



Minutes
City Council Meeting
September 21, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: City Hall Council Chambers

Members present: Mayor Terry Merritt, Council members Taft Matney, Carol King, Jason Kraeling, Dale Black, Michael Reynolds, and Diane Kuzniar. City Attorney John Duggan and City Administrator Brandon Madden were also present.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Terry Merritt

- a. Invocation- Pastor Wade Leonard
- b. Pledge of Allegiance- Councilman Kraeling
- c. Welcome- Mayor Merritt

2. Proclamations and Presentations

- a. Justin Romero Proclamation
Mayor Merritt read and presented the proclamation.

Amanda Taylor from AT&T presented the City with a check for \$50,000 to go towards the Swamp Rabbit Trail project.

3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

Mayor Terry Merritt

- a. City Council Meeting –August 17, 2020
Action: Councilman Black made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted with Councilwoman King seconding. Mayor Merritt made a note of a small change that had been made to the minutes since they were sent to Council.
Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

4. Public Comment- None

5. Report from City Administrator

Brandon Madden

- a. Employee Recognition
Mr. Madden recognized City Departments for their help with the BBQ festival this past weekend. He then announced Willie Stewart from our Recreation Department is now the President of SCAP.

6. Reports from Standing Committees

- a. Finance and Policy (Chairperson Reynolds)- Chairman Reynolds said he had one item on the agenda regarding capital and operational items. He also mentioned that Council would be having an audit meeting soon.

- b. Public Safety (Chairperson King)
- c. Public Works (Chairperson Kraeling)
- d. Economic Planning and Development (Chairperson Matney)
- e. Building Codes (Chairperson Kuzniar)
- f. Recreation (Chairperson Black)

7. Unfinished Business Ordinances - Second Reading

- a. An ordinance to provide for the annexation of Property owned by Access 100, LLC, and located along Old Laurens Road by one hundred percent petition method; and to establish a zoning classification of I-1, Industrial, for said property

Councilor Kuzniar

The City of Mauldin has received a signed petition requesting the annexation of a tract of land pursuant to South Carolina Code of Laws Section 5-3-150. This petition includes approximately 0.45 acres owned by Access 100, LLC, and is located along Old Laurens Road.

The applicant has requested that this tract be zoned I-1, Industrial, upon annexation into the City of Mauldin. The applicant has already begun construction of the Access Point Business Park on 53 acres adjacent to this site. The applicant recently acquired this 0.45-acre tract to add to this existing project site.

Action: Chairwoman Kuzniar made a motion to accept this ordinance on second reading. Councilman Black seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

8. New Business

Standing Committee Items

Tire Amnesty- The City of Mauldin Public Works Department through its Sanitation Division has provided a disposal program for used/old tires. The current procedure is to pick up the tires and stockpile them at the Jenkins Facility until a full load of tires exists. Landfill requirements mandate that tires be separated from municipal waste and disposed of in a separate portion of the landfill. Additional requirements have included the licensure of the City as a "Waste Tire Hauler," and paperwork to include manifests for each tire.

In preparation for the closure of the Jenkins Street Facility, Public Works has been hauling off trash, brush, soil stockpiles, and an assortment of other junk stationed around the facility. Old and damaged equipment has been removed and the back side of the tract has been cleaned up. The continued stockpiling of tires on the tract is no longer a viable option.

The Public Works facility does not have additional storage space for tire storage; however, Public Works does not want to diminish or reduce services to City Residents. If a Tire Amnesty program is implemented with two pick-up dates (first Friday in April and October), Public Works could

collect all the tires City-wide and transport them directly to the landfill without stockpiling.

Action: Chairman Kraeling made a motion to accept staff's recommendation for a Tire Amnesty Program. Councilwoman King seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

- b. Vegetation Management Procedure- Currently the City does not have a written procedure on how to handle and manage vegetation in the City of Mauldin. Chairman Kraeling said he was very impressed on how well written this document is.

