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| Mayor Elise Partin | Mayor Pro-Tem Tim James | Council Members Phil Carter Hunter Sox Byron Thomas | Interim City Manager James Crosland | Interim Deputy City Manager Michael Conley |
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**City of Cayce
Regular Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

The November 20, 2024, Regular Council Meeting was held this evening at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Those present included Mayor Elise Partin and Council Members Phil Carter, Hunter Sox and Byron Thomas. Interim City Manager Jim Crosland, Interim Deputy City Manager Michael Conley, Municipal Clerk Mendy Corder, Fire Chief Steven Bullard, Finance Director Kelly McMullen, Human Resources Director Lynn Dooley and City Attorney Danny Crowe were also in attendance.

Mayor Partin asked if members of the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the FOIA. Ms. Corder confirmed they were notified.

Call to Order

Mayor Partin called the meeting to order and Council Member Sox gave the invocation. Mayor Partin led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Regarding Items on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

Presentations

- A. Recognition of Lexington Two Innovation Center Welding Instructor, Laird Thompson, being awarded News 19 Teacher of the Week

City staff member Chad Dulinsky nominated his former Lexington Two Innovation Center Welding Instructor, Laird Thompson, for News 19 Teacher of the Week. Chad stated that he would not have the job with the City of Cayce without Mr. Thompson. He stated that Mr. Thompson told his students to pursue their dream and to go out and actually pursue the job he currently had. Mayor Partin and Council recognized Laird Thompson for being chosen as News 19 Teacher of the Week. Mr. Thompson stated that when one can energize someone to get out of their comfort zone and get them into doing something different it is remarkable to watch and they turn into great community citizens. He stated that he was speaking to Chad's supervisor before the meeting and with Chad only being 19 years old he had operated the water treatment plant. Mr. Thompson stated that his students were remarkable young, great citizens of their communities. He stated that they were coming through the schools and the funds given to the schools were creating the opportunity for their exposures, not just to welding, to any and every one of the opportunities that were in our communities and the need for them. He stated that they were great young people out there being grown into adults

and they were going to be the next generation. He stated that there were great children in the community and he was so fortunate to have the opportunity to teach.

Mayor Partin thanked Mr. Thompson for reminding everyone what a difference teachers made. She thanked Chad for being a part of the City of Cayce team and for being a great student and team member, and for also for taking the time to thank those who made a difference in his life.

B. Recognition of Vanesa Mota and Mota Crosslinking Business Academy for Fostering Growth in the Business Community

Mayor Partin stated that Council was recognizing Vanesa Mota and Mota Crosslinking Business Academy for fostering growth in the business community. She stated that Cayce resident, Vanesa Mota, was the visionary founder of Mota Vaded Consulting and Mota Cross Linking Business Academy established in 2019 and through her efforts, MCBA has become a pioneering bilingual and multicultural institution with a global reach dedicated to the education and empowerment of entrepreneurs and business leaders. She stated that Ms. Mota's unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and growth was evident in the Academy's work to serve multicultural communities by offering tailored programs, curriculums, training, business consultations and technical assistance across South Carolina. She stated that MCBA had played a critical role in enhancing businesses and uplifting diverse communities. Mayor Partin stated that Ms. Mota's guiding philosophy, "think about your legacy, the money will follow," inspired countless individuals to pursue impactful and meaningful ventures. She stated that recently, Ms. Mota's remarkable contributions were celebrated by the South Carolina House of Representatives, an acknowledgement of her dedication to connecting and empowering individuals of all ages, ethnicities and cultures. Mayor Partin stated that she and Council recognized Vanessa Mota for her exceptional leadership vision and commitment to creating opportunities that leave a lasting legacy for communities and future generations.

