

**City Council Minutes  
February 15, 2022**

Orangeburg City Council held a meeting on Facebook Live via Zoom on Tuesday, February 15, 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**

A motion was made by Councilmember Stroman, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the January 18, 2022, City Council minutes. The motion was unanimously approved.

Councilmember Hannah made a motion to amend the agenda to add an Executive Session item concerning Orangeburg Department of Public Safety.

City Attorney Michael Kozlarek addressed Council. He stated, "In the Code of Ordinances, Section 2-2.3 items to be placed on the agenda must be sent to the City Administrator at least six days prior to the Council meeting which would then be listed and presented to Councilmembers in advance of the meeting. In addition, there is a potential Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) concern with respect to amending the agenda at the day of the meeting rather than 24 hours in advance."

Councilmember Hannah stated, "I requested more than 24 hours before the meeting."

Councilmember Haire asked, "We cannot amend the agenda if there is a unanimous decision by Council to amend?"

City Attorney Kozlarek stated, "There are two different questions. One is a local Ordinance which is the procedure of City Council which indicates items should be to the City Administrator no less than six days prior to the meeting. There is also a Freedom of Information Act question about whether amending the agenda would be proper. Yes, there is a three-quarters majority exception in the Freedom of Information Act with respect to certain items that could be added to an agenda. I think that the local Ordinance of Council indicates that items should be to the Administrator no less than six days prior to the meeting. Obviously, Council has the ability to suspend its rules but that is an Ordinance that is in place right now."

Council agreed to abide by the existing City Ordinance and not add the item to the agenda. Council asked Attorney Kozlarek to provide a copy of the Ordinance and FOIA information that was presented.

Mayor Butler recognized "Self-Discipline" as the February 2022 Orangeburg County Community of Character trait. Self-Discipline is the ability to push yourself forward, stay motivated, persistence.

Mrs. Merle Buck appeared before Council She stated, "I wanted to provide Council an update. After our appearance before Council last month, we filed a statement of concern with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) about the Riverbank Drive area to include pictures of the wrecks, pictures of the curves and recommendations to resolve the problem. SCDOT replied by email stating, 'Vehicles leaving the roadway at this location appears to be speed related. We traveled through this location several times at the posted speed limit and had no difficulty maintaining our lane. We noticed several drivers passing through the curve at speeds well above the posted limit of 35 mph. While we can add signage and try to make the curve more visible, SCDOT is not an enforcement agency. It will be important to continue to seek assistance from local enforcement.' It appears since this signage, that traffic has slowed a bit. DPS had a radar in our area for several days and we have seen two traffic officers present. We hope this will slow drivers down and eliminate wrecks. I appreciate all of your help."

Mayor Butler recognized Councilmember Liz Zimmerman Keitt 2021 Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award – Top 100 national winner. He stated, “Ms Keitt was selected from nearly 700 nominees from 49 states. Ms. Keitt, thank you for your service to our community.”

UNC/DFI presented an update on the redevelopment of Railroad Corner and next steps. Ms. Sonyia Turner stated, “The Guiding Public Interest that Council endorsed in May 2021 are:

- Provide a catalytic mixed-use development that connects downtown to the universities and serve as a gateway to downtown.
- Respect the historical significance and context of the site and integrate this history into the development.
- Consider options for preserving the State Theater building.
- Incorporate engaging street level uses attractive for students and the community.
- Enhance walkability to increase pedestrian activity from the universities to the Railroad Corner and along Russell St.
- Optimize public investment and maximize private investment.

The Project’s Financial Feasibility:

- Site constraints limit density and may require the project to develop structured/podium parking.
- Low market rents do not provide adequate return on investment.
- Student housing offers path to financial feasibility
- Project likely needs to pursue tax credits (federal and state) and grants and may require public participation in addition to university partnership to be feasible.

Based on this information from Council, our team provided Council with a recommendation.