Action: Chairman Kraeling made a motion to adopt this procedure with Councilman Reynolds seconding.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

- c. Resolution approving the Sale and Transfer of property- In October 2020, Police Canine PACO was scheduled to retire out from the department due to age. PACO is currently 14 years old and worked on patrol for the past 11 years. With the recent promotion of Lt. George Miller, the decision was made to proceed with the retirement of Police Canine PACO two months early and purchase a new Canine for the department. This item was previously discussed during the August 2020 Council meeting. As part of the retirement of the Police Canine PACO, Lt. George Miller would take ownership of this City asset.

Action: Chairwoman King made a motion to accept the resolution to approve the sale and transfer of Paco to Lt. George Miller. Councilman Matney seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

- d. Police Canine Purchase Update- A police canine purchase in the amount of \$8500 was approved for an out of state vendor in the August 2020 Council meeting. This week the Mauldin Police Department received information that a local vendor could provide a canine to the department for the same price. The extended training for the Canine and officer will still be conducted free of charge at the Greenville County Sheriff's Office and once training is completed, the canine will have certification from the North American Police Work Dog Association (NAP-WDA). There will be no increase in cost over the previously approved amount.

Action: Chairwoman King made a motion to obtain a police canine from Astro Kennels in Simpsonville for the amount of \$8500. This action supersedes the previous action from last month's council meeting. Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

- e. Take Home Vehicle Request- City Council is requested to approve the use of a take home vehicle Fire Marshall James Rice. This item came out of committee with no recommendation. A vehicle policy was passed in August 2017. The policy was a result of months of work. The policy allows take home vehicles for police and fire personnel who live within 10 miles of the City.

James Rice currently uses a city vehicle for inspections in the City and Mauldin Fire District and is called back for all undetermined or suspicious fire investigations after hours. He currently lives 20 miles outside the fire district line. Staff is requesting that Mr. Rice be given approval to use the city vehicle as a take home vehicle. This will allow for him to be

able to respond to fires after normal business hours in a timely manner.

Pursuant to the City's vehicle policy all requests for take home vehicles must be submitted in writing and approved by the City Administrator and City Council. The City Administrator approved the request. Councilman Reynolds asked under what circumstances Mr. Rice would be called in. Mr. Madden said Mr. Rice would come back in for a structure fire. This would be a way to be a little more efficient. Mr. Rice would be able to go directly to the scene of a fire instead of first having to report to the station to get a vehicle.

Action: Chairwoman King made a motion to table this item. Councilman Reynolds seconded the motion.

Councilman Matney asked the Fire Chief to come forward for comment. Councilman Matney asked Chief McHone how many times this year has Mr. Rice had to respond to a fire. Chief McHone answered approximately six times since January. Councilman Matney asked if he has lights in his personal vehicle. Fire Chief McHone answered no, no one has lights in their vehicles. Councilman Matney asked how much it would help a fire investigation if Mr. Rice was able to get there faster. Chief McHone said he would be able to respond and see the fire as it was burning. He can also be utilized on the fire scene for safety, or for whatever else the incident commander may need.

Mayor Merritt asked how many Deputy Fire Marshals the City has. Chief McHone answered 2-one is going through the training for the investigation part of the job. Mayor Merritt asked how quickly the Deputy Fire Marshal who lives in the City could respond. Chief McHone said he lives 1.1 miles away and could respond in less than 10 minutes depending on the location of the fire.

Mayor Merritt said the Deputy Fire Marshal that lives 20 miles away would take about an hour to respond. Mayor Merritt asked if the investigation started during the active fire. Chief McHone answered no, the investigation begins after the fire is extinguished.

Chairwoman King asked if the vehicle stays at the Feaster Road station. Chief McHone answered yes. Councilwoman Kuzniar asked how often he is on call. Chief McHone answered every day, 24 hours.

Chairman King said this is not personal but has to do with a policy that is 3 years old. It is important to respect the policy we have. If this is approved, the truck would have an additional 20 miles one way, per day. She does not believe this is an emergency situation. Councilman Kraeling asked if he lived within 10 miles, he could take the vehicle home, correct? Chairwoman King said that was correct.

