to take on a road that is in litigation and thereby assume liability for it. Furthermore, if a road is not up to County standards, then the County becomes responsible if anything happens on that road.

Mr. Branham inquired if there was a cutoff for the first batch of roads we will address.

Ms. Williams responded that the Public Works Department will focus on the internal list of roads the County agreed to examine. The challenge is identifying the roads that were not originally agreed upon to be examined and any additional roads. The list of roads should be provided by the end of March.

- b. I move to direct the County Administrator to commission an analysis of the County's residential development permitting processes and standards related to noise, flooding, air pollution, and other environmental impacts, in order to ensure that the County has adopted and is following the most current industry best practices to reduce negative environmental impacts. This may include recommendations for improving and enhancing the County's Land Development Code, Land Development Design Manual, Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Map, and related documents. [NEWTON, PUGH, BARRON, and TERRACIO – September 10, 2024] – Mr. Brown indicated the recommendation is to include the best practices identified during the update of the Comprehensive Plan in the next update of the Land Development Manual and Land Development Code.
- c. I move that the county consider developing a Neighborhood Master Plan that establishes policies and goals related to preservation and development in the Ballentine community with the goal to preserve and promote the desired character of the community while also conserving and protecting the waters and watershed of Lake Murray. [BRANHAM – November 19, 2024] – Ms. Williams noted neighborhood master plans were identified by Council in 2005. At that time, it was adopted through budget ordinances. Council agreed to create a Neighborhood Planner position and later approved funding to create the neighborhood master plans. Council identified 10 areas where they wanted the original master plans to happen.

In 2016, criteria was developed for future master plans. The criteria was as follows:

Scale: Neighborhood Master Plans had to be limited to an area within a 1/4-mile radius of an identified central point.

Substructure: An established network that will be responsible for implementing the plan. (i.e., homeowners association).

Cost-benefit analysis: Ensures as many citizens as possible have access to the resources offered by the Neighborhood Improvement Program.

When we took those criteria and specifically looked at the Ballentine area, it was a very small scale. Staff does not believe it meets the intent of what was requested through the Neighborhood Master Plan. It would not fully cover the concerns regarding commercial development, growth around Lake Murray, or touch subdivisions. Therefore, going off the 2016 criteria, we do not feel our current criteria would achieve what residents want to see in that area.

Ms. Newton acknowledged this motion was made to achieve a specific objective in the community. She reiterated the County will continue to work toward achieving the community's goal, but not through a master plan.

8. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Barron moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. English.

In Favor: Branham, Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:55 PM.