



**Town of Bluffton**  
20 Bridge St.  
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Bluffton, SC 29910  
843.706.4500

**To:** Town Council

**From:** Stephen Steese, Town Manager

**Date:** March 4, 2024

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#### **Town Operations / Community Meetings**

- The Special Election to fill Mayor Toomer's seat was held and results certified. Emily Burden won the election and will serve the remainder of the term after being sworn in at the March Council Meeting.
- The Town Budget process is underway, and departments have submitted requests and had initial review meetings. We will finalize estimated reviews and look to get the proposed budget ready for review meetings with Council. You should have invites for these meetings.
- We are closing on 140 Buck Island Road on March 5th. We are working on the community meeting for the updated Buck Island – Simmonsville Community Plan and will look to seek input on future use of the property. We are working on how to best seek the input and will ensure Council is invited.
- We received our OCRM/CZC Permit for 1095 May River Road and can now submit for our final approval with SCDOT. We are working with our development partner in finalizing the next steps to move the project to permitting. We anticipate transfer of the property and a groundbreaking in the next couple of months.

#### **Town Council/Town Attorney Related Meetings**

- Weekly Mayor / Mayor Pro Tempore / Manager meetings.
- Mayor Toomer, Councilman Hamilton, and Councilman Wood along with staff attended the SOLOCO Meeting at the Rotary Center. We received a presentation on County Council Chairman Passemment's 30-year vision for the County. We anticipate updates from our regional utility providers and the BJRHTF in the next month.
- Mayor, Council, and managers attended the MASC Hometown Legislative Action Day February 6<sup>th</sup>. We received updates on legislative matters, the state and regional economy, and best practices for implementing programs that are available to local governments.
- Continued our monthly meetings with BJWSA and Beaufort County related to the Stoney Creek Project. The project is progressing in design, and we worked through some topics related to community outreach and encouraging connection to the system.
- Mayor Toomer and I attended a countywide Mayor/Manager meeting. We discussed the upcoming Penny Tax and some questions related to projects. There was also discussion about working to reduce littering throughout the County.

#### **Updates and Miscellaneous Information**

- The Town celebrated Black History Month via an employee luncheon that featured an educational session on the Harlem Renaissance, and its influence on the arts.
  - We presented for our MASC Achievement Award, but it appears that we did not win this year.
  - Continuing to work on partnership for Willow Run property and have other properties that may come to Council for consideration and/or partnerships. Also submitted properties to the Green Penny committee for consideration.
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