C. Recognition of Juan Rivera for being awarded the 2024 South Carolina Latino/Hispanic Business Day Business of the Year for Tacos Nayarit

Mayor Partin stated that Council was recognizing Juan Rivera for being awarded the 2024 South Carolina Latino, Hispanic Business Day Business of the Year for Tacos Nayarit. She stated that Mr. Rivera was recently awarded the 2024 South Carolina Latino, Hispanic Business Day Business of the Year by Mota Cross Linking Business Academy. She stated since its inception in 2007, Tacos Nayarit has not only delivered authentic and delicious Mexican cuisine to South Carolina, but also served as a testament to the power of hard work, perseverance and dedication to excellence from humble beginnings with a single food truck to the celebrated success as a restaurant chain. She stated that Mr. Rivera's journey embodied the spirit of the American dream and his culinary achievements were widely acknowledged, earning Tacos Nayarit

accolades such as being ranked number 74 on Yelp's top 100 taco spots in the US, and being named South Carolina's best taco spot by Yelp. She stated that their food had been celebrated by locals and critics alike, making them a beloved staple of the community. Mayor Partin stated that beyond Mr. Rivera's culinary talents, he demonstrated a profound commitment to giving back through his generous support of local schools, churches, law enforcement and sports teams. She stated that he had shown how businesses can uplift and empower the communities they serve. Mayor Partin stated that the City was thrilled to have been chosen as the second location of Tacos Nayarit and looked forward to it opening soon in Cayce. Mayor Partin stated that when she told her husband that Tacos Nayarit was opening in the City he went to one of his colleagues and said, let's go there for lunch and his colleague said he couldn't because he had already been there three times that week.

D. Presentation and Progress Report by Tom Behnke, Senior Hydrogeologist with S&ME Inc., on the City's Brownfields Grant

Mr. Behnke thanked Council for having him to present and thanked them for hiring S&ME to handle the City's Brownfields grant. He stated that the Brownfields Assessments Grant was an EPA grant in the amount of \$500,000 and the grant period was from July 1, 2022, through December 30, 2026. He stated that the fees spent to date were \$51,000 and that money was spent on community outreach meetings, flyers and mailers, a \$12,000 assessment and \$22,000 for programmatic support, which was all the reporting that was required by the EPA. He stated eligible activities for the grant monies were Phase One environmental site assessments, Phase Two environmental site assessments that included asbestos and lead based paint, soil and groundwater hazardous materials. He stated that the grant would pay for reuse planning activities. He stated for example, if one purchased an old building and wanted to turn it into a coffee shop, or an old brownfield property someone wanted to make into a park. He stated that the grant would pay for reuse planning activities and then community engagement meetings. He stated the grant monies were not eligible to be used for underground storage, tank removal, remediation, building demolition, building renovation, residential properties or properties with no economic value for the City.

Mr. Behnke stated that progress to date was developing a community involvement plan. He stated that they held one (1) community engagement meeting in January and produced a quality assurance project plan which was basically a blueprint for all the environmental work that they do. He stated that it was a long, involved document that took a lot of time to put together and DHEC and the EPA had to approve it and that it was finished in June. He stated that they conducted a Phase One environmental and a lead based paint on the Cayce Grammar School site at Lexington Avenue and then a Phase 1 L, B, P and asbestos for a piece of property of 237 Foreman Street, which was right next to Steel Hands Brewery. He stated that they did find some issues with that property and prepared a site specific quote for that property to do additional investigation. Mr. Behnke stated that the status of that was they sent it

to DES about three weeks ago and it was still waiting for their review. He stated that there was a lot of government interaction with this, between all the documents they had to provide and the reporting, which slowed progress as they went along. He stated that they had a community engagement meeting scheduled for December 11 and the purpose of the meeting was to have folks come in and talk about the grant and what it could do for their properties and how it could help them. He stated that it was also a way to reach out to property owners in the City and give them information on the grant.

Mr. Behnke gave an overview of the two (2) properties that they had worked on so far. He stated that they did not find any issues at 800 Lexington Avenue. He stated that they did a Phase One environmental assessment at that property. He stated that 237 Foreman Street was a sizable property just south of Steel Hands Brewery. He stated that he was told that Steel Hands Brewery might have some interest in expanding into this property and the property owners also expressed to him that there might be other buyers as well. He stated that they were waiting to get DES approval and then EPA approval to move forward with the Phase Two assessment. He stated that at this point, it probably was not going to happen until after the first of the year, but that assessment would be soil and groundwater testing. He stated that once that was done, then hopefully that would be a vehicle to help the property owner be able to sell the property and then have a developer commit, come in and redevelop the property going forward.

Mr. Behnke stated that there were 37 potential properties throughout the City and they were scattered throughout the City. He stated that one of the properties was 1800 State Street, which was an old gas station. He stated that it was a perfect type of property to potentially reuse. He stated that the whole idea was to have the assessment paid for by the grant and motivate the property owner to want to do something with their properties, redevelop and turn them into something other than what they were, especially if they were just vacant and blighted properties. He stated that the challenge was getting property owners motivated to do something with their property. He stated that the grant was for \$500,000 which was a lot of money to spend on environmental assessment. Mr. Behnke stated that an old factory or landfill were properties that a lot of money could be spent on for an assessment but the small properties were just little pin pricks here and there. He stated that they had monthly calls with the EPA who had experienced some turnover so they had a new project manager who had been very patient with them. He stated that they did update the EPA and they seemed content that they were making a sincere effort to get property owners involved and engaged but the EPA did want to see some progress. He stated that in the contract, after 18 months, S&ME could get reviewed to see if they were spending the money. He stated that the EPA would have the option to cancel the grant if they wanted to but they were not there. Mr. Behnke stated that they were trying to reach out to local realtors and commercial realtors in the area to let them know, because they were the movers and shakers in town and they were selling these properties.

Mayor Partin stated that the City worked very hard and long to get the Brownfields grant and they would not be turning that grant back in so whatever they needed to do to connect property owners to real estate agents, Council would love for S&ME to be doing that. She stated that the grant was a great economic development engine and was designed by the EPA to help bring new life to blighted properties and create an adaptive reuse of some sort for the property. She stated that she brought to Council an option to encourage landowners to make sure that blighted properties did not just sit but the Council did not want to do that and that was certainly Council's prerogative. She stated that the City won this grant money and she would love to make sure they were doing whatever they needed to be doing to support those landowners to know how this was a great resource for them to be able to do cool and unique things with their property, maybe just even above sending mailers out.

Ordinances

- A. Discussion and Approval of Ordinance 2024-11 Amending the Zoning Map and Rezoning Property Located on Fish Hatchery Road (Tax Map Number 006896-02-035) from RG-1 to M-1 – Second Reading

Interim City Manager Crosland stated that the owner of Browns Creek Properties had requested a map amendment to rezone property located on Fish Hatchery Road from RG-1 to M-1 and this was Second Reading.

Council Member Sox made a motion to approve the rezoning on Second Reading. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

City Manager's Report

Interim City Manager Crosland thanked the Cayce Woman's Club for providing breakfast that morning for the City's Utilities staff. He stated that he received some kudos for Battalion Chief Wakeman with the City's Fire Department. He stated that Battalion Chief Wakeman answered a call for service to aid an elderly citizen who had fallen in his yard and he not only helped the citizen medically, but also helped him back inside his house. He stated that the elderly citizen was having issues with his TV and could not get it working so Battalion Chief Wakeman made a simple remote control fix. He stated that he demonstrated the care and kindness of the City's team to go out and do the little things which meant a lot to the citizens. He stated that Tom Chumney, a vice president of Haven Homes, reached out to Mayor Partin and expressed his appreciation for the City's Utilities team for going above and beyond of what he was normally used to. He stated that Shelly Smith, the City's Business License Administrator, had just graduated from the South Carolina Economic Development Institute and they were very proud of her and looked forward to her using that wisdom to help the City. Interim City Manager Crosland stated that the Finance Department had

completed the fiscal year 23/24 audit and was finalizing that annual comprehensive financial report which would be on the City's website very soon. He stated that staff had already kicked off the 25/26 FY budget process. He stated that Interim Deputy City Manager Conley wanted to thank the Parks team for planting plants at the signs at City Hall. He stated that the City recently had an unveiling of the 12,000 Year History Park's visitor center design. He stated that Mayor Partin spearheaded that project and the City was thankful for the hard work of Senator Nikki Setzler and Representative Micah Caskey helping the City to get money for that and thankful for the donation from the Daniel and Susan F. Boyd Foundation.

Mayor Partin stated that \$2.155 million in donations was certainly a blessing to get to help spearhead. She stated that the 12,000 Year History Park was a piece of property between the Cayce Tennis Center and the Congaree River. She stated that in that one (1) square mile, there was proof of habitation from 12,000 years ago and also proof of Civil War and Revolutionary War battles. She stated that most of those pieces of property in the country had been built over or forgotten so thank you to the River Alliance for having that vision. She stated that Dominion, formerly SCANA, donated the land to the City and they had slowly been moving forward on figuring out how to protect that land further and how to make sure to tell the important stories of what happened there. She stated that Senator Setzler and Representative Caskey helped get money from the State for some site preparation work and that certainly mattered but then the Boyd Foundation was very excited to work together to bring the building to fruition. She stated that the person who spearheaded the project and helped move it forward was Ozzie Nagler. She stated that he was an amazing man who had done work around the world and he drew the original concepts. She stated that the Visitors Center would have a museum space and a theater as well as a classroom space or a meeting space. She stated that it was a lovely design and it worked beautifully with the natural, cultural and historical significance of the site there. She stated that the City was excited to have the groundbreaking after the first of the year and have Mr. Nagler there to see the building come to fruition.

Council Comments

Council Member Thomas stated he just got back from the National League of Cities Summit in Tampa and learned a lot. He stated that there were cities that had a cemetery task force that involved city employees and stakeholders in the community who work with universities and companies that have ground penetrating radar technology and they work with private property owners to verify cemetery sites. He stated that some cities had purchased cemeteries to preserve property or were able to dedicate them as park space to prevent anyone from building on the cemeteries. He stated that the City of Cayce hired Stantec in 2022 to complete a survey of historic African American cemeteries and in their research they stated that most of the cemeteries in the City needed to be further investigated with ground penetrating radar technology. He stated that he would love if the City could continue to work and finish a

job and not allow this to be a halfway thing, because he had a lot of constituents who had reached out to him in regard to wanting more answers on where these cemeteries were, with knowing that the last records were saying that the City needed to further dig in for more information. Council Member Thomas stated that if the City could create a task force and look for grant money, and work with universities and companies that had the technology, he would love for the City to dig further, because there were people in the City that were older and had knowledge of where these cemeteries potentially were and the last thing he wanted was for them to pass away and the City did not give them the closure that they deserved.

Council Member Thomas stated that he spoke with a number of people at the conference that had City Youth Councils. He stated that he knew that was more so a mayor thing and he would be honored to work with Mayor Partin on this. He stated that he was not sure if Mayor Partin had a Youth Council in the past, but he would love to work with her to try to get something going again. He stated that working with the youth would help the City continue to elevate with the times. He stated that they needed to engage with the youth and get them engaged in the amazing City events for them to participate in. He stated that he would be one of Mayor Partin's foot soldiers and he would do whatever he could to support so the City could have an amazing youth council with BC High School and Airport High School. He stated that there were cities that were building relationships with the banks in their community and finding ways for these banks to help their citizens. He stated that the banks, working with the city, were educating their citizens on loans, what to watch for and not be scammed in predatory loans, how to build up their credit, how to improve and how to build up an emergency fund. Council Member Thomas stated that the banks also partnered with school districts to educate parents on child savings accounts, like the State's five to nine future state and scholars' plan. He stated that his belief was, if the City could help one family take that financial step from one level to the next, they were doing an amazing job as a city. He stated that he was there to help the City work with any partnerships and whatever they could do to sit down with them to figure out how to help residents, he would love to be a part of that conversation.

Council Member Thomas stated that one city had an ordinance where they had business criteria for awarding major bids to a company. He stated, for example, projects that were ten million and higher, the winning bid must have met certain criteria, regarding how involved and invested they were in the community and how many of their employees actually lived in that city. He stated that they did this because it was taxpayer dollars being used for those projects so they wanted to make sure those companies were invested in the city. He stated that he thought that was very interesting. He stated that he was still learning the City's procurement process but thought it was amazing what some cities were doing. He stated that he learned a lot from the National League of Cities Conference and was very excited to continue to go to more conferences, like the State's Municipal Association Conference, and he was going

to continue to learn to bring great information back to the citizens, because he was competitive and he knew the City of Cayce had so much more to offer its citizens.

Council Member Thomas stated that he was holding a hot dogs and handshakes event on December 1 from 2pm to 4pm at Burnette Park. He stated that Interim City Crosland and Police Chief Herbert Blake would be there. He stated that the event was sponsored by Something Borrowed, a business in the City. He stated that Keep the Midlands Beautiful was looking for school students to submit a mural design. He stated that he had partnered with them to bring a mural to his district to help bring more tourism and business to the City. He stated that if they did not get any submissions, the City could potentially lose the opportunity so if anyone knew a student that loved to draw tell them to submit a mural design so they could continue to beautify the City of Cayce.

Council Member Sox stated that he had the privilege of going to the National League of Cities Conference as well. He stated that he attended some good economic development sessions and toured their riverwalk which was a little bit different than the city's Riverwalk. He stated that it was vast and had a lot of businesses along it, which would be awesome for the City to be able to bring some businesses to the Midlands Riverwalk since the City prioritized nature in its Riverwalk. He stated that he also attended a session on moving the needle on housing and diversifying housing stock and learned best practices on that and getting people up to speed. He stated that one of the communities talked about how they were able to bring developers together with community members, religious groups and local businesses and the developers talked to them about how they look at a project from a development standpoint and what they had to get out of the property to be able to properly develop it and take in from the community members what they want to see to preserve what was there.

Council Member Sox stated that he attended one session called Buy Local, Thrive Local which sounded like the Greater Cayce West Columbia Chamber's motto of love local. He stated that he also had some great discussions with other elected officials and staff members from around the country about TIF and learned about multi county business parks, both of which were some things that he thought could be influential and impactful on the Airport Boulevard corridor and possibly the Charleston Highway corridor to continue some of the efforts that had been done on Knox Abbott Drive. Council Member Sox stated that the press conference with the School District, the Chamber, Cypress and all those involved at the 800 Lexington Avenue lot was great. He stated that it was great being able to hear from former teachers at the school and learn about the history of it. He stated that he thought it would be a really exciting development.

Council Member Carter thanked Council Member Thomas for mentioning the African American Cemetery project and stated that he fully supported the continuation of the final work already done to not only identify but recognize those particular

cemeteries. He thanked Interim City Manager Crosland and Mayor Partin and Council for recognizing Laird Thompson, Vanessa Mota and Juan Rivera. He stated that it really brought a good spirit to the room when Council recognized folks in the community and he thought Council was going to continue that and it was really appreciated. He stated that great things were being done and they were going to start working a little tighter with the School District, to mention some good things going on there. He stated that they were going to talk more about that in the future.

Mayor Partin asked Interim City Manager Crosland if he could re-share the document from the African American Cemetery study because she did not want there being any misperceptions. She stated that the study was very comprehensive and she did not think there was anyone that did not get to contribute to it. She stated that there was extensive community involvement and that was how they found what they did and were able to locate those cemeteries. She stated that the work was largely done and the involvement from citizens was not missing. She stated that it was well done by the museum and the consultants that were involved with it. Mayor Partin stated that she was wearing her pin that the Doves, the young girl's group at Cayce elementary that one of the City's female school resource officers started, and they gave her that pin on induction night. She stated that she just got reminded of something about young girls, and sometimes they needed to encourage each other. She stated that she sat there as Mayor, to remind them that even when those around you might lie about you or say unkind things about you or name call you, that you still had to keep doing what was right. She stated that you still keep believing in being kind and in making a difference. She stated that it mattered and thanked SRO Cochran who started that group.

City Attorney Crowe stated that there were two (2) items for Executive Session that were inadvertently omitted on the electronic reproduction of the agenda. He stated that discussion of a matter covered by the attorney client privilege and discussion of negotiations incident to an agreement with DOT concerning the Avenues Drainage Project, needed to be discussed in Executive Session, if Council could consider those. Mayor Partin stated that if those items had not been put out electronically to the citizens, could they wait until the next meeting to ensure that they were sharing with the citizens what Council was doing. City Attorney Crowe stated that the attorney client privilege matter would be a little bit time sensitive. Mayor Partin asked if it was something that there would be any action on that the citizens should know about or would that action happen later so the citizens were aware of anything that might happen. City Attorney Crowe stated that it would not necessitate a motion coming out of Executive Session but it was related to the Council's business relationship with the City Attorney.

Council Member Sox made a motion to add said matter to action under attorney client privilege for Executive Session. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Council Member Sox made a motion to move into Executive Session. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Executive Session

- A. Receipt of legal advice relating to claims and potential claims by and against the City and other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege

Reconvene

After the Executive Session was concluded, Council Member Sox made a motion to reconvene the Regular meeting. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. Mayor Partin announced that no vote was taken in Executive Session other than to adjourn and resume the Regular meeting.

Possible actions in follow up to Executive Session

There were no actions in follow up to Executive Session.

Adjourn

Council Member Carter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Thomas seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by roll call vote. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:02pm.

Elise Partin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mendy Corder, CMC, Municipal Clerk