On Tuesday, January 18, 2022, Council endorsed Scenario B redevelopment program and potential public participation for the Railroad Corner Redevelopment:

- Maximizes the development potential of the site while preserving elements of the State Theater
- Provides opportunities to increase the density of the development with additional site acquisition
- Enables a catalytic partnership for housing with university(s)
- Project is feasible with university partnership for housing, developer utilizing available tax credit programs (federal and state) and grant funding, and currently estimated public participation.

We want to share with you tonight the conceptual rendering that was prepared by Perkins and Will Architectural firm for this project. We feel this rendering helps to capture the spirit of the Railroad Corner redevelopment as we have heard from the community, staff, and Council. The State Theatre integrates into the development. The community input was to preserve the elements of this building. There is a four-story mixed-use development at the corner of Boulevard and Russell Streets anchoring the development and making it visible from the main thoroughfare. You will notice we are modeling the overpass. This location is only an option as the final location of the overpass is to be determined. It will require conversations with universities, the city, the state, and the railroad. There are streetscape improvements on this plan and Boulevard Street has been turned into a one-way street. Ultimately how the combination of the streetscape improvements along with the pedestrian overpass, and the mixed-use development help anchor the Railroad Corner in the City of Orangeburg and meet those public interests of it being a catalytic development that serves as a gateway between the universities and downtown.

Next Steps:

- Solicitation Release – Late February 2022
- Solicitation Close – Mid May 2022
- Development Partner Selection – June – July 2022

Solicitation:

- DFI will target experienced developers (predominantly in the SE)
- Including architects and brokers with key developer contacts
- Response period will be open for 90 days
- DFI will work with interested development teams to better understand the opportunity and challenges
- Once proposals are received, DFI will complete extensive due diligence on development teams/their proposals and will work with City staff on formulating recommendations to Council”

Mayor Pro Tem Kalu asked, "Will this rendering be shared with the T&D?"

City Administrator Evering stated, "Yes, we are planning a press release that will be sent to the T&D as well as other media organizations."

Mayor Butler stated, "Please update us on the development of Treadwell Street."

Ms. Turner stated, "Treadwell Street will be primarily residential. There is opportunity with additional site control. What is currently being modeled on the side closest to the new library, we are showing tabletop parking in addition to some new retail at the location of the current service station. The side of Treadwell that is most adjacent to the development, we are planning to have podium parking, which is parking on the first level, residential units above and potential amenity space for those apartments. The plan is focusing the retail activity along Russell and Boulevard Streets and transiting to a more residential development as you move down Treadwell Street."

Councilmember Stroman asked, "I am thinking about the churches on Boulevard Street. Is the one-way street from Russell Street to Amelia Street?"

Ms. Turner stated, "The one way will be from Russell to Amelia Streets. I have had an opportunity to speak with the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church a couple of times and have shared this with him. He did not present any major concerns about the conversion of the one-way street. We believe it will serve the development, allow for green space and trees, street parking and serve the community at large."

City Administrator Evering stated, "I would like to thank each Councilmember for your support and guidance in this project. Also, would like to thank Sonyia and Roy as they have been instrumental in getting us to this point. I see this as a turning of the corner to be able to see a rendering and see all the time and effect that has been put into this project. We certainly have a lot of work to get us where we want to be. This has been a collaborative effort with the county, Claflin University, South Carolina State University, Congressman Clyburn, conversation with our legislative delegation and of course the public that came to the public input sessions and answered surveys. This has been a total collaborative effort and we want this to be a project that the City of Orangeburg and surrounding communities can be very proud of."

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kalu, seconded by Councilmember Keitt to approve the Emergency Ordinance requiring face coverings in establishments and at gatherings to expire April 16, 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Keitt, seconded by Councilmember Stroman to go into Executive Session concerning Contractual Matters a.) Discussion of finances regarding new City Hall and b.) Downtown Buildings, Personnel Matter a.) Performance Evaluation for City Administrator S.C. Code Sec. 30-4-70 (a)(1) and Legal Matter a.) Receive briefing on legal matter from City Attorney (Attorney/Client Privilege).

Council did not return to open session. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda McDaniel*

Linda McDaniel  
City Clerk

