

TOWN OF IRMO COUNCIL WORKSHOP November 29, 2022

The Irmo Town Council held a Workshop on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, in the Municipal Building. In attendance was Mayor Walker, Mayor Pro Tem Danielson, Councilmen Busch, and Sickinger. Others present were Mr. Courtney Dennis, Town Administrator; Police Chief Bobby Dale; Mrs. Renee Caviness, Finance Director & Municipal Clerk; Mr. Whitt Cline, Public Services Director, and Mr. Will Edwards, Town Attorney. Councilwoman Waldman was absent.

The agenda was published and posted on Friday, November 25, 2022, to meet FOIA requirements.

Mayor Walker called the workshop to order at 6:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Presentation from Capital City/Lake Murray Country on their use of Accommodation Tax Funds (Staff):

Ms. Mirriam Atria and Ms. Viki Davis started their presentation by introducing Mr. Chris Williams who is one of three chefs named South Carolina Chef Ambassadors by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. Ms. Atria gave Council the Capital City Lake Murray Country Annual 21/22 Report and the Visitor's Guide. She stated that over 10.7 million people visited their website which is giving the Town of Irmo lots of exposure and mentioned that the midlands region was named the "Top Southern Destination" per *Forbes Magazine*. Ms. Atria discussed some of their marketing campaigns, special events and tournaments they have hosted which included the following:

- Advertising and promotions are publications like *Lake Murray Lifestyle Magazine*, *SC Living*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Edible*, *Southern Travel + Lifestyles*, *Food & Travel*, and *Travel Outdoors* to name a few.

- Hosted the Final Table event, sponsored area chefs for the World Food Championship, and hosted multiple fishing tournaments (The Striped Bass Challenge, Big Bass Tour, Carolina Bass Challenge, MLF Fishing, and other fishing tournaments/events).

Ms. Davis ended the presentation by informing Council that all the money they receive from the Town is being spent only on marketing and not on employee salaries.

B. Discussion on mini-warehouses and storage units (Sickinger):

Mr. Sickinger started the discussion by stating that Council should put a six-month moratorium on approving mini-warehouses, car washes, storage units, etc. This will give the Planning Commission and Council time to create a plan with conditional uses and guidelines for developers/landowners which allow them to know what to expect from Irmo staff. Mr. Danielson was against the moratorium and was in favor of creating conditional uses and guidelines but stated that Council should hire an expert to fix the problem and update the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Dennis explained that the current zoning manual already has a section for conditional uses for certain types of businesses. He further explained that Council should consider creating special exceptions instead of a moratorium. The discussion ended with Council agreeing to get the Planning Commission to discuss and create special exceptions recommendations to Council.

C. Discussion on tobacco/cigar stores in proximity to schools (Sickinger):

Mr. Sickinger removed this item because it goes with item “B” about special exceptions.

D. Presentation and discussion with the Midlands Council of Governments on the review of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan (Staff):

Mr. Dennis introduced Mr. Gregory Sprouse, Midlands Council of Governments, informed Council that he helped the Town to update the Town’s Comprehensive Plan approximately four years ago. Mr. Sprouse explained that a complete update is required by State Law every ten years and should be reviewed every five years. He stated that during the five-year review, Council could update small items like maps, population, adding both a community resilient and mitigation/hazard plans. Mr. Sprouse continued to explain that the Comprehensive Plan is the vision for the Town and that the zoning helps implement the strategies to achieve the vision over time. He stated the next step would include Council deciding whether they want to do a complete revision of the Comprehensive plan or revise/update certain areas of the comprehensive plan for the five-year review.

E. Update on the town owned property at the corner of Broad River Road and Royal Tower Drive (Staff):

Mr. Cline introduced Mr. Brian Nickerson, Civil Engineering Consulting Services, who has been working with Richland County on the Broad River Road widening project. Mr. Cline stated that there is a flooding issue in Friarsgate area. Therefore, he has been working with Mr. Nickerson and Richland County to work on solutions to help alleviate the flooding issue which could be made worse when Richland County widens Broad River Road. Mr. Nickerson explained Richland County’s proposal by stating the County would need to reroute the water using some of the property the Town owns to help with the flooding in Friarsgate area. He proposed rerouting the water to a certain area of that land that will be graded, and they will make the water holding area deeper.

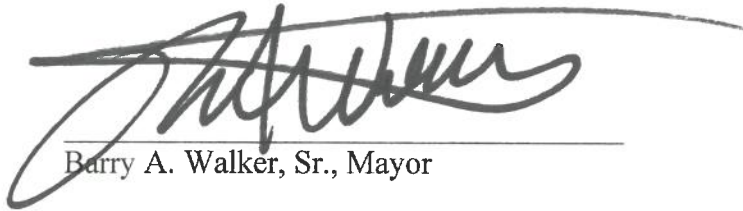
F. Discussion on the Moseley Avenue downtown project (Danielson):

Mr. Danielson gave Council a copy of his downtown acquisition plan that explained how the Town of Irmo will pay for the project with estimated costs. He stated that the property would be acquired through eminent domain and using a specific special district overlay describing mixed use development with strict architectural standards. Once the property is acquired, Council will have the infrastructure installed, which includes installing water, sewer, and any other infrastructure updates to Moseley Street. His plan includes using ARP funds, Hospitality Tax funds, receiving bonds to purchase the property, build the infrastructure, and create a special district for the area. Then, the Town would sell certain parcels to builders and developers to pay off the bonds after the property is developed. The vision included walking trails where people can walk to restaurants, businesses, living spaces and a brewery, etc. Mr. Danielson stated that the project will change the look of the town by connecting the community to both these commercial places and the Town’s parks.

Mayor Walker stated that he is in favor of the project but is uncomfortable using eminent domain to acquire the properties. Mr. Sickinger explained that Council would need to make some uncomfortable decisions to move Town forward. He then stated that Council would want to be fair and transparent about the process. Mr. Will Edwards advised Council that they would need to hire a real estate acquisition firm to help with purchases of certain properties. The discussion ended with all of Council agreeing to create a resolution to move forward on the project.


D. Opened Discussion: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further items to discuss, Mr. Sickinger made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Busch seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously; therefore, the workshop was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.



Barry A. Walker, Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:



Renee Caviness, Municipal Clerk