

Regular Town Council Meeting

Theodore D. Washington Municipal Building, Henry “Emmett” McCracken Jr. Council Chambers, 20
Bridge Street, Bluffton, SC

July 09, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Toomer called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

PRESENT

Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Pro-Tempore Dan Wood

Councilmember Fred Hamilton

Councilmember Bridgette Frazier

Councilmember Emily Burden

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Toomer.

3. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Councilmember Burden.

4. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of 06/11/2024

A motion made by Councilmember Frazier, Seconded by Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of 07/09/2024.

5. PRESENTATIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND RECOGNITIONS

2. Beaufort County School District Character Student of the Month - Mayor Larry Toomer

Mayor Larry Toomer, on behalf of Town Council, honored Cora Marston a 2nd grade student from M.C. Riley Elementary School for the character trait of responsibility and cooperation.

3. Gullah Geechee Heritage Month Celebration - Mayor Larry Toomer

Gwen Chambers, on behalf of Queen Quet-Chieftess Gullah Geechee Nation, received the proclamation for the Gullah Geechee Heritage Month Celebration.

4. Recognition of Bluffton Rotary Club's Community Impact and Accomplishments - Mayor Larry Toomer

Members of the Bluffton Rotary Club received the proclamation recognizing the many accomplishments of the group.

5. Introduction of New Employees and Recognition of Promotions - Anni Evans, Director of Human Resources

The following new employees were recognized:

Anna Bashaw, Customer Service Representative
Christopher Sim, Building Inspector I
Andrew Cocchiara, Planning Intern
Angie Castrillon, Planner
Laurance Beckler, Director of Public Services
Laura Edwards, Finance Intern
Andy Zuviri, Finance Intern
Christian Vasquez, Finance Intern
Craig Mielcarek, Class III Advanced SRO
Oscar Dorta, Police Recruit
William Ayler, Police Recruit
Matthew Collins, Police Recruit
Rachel Klingberg, Police Intern
Lisa Carlucci, Community Mental Health Advocate

The following employees were recognized for promotions within the Town:

Mary Sue McEntire, Principal Customer Service Representative
Keiry Ponce, Growth Management Coordinator
Kerry Guzman, Assistant Town Clerk
Azahel Young, Police Officer
Alexa Lindiakos, Police Officer
Gabrielle Pagano, Police Officer
Taylor Corlett, Police Officer
Michael Laccasaglia, Police Corporal

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Howard 14 Pin Oak St. - Ms. Howard spoke in support of a Juneteenth festival.

Sarah McCarty 8 Berwyn Cr. - Ms. McCarty spoke in support of the Juneteenth festival.

Reverend David Thurlow 131 Bridge St. - Rev. Thurlow discussed his concerns about the noise levels from the parks affecting worship services.

Ansley Manuel 104 Pritchard St. - Ms. Manuel discussed her concerns about the noise levels affecting homeowners in the Historic District.

Gene Cashman 131 Bridge St. - Mr. Cashman asked that the Town workshop the proposed noise ordinance.

Judy Bradley 115 Bridge St. - Ms. Bradley spoke about her concerns with the noise levels. Ms. Bradley gave suggestions to add to the proposed ordinance.

Sharon Brown 163 Buck Island Rd. - Ms. Brown discussed Council attending different events in the town. Ms. Brown asked for a meeting to discuss the Hamilton Grove development happening near her home and a meeting with the police department to share the procedure when a citizen is pulled over for non-criminal infractions.

RJ Heape 1 Sunset Blf. - Mr. Heape is a field representative for Congresswoman Nancy Mace and discussed the Military Service Academy Nomination program. This program is open to high school seniors.

Lori Guscio 75 Bridge St. - Ms. Guscio spoke to the amount of and volume of events in Old Town. She spoke of concerns about trespassing and barricaded streets during events.

Melissa Tullino 142 Horizon Trail - Ms. Tullino spoke about the New River Linear Trail and the investment into the Trail.

Matt Jording 15 Captains Cv. - Mr. Jording spoke about a newspaper article regarding a councilmember.

