



MINUTES

Regular Council Meeting
December 12, 2023, 6:30PM
South Congaree Town Hall
Council Chambers
119 West Berry Rd.
West Columbia, SC, 29172

Members in Attendance: Mayor Cindy Campbell, Mayor Pro-Tem Mechelle Mabry
Councilmembers: Brian Jackson, Kitty Spires, and Jim Drennan.
Also in Attendance: Municipal Clerk Kerri Charlton, Town Attorney John Rakowsky

The public was duly notified of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

I. Call to Order.

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. A quorum was present. Mayor Campbell led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Pastor Gerald Watford, (Dunn's Chapel Church) led the Invocation. The Freedom of Information Act was read by Mayor Campbell.

II. Special Presentation: (Cancelled)

Ms. Judith Simpson from The Friends of the South Congaree Pine Ridge Library was unable to attend and asked to be on the January Council meeting Agenda.

III. Approval of Minutes 6:32 PM

A. October 12, 2023, Council Work Session Minutes:

Motion to approve October 12, 2023, Work Session minutes by Councilwoman Spires at 6:32 PM, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry (6:32 PM). Discussion: (6:33 PM) Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry referred to page 3 section VI-CPA Contract. Mayor Pro-Tem asked to please add the following: "Mayor Campbell asked, "Where would we house the on-site accountant?" before the statement -- "Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry suggested relocating Sergeant Walker's office back to the Police Department side to accommodate an on-site accountant." Approved with the requested addition/ revisions. Roll-call vote:

Motion carries at 6:35 PM

- Councilman Drennan-Yea
- Councilman Jackson- Abstain
- Councilwoman Spires- Yea
- Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry- Yea
- Mayor Campbell- Yea

B. October 17, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve October 17, 2023, minutes by Councilwoman Spires at 6:35 PM, seconded Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry (6:35 PM), Discussion: None. Roll-call vote:

Motion carries at 6:36 PM

- Councilman Drennan-Yea
- Councilman Jackson- Yea
- Councilwoman Spires- Yea
- Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry- Yea
- Mayor Campbell- Yea

IV. Special Presentation by GMK Associate Chris Clark 6:36 PM: (7:13-50:18 FB Live)

GMK Associates, Inc: Senior Architect Chris Clark, in reference to the Town Buildings Inspection and their analysis of repair. Mr. Clark introduced himself and gave a quick overview of his company as a multi-disciplinary firm to include Architectural, Engineering, and Construction services. GMK has been in business for over 60 years.

1. Mr. Clark presented the council with an updated financial breakdown assessment for **(\$1,073,113.00)** the non-invasive, visual assessment only, no probes or samples, a visual Architectural assessment. Third party assessments by SAFEBuilt for code violations and fire safety violations from Lexington County Fire Service are included in this package.
2. He addressed as a critical point of concern the age of the building. Circa "1950-1960", and it was acquired in 1967. The appearance of the building regarding repair and upkeep looks to Mr. Clark's assessment to have had little maintenance done throughout the years. Mr. Clark stated, "There has not been efficient enough to keep the building structurally sound. Where there is water seen standing around the perimeter of the building and cracks in the concrete walls, that is an indication that moisture has seeped into the foundation and the foundation may be failing through all these years. This is one of the critical things other than cosmetics. Cosmetics are easy to fix, the structure is a whole lot different."
3. **6:40 PM (10:32- on FB recording)** Mr. Clark discussed the life safety reasons, and the structural assessment of this. "Now again, this was non-evasive, so we don't know exactly all the details of the foundation and the strength of the concrete at this point and what's going on underneath the building." Mr. Clark discussed the building being referenced as the "Envelope" as the environment of the structure and the envelope being the sealing of the building and keeping the mechanics of the building being regulated. The envelope has been compromised in Mr. Clark's assessment.
4. During Mr. Clark's walk through, he noticed a lot of moisture seeping through the building but was unable to pinpoint the exact location. There were areas such as roof leaks from a compromised roof, facias, siding, and things where moisture can get in. Mr. Clark discussed the implications from years of moisture damaging the building components and extensions to include the built-on and two-story building. The addition on the single-story side he believes has deteriorated the building beyond cosmetics, and he referred to the building as a "Sick Building." Mr. Clark stated, "It's unsound, and he believes that the building is environmentally not prone to a healthy work environment." "Let's put it that way." Again, this is a visual assessment only.
5. Mr. Clark discussed the items he witnessed and read through the reports from Lexington County and SAFEBuilt while also doing their own assessment as well.
6. **6:43 PM (12:59-on FB recording)** Mr. Clark stated that he has seen **Black Mold** in some of the venting that was easily evident, and some of the flooring has moisture underneath. He continued to discuss the items he has witnessed to include, pests, rodents and snakes that are in the environment, aka the "envelope", demonstrating that the building is not sealed correctly.
7. He discussed the location of the building as a **low-lying area** and how it lends itself to becoming more environmentally unsound throughout the years.
8. Mr. Clark began to read the Architectural findings report. (Please see attached report to the minutes)
9. **6:45 PM (15:55-on FB recording)** Mr. Clark gave his professional opinion to state this building is **NOT** a safe environment for day-to-day activities for the employees.
10. He discussed the code violations to include the stairs to the second floor. This is a life safety issue. When you start getting into life safety issues, then it really gets to the point where something needs to be done other than a new coat of paint and new carpet.
11. He stated that the building addition behind the Town hall needs to be demolished immediately. This was also the assessment of SAFEBuilt.

