

**TOWN OF CENTRAL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
1067 WEST MAIN STREET, CENTRAL, SC 29630
MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023 – 7:00PM**

Present: Mayor Andrew Beckner; Council Members, Paige Bowers, Joe Moss, Lynne Chapman, Harry Holladay, and Ken Dill; Administrator Phillip Mishoe; Assistant Administrator Tom Cloer, Fire Chief Ed Reynolds, Corporal Levi Hamilton, Joel Smith, Curtis Peek, Stan and Reba Thompson, Danny Sanders, Troy Porter, Katherine Brooks, Tripp Brooks, Will Mullinax, and Town Clerk Susan Brewer.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Andrew Beckner.
Joe Moss rendered the invocation.

Joel Smith – SCDOT

Mayor asked Joel Smith from SCDOT to share information with Council. He said he wanted to talk with them and answer questions about Highway 93, Pepper Street and the underpass intersection. He said he had been working with Tom and some others talking through some solutions and ideas for this area. He said they have talked about the traffic issues with the limitations of the underpass. They have been going through ideas how to make this intersection better and how the town can potentially fund. He said some of the ideas they have come up with starting with the easiest and lowest cost:

Option A would be right in, right out. He said this would limit the left turn out of the underpass and in to the underpass. He said this would help reduce accidents because the way the roads are offset. He said this would be relatively simple to do.

Option B would be a lefthand turn signal on both sides. One to the ballfield and one at the underpass. He said this would require doing some significant modifications to the roadway. The curb and cutter, sidewalk, and some of the trees that buffer the ball field.

Option C would be a round-about. This would be to most expensive one running a couple of Million dollars. He said this would also be the most difficult option with the railroad being so close and it may not even be an option because of that.

He said the right in right out he felt like SCDOT could help with that.

Plan B Option, the turn lane would be the town's responsibility. Maybe apply for some grants to help with it. The signal does not warrant signal.

Ken Dill asked about round- about cost. Joel Smith said 2.1 to 2.3. million dollars right now. Ken Dill asked him about the signal. Joel Smith said about \$250,000 for the traffic light but with all the extra lanes, sidewalks, drainage, all that stuff it would be about a million dollars or just a little under and it would include our design and engineering. Ken asked about the right in right out. Joel Smith said that DOT could do that at no cost. He said they had talked about a temporary pavement marking. In the future if the town saw it was beneficial, they would pour concrete and make it permanent. Ken then asked about the signal light being approved now

that we lowered the speed limit to 25 starting at Wesleyan Drive because that helps drivers to slow down before reaching the signal light. Joel Smith said that it did. Ken Dill asked if that is what made the traffic light an option for us where it has not been in the past. Joel Smith said that it was a two-fold. He said the signals that close don't work as well when they are close like the ones there unless you take the speed limit down. He said from the study they had done 3 or 4 years ago did not warrant a signal. But since we lowered the speed limit and the town would pay for it, that is why it is back in discussion about it. With it not warranted the DOT could not fund it. Ken Dill then ask about the underpass belonging to the railroad. He said he had reached out to Norfolk Southern in Columbia and they confirmed they did own the underpass. Ken Dill asked if the railroad decides they could carry heavier and longer loads and they decided the underpass was unsafe then they could just block it up. Joel Smith said that he didn't want to speak for Norfolk Southern but he wouldn't know why they wouldn't. Ken Dill said potentially we could spend a million dollars and this could happen.

Lynne Chapman asked Joel Smith to explain the right in right out in depth. He said if you were coming in on 93 from Liberty you would still be able to make a left-hand turn but if you were coming through Central towards Liberty on 93 you could not make a left at the underpass. Also, when you are coming out from the north side of the underpass it would be a right turn only. She said she was not aware that you could not turn left coming from Clemson at the underpass. Joel Smith said they could look into something with that but any time you add a left-hand turn at an intersection it increases a risk of wrecks. Lynne Chapman then asked him if he had access to the data for the number of accidents have taken place at this intersection. Joel Smith said he used what the Police Department had. It was 3 in 2 years.

