

**MINUTES
CITY OF MAULDIN
COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 19, 2024
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 5 E. BUTLER ROAD**

Members present were Mayor Terry Merritt, Council members Taft Matney, Carol King, Jason Kraeling, Michael Reynolds, Frank Allgood, and Mark Steenback.

Others present were City Administrator Seth Duncan and City Attorney Daniel Hughes.

1. Call to Order- Mayor Merritt

- a. Welcome- Mayor Merritt
- b. Invocation- Councilwoman King
- c. Pledge of Allegiance- Councilwoman King

2. Proclamations and Presentations

Kim Guthrie, President, Greater Mauldin Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Guthrie introduced herself to Council and mentioned a few ribbon cuttings and grand openings that would be upcoming.

3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

- a. City Council Meeting- January 16, 2024

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to approve the minutes with Councilwoman King seconding.

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

Council Goals Session- February 1, 2024

Motion: Councilwoman King made a motion to approve the minutes with Councilman Reynolds seconding.

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

4. Public Comment- None

5. Report from City Administrator

The Mauldin Police Department has partnered with B93.7 and Audacy to host the “In the Clutch” donation drive to support victims of domestic violence. All donations will benefit Mary’s House Ministry Alliance, a non-profit organization that exists to ensure safety, advocacy and independence for victims of domestic violence.

There is currently a donation box located inside Mauldin City Hall next to the courtroom, and donations of handbags and personal care items will be accepted through the first week of May.

Tickets are on sale now for Disney’s High School Musical Jr. at the Mauldin Cultural Center. Tickets are \$20 for general admission and \$15 for students, seniors and members of the military. There are 12 scheduled shows between March 8th and March 24th.

AT&T will be holding a ribbon cutting on March 1, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. to dedicate their new fiber system that will be installed.

Bridgeway Station will hold a grand opening on April 27th.

6. Report from Standing Committees

- a. Finance and Policy (Chairperson Reynolds)- The committee is working on the employee handbook.
- b. Public Safety (Chairperson King)- Chairwoman King thanked the City for its support of Sgt. Krause and his family.
- c. Public Works (Chairperson Kraeling)- None
- d. Economic Planning & Development (Chairperson Matney)- None
- e. Building Codes (Chairperson Steenback)- None
- f. Recreation (Chairperson Allgood)- Chairman Allgood wished Mayor Merritt happy birthday.

**7. Unfinished Business-
Ordinances- 2nd Reading**

None

Standing Committee Items

None

**8. New Business
Ordinances – 1st Reading**

- a. Ordinance to Sell Butler Road Property for ROW

Motion: Chairman Kraeling made a motion to accept this ordinance on first reading with Councilwoman King seconding.

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

b. Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance Establishing Regulations for Temporary Uses and Structures

Motion: Chairman Steenback a motion to accept this ordinance on first reading with Councilman Allgood seconding.

Councilman Matney said he and she pronoun use was mentioned in the committee meeting in reference to the police chief's role in this ordinance. There is already a provision in the code of ordinances regarding pronouns. "Terms importing the masculine gender include the feminine and neuter."

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to amend the motion to go back to the original form of the ordinance that was presented to committee. Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion.

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

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

Standing Committee Items

c. SCIP Grant Contractor Selection

The City was awarded 3,399,750 dollars from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority for the Basin RG2 Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation. A municipal match of \$600,000 is required by the City. The rehabilitation funds from the 2022-2023 and the 2023-2024 fiscal budgets were used as the municipal match.

Motion: Chairman Kraeling made a motion to authorize the contract between the City and Atlantic Coast Contractors. Councilman Allgood seconded the motion.

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

d. Trail Branding and Bridge Naming

Chairman Allgood asked that these two items be taken separately.

Motion: Chairman Allgood made a motion to open up discussion on the bridge name. Councilman Steenback seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Merritt asked Ms. Lauren Carter to recap the bridge naming process.

After Ms. Carter's response, Councilman Matney said none of the proposed names struck a chord with Council, which is why a name has not been picked. The City is trying to develop a sense of identity with the strategic plan being developed by Benchmark Planning. We are waiting to find out what that looks like. It will be integral for economic development and tourism throughout the City.

Councilman Kraeling would like to see the \$16,000 proposed expenditure go completely to the trails, and not partially going towards naming the bridge. He would also like to look at re-branding the City and changing the current logo.

Councilman Reynolds said he likes the name Gateway Bridge and sees Mauldin as a gateway to the Golden Strip and to Greenville.

Mayor Merritt said he wants the bridge to be named. Citizens and organizations have asked him when it will be named. He would like the name Mauldin included because Bridgeway is in the City of Mauldin, but has a Simpsonville address. Brookfield Office park is in the City of Mauldin, but has a Greenville address. He wants Mauldin to get its credit. He also agreed with Councilman Kraeling; the City needs a re-branding.

Motion: Mayor Merritt made a motion to name the pedestrian bridge the Mauldin Freedom Gateway Bridge. There was no second.

