

**City Council Minutes  
January 4, 2022**

Orangeburg City Council held a meeting on Facebook Live via Zoom on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 6:00 PM with Mayor Michael C. Butler presiding.

**PRESENT:**

**Michael C. Butler, Mayor**  
**Dr. Kalu Kalu, Mayor Pro Tem**  
**Bernard Haire**  
**Jerry Hannah**  
**L. Zimmerman Keitt**  
**Sandra P. Knotts**  
**Richard F. Stroman**

Public Hearing for Consideration of Amendment of the text of Chapter 24, Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance titled "Buffering, Screening, Landscaping, Common Open Space and Tree Protection." Public Hearing was closed as no comments were made.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the December 21, 2021, City Council minutes. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Haire abstained.

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Stroman to approve the December 29, 2021, City Council Special minutes. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Haire abstained.

Mayor Butler recognized "Creativity" as the January 2022 Orangeburg County Community of Character trait. Creativity is the use of the imagination of original ideas.

Mayor Butler recognized the retirement of James F. Walsh, Jr. for his service to the City of Orangeburg for thirty-seven years and thirty days with a retirement date of December 31, 2021.

City Administrator Evering addressed Council concerning the significant uptick in COVID cases. City offices will be closing to the public Friday, January 7th. The City has eight employees out with COVID and six additional who have been exposed and being tested at the time of the meeting. The notice will be publicized on our website and social media.

City Administrator Evering introduced Dr. Morris J. Blachman. He stated, "When I first came on board, we talked about vision and moving the City forward. We are working towards that in earnest fashion. We engaged Dr. Blachman for strategic planning purposes who is an experienced consultant and facilitator. We will be having a strategic planning retreat to put ourselves in the best position for the growth that we are planning for the City of Orangeburg. We have many projects in the pipeline, and a strategic plan will be an essential part of bringing this to fruition."

Dr. Morris J. Blachman stated, "It is a privilege to be here tonight. You have tremendous opportunities in front of you. How do you bring the resources you have in the community to bear in a way that you can focus and target them so you have the greatest opportunity for success and do it in a way that you can be sure that you are following the progress. That is what we are going to be designing. This is to make sure you are looking to achieve the kind of accomplishments that you on Council have helped develop and for which you hired Sidney in the first place. The process takes a little time, but it is worth it. We will be interviewing each of you for up to an hour. We will be asking you about your view of Orangeburg, particularly how you see where you are and where you want to go. We will use this information in the strategic planning process. We will do the same with Sidney and his staff. In my experience, when you begin to do the actual strategic planning itself, you have covered with everyone an understanding of the kinds of concerns and issues that needs to be addressed. I know you want this to be an efficient and effective process and the way that works is to make sure you understand what is at issue. On January 26<sup>th</sup>, we hope that each of you will participate in the planning retreat. We will spend the morning talking about the vision of Orangeburg. What is it that you want to set out as the vision? Equally important is to understand the values and guiding principles by which you operate. The integrity by which this community moves forward. After lunch we will convene with Sidney and his staff to begin to talk

about how we turn this into an operational plan. We will begin that process. It is a process. You want to really think it through. We will talk about how we make sure we are moving Orangeburg forward. We will be designing what you are going to do to get there, but also, we will create criteria to ensure there is accountability in the process. We will use those criteria to create a dashboard which will be available to Council. So periodically, during the next several years you will be aware how you are moving towards those goals. That is the first part of the process. Then we will wait a few weeks because you need time for things and ideas to sift through and then we will convene that group again to discuss how is this going to work. We will be looking at how each department in the City can contribute to make this the most effective plan. Once that is done, a finished rough draft will then be presented to Council. In that interaction, whatever final product comes out then the last phase of this is to work out the detailed plans to make sure this goes forward. I anticipate we will be in these two phases during February. By the time you finish the rest I hope it will be March maybe a little longer due to COVID. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.”

Mr. and Mrs. George (Merle) Buck addressed Council about wrecks in their yard on Riverbank Drive. They have come before Council before regarding this matter. Their purpose is to document their attendance once again. There have been eight wrecks in their yard. They are concerned about their safety going to their mailbox. It is a dangerous sharp curve. Not only are they concerned about their safety, but also the safety of the people involved in the wrecks. Additionally, their yard and mailbox is damaged with each wreck. The Department of Public Utilities has put a light on their pole to give light to the road, but many of the wrecks happen during the day. Due to the layout of the road, it is hard to see the curve from the top of the hill and people are speeding. They understand this road is maintained by the State and not the City. Their goal is to go to South Carolina Department of Transportation and see what can be done. They appreciate what the City has done, putting up the light and having the Department of Public Safety (DPS) set up the radar showing people how fast they were going. Those only help for a short time. They are concerned for everyone's safety. They would like to see some type of flashing light and arrow signs cautioning drivers.

Department of Public Safety's Chief Austin stated there would be a traffic officer patrolling the area. He has spoken with Mr. and Mrs. Buck and is working with them to address the problem and that it will require a collaborative approach to address it.

Councilmember Stroman stated, “We need to do something about this. Last week, I was on the way home from a Council meeting. I was going 30 mph in front of Mrs. Buck's house and a car passed me. I have quit walking on Riverbank because cars were getting too close to me and driving too fast. I think DPS should put a radar there and try to catch some of these speeders.”

Assistant City Administrator Singh addressed Council concerning the Second Reading of an Ordinance amending Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Orangeburg, South Carolina titled Buffering, Screening, Landscaping, Common Open Space and Tree Protection. He stated, “This is to upgrade our buffering mainly in areas between our residential areas that butt up to commercial or office institutional settings through certain levels of landscaping or if there are spacing issues, they are able to request to put up a barrier of some type. This also puts in place where we can enforce and maintain that barrier, so the transition is smooth between the areas. Along with the public hearing we had tonight we have not received any additional comments through our website or email. Mr. John Ford of Robert and Company who worked with us on this buffering ordinance is here tonight and is happy to answer any questions you may have for him.”

Councilmember Hannah asked, “With the walls or dividers, is it specified how far it can go out to the main street? It could block the view of traffic.”

Assistant City Administrator Singh responded, “Most of the buffering would not be coming out to the road, it would be on the sides and around where it butts up against a residential property. South Carolina Department of Transportation has a set right-of-way on all South Carolina Department of Transportation streets and there is a certain distance that you can plant or do anything. There is room so you do not have that problem.”

Mr. John Ford stated, “We did not change the buffering between the street and the property. That remains the same as the existing ordinance. The primary things that we changed is to allow a barrier to substitute for a buffer, especially for properties that are very short and lack depth. Where

a 50-foot buffer would be a significant problem for the property owner who is redeveloping and it would not do much good for the property owner adjacent to it. By building a barrier, i.e., a fence or a wall that gives a much greater protection and separation between the proposed new land use and the existing residential land use. That was the primary intent I was given when we put together this Ordinance.”

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the second reading amending Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Orangeburg, South Carolina titled Buffering, Screening, Landscaping, Common Open Space and Tree Protection. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Kalu to cancel February 1, 2022, City Council Meeting due to MASC Hometown Legislative Action Day on February 1, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.


A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Knotts to enter into Executive Session concerning Personnel Matter (a) Performance Evaluations of Municipal Judge and Department of Public Utilities Manager. S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70 (a) (1) and (b) Interviews, appointment, and compensation of City Attorney S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70 (a) (1). The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to return to open session. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Haire was absent for the vote.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to appoint Michael Kozlarek Law Firm to represent the City of Orangeburg. The motion was approved 5-1-1. Councilmember Hannah Opposed. Councilmember Haire was absent for the vote.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to adjourn. The motion was approved 6-0-1. Councilmember Haire was absent for the vote.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John D. Singh  
Assistant City Administrator

/lhh



VOID

VOID

VOID





## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS,** James F. Walsh, Jr. faithfully served the City of Orangeburg for thirty-seven years and 30 days with a retirement date of December 31, 2021; and,

**WHEREAS,** he, through his long and faithful service, contributed greatly to the successful operation of the City of Orangeburg; and,

**WHEREAS,** the City Council, in recognition of the fine contribution rendered the City of Orangeburg, wants to inscribe on the records its appreciation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Members of Council, in Council assembled, do officially recognize the faithful service rendered to the City of Orangeburg in the capacities in which he served the City and we take pride in commending him for a job well done.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this Resolution, in appreciation for his devotion of duty to the City of Orangeburg, be placed in the minute book of the City and a copy furnished to Mr. Walsh in recognition of his services.

**PASSED BY** the City Council of the City of Orangeburg, State of South Carolina, this 4th day of January 2022.



Michael C. Butler  
MAYOR

Richard F. Stroman

Walter J. Lee

L. J. Furman

Samuel Haire

Danica P. Knott

Jean Howell  
MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

**ATTEST:**

Kinda McDaniel  
CITY CLERK