Harry Holladay said this will not work. He said it will not work because of the railroad. A lot of times the railroad stops all three crossings and the people that live on the other side which used to be the good side of town was the bad side of town now. He said he has lived there for 65 years and you can't put a no left turn up. He said you have to have the 2 lefts whether it be a caution light or a turn light. He said we can not do it with the railroad and the underpass has been there over 100 years and if it collapses the railroad would not pay to have it repaired. He said the railroad didn't care if citizens could get through or not. He said there wasn't anything they could do except for a red light or a caution light. He said as far as having to fix the road to have people pass on the right at the signal light should be fine like it is. He said people pass him on the right now. He said the standards are 30feet and it should just be the sidewalk and it should be a whole lot cheaper than \$250,000 plus. He said we should be able to do it \$50,000 or less. He said if they can't, we could put it up ourselves somehow. He said that it was ridiculous to spend that kind of money when the road. Phillip Mishoe asked if SCDOT had any voice if the railroad decided to close the underpass. Joel Smith said they do not. The railroad tells them when they are closing their roads.

Paige Bowers asked if SCDOT had thought about the roundabout at our current red light. He said they had talked about was a one-way project but they have to take in considerations about to the truck traffic. Joel Smith said we would be talking about 5 or 6 intersections to make that work. Paige Bowers said that the school she works at the buses have to go down Mauldin Road to cross the railroad tracks. Harry Holladay said that sometimes the railroad

blocks all three crossings. Phillip Mishoe said they were not supposed to do that and Harry Holladay said they do whatever they want to do.

Mayor Beckner asked Joel Smith with the one-way option had he determined which way would be one way. Joel Smith asked what the parallel street was and Council said Gaines Street. He said that he looked at turning right onto Gaines Street then take a left on Church Street and back a right on 93. He said again trying to make that work would be tough.

Mayor asked Joel Smith why wouldn't a stop sign work. Joel Smith said if we did a 4 way stop it would back up to the existing traffic light. He said doing this without turn signals at the underpass would cause more problems.

Mayor asked Joel Smith if we somehow had a million dollars and we gave it to him tomorrow how long would it take to get this signal light done? Joel Smith said with the design and all the permitting about 2 years.

Paige Bowers asked about a roundabout at our current traffic light. Joel Smith said again it is possible but the challenge would be the railroad and it would eat into our streetscape and he didn't think it would be impossible but a lot of things to consider.

Paige Bowers asked if we said tomorrow, we had our million dollars and it is going to take 2 years for the project and we know you won't break ground tomorrow, would we have to give you our million dollars tomorrow? Joel Smith said the way it works was the project would have to be spearheaded by the town. He said SCDOT would help us out by doing preliminary sketches and come up with a signal plan. He said those things staff could do in house. He said they would give the ok that this was actually feasible and this was really going to work because they have put pen to paper. Right now, they have been talking about it and drawing some lines on google. But beyond that preliminarily it can physically fit and there wouldn't be any major hang ups, the town would have to hire a consultant or an engineer to finish the design with actual civil drawings they could hand to a contractor and then the town could seek grant funding and then champion the actual construction project. He said unfortunately because it wouldn't be a DOT project, it wouldn't be a turn key project but as slow as their (SCDOT) projects are going right now he felt that we could do a project faster than could even if it was a DOT project. He said their project can be as far as 5 or 6 years out. Paige Bowers said SCDOT has one of our projects that is 5 years out and they are already holding our money.

Mayor said it was solely our project simply because of our traffic light at Church Street. Joel Smith said because it involves turn lanes, roadway improvements, and the traffic light is not warranted from the study DOT could not assist with the funding. Mayor asked what could be to have it warranted. Joel Smith said if there were considerably more traffic accidents, then it would get put in the list for the statewide and then their safety office in Columbia would review it and determine if funding was available. But unfortunately, with 3 accidents in 2 years it would be way down the list.

Ken Dill said it was hard for him to believe we were the only town with this problem. He asked Joel Smith what kind of solutions have some of them come up with. Joel Smith said traffic

signals, turn lanes, restricting access (right in right out), He said they always try to think outside the box. Phillip Mishoe asked what about turn lanes without a signal. Joel Smith said that it creates that potential problem. Right now, we have 2 lanes and only have 2 cars that have to look at each other to make a decision. Hopefully using their blinker but adding turn lanes adds more vehicles to create more potential for traffic accidents. He said this would not be addressing the issue. Phillip Mishoe said it was probably going to make it worse. Joel Smith said absolutely. Phillip Mishoe said he was trying to figure a way to reduce the cost. Joel Smith said DOT doesn't normally approve a turn lane on a main route without a signal at a 4-way section. If it was a 3-way you could.

