



Richland County Council
DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE
MINUTES

March 28, 2023 – 5:00 PM

Council Chambers

2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Chakisse Newton, Chair; Allison Terracio, Gretchen Barron, and Cheryl English
Not Present: Derrek Pugh.

OTHERS PRESENT: Michelle Onley, Ashiya Myers, Angela Weathersby, Patrick Wright, Stacey Hamm, Michael Maloney, Leonardo Brown, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Anette Kirylo, Lori Thomas, Kyle Holsclaw, Jeff Ruble, Bill Davis, Quinton Epps, Sandra Haynes, and Shirani Fuller.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Chakisse Newton called the meeting to order at approximately 5:20 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. February 28, 2023 – Ms. Terracio moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Barron.
In Favor: Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton
Not Present: Pugh
The vote in favor was unanimous.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Ms. Barron moved to adopt the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Terracio.
In Favor: Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton
Not Present: Pugh
The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**
 - a. Economic Development – Partial Closure of Locklier Road – Mr. Brown stated Public Works requests to close a portion of Locklier Road for the following reasons:
 1. The narrow width of the existing road makes it almost impossible for two-way traffic to pass.
 2. The washed-out culvert makes it impossible to travel along the entire length of the road.
 3. The existing dirt portion does not currently serve any residences or businesses.
 4. The existing road splits the property in half, which is undesirable for interested industries.
 5. For any industry that chooses to build on the property, their access points would be on Blythewood Road and/or Community Road, canceling the need for the dirt portion of Locklier Road to remain.

Ms. Newton stated, for clarification, that a vote in the affirmative would begin the legal process to close a portion of Locklier Road.

Mr. Wright indicated there is a process required by State law.

Ms. Barron moved to forward to Council with a recommendation to honor Public Work's request to begin the process of closing a portion of Locklier Road for the reasons outlined above, seconded by Ms. Terracio.

In Favor: Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- b. Utilities – Southeast Sewer Master Plan – Mr. Brown stated this is a continuation of a process. The County went through a process with a previous vendor to look at a master plan. Phase I came out of that, and it has been completed. Utilities is now requesting a concept plan that will communicate what the County intends to do to create access to sewer infrastructure and then engaging the consultant, AECOM, to complete the master plan. The funding is already in the department's budget.

Ms. Newton inquired if this is based on the three initial phases approved by Council in 2018, will address the development of the two previously approved phases, and provide a long-range vision for what the infrastructure could look like in the area.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative. He noted one of the reasons they did this is because Council approved a large version, which they could move forward with, but he wanted to ensure the current body is aware of what is going on and wants to proceed.

Mr. Bill Davis, Utilities Director, stated they want to refrain from spending funds on something Council does not desire to do. They are trying to align themselves with the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Lower Richland Tourism Plan, and to provide for future industries. He indicated that developers have driven the development of the sewer system in the Northwest in such a way that it is limited, and those limitations are causing long-term problems. The timeline for doing a wastewater treatment will take approximately three years. It will include a plan, a preliminary engineering report, a design plan, purchasing property, obtaining easements, lining up assets, and bidding it out for construction.

Phase I provided for the transfer area customers to be connected to the County's wastewater treatment plant, closed three (3) failing school wastewater systems, and the McEntire wastewater system. The long-term goal is to align ourselves with the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), protect the waterways, and close the smaller wastewater treatment facilities. As you see throughout this plan, we are looking at how we can grow when we have a limited amount of capacity.

Mr. Davis noted the concept plan will cost approximately \$77,000.

- Utilities is currently 90% staffed
- Southeast Water & Sewer Phase I is complete

CURRENT EASTOVER WASTEWATER NEEDS

- An interim biosolids plan for the Eastover WWTP was awarded to Bionomics; a belt press will be in operation in the next few months
- New well system – the existing irrigation well is inadequate for future process water needs
- An upsized return-activated sludge pumping system
- A lime feed system
- Increased capacity of our disinfection system
- Certified lab at the plant
- A storage facility and maintenance office space

REMAINING PHASE I SEWER CAPACITY

- Quick response from developers interested in utilizing the Phase I sewer infrastructure through the southeast
- Issued willingness to serve letters for several thousand residential homes in the southeast
- Franklin Park Pump Station has 9% capacity remaining
- Gadsden Pump Station receives flows from Garners Ferry Road, Franklin Park, and McEntire Pump Stations
- Only a few areas remain to accept minimal additional growth

Mr. Davis stated the plan approved in October 2018 utilizes a lot of pressure pipe, which is not what we should be aiming for, but gravity sewer. Gravity sewer will make us more resilient and sustainable and reduce our carbon footprint.

SOUTHEAST SEWER PHASE II AND III

- Utilities and Planning staff have been working with Councilwoman English to develop a Concept Plan
- We have retained an Engineer, AECOM, to work on the Southeast Sewer Master Plan
- We are seeking Council approval of the Concept Plan so that AECOM can complete the Southeast Sewer Master Plan
- The Master Plan will define the Phase II projects

RECOMMENDED SOUTHEAST SEWER PHASE II & III PROJECTS

- 24" force main for additional capacity
- Expansion of the Eastover WWTP to achieve additional capacity for Phase I-III Design Flows
 - We have applied for a \$10M grant; we anticipate receiving \$4M-\$6M
- Other major short-term projects to add capacity along the three (3) growth corridors in Concept Plan
- The Southeast Sewer Master Plan will define projects
- Without these projects, we will:
 - Limit growth in the Southeast
 - Face long-term moratoriums in certain areas
 - Be exposed to potential regulatory penalties

Ms. Newton stated the committee is being asked to approve creating a master plan, which will allow staff to proactively determine how we can achieve the plans the Council previously approved.