12. Mr. Clark continued to discuss his assessment and the structural soundness and safety issues to include shifting of the masonry. Mr. Clark stated that the building is not uninhabitable, but it is evident that over the years the building has taken a beating, has not been renovated where it meets the code, and it now presents life safety standards.
13. **6:47 PM (17:59- on FB recording)** Mr. Clark recommended a **Structural Analysis**. This would be an evasive to include samples and foundation/structural analysis. This would come at a fee to the town.
14. The breakdown of the report given to Council in the amount of **\$1,073,113.00** is to bring this building up to code and ADA compliance. The costs are apportioned between the repairs for the Town Hall (approx. \$300K) and the Courtroom (approx. \$435K), not including soft fees. This is an *Opinion of Probable Cost*. (OPC)
15. Mr. Clark explained what an (OPC) Opinion of Probable Cost is.
16. These buildings should go through a construction phase if the Town chooses to move ahead; however, Mr. Clark stated he does not think repairs and/or cosmetic changes are worth the funds needed to make these changes.
17. He recommended that the town build a new building suitable for the needs of the town or find an existing building to remodel to meet the needs if funds allow. He suggested that this existing location be made into a destination park with possibly a splash pad.
18. Mr. Clark stated that he believes this building needs to be demolished.
19. Councilwoman Spires asked what comparable space would be to accommodate for the three areas (Police, Court, Town Hall). Mr. Clark stated that approximately 6500 sq ft would work.
20. Councilwoman Spires inquired as to the cost of a structural assessment, and Mr. Clark stated that he does not have that information but could get a quote if the Town would like him to.
21. Mayor Campbell asked how much property would be needed to accommodate the 6500 sq ft building. Mr. Clark stated that somewhere between 2.5 to 3.5 acres of property would work. The Mayor addressed the 12 Acres donated to the Town and the possibility to build on that property. Mr. Clark addressed the current elevation, wetlands, and flood plain. He stated that the dirt needed to bring you to the allowed level of elevation could be costly. Mr. Clark reassessed his acreage opinion to accommodate the impound yard to 3.5 to 4.5 acres stating that including this would make a tight fit even with added acreage.
22. Councilman Drennan addressed Mr. Clark in reference to having a life cycle for buildings and homes, asking if that would be a fair statement? Mr. Clark stated, "I think so." Councilman Drennan stated his home was built in 1916 but has done numerous repairs and upkeep. Mr. Clark stated he loves Historical Preservation, and he reiterated that there are life cycles for buildings. We have advancements in mechanical and energy codes, basic building codes, and the ADA requirements for public buildings.
23. Mr. Clark stated that he would not put these buildings on the National Registry.
24. The Mayor clarified that the Town Clerk has been working with Mr. Clark, not the Mayor.
25. Mayor Campbell asked Mr. Clark if their firm assists with the consulting to put together the proposal for others to bid on. He replied, "Yes, we are a multidisciplinary firm." Mayor Pro-Tem clarified that those services for consulting are an added cost. Mr. Clark replied that yes, they are.
26. Please see the FB Live link to the recording for the full presentation and report.
<https://www.facebook.com/TownOfSouthCongaree/videos/873172367812225/>

Council Discussion from presentation 7:20 PM:

(50:18- 1:18:06 FB recording) The Council continued to discuss the deficiencies and the next step in the process. Mayor Pro-Tem Mabry asked how we came into contact GMK? The Town Clerk replied stating numerous companies were contacted and GMK is the only company to provide anything for the repairs cost to town hall. The Town Clerk stated several companies came out, but this is the only company to put anything in writing. Councilman Jackson asked why we couldn't use the reports to get assistance. The Town Clerk stated

that the reports were sent to all the construction companies for review when asking for assistance. The Council continued to discuss the foundation and where to go from here. How to utilize the American Rescue Plan funds was discussed by the Council. Clarification as to the authorized uses is needed before proceeding. Mayor Campbell informed the council that in April the ARPA funds were designated as "Revenue Replacement." There was a deadline and MASC representative Charlie Barrineau assisted with the paperwork for the report. No vote for use or spending of ARPA funds has taken place currently. The Town of South Congaree has a new field representative, Naomi Reed, who could assist with the clarification of ARPA funds use. Town Attorney John Rakowsky suggested bringing in Naomi Reed for open discussion, and to create an Agenda with nothing but Naomi Reed and ARPA, no awards, no reports, just discussion on funds. Mr. Rakowsky stated personally that he does not think this building would be worth repairing. The council continued to discuss numbers. The Mayor suggested that all the council go tour the Town of Springdale's new offices. Town Attorney John Rakowsky stated that Springdale would be a good blueprint and to start with a meeting with the Field Representative Naomi Reed to see if those funds are available for use. The Town Clerk was asked to reach out and invite Naomi Reed for a special meeting, to see what dates she is available. Councilman Jackson asked for this to be after January 2, 2024, and that a public hearing should be held as well in reference to the ARPA funds. The council agreed by voice to a public hearing. The Council continued to have open discussion.

V. Citizen Comments: None

VI. Adjournment of Council Work Session:

The council, on the motion of Mayor Campbell, seconded by Councilwoman Spires, voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 PM. Motion carried with a unanimous vote of council.

Attested by:
Kerri Charlton,
Municipal Clerk

Approved by:
Cindy Campbell,
Mayor

Date Approved