Mayor and Council thanked Joel Smith for coming.

Reading of Minutes 07-14-2023 and Special Called Meeting Minutes 07-25-2023

Lynne Chapman made the motion to adopt Regular Council Meeting Minutes 07-14-2023 and Special Called Meeting Minutes 07-25-2023; seconded by Paige Bowers. The vote was unanimous.

Public Session (30 Minutes Total)

Stan Thompson approached Council and said when he heard about the traffic issues at the underpass and he assumed it was from school traffic. He said that it does get congested 2 times a day with school traffic. He said he lives across from the elementary school and he has enough sense not to try to go anywhere during those times. He said if this becomes an ordinance for no left turn off of Gaines at the underpass about 99% of the residents that live over on that side are going to be angry. He said the next time the train stops on the track and it is left there 2, 3, or 4 days we were really going to have a mess if folks can't take a left off of Gaines to the underpass. Even with out the trains not being stopped it is going to cause a lot more traffic across the at grade tacks and that itself is going to create danger. It seems to him that there might be some other things that could be done short of telling all the folks that live over close to the school that they can't come down this road and turn left. If that train is parked there on the tracks they would have to go to Clemson if they were going to Pancho's or go to Norris and go down 93. He said if the ambulance has to go to his house in the middle of the night and he wants to go to An-Med and they turn left and go through the underpass And the trains are parked on the he would be dead before he got to An-med. He said there was some other things we could do. Maybe get DOT to adjust the light at Church Street to hold the traffic a little longer on Main Street to give folks going through the underpass a little more time to get out on 93 and/or might want to consider having a police officer down there Directing traffic. He said he was assuming they still teach directing traffic and whistle blowing. Maybe working with the school and let them encourage the kids to ride the school bus. He said he sees a lot of school buses in town and there were only 2 or 3 children on them and that is terrible. If kids would ride the bus that would eliminate a lot of the school traffic at the underpass. He said he just thinks there are other things we could do except going to the extreme of preventing left hand turns to the underpass for a large percentage of the town's population. He told Council he hoped they wouldn't be in a rush to make the decision and ban no left hand turns off of Gaines Street. He said there were already a lot of driving regulations that are not already being observed. He said he travels down Gaines Street at least 6 times a week and hardly a day goes by that he doesn't see somebody or somebodies running stop signs, not even slowing down for them. He said there was hardly a time he goes down

Madden Bridge and tries to follow the speed limit and he gets tail gated. But he very seldom sees a Central police car on the road. He said he couldn't tell us when the last time he saw one with someone stopped. He said "I guess they were just not in the right place and the right time." He said for Council to please think this through and don't rush and just realize if you ban left hand turns at the underpass there will be a great discontent stirred up with them. He thanked them for them.

Mayor and Council thanked him for coming.

Receipt and Disposition of Petitions (15 Minutes Total)

Reports from Council Committees:

All committee reports are on file in the Town Clerk's office and available for review upon request.

- A. Planning – Paige Bowers
Paige Bowers reported that Planning would not meet this month.
- B. Streets and Public Safety – Joe Moss
Joe Moss made the motion to authorize the Fire Chief to apply for a FEMA grant that would fully fund 2 full-time firefighters for 3 years and then the town would be responsible to continue salaries after the 3 years; seconded by Paige Bowers. The vote was unanimous.
- C. Finance and Marketing – Lynne Chapman
Lynne Chapman reported the sewer and sanitation funds were in the black. She said the water and general fund were in the red and deferred to Phillip Mishoe for those. He said the general fund had some bi-annual bills due because of the new budget year that began July 1st. He said the water usage was down due to the rain and no one watering their lawns. Also, the students have not been in town because school has been out.
- D. Recreation – Ken Dill
Ken Dill reported the walking track at Bolick field has been resurfaced. He said it was completely funded by a private donation and matching funds from Pickens County Recreation Funds.

