



**MINUTES
WORKSESSION
FAIRFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
JANUARY 20, 2016**

Present: Carolyn B. Robinson, Mary Lynn Kinley, Kamau Marcharia, Dan W. Ruff, Marion B. Robinson, Billy Smith, Council Members; J. Milton Pope, County Administrator; Davis Anderson, Deputy Administrator; Shryll M. Brown, Clerk to Council; Jack James, County Attorney

Absent: Walter Larry Stewart

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e), as amended, the following persons and/or organizations have been notified of the time, date, and location of this meeting: The Herald-Independent, The State, and Winnsboro Cablevision, and one hundred twelve other individuals.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M.

2. INVOCATION

Council Member Robinson led in the Invocation

3. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Animal Control Ordinance

Mr. Pope gave the following update:

- Have had several discussions about the Animal Control Ordinance--some of it having come about when there was an incident with seizure of some of the equines. Informed the Council that Animal Services would work on the following issues:
 - (a) Finding some property to lease for large animals and/or equine. Have located a piece of property that is close to the animal shelter. Working through County Attorney and property owner to finalize lease agreement to have adequate space. Still doing all of the spay-neuter information that is commonly done.
 - (b) Have partnered with a large animal Veterinarian. Ms. Lori Holbrook is the on-call person.
 - (c) Working closely with Sheriff's Department with issues that arise to the possibility of neglect or abuse.
- Revisit or discuss the number of animals. In previous years, there was a provision in the zoning ordinance that stated that an owner in a residential area could now have more than three (3) dogs. In the rewriting of the code several years back, that language was omitted. As the code stands today, there is no number provision in the code that limits the number of animals a person may have. If that situation is determined to be a public nuisance, Animal Control has the right to go in, investigate, and make their findings in consultation with the Sheriff's Department.
- Discuss regulatory restraint methods used on dogs, i.e., the chaining of dogs. Council received a model or template of the ordinance from York County to use as a guide.

Questions and Comments:

- Nothing to identify what "shelter" is. The York County template gives a good definition of adequate shelter. Fairfield is weak in the shelter definition. Would like to see that changed. Would like to see something to address the dogs on constant chains.
- Would like for Animal Services to use Fairfield language and blend it with what York County has on those two areas and present it back to Council.

- The Ordinance addresses tethering and how long it has to be.
- Staff can work with the County Attorney to incorporate those two provisions into the Ordinance and get the document back to the Clerk to put it in the proper formatting to be brought back to committee as a draft.
- Adequate shelter is described under Section 47-1-170 of the S. C. Code of Laws, which is the law of the State, which could be incorporated in the Ordinance.
- Animal Services works closely with Hoof and Paw and Career Center to provide assistance with the dog houses.
- Recap:
 - (a) Adequate Shelter. Use York County verbiage for what is considered shelter for Fairfield County. The language on the barrels and cans would have to be amended.
 - (b) Restraint. Use York County language to incorporate how animals are restrained and tethered.

B. Economic Development Plan Update. Ms. Crystal Morphis gave a presentation, covering the following topics:

- Strategic Plan Overview
- I-77 Alliance Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Economic Trends
- Economic and Demographic Overview
 - Population, Age Demographics, Per Capita Income, Employment by Industry Sector, Unemployment Rate, Labor Force, Regional Unemployment Rate, Wages by Industry, Median Home Value, SAT Scores, Educational Attainment
- Business Survey
 - 74% own a business or work in Fairfield County
 - Majority are in business and professional services, nonprofit, government, and health care
 - In business more than 10 years
 - 62% have less than 10 employees
 - 60% rate business climate as 3 in a scale of 1 - 5
 - SWOT Analysis. After Ms. Morphis presented and discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, she asked Council to provide their input into the planning process to make sure everyone is headed in the right direction}.

Council Input:

Strengths

- Decision makers make up their mind and stick to it
- Close to Interstate, rail and lakes

Weaknesses

- Information dissemination (how we communicate and where information comes from)
- Population decline
- Lack of internet/broadband

Opportunities

- Tax reduction for businesses
- Historical features of the County
- Highlight available space
- Road/highway improvements
- Have healthy, growing and thriving municipalities

Threats

- No long-term infrastructure plan
- Age demographics
- Division
- Local Government Fund

- Major Goals or Vision
 - Work ethics and ensure good workforce
 - Implementable timeline
 - Working together and partnerships
 - Beautifying entrance to County on Interstate
 - Loss of grocery stores
- Next Steps
 - Council input
 - Draft report
 - Economic Development Advisory Council
 - Finalization

C. Noise Ordinance

Mr. Pope reported that at the last vote, Council tabled the matter. From a staff perspective, staff is requesting Council's input on how it desires to proceed in bringing this document back through the committee process.