Councilman Matney said he would vote no on the tabling motion. This is not just for investigation after the fact. We are dealing with fire and life safety issues and the Deputy Fire Marshal is a participating officer on an active fire. In the line of work they are in, seconds and minutes can mean the difference between life and death. We need to have all the personnel we can get. Police and Fire have very different functions from the rest of the departments.

Vote: The vote to table was 6-1 with Councilman Matney dissenting.

f. Funding Assistance Agreement

Action: Chairman Matney made a motion to approve the funding source for Project Bosa in the amount of \$5,000. Councilman Reynolds seconded the motion.

Van Broad said the City has grant money provided by GCRA in the form of CDBG funds that we get from the federal government. Businesses can use the money for façade improvements. The business has requested grant funding in the amount of \$5,000.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

g. Approval of Capital and Operational Items (Pages 57-76)

Action: Chairman Reynolds made a motion to approve these funding sources for capital and operational items. Councilman Matney seconded the motion.

Chairman Reynolds commended staff on their fiscal responsibility and also thanked this Council and past Councils for their efforts resulting in a surplus.

The largest project is adding \$1.1 million to the CIP fund balance. This will also fund:

Increasing the Public Works Department's personnel budget

Training related to diversity and inclusion

Replacement of chairs for public seating in the Council Chambers/Courtroom

Repaving the City Park parking lot

Public Works information campaign

Construction of Swamp Rabbit Trailhead

Upgrades to the Miller Road Fire Station

Replacement of HVAC systems

Councilman Black asked why the difference in the HVAC numbers for units that are the same tonnage. Matt Fleahman said two of the units are heat pumps and will replace both heating and air. The third unit is an air conditioning unit only.

Action: Chairman Reynolds made a motion to amend his motion to allow \$25,000 for Council initiatives on diversity and inclusion. There is already \$25,000 allowed for staff initiatives, and this would be an additional \$25,000 for Council initiatives for diversity and inclusion, for a total of \$50,000 for diversity and inclusion. Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion to amend.

The funding source would be the CIP fund and would take the additional \$25,000 out of what would be allocated to the CIP fund balance. Councilwoman King said the additional funding would be for Council initiatives. The other \$25,000 is for staff funding.

Vote: The vote on the amendment was unanimous (7-0). The vote on the motion as amended was unanimous (7-0).

**Action: Councilman Matney made a motion to consider items H and I informally.
Councilwoman King seconded the motion.**

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Committee of the Whole Items

Mayor Terry Merritt

h. Cultural Center Auditorium Renovation

Councilman Matney asked Mr. Broad to talk about this project.

Mr. Broad said Phase II is comprised of a new lobby plan, which is more of a plaza. This will supersede the 2009 plan which called for a portico. The new lobby will contain:

1. Handicap accessible bathrooms
2. Warming kitchen
3. Loading patio for catering
4. New egress and ingress into the Lobby and Auditorium
5. New Plaza as an extension of the lobby waiting area will also serve as:
 - a. Reception leasing space
 - b. Extended area for patrons to relax
 - c. Overflow crowds
 - d. Entertaining venue for small productions and private gatherings

In the current budget, the lobby renovation is part of the Council approved 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). With enough funding to commit to the Phase I portion of the lobby, staff plans to seek additional partners for phase II and III by submitting a grant requests to SCPRT for funding in the amount of \$200K. These grants will be matched by the funding included in the City's CIP. Additionally, staff will seek private donations for opportunities to name portions of the lobby and other areas in the center.

Phase II will contain most of what is noted in the new lobby plan and phase III will contain:

1. Complete fix of all window repairs
2. Renovate and relocate bathrooms beside auditorium
3. New ticket booth
4. Repair any and all ceiling drywall maintenance
5. Finish and complete sheetrock and painting green room
6. New awnings over front windows and others and lighting

An RFQ will be submitted in order to solicit a CMAR (construction Manager at Risk) to complete phase II and phase III of the lobby renovation. The Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) is a delivery method which entails a commitment by the Construction Manager (CM) to deliver the project within a Guaranteed Maximum Price.

