

Regular Town Council Meeting

July 11, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Sulka called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. Council members present were Larry Toomer, Bridgette Frazier, Fred Hamilton, and Dan Wood. Town Manager Stephen Steese, Assistant Town Manager Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager Chris Forster, Chief of Police Joe Babkiewicz, Town Clerk Marcia Hunter, and Town Attorney Terry Finger were also present.

The pledge and invocation were given by Mayor Sulka.

Adoption of the Agenda

Toomer made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Frazier seconded.

Civility Pledge

We pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of the Town of Bluffton.

Adoption of the Minutes

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023

Wood made a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2023, as presented. Toomer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentations, Celebrations and Recognitions

1. 2023 Legislation Session Update – Senator Tom Davis
2. Beaufort County School District Character Student of the Month - Mayor Sulka
Mayor Sulka, on behalf of the Town Council, honored Neeley Miller, a third-grade student from Pritchardville Elementary School, for the character trait of responsibility.
3. Don Ryan Center Update – David Nelems, CEO

Public Comment

Prior to Public Comment, Mayor Sulka reviewed rules of Public Comment.

Skip Hoagland - 61 Sparwheel Lane, Hilton Head Island - Mr. Hoagland approached the podium and addressed Mayor Sulka, advising there is a need for a Law Compliance Pledge. He then proceeded to discuss the previous lawsuit with Mayor Sulka.

Lynne Greeley - Mr. Skip Hoagland began speaking, stating he was there to submit a POA for Ms. Greeley, whom is not in attendance. Public comment time was called to close. An exchange occurred between Mr. Hoagland and Mayor Sulka stating that Mr. Hoagland was out of order. Mr. Hoagland was escorted out of Council Chambers by Bluffton Police Department.

Communications from Mayor and Council

Council Member Frazier thanked and praised the MLK Committee for the overwhelming success of the Juneteenth events held over the past weekend. She then thanked the Town of Bluffton Staff for their efforts and success in the 2nd Annual Independence Day Celebration.

Council Member Frazier invited the community to attend a Champion Celebration in Wright Family Park on 7/13/23, to honor gold medalist Charlotte Lewis, who represented the USA in Berlin, Germany for the 2023 Special Olympics World Games. Lewis won an impressive three medals in total during the competition placing 4th in 400 singles and 3rd in the 200 tandem.

Mayor Sulka informed the public of a proclamation to be delivered to Queen Quet, Chiefess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, to celebrate the Gullah/Geechee Nation Appreciation Week. The theme for this year's celebration is "Celebrating Gullah/Geechee Resiliency." The proclamation will be presented on 7/29/23, at the Gullah/Geechee Famlee Day on historic St. Helena Island, SC.

Attorney Terry Finger addressed Council to advise Mr. Skip Hoagland has notified the town he is now being represented by Taylor Smith, Counsel out of Columbia regarding the Public Comment matters. Attorney Finger read an email response in return to the representing attorney, advising he cannot ethically communicate directly with Mr. Hoagland moving forward, Smith responded verifying he has relayed the information to Mr. Hoagland.

Formal Agenda Items

1. Consideration of a Resolution to Approve a Proposed Contractual Agreement with First Citizens Wealth Management Relating to Financial Advisory Investment Services – Chris Forster, Assistant Town Manager

Toomer made a motion to approve the request to approve the Contractual Agreement. Wood seconded. Town Council unanimously approved.

2. Consideration of an Ordinance for Certain Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Unified Development Ordinance, Including Amendments to Article 3 – Application Process, Sec. 3.2 (General Application Approval Process), Sec. 3.14 (Certificate of Construction Compliance), Sec. 3.17 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Highway Corridor Overlay), Sec. 3.18 (Certificate of Appropriateness-Historic District), Sec. 3.19 (Site Feature-Historic District Permit) and Sec. 3.25 (Designation of Contributing Resources); Article 4 – Zoning Districts, Sec. 4.4.(Conditional Use Standards); Article 5 – Design Standards, Sec. 5.8 (Lot and Building Standards), Sec. 5.11 (Parking), Sec. 5.13 (Signs) and Sec. 5.15 (Old Town Bluffton Historic District); Article 7 - Nonconformities; Article 9 – Definitions and Interpretations, Sec. 9.2 (Defined Terms); Sec. 9.3 (Interpretation of Dimensional Standards); Sec. 9.4.1 (Description of Land Use and Buildings) – First Reading – Kevin Icard, Director of Growth Management

Wood made a motion to approve the request to approve the Ordinance Amendments as discussed to the Town of Bluffton Code of Ordinances Chapter 23 – Amendments to Article 3, Sec. 3.2, Sec. 3.14, Sec. 3.17, Sec. 3.18, Sec. 3.19 and Sec. 3.25; Article 4 - Sec. 4.4;

Article 5 - Sec. 5.8, Sec. 5.11, Sec. 5.13, Sec. 5.15; Article 7; Article 9 - Sec. 9.2, Sec. 9.3, Sec. 9.4.1. as presented. Hamilton seconded. Town Council unanimously approved.

3. Consideration of an Ordinance Amending the Town of Bluffton Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 21 – Emergency Permitting Procedures to Consolidate all Regulations Pertaining to Emergency Management and Civil Emergencies within one Chapter - First Reading – Heather Colin, Assistant Town Manager

Toomer made a motion to the approve the request to approve the Amending the Town of Bluffton Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 21 – Emergency Permitting Procedures to Consolidate all Regulations Pertaining to Emergency Management and Civil Emergencies within one Chapter. Frazier seconded. Town Council unanimously approved.

4. Approval to Authorize a Contract to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to Update the 2004 May River Watershed Baseline Assessment (Fiscal Impact: \$155,000.00) - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Toomer made a motion to the approve the request to Authorize a Contract to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources to Update the 2004 May River Watershed Baseline Assessment. Frazier seconded. Town Council unanimously approved.

5. Consideration of a Proposed Lighting Agreement with Dominion Energy for the Oyster Factory Park Parking Lot Project (Fiscal Impact: \$105,445.20) - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Wood made a motion to approve the Proposed Lighting Agreement with Dominion Energy for the Oyster Factory Park Parking Lot Project. Frazier seconded. Town Council approved 4 -1 with Council member Larry Toomer recusing himself.

6. Consideration of a Proposed Purchase Agreement with Green Flush Technologies LLC for the New River Linear Trail Project (Fiscal Impact: \$200,730.00) - Kimberly Washok-Jones, Director of Projects and Watershed Resilience

Toomer made a motion to the approve the request to Authorize the Purchase Agreement with Green Flush Technologies LLC for the New River Linear Trail Project. Hamilton seconded. Town Council unanimously approved.

Executive Session

1. Discussions Relating to Negotiations and Contractual Arrangements for Proposed Land Acquisition in Old Town, May River Road, Buck Island Road, and Simmonsville Road (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])

2. Legal Advice from Town Attorney Regarding Contractual Matters Regarding Economic Development Public Private Partnerships (Pursuant to SC Freedom of Information Act 30-4-70 [a][2])

Action from Executive Session

No Action was taken at Executive Session.

Adjournment

Frazier made a motion for adjournment at 8:43 PM. Toomer seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED