

**MINUTES
MAULDIN CITY COUNCIL
APRIL 18, 2011
7:00 PM**

Members present were Mayor Don Godbey, Council members Patricia Gettys, Bob Cook, Gabe Hunter, and Michael Reynolds. Dale Black and James Kennedy were out of town.

1. Call to order.- Mayor Godbey
 - a. Invocation- Councilman Hunter
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance- Councilman Reynolds
 - c. Welcome- Mayor Godbey
2. Proclamations and Presentations- Prayer proclamation; Reedy River Missionary Baptist Church proclamation; Bethel Elementary Proclamation- Brenda Byrd, Principal; TMaldi resolution; Economic Development Proclamation; George McLeer, Executive Director Mauldin Cultural Center; Pat Pomeroy, Mauldin Chamber

Mayor Godbey read the prayer proclamation and TMaldi resolution.

Trey Eubanks was given the economic development proclamation on behalf of GADC.

Brenda Byrd was given a proclamation for Bethel Elementary School. They are one of two elementary schools in the state that was given the Palmetto Award.

Mayor Godbey read the Reedy River Missionary Baptist Church proclamation.

George McLeer reported that the summer concert schedule has been done. SC Bank and Trust is sponsoring the events. The Cultural Center board retreat was held April 8th.

Frank and Dean were available from LP3 Neal Prince to talk about the cultural center improvements. There will be a new front entrance to the auditorium with a tower effect. A history hallway where things will be displayed will also serve as a handicapped ramp for access to the information. An additional ramp is also to be added toward the terrace for ease of handicapped accessibility. A permanent area will be added to the top of the building for access to the HVAC areas so that a ladder will not have to be moved to give access.

Councilman Hunter asked if we are ready to go out for bid. Trey Eubanks said we need to wait on a funding source. Fundraising was discussed at the Cultural Center Foundation Board retreat this month. The estimated cost for all renovations and expansion is 1.7 million dollars. The City will fund phase one of the landscaping plan.

Councilman Cook said we need to start work on the auditorium first. Fundraising will be easier if people are able to start coming to events in the auditorium. Trey answered that we have been waiting for construction drawings so that we didn't have to undo anything. The stage will be shored up first and we are working on auditorium improvements. Mayor Godbey asked by the May committee meeting to see a list of things that are being done on the project now.

John Duggan asked if there were opportunities for naming things at the cultural center such as benches or bricks. George McLeer said yes, there is a list of things that can be named.

3. Reading and approval of minutes.- March 21, 2011

Councilman Cook made a motion to approve the minutes with Councilman Hunter seconding. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

4. Public Comment.

- a. Teresa Allen: I live at 105 Remington Court. The reason I am here is concerning left turns out the side entrance or exit to Ingles coming up to West Butler. I was the front row seat to the accident with John Lafoy. I see a lot of people, because I come down that road a lot, I see people to avoid the long line of cars, they cut down through Ingles and the side around Wendy's and try to turn left. You have two lanes going into four at Walgreen's, three going into two at BB&T, so there is a lot going on there. There will be two or three over at the side entrance trying to get people to stop and if that was a no left turn, this wouldn't have happened. The guy in the truck came out in front of us and he didn't see him but John saw him.

I don't know what the protocol is and I know this is a touchy subject for a lot of people right now, but these people that are using this as a bypass, they are causing a problem.

Mayor Godbey: This is a private drive. Ingles will have to make that call, but we will forward your comments to DOT. Our jurisdiction is limited, but we can forward your comments.

Trey Eubanks: We are going to request Ingles to do that. They would have to approve that, but we are making the request and waiting to hear back from Ingles.

Mayor Godbey: We are very mindful of private property owner's rights. That leads us into our next... Mr. Cook?

Councilman Cook: Get her name and forward any information you get to her.

- b. Joel Ann Chandler: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Joel Ann Chandler and I live at 125 Bridges Road in Mauldin. I have owned and operated the Mauldin Open Air Market over 25 years. I saw an article recently in the Tribune Times regarding the enhancement project on East Butler and I was concerned that nothing was mentioned about the market. They are talking about widening the section of Butler at the high school down to the intersection. There will be more vehicles. A four lane road will create major problems. I am concerned that some of my parking lot may be taken and I was concerned that some of my property would be taken. I spoke to John Gardner today and I appreciate his time in talking to me.

The main thing I want is to be able to operate the market as I have all of these years. It is a landmark in Mauldin. Everyone knows where the fruit stand is.

Mayor Godbey: It is part of our cookbook.

Joel Ann Chandler: We have been there for years. People come for fresh produce, boiled peanuts, and we provide unusual projects. People come from miles around to shop here. I live across the street and farm the land. It has been in my family since 1924. Butler Road is a good combination of residential, commercial, and churches. We have a good combination of services. We have a turn lane, sidewalks, Butler Road does not need to be four lanes. That would take away the character of the road. We need to take each home and business into consideration and not take their property.

There is a turn lane at the high school and at Corn Road already. I have a petition from numerous people to preserve the market at its present location. Thank you.

Mayor Godbey: This is a DOT project and DOT road. We are interested in what is happening there because it affects our community. The City

has limited ability to impact the decisions that DOT will make on their road, but we will be in conversations with you. Staff and myself are willing to help you where we are able to.

Trey Eubanks: I know you have had some conversations with John Gardner . He is available to you to review those plans. Initially, DOT was looking at a lot more right-of-way. We got them to scale back the scope of this project. You did the right thing showing up at the high school for the DOT meeting and I will send the petition to the DOT.

Mayor Godbey: We don't have a lot of control over private property, but we can be a voice for our citizens and our neighbors.

- c. Danny Day: I live at 912 Fargo Street. I wanted to talk to you about your budget process that you are going through and give you some input. If any of my numbers are wrong, we are going to blame Nathaniel. I haven't been to any of the budget workshops, so I am getting the numbers from the paper. I am sure they are correct. I want to talk about the proposal for the garbage fee. I have to start out that I had two thirty gallon trash bins when I first moved to Mauldin and they were behind the house. The city used to go around the house and pick them up twice a week. A little later we went to once a week. Greg thinks I am picking on him. Later we went to rolling carts, then rolling carts and the recycling bin. After pay as you throw last year, I went and got the big recycling bin. I have cut my garbage load at least a third, maybe a half. In addition to that, my lot is covered with trees, and I have mulched my leaves.

If you do a \$65 fee, you have to keep in mind what you are doing to the average taxpayer. I realize the cost of business increases and we haven't raised taxes in seven years before last year and that revenues have to come from somewhere. The problem is if you do fees, and even though this will be tax-deductible, the impact you do to the average homeowner is not equitable. You got tax mills last year and then had to rescind it because of the reassessment. The table I want to give you

says standard market value. I started at \$100,000 up to a million. On a \$100,000 home, the tax on that is \$218. If you put a \$65 fee on top of that, you have increased the tax 30%. Conversely, if you have a 5 mill increase, it would be a 9% increase for everyone. A \$65 fee on a \$200,000 is a 15% tax increase. If you are over \$500,000 property, they are not really getting an increase at all. I understand that it is an election year and you don't want to raise taxes. People don't get as mad over a fee. I understand that. This is a regressive tax, though. You are taking a lower property owner and regressively taxing them. I don't know about your revenue stream, but it is not just tax millage. I am also not sure, Gabe, you were quoted that the tipping fees have gone up. Every time we have a revenue need, it is always a garbage problem. Greg seems to be taking the heat for this. I don't know if he is connected with the mob, or what.

I cannot tell you how to create revenues, but I can give you some means. I think the flat fee is regressive and unfair to the elderly and lower income people who have less assets. I know you have good intentions, but public works is not where all the cost increases come from. This is the same as last year. Fees versus taxes. I wish Dale was here because he can't believe people would rather have a tax increase than fee. Take a hard look at what you are doing and I think you would be better off raising the millage. It is more equitable.

One last thing I didn't sign up for, but I had the opportunity to be in the corporate headquarters of Hubbell Lighting. They have passed some of the most stringent green qualifications I have ever seen. I know it is late in the game, but the maintenance of the sports center lighting, they might be willing to help you reduce your costs.

Mayor Godbey: Put in a good word for us.

Danny Day: Will do.

Mayor Godbey: The County is charging us twice for garbage because we are a municipality. I keep saying that and want to see it in the paper someday. Also, managing revenue shortfalls, home rule is not acted on. Our hands are tied by the state legislature. You can be an advocate to say let our municipalities govern themselves. The millage cap is probably going to be about .6 this year. Under one for sure.

5. Report from City Administrator

Trey reported some population data. According to the 2010 Census, Mauldin has 22,889 people. We are the 18th largest city in the state. We are the seventh fastest growing with a population of 3,000 or greater.

E-recycling day is April 30th at the Municipal Stadium. The Garden Club Spring Fling is April 30th. Senator Graham will be at the First Baptist Church on May 9th. The train show is May 13th-15th and May 20-21st. National Day of Prayer is May 5th at 12:00 p.m.

Olivia Harris showed the Mauldin website improvements and updates.

6. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Fire (Chairman Black)

i. Reports and Communications from Fire Chief

Captain Crawford reported that the response time is 2.9 minutes. 256 calls were run last month. A slideshow was shown with the pictures of the steel foundation of the new fire station on Bethel Road.

b. Police (Chairman Cook)

i. Reports and Communications from Police Chief. – report on file

ii. Reports and Communications from Municipal Clerk of Court /
Administrative Judge- report on file

c. Public Works (Chairman Kennedy)

i. Reports and Communications from PW Director

Greg Fincher reported the parks look good. Recycling is going very well.
Nathaniel Starks is retiring in a month after 30 years.

d. Finance and Policy (Chairman Reynolds)

i. Reports and Communication from Finance Director

Holly Abercrombie reported that the property tax checks are in and that we have reached budget. Business licenses were due the 15th. The building department is putting the amounts in and we should have a budget number by committee meetings.

e. Planning and Economic Development (Chairman Hunter)

i. Reports and Communications from Building and Zoning Director.

Peter Nomikos reported the department will end the year under budget. 130 permits were issued last month in the amount of \$67,000. Permits typically increase in warmer months. Councilman Cook asked if roofing companies were still being watched to make sure they are getting their business licenses. Mr. Nomikos said that was happening and the companies are getting their licenses.

f. Recreation (Chairwoman Gettys)

i. Reports and Communications from Recreation Director

Van Brannon reported that baseball and softball are going well. 100 participants will be playing in the Miracle League. The sports center member appreciation event was well attended. 2500 seniors attended events at the center. The Easter Egg hunt went well.

7. Unfinished Business- None

8. New Business

a. Consideration and action on inclement weather policy (Finance)

Chairman Reynolds made a motion to accept the inclement weather and emergency policy. Three days a year will be given as administrative leave and any hours over that amount will be charged as vacation leave. Councilwoman Gettys seconded the motion.

b. Consideration and action on FLSA policy (Finance)

Chairman Reynolds made a motion to table this policy and send it back to committee. Councilman Cook seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

c. Road improvement project report (PEDC)

Chairman Hunter made a motion to piggyback with the East Butler project with DOT. DOT will allow us to piggyback on the widening project and will include Main Street enhancement. \$117,500 is the estimated cost. \$94,000 will come from federal funds. Councilwoman Gettys seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

Councilman Cook asked if any property would be taken as part of this project and was answered no.

9. Public Comment.

Tommy Shaleuly: I live at 961 Fargo Street. I want to talk about the budget, but I am not going to be as nice as Danny was. Last year you raised taxes to the maximum and then came in the back door to raise fees. This year you are going through the back door again and are raising more taxes. You want to run over the citizens of Mauldin. Growth does not relate to taxes. You have to get your costs under control. This sports center is costing an arm and a leg. Last year it cost \$180,000 and this year it is a quarter of a million dollars. With the exception of Mrs. Gettys and Mr. Reynolds, these are the same people who said the sports center would help reduce taxes and be a revenue generator. It has raised taxes. Taxes are going up. I can sit here all night and go through other costs, but I am pleading with this council to get the costs under control. Start with the sports center. I am not against the sports center, I like it, but I don't think a quarter of a million dollars is justified.

Councilman Reynolds: Standard and Poor's just reduced the federal borrowing rating to negative. We still have AAA +. We are better off than the federal government at this point,

10. Council requests.- None

11. Adjournment. – Mayor Godbey adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Miller
Municipal Clerk