Mr. Davis responded in the affirmative and noted the plan would come back before the body.

Ms. Barron noted that just because there is a master plan does not mean everything included will be implemented. The master plan is a guide to help us move forward.

Mr. Davis indicated a master plan is a vision for the future, which you aspire to do, but that vision may change.

Ms. English thanked Mr. Davis for working with her over the last few years. She inquired if the new pipes would have notifications to assist with locating problem areas.

Mr. Davis indicated the County could explore the option. He noted the more electronics you have, the more dependence you have. He pointed out with the most recent breach, the remote sensors alerted staff there was an issue.

Ms. Terracio inquired if there was a reason we did not plan for gravity sewer.

Mr. Davis stated that people want to do the pressure vs. gravity because they can get a quick easement and install a force main and a pressure pipe, resulting in a hodgepodge of pressure pipes connecting. Then when one fails, it affects the environment.

Ms. English moved to forward to Council with a recommendation to approve the concept plan so AECOM can complete the Southeast Sewer Master Plan, seconded by Ms. Terracio.

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

Not Present: Pugh.

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- c. Department of Public Works – Engineering Division – Traffic Calming Policy Update – Mr. Brown stated staff is requesting Council adopt the March 1, 2023, revised Traffic Calming Policy. He noted, “Based on the overwhelming number of requests received and the small percentage of requests that meet all criteria for installation, staff recommends adjusting the policy to reflect the need for neighborhood support prior to a traffic study being performed. The policy change reorganizes the process so that after staff provides an initial review, the neighborhood must sign on to the traffic calming, then staff conducts the traffic study to make the final determination of feasibility.” It was further noted, “Staff has recommended a clear process for vetting projects including establishing facility priorities and determining financial resources aligning with the improvement plan. The reorganization of the process will achieve the desired result in this alignment of the needs to the funds.”

Ms. Newton inquired if this was a time-sensitive item.

Mr. Brown responded, from our standpoint, it is not time-sensitive. Because of what staff is being requested, the sooner it is addressed, the better.

Ms. Shirani Fuller, County Engineer, stated there is a relatively long backlog. They want to rearrange the sequence to help alleviate the 9-10 month backlog.

Ms. Newton noted there is not a week that goes by that someone does not talk to her about traffic calming.

Ms. Terracio indicated that if this is not time-sensitive, she would like to take her time with this item.

Ms. Newton stated speeding is the number one complaint the Sheriff’s Department deals with. We want to address this issue and see what we can do to make things safer for our residents and not have such a long backlog. She requested a red-lined version of the policy before this item comes back.

Ms. Fuller indicated staff could not find where Council adopted a traffic calming policy. The policy has been an internal department policy.

Ms. Barron moved to defer this item until the April committee meeting, seconded by Ms. Terracio.

In Favor: Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh

The vote in favor was unanimous.

5. ITEMS PENDING ANALYSIS: NO ACTION REQUIRED

Ms. Newton stated she appreciated the presentation of these items and providing the updates in the agenda packet.

- a. I move to direct the Administrator to conduct a review of the rank weeds and vegetation ordinance and recommend any updates that would improve the effectiveness of the ordinance particularly as it relates to safety, enforcement, and blight reduction. [Newton - August 30, 2022] – Staff has reviewed national and local ordinances for comparison, consulted with the County Attorney’s Office and the Richland County Sheriff’s Department, and drafted an initial redline update to the ordinance. However, the more significant issue of enforcement and blight reduction effectiveness requires a more nuanced effort.
- b. Direct the Administrator to create regulations for the operation of Short Term Rentals (STRs) in unincorporated Richland County. Those regulations would be listed as an amendment to the current Ordinance relating to residential rental property regulations similar to the Absentee Landlord Ordinance that is currently being considered. Consideration should be given to licensing, safety measures, number of occupants allowed, effects on infrastructure such as sewer and water, EMS and Law Enforcement potential response and not having them create a nuisance in the neighborhood. [MALINOWSKI - December 6, 2022] – The Business Service Center has been assigned this project and coordinating with the City of Columbia on its short-term rental ordinance, which is near adoption. However, the ordinance, as drafted, includes caps on the number of licenses, which may be contrary to the pending South Carolina Bill H3253, which would prevent jurisdictions from prohibiting short-term rentals (STRs).

- c. Direct the County Administrator to work with staff to ensure the proposed Short Term Rental Ordinance requires each homeowner who wishes to provide a short-term rental to obtain a business license and pay accommodation taxes. [TERRACIO - January 3, 2023] - The Business Service Center has been assigned this project and coordinating with the City of Columbia on its short-term rental ordinance, which is near adoption. However, the ordinance, as drafted, includes caps on the number of licenses, which may be contrary to the pending South Carolina Bill H3253, which would prevent jurisdictions from prohibiting short-term rentals (STRs).
- d. Direct the Administrator to research and present to Council current laws 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. [PUGH, BARRON, and NEWTON - January 3, 2023] - Research has begun and is ongoing. The initial analysis suggest that there are limited opportunities for impact fee collections given that impact fees in South Carolina typically must fund new facilities for school districts, recreation districts, and utilities, and cannot be used for ongoing operations. As such, any impact fee structure would most likely not benefit Richland County.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Terracio moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Barron.

In Favor: Terracio, Barron, English, and Newton

Not Present: Pugh

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:58 PM.