Motion: Councilman Reynolds made a motion to name the bridge Mauldin Gateway Bridge. Councilman Kraeling seconded the motion.

Chairman Allgood said he believes the City needs to look at branding and setting up our trails for success.

Councilman Kraeling said the City could change the name of the bridge at a later date if need be, but there needs to be a name.

Councilwoman King said she has a problem with not following the process. Staff went through a naming process that followed the will of Council at that time. She is not sure there is a rush to name the bridge. We owe it to our City to get it right.

Councilman Steenback said he can see both sides. The one thing that sticks out to him is there is not a consensus of Council or the community on what the image of Mauldin is.

Mayor Merritt said there is a grand opening of Bridgeway Station in April, and he would like the bridge named before that.

Vote: Council took a roll call vote on the name Mauldin Gateway Bridge. Councilman Matney- no, Councilwoman King- no, Councilman Kraeling- yes, Councilman Reynolds- yes, Councilman Allgood- yes, Councilman Steenback- no, Mayor Merritt- yes. The motion passed by a vote of 4-3.

Discussion resumed on the trail branding.

Motion: Chairman Allgood made a motion to approve the Mauldin trail branding and implementation plan from Drum Creative. Councilman Matney seconded the motion.

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to amend the motion to receive another quote related to the logo design and branding of the newly named pedestrian bridge.

Chairman Allgood asked if all of this can be done for \$16,000. City Administrator Duncan said yes, he believes both logos and the implementation plan can be done for \$16,000.

Councilwoman King seconded the amendment.

Councilman Matney rescinded his motion to amend.

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to amend the original motion to include appropriations for bridge logo design and branding to include Mauldin trail branding and implementation plan in an amount not to exceed \$16,000. Councilwoman King seconded the amendment to the motion.

This expenditure will be made from the hospitality and accommodation fund balance.

Vote: The vote was 6-1 on the amendment with Mayor Merritt dissenting.

Vote: The vote 6-1 on the motion as amended with Mayor Merritt dissenting.

Committee of the Whole

e. Cultural Center Art Selection

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to consider this item informally with Councilwoman King seconding.

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

For the seventh piece of art, staff worked with the Mauldin Cultural Council to select the theme “Soaring Energy,” and solicited proposals from artists for their envisioned works of art. The Mauldin Cultural Council selected two semi-finalists to fund the production of scale models, and now that the two semi-finalists submitted their scale models to staff, staff is now recommending that the City Council authorize the installation of “Rise” by Carey Morton.

Motion: Councilman Matney made a motion to approve the installation of “Rise” with Councilwoman King seconding.

Mayor Merritt said he is concerned about the possibility the art piece will be climbed by children. The cloud at the top is 10 feet off of the ground and there is a sharper piece that is four feet off of the ground. The City has tried to put fencing around its art pieces, and they are all climbed routinely. He is worried about the liability.

Councilman Matney asked Daniel Hughes what our liability exposure would be. Daniel answered said it depends on what notice is put out at the art structures for children not to climb on the pieces. The City can’t shield itself completely from liability. Councilman Matney asked if Mr. Hughes had the same concerns the Mayor does. Mr. Hughes answered no, if we take precautions, then liability would be at a tolerable risk level.

Councilwoman King said she watches children climb on several of the art pieces that are out there and could be equally as dangerous.

Councilman Allgood said he believes the point that is shown on the model that will be four feet tall is not going to be as sharp as it is on the model. Also, the artist can take some of the suggestions and concerns and modify the art piece.

Councilman Steenback commented he shares the Mayor’s concerns as a parent. He would not like to see his 7-year-old on top of the cloud that is 10 feet in the air.

Councilman Reynolds said as long as we use a little precaution, we should be ok. This is not playground equipment, it is art.

Vote: The vote was 6-1 with Councilman Steenback dissenting.

9. Public Comment

Travis Rockwell and Kevin Wilik had public comments.

10. Council Concerns

Mayor Merritt asked the Administrator to work on posting warnings and any structures around the art trail to make sure kids are not climbing on our art pieces.

Councilman Matney wished Mayor Merritt a happy birthday. He then commented that he is proud to live in this City and to be a member of Council. Even when the members disagree, it is done in a civil way without personal attacks.

He then thanked the department heads and staff. When a City employee or someone else hurts, we all feel it. The wife of one of our police officers passed away recently, and the City employees rallied around to help. That is a testament to Mauldin.

Councilman Steenback wished the Mayor a happy birthday. He noted that even when Council disagrees, everyone is still treated with respect. He appreciates it and is happy to be a council member.

Councilman Kraeling said he lived next to a farmer when he was growing up who had an electric fence and he learned not to touch it more than once.

The Mayor mentioned the MASC has developed a civility pledge and we normally display civility in our meetings. He appreciates the Council. The job is not always easy.

Mayor Merritt said current staff is the most professional we have had and he appreciates what they do.

11. Adjournment- Mayor Merritt adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Miller
Municipal Clerk