Action: Councilman Matney made a motion to move forward with the renovations using the plan presented tonight and last week at the committee meetings that supersedes the 2009 plan.

Councilman Reynolds seconded the motion.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

i. Project Crustacean

Action: Councilman Matney made a motion to approve the contract for Project Crustacean. Councilwoman King seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Kuzniar asked Mr. Broad what the square footage would be. Mr. Broad answered he was not sure but thinks probably 700-800 square feet. He said he would get the number and send it to Council. Mayor asked if the ramp in the back would be ADA compliant. Mr. Broad answered yes.

Vote: The vote was unanimous (7-0).

9. Public Comment

Mayor Terry Merritt

- a. Jennie Neighbors: Thank you. I live at 1 Cade Court here in Mauldin. Let me get my written word. I am not very good at speaking. I appreciate the funding for diversity and inclusion training. It is a great thing. I have been doing diversity and inclusion work for seven years. I know it is easy to feel like you are doing something if you are doing diversity and inclusion training. This is the first step, but not the most important step. I would like to talk about time and words.

As a white person, I understand that learning about racism can feel like action. It is big, powerful, and can be a revelation. But learning about racism is not action and doesn't change the status quo. Learning about racism is important but is not a step that changes policy. Making the world more just requires action. White friends, you have had time to listen to the gentlemen of the Concerned Citizens for Mauldin who have ever so patiently and generously tried to educate you and me and we must continue to learn. Don't take their generosity for granted. White people have been asking black people to be patient for a long, long time. The time that you have been given to learn is time that has been taken from those who have so patiently and graciously been trying to educate you.

They are being actively denied representation from the very Council you sit on. They do not trust you. Your thanks for their patience is not enough. I want to read a short piece from Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham jail to the white churches, five white pastors from Birmingham. Great piece of writing of course. He writes that, he is talking about a friend of his.

"I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be coworkers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation." I urge you not to allow time to stagnate and to represent all people in Mauldin fairly. I encourage you to keep going in the direction you are going and respect the people in the community who work so hard to make this a better place. Thank you.

- b. Reverend Wade Leonard: I live in Woodruff, but work at 150 S. Main Street in Mauldin. Thank you for allowing me to speak. My purpose in speaking tonight is to talk to you about Dale Black. After serving Mauldin First Baptist as an Associate Pastor, and Senior Pastor for the last 20 years, I have had the opportunity to build relationships with many of our church members as well as members of the community. Over that time, it is common for me to write a letter of reference for someone if they are applying for a job or speak by phone in regards of people's experiences. I have even appeared in court numerous times on someone's behalf, character,

or reputation. Tonight, I would like to speak on behalf of Dale Black.

I have known Dale and his wife, Judy, for more than 20 years. They are members in good standing for more than thirty years. During that time, I have had many conversations with Dale as well as opportunities to observe Dale in small group settings and in leadership roles in the church as well as the community. In that time, I have only known Dale to treat people with respect. He has a warm demeanor and a pleasant personality. He has a heart for serving. Over the years, he has shared with me when he disagrees with something at the church, which is not unique to him, I have heard things from other people as well. But, he has always done so in a good spirit, and I always knew he was for me and for the church and only wanted the best for our community and church. I have been and continue to be proud to call him my friend and brother in Christ.

Having said that, it doesn't mean that he is immune to poor choices or mistakes; none of us are. Some of the Facebook posts he shared are construed as inappropriate, but they do not warrant his removal from Council leadership. Let me be clear about this, I am not here to advocate for one position or the other regarding that matter. While I have served at Mauldin First Baptist for 20 years, I am not a resident of Mauldin and I do not have a vote. I want to close by being clear about this, I support Dale Black as my brother in Christ. To me, support doesn't mean you agree with everything they say or do, nor that there won't be consequences, but I believe, as Jesus, that our love for each other should be unconditional. I spoke to Dale directly, not to tell him what to do, but to simply let him know that I love him. That will continue. I pray no one here that hears or reads these words would look at me as for or against.

I have great respect for this City and for all those involved. I have great respect for my fellow clergy who have spoken out and I applaud the passion for justice and the need to shine light against the sin of prejudice. I am willing to serve and to help things. When all this began our church made this a point of prayer each week and I recently concluded an 8-week series about prayer. As Jesus said, may they all be one. This continues to be my prayer. Again, I am at the disposal of this community to serve and help in any way I can. Thank you for letting me share.

- c. Tim Brett: My name is Tim Brett. I live at 37 Endeavour Circle in Mauldin. I have lived in this great City for a lot of years, about 50. I started, a little background, because it will help share my point of view. I started in this City in 1975 as a Police Sergeant. Served 5 years in that role. I later had the opportunity to enter into politics and served this community in the General Assembly. I have spent the time and effort to lead the fundraising for the Jack Greer Library we have, and I have chaired the Mauldin Cultural Center in early years. I love this City and I love each of y'all. What I am going to say tonight is from the heart. It is not my intent to be disrespectful to anybody. I have known Dale for a long time. He is in my Sunday School class. He is a man of character and a Christian gentleman. He likes to stay on his phone too long. If I pull my phone up it is full of fake news and political opinions. One who is strongly opinionated about things could easily hit share, S H A R E. That is all you have to do.

Dale Black went to Parker High School. He is not very smart. He pushed the button and riled the masses. I felt sorry for him. I know you, Mayor, have met with the black clergy in the City and have had the opportunity to have conversations. I have a lifetime in politics and see things a little differently. I am in the twilight of my career.

What I spend most of my time on is serving as an Assistant Chaplain at Perry Correctional Institute. That is what my love is. That is what I do. Perry is a maximum-security prison located about 15 miles from here. If you have ever been to Perry, about 2/3 of the inmates are black. These are men that are hurting, they have no hope, they don't understand forgiveness, and their families don't see them. Most of the men are lifers there. I have had the opportunity to go there with Dale Black and serve Christmas dinner to a whole wing there. I had the opportunity to see the interaction with these folks and he gave them encouragement. I know what kind of man he is.

I know this has boiled and bubbled up. The thing that bothers me the most about this is I know Mauldin does not have a race problem. All of this demonstration and all of this conversation is throwing a bad light on our City. It bothers me that it is destroying our reputation. I personally find some of it to be rude, unfair, disrespectful, non-forgiving, and aggravating. I understand in today's times, circumstances are such that they can become a prop for a larger agenda. I don't mean any disrespect, but I do believe that enough is enough.

Finally, I had the opportunity to go on Facebook today and I searched several sites. One of the sites I searched was from Bruce Wilson, who is a very familiar person who feels strongly about his views with Black Lives Matter. I would like to read to you what he posted. "Don't get worked up over things you can't change, or people you can't change. It is not worth the anger, build-up, or the headache. Control what you can. Let go." That is the message I have tonight. Please let go. Let's move on. We need to heal. We understand the message, but we need to continue the wonderful life we have here.

- d. Phil Cochrane: I live at 435 Bishop Drive. I am here to talk about stormwater, and I know you are shocked. But first, I would like to say, thank you for all of you who are here. You are burning your family time and that is a non-renewable resource; you will never get it back. My thanks and respect to you for spending your time trying to help Mauldin. Most everyone knows an issue we have and that is unabated stormwater flow. For me, it is particularly painful. I get all the stormwater in my neighborhood at my house. Every time it rains 3 inches or more, my house floods. I have dealt with that for 25 years. I have contacted City Council, City Administrators, Mayors from previous administrations over and over again. I have provided DVDs, pictures, costs, everything, and nothing has ever happened. For the first time in my life, being a 25-year resident of the City of Mauldin, paying my taxes faithfully, I have a glimmer of hope with this administration and the people on this Council. What we used to be told, is that it is a County problem and when you would go to the County, they would say that is a City of Mauldin problem. You can see where that road leads. It is one big vicious circle.