Questions and Comments:

- At last discussion, there were questions about skeet shooting.
- Come up with a good definition of exactly what an event is.
- Not intention to stop people from enjoying their property if they are acting in a sensible manner. Identify what that definition should be.
- Section C(9) of the proposed ordinance. This does not say one can go on their land and shoot guns at targets.
- Section C(7) and C(8). Noise created by animals at a kennel. It seems to be alright as long as there is a kennel, and dogs can bark at night. It appears one can go get a business license to operate a kennel and there would be no problem with the hunting dogs barking.
- Would support consideration of including something in the Ordinance that says no provision of this Ordinance is to interfere with (and complete with sentence with what will work).
- To be charged, there has to be complaint. A deputy would have to go out to the property line of the person making the complaint and stand with a decibel meter. The noise that the complaint was made about has to be such that it is above the decibel limit set for that certain time of day.
- A lot of this information was taken from other Ordinances, and the intention of the committee was to draft it and pare down certain things. Would support a professional kennel having this exception.
- Consider deleting "while hunting" from Section C(10) and leave it as noise associated with the legal operation of any firearm.
- Would support putting something in for sensible operation, but not leaving it open.
- Agree with taking out "while hunting" in Section C(10) and C(9) can be eliminated altogether.
- Section C(10): Change to say "noise associated with the legal operation of any firearm between 6:00 a.m. and 10 p.m.", and take out "while hunting". In this consideration, C(9) would not be needed.
- There are people who do night time hog and coyote hunting, which are legal under DNR specifications. They would be precluded from the exemptions if the time is put on the hunting.
- Continuous sound levels from a facility or property shall not exceed these maximum limits in the times given in residential and non-residential. The Sheriff was asked how do we deal with the situation at the lake?
- Non-daily noises and obnoxious noises were clarified.

- People who have hunting dogs could get in trouble under this Ordinance, as they would not be exempt under this Ordinance. While dogs are in their pens, that is not during the course of lawful training. The only way they would be exempt and not have to worry about it is if they were a professional kennel or pet shop.
- May not need to carve out something just because a dog is used just hunting.
- Sense of Council for revisions to next Draft:
 - Delete Section C(8)
 - Leave Section C(9)
 - Section C(10). End sentence with word "firearm".

D. Community Enhancement Grant Program

Mr. Pope reported that Council has already taken a vote to end the Community Enhancement Grant Process as it is known. In the discussion of doing that, Council mentioned it wanted to consider some type of similar program to be incorporated in the budget process such as a community support program that would be done by consensus, where people would have an opportunity to participate in.

- Some of the things staff would need in that direction is what type of program Council would want to support or have staff research, and if the same \$17,500.00 allocated would be used, because in the old program, \$2,500.00 per district was allocated.
- Also, would the program still be based upon a per district allocation, or would it be county-wide, where there would be a certain amount of money to be applied for.
- Would also need to address the funding of the lighting out of two of the districts presently, or take that up in the budget process under a separate line item.
- What type of safety net programs the Council wants to establish or have staff research? Some type of application process can be implemented for the budgeting process.

Questions and Comments:

- When the old program was in place, which left it up to the Council Member from the district to decide on it, don't really have a problem with it, but believe it needs to be tweaked. The concern was that there may be favoritism; however, if that had been tweaked instead of changing to the grant program would have been a whole lot better. Think we still need to have an application process, where it would not be just a Council Member deciding they were going to go out and give it to one certain group; but rather people from that district could submit the applications and the Council Member could decide for that district. Do think those applications need to be brought back to full Council for full disclosure, because that was another thing that was not happening and it breed a lot of controversy. Would not have a problem with leaving it up to the individual Council Member within their district and put some sort of guidelines on it, but make it more transparent and bring it back before full Council.
- If this is done the way it is being proposed, want to put the ICan organization out there for Administration to look into and to ascertain if that is a program that maybe could be a recipient.
- Need to be more specific on what the funds can be used for because it was some things that requests were made for that were not in the best interest of the use of that money.
- Look on page 4 of the application and maybe use those as a guideline to start talking about specifics that Council would want or not want. The program was narrowed to awarding grants to fund the following four types of projects: (a) Back to school supplies for K-12 students; (b) Community enhancement programs/initiatives for churches, non-profit or other eleemosynary groups that serve individuals or families in need; (c) Community improvement grants programs/initiatives that improve the quality of life for neighborhoods, identification signs, beautification, etc.; (d) Youth,

adult and/or elderly programs/initiatives that support wellness, health fairs and related services to improve the overall quality of health in the community.

- The way these projects are worded, in the past, people interpreted them the way they wanted to. Think a lot of it came under letter (d). Don't see how trips fit into any of this.
- Supported (a), (b) and (d); however, when this program was first initiated, it was addressing the needs of people, helping children get back to school, helping people with the food program, feeding the elderly, looking at senior citizens' homes, etc. It had to do something with a need rather than a want. Not banning trips because they are important for young people and adults to get exposure. The related health matters are for transportation and medical. Should be geared toward a need rather than other requests, but think it can be crafted.
- That is the reason I made the recommendation to put the idea out there to go back toward the way it used to be done, but to bring it more in the light because with things like this, it is pretty difficult to be very specific. Think it should be put back in the purview of the Council Member in that area, but to be brought before Council and voted on by Council.
- Would want to get receipts and reimburse them, unless there is demonstrable need or hardship. Should still have a guideline like that. The reason for the application is to get it in writing so that there are no questions and no things that are unaided, and if a citizen wants to FOIA that document, there would be something to give them. Administration will make the determination about the hardship.
- W-9's would still be included.
- \$500.00 limit on each grant.
- Application can only be submitted once in a calendar year.

4. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned, upon unanimous approval of Council.

SHRYLL M. BROWN
CLERK TO COUNCIL

CAROLYN B. ROBINSON
CHAIRMAN