Brendan Downey 2 Fisherman Ln. - Mr. Downey spoke about a councilmember.

Joan Heyward 95 Boundary St. - Ms. Heyward spoke about the proposed noise ordinance.

Jane Hancock Long 123 Bridge St. - Ms. Hancock Long discussed the noise levels from nearby events.

7. COMMUNICATIONS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilmember Frazier extended condolences to the families of Deborah Edmondson and Joe Crowley. Ms. Frazier thanked Town Staff for their hard work at the Juneteenth festival and the Independence Day festival.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wood also recognized the passing of Joe Crowley.

Councilmember Burden acknowledged the citizens that spoke at public comment. Ms. Burden thanked staff for their hard work at the Independence Day event.

8. PUBLIC HEARING & FINAL READING

6. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton's Comprehensive Plan ("Blueprint Bluffton") to Incorporate a Housing Impact Analysis to Obtain Certain Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Funds for the Development of Workforce Housing - Public Hearing and Final Reading - Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Councilmember Burden made a motion to approve the comprehensive plan amendment to incorporate the housing impact analysis into the Town of Bluffton comprehensive plan.

Seconded by Councilmember Frazier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

9. FORMAL AGENDA ITEMS

7. Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances, Chapter 13 – Public Property, Article 2 – Public Park, Dock and Boat Landing Rules as it Relates to New Town Parks and Facilities; and Chapter 12 – Environmental, Article 3 – Noise Control. First Reading – Heather Colin – Assistant Town Manager

Mayor Toomer recused himself from the Oyster Factory Park portion of the discussion.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wood made a motion to table the oyster factory park rules.

Councilmember Hamilton seconded.

Voting Yea: Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier

Voting Nay: Councilmember Burden

The motion passed 3 - 1.

Mayor Pro Tempore Wood made a motion to approve the New Riverside Park rules.

Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

Councilmember Hamilton made a motion to approve the splashpad rules with a 10am opening.

Seconded by Councilmember Burden.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

8. Consideration to Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Bluffton and CommunityWorks to Initiate the Town of Bluffton Employee Homebuying Program – Stephen Steese, Town Manager

Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood made a motion to approve the memorandum of understanding between the Town of Bluffton and CommunityWorks and to authorize the town manager to execute on behalf of the town.

Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

9. Consideration of Approval of a Resolution to Update the Town of Bluffton Employee Handbook - Stephen Steese, Town Manager

Councilmember Burden made a motion to approve a resolution in support of the adoption of the revised Employee Handbook.

Seconded by Councilmember Frazier.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

10. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the Conveyance of Certain Real Property Owned by the Town of Bluffton to Beaufort County, Located Adjacent to 140 Buck Island Road and Consisting of 0.072 Acres, More or Less, and Identified as a Portion of Beaufort County Tax

Map No. R610 031 000 0003 0000; and Authorizing the Execution and Recording of Associated Documents – First Reading - Stephen Steese, Town Manager

Councilmember Burden made a motion to approve the first reading of an ordinance authorizing the conveyance of certain real property owned by the Town of Bluffton to Beaufort County, located adjacent to 140 Buck Island Road and consisting of 0.07 acres, more or less, and identified as portion of Beaufort County tax map no. R610-031-000-0003-0000; and authorizing the execution and recording of associated documents.

Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the motion passed.

10. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Councilmember Frazier made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Seconded by Councilmember Burden.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the consent agenda items were approved as presented.

11. Monthly Department Reports: Police, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, Municipal Court, Projects & Watershed Resilience, Public Services, Don Ryan Center for Innovation, and Growth Management

12. Town Manager Monthly Report

13. Resolution for Emergency Procurement for Repairs of the Pavilion at DuBois Park - Felicia Roth, Director of Compliance and Contracts

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Councilmember Hamilton.

Voting Yea: Mayor Toomer, Mayor Pro-Tempore Wood, Councilmember Hamilton, Councilmember Frazier, Councilmember Burden

All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.