I am seeing a little hope. I am seeing that in the last two elections, stormwater was a big issue and probably contributed to the fact that certain people did not get re-elected. It probably is why we now have a new Mayor. I am here asking for one thing. We have the Covid pandemic, City Center, Dale Black, and his thing here. Please don't forget about stormwater. It impacts people like me every time it rains. Every time it rains my house is damaged. Every time it rains, I have to drive over flooded city streets. I hope, since the City Attorney is here, that the City does not wind up spending money to compensate a family or some other litigant who hydroplanes on storm water flowing on the street and says we will seek a \$5 million judgement for the loss of my child, or pregnant wife or whatever. Again, I am here to say please don't forget about stormwater. It is a long-time problem in this City.

The ditches in my neighborhood have not been maintained for 40 years. I have been here 25 years. I live in a neighborhood where people have lived there for 40 years. Once the

neighborhood was put in, those ditches have not been touched by the City. I think liability could be easily established depending on the litigant. I don't want that to happen. I love this City. My son served on the Mauldin Police Department for a number of years. My grandkids live here; that is a big deal to me. I am just asking please don't leave us in the place we are in. I bet if I asked, people would raise their hand that they have been affected by stormwater flow. It needs to be in the ditches, culverts, storm drains, not flowing on the top of the ground where it causes difficult situations.

So, thank you for what is beginning to happen. Mr. Mayor, thank you for convening a committee. I think citizens will learn all about stormwater. I think all of you already know about stormwater, right? I know I am preaching to the choir. Our police department puts up barricades, our fire department is in their trucks anytime there is a deluge. You are aware. I appreciate what's happening. I won't go my whole five minutes.

Mayor Merritt: Actually, it was 5 minutes 40 seconds.

- e. Pastor Robert Simpson: I live at 420 Adams Mill Road. I am one of the ministers that have met with the Mayor. Good to see you again. I moved out of Piedmont into Mauldin, bought a house, and have two boys that go to Mauldin High School. One plays on C-Team and one plays on Varsity for football. I am the Pastor of Victory Temple Baptist Church. I have been there 13 years. I am the former President of the South Carolina PNBC, Progressive National Baptist Convention. I was President of the convention for four years over the State of South Carolina. I am the current President of the Baptist Ministers Fellowship of Greenville which consists of over 70-80 preachers.

When you are dealing with, when you are a leader, you are held to a certain standard. It is true, you can go to Facebook and look at share, but you have a choice. The choice was made by Mr. Black. This is not a personal attack. I don't know Mr. Black, but it is accountability and respect. You can stand up here and use Christian all day long. My forefathers heard that. Christianity. Forgiveness but yet you still get hurt.

It doesn't mean I don't love him. But is it fair to represent me? Me, a paying tax person here in Mauldin? It hurts to see my leadership with the explosive comments. It hurts. I don't believe in attacking, I don't believe in attacking his family. I don't believe in that. But when is this going to change? Pack it down? Where is the change? Will it change? Do you hear the voice of the community? I don't think so. I observed everyone coming in laughing. That's what friends do. But my friends tell me when I am wrong. They say, you are wrong. They don't stand behind walls. They say, Reverend, you are wrong. Things need to be changed. Mauldin, I love Mauldin. I don't have problems with water or people. I have a problem with the sin and what represents my people. It is not a racial thing; it is the right thing.

I like that. I would like to get two of those.

- f. Brad Steel: 156 Birkhall Circle in the Bonnie Brae neighborhood where the golf course was. I serve on the HOA. I was talking to a neighbor and he was approached by a developer and he mentioned that we are looking at potential stormwater issues as well with the remnants of the hurricane. Even yesterday morning there was still some standing water. I was on the City's website earlier and I saw the advisory group. I was wondering how I would get on it or if there is a mailing list. I may talk to you after. I know this is a comment section and I can ask questions. There are 600 homes going in there. I am trying to be a good neighbor and want to work with the appropriate groups and avoid what the gentleman spoke of. I just wanted you

to know the neighborhood of Bonnie Brae was concerned and wanted to avoid any kind of issues. Thank you.

- g. Pastor Clarence Thornton: I live at 114 Doppler Street in Greenville. I want to read you words from our Bible. Everybody wants to talk about the Bible. The Bible says, " Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit." I can speak evil or good things, but out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Good men bring forth good things and evil men bring forth evil things. But I say to you, for every idle word you say, a man will speak, and will give an account for it in the day of judgement. For your words, you will be justified and by your words, you will be forgiven."

The words didn't come out of my mouth; they came out of Councilman Black's mouth. The community is not pleased with you. The leadership needs to take action and they need to take responsibility for those actions. If it was a black person that said these things, and you had the white pastors and the white community come out, and state representatives, Lindsay Graham, and all them come to speak against it, against a black person. Would they still be here? From Taylors Baptist Church, would they speak against a black person? Would they still be here? Your neighbors have spoken against you. Have you noticed that the ones who come to endorse him all seem to be one color? Have you thought about that? We ask about racism, but racists are always good to their own color. A racist is always good to his own color. Look at the age groups, look at the Mayor of Spartanburg, look at his age. He grew up when blacks didn't have rights. He grew up in the old hatred.

We are going on a new path. Look at the NFL owners, NBA, look at Trevor Lawrence. Words have power. This country is one day going to live up to its creed, with Freedom, Liberty, and Justice for All. We have seen the symbols of hate being torn down. Your words have power. Lies have killed many people. Ahmaud Arbery is dead today because they thought he was a burglar running in his own neighborhood. Martin Luther King was killed because someone called him a communist. It riled up the white community so bad with fear, he is a communist, bad for the country, and a man got a rifle and assassinated him. Emmett Till was killed because a white man, no, in this case a white woman, said he whistled at her. Come to find out he never whistled at her. It riled the people up.

Racists always hide behind lies and they always hide behind fear. Hide behind lies and fear. And when you say stuff about the NAACP, that is creating fear. Matter of fact, those same people who created fear was the same ones that didn't allow women the right to vote. Those same people creating fear are against the NAACP that allows women to have the jobs you now have. It took Moses multiple times. God said set my people free. Jesus says set my people free, and now they are free. We are not going back in any kind of slavery. If you don't believe God set us free, then why did we have the Civil War? You want to take us back again. Then we had the Civil Rights movement, now you want to take us back. Look at what is going on in the country. When will you ever learn that those who are set free are free indeed? We are not going back to slavery and God will not allow us to go back to slavery.

You know a man by the company he keeps. By the fruit he bears. It is not what he puts in his mouth, but what comes out. I am asking this question and it will be my final idea. As we go home tonight, do we really have freedom in America and liberty and justice for all? I heard your plans tonight, but as you go home, remember this, we have a National holiday for Martin Luther King and I always ask myself why we don't have one for Billy Graham, or whatever. Why? Billy Graham wasn't willing to take that risk. He didn't want to go out there with the people. Jesus got out there and marched with the people. Thank you.

- h. Joe Robinson: Excuse me. I live on Ashmore Bridge Road in Ashmore Estates. For the last 5-6 years we have a lot of 18 wheelers and 2 and 5-ton trucks come up through there. It is near the CVS drug store on the corner. There used to be an island, and you moved the island and that is where the problem comes in. Instead of going through Conestee, those trucks go down Ashmore Bridge Road going to Donaldson Center. That road is too small and that is why it is always torn up. You can't turn because you might get hit. Those people are going real fast on that street. Bonnie Brae golf course was there but now they are putting in all those houses, so there is no point in those trucks coming on that street, period. They shouldn't be coming through there.

Mayor Merritt: Let me talk to you after the meeting and get your name and phone number so that we can get back with you.

10 Council requests

Councilwoman King asked the Mayor to send a list of the stormwater committee members to the Public Works Committee. Mayor Merritt said it is a group, not a committee. The initial meeting is tomorrow. Councilwoman King said she would like to know who the members are if she is asked.

10. Adjournment- Mayor Merritt adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Miller
Municipal Clerk