Ken Dill said the Central Tigers Super Saturday would be Saturday, August 26th starting at 10:00am. He said there would be 4 games. The gate fee would be \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.
- E. Enterprise – Harry Holladay
Harry Holladay reported the Sanitation Department operated on a normal schedule. They had 284 total work orders completed for the month of July. They had 43 disconnects with 40 reconnects.
- F. Tourism and Economic Development- Vacant
Mayor asked Katherine Brooks for an Update for Upcoming Events.

Katherine reported that September 1st the news channel 7 will be in Central from 5:00 am -10:00am. She said the police K-9 fund raiser would be October 14th, and the homecoming parade would be September 27th.

Mayor made the motion to authorize the Administrator to enter into a contract with Samantha Wood for improvements of the website to be funded by remaining ARPA funds that were allocated to the Depot renovations in the amount of a one-time fee of \$2500, in addition to \$5200 yearly for 2-4 hours weekly; seconded by Ken Dill. The vote was unanimous.

New Business

None

Old Business

None

Introduction and consideration of new Ordinances, Policies, Proclamation and Resolutions

Resolution #08-14-2023 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Paige Bowers made the motion to adopt Resolution #08-14-2023 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan; seconded by Joe Moss. The vote was unanimous.

Ordinance #09-11-2023 RE-ZONE BRIGHT

Mayor called for a motion to adopt on first reading Ordinance #09-11-2023 RE-ZONE BRIGHT. No motion was made and the Ordinance failed.

Consideration of Ordinances and Policies already in possession of Council

Second Reading of Policy #08-14-2023 Zoning Compliance Fees

Mayor made the motion to adopt on second reading of Policy #08-14-2023 Zoning Compliance Fees; seconded by Paige Bowers. The vote was unanimous.

Second Reading of Ordinance #08-14-2023 SPEED LIMIT

Ken Dill made the motion to adopt on Second reading of Ordinance #08-14-2023 SPEED LIMIT; seconded by Harry Holladay. The vote was unanimous.

Second Reading of Ordinance #08-14-2023 Amendment to Code of Ordinance Section 12-6

Paige Bowers made the motion to adopt on second reading Ordinance #08-14-2023 Amendment to Code of Ordinance Section 12-6; seconded by Mayor. Mayor called for a vote. Lynne Chapman asked to change her vote to nay. The vote carried with 4 in favor and Moss and Chapman opposed.

Second Reading of Policy #08-14-2023 Amendment to BASE RATES

Lynne Chapman made the motion to adopt on second reading of Policy #08-14-2023 Amendment to BASE RATES; seconded by Ken Dill. The vote was unanimous.

Second Reading of Ordinance #08-14-2023 AMENDMENT TO Ordinance #06-12-2023BU (Sewer Rates)

Paige Bowers made the motion to adopt on second reading of Ordinance #08-14-2023 AMENDMENT TO Ordinance #06-12-202 3BU (Sewer Rates); seconded by Lynne Chapman. The vote was unanimous.

Reports from the Administrator and Mayor:

A. Administrator

Phillip Mishoe reported he had checked on the traffic study they had requested him to get. He said he had talked with

Phillip Mishoe said the Church Street water line project is still moving along at a steady pace. He said when they get to Main Street, they would be boring under highway 93, and the under pass. He said they should be completely done by February.

Phillip Mishoe said the walking track contract behind the Rec Center on Commons Way through Spring Forest has been signed. They say it will be completed in 120 days.

Mayor Beckner said he wanted to go on record and asked the Administrator to confirm that all the roads and sidewalks will be replaced when the water line has been installed. Phillip Mishoe told him that was correct. He said they temporarily patched it to allow it to pack down where when they pave the asphalt wont sink where they have disturbed the ground.

Paige Bowers asked if they were going to continue running the water where they are replacing the line. Phillip Mishoe said they would be. When replacing the line, the water needs to continue to trickle to prevent the water from getting contaminated with algae.

B. Mayor

Mayor thanked everyone for coming out. He said for everyone to educate themselves.

Executive Session

Mayor made the motion to go into executive session per S.C. Code of Laws, Section 30-4-70 (a) (1) Personnel Matter, Legal Issues-Section 30-4-70 (a) (2) to discuss a personnel matter; seconded by Ken Dill. The vote was unanimous.

Return from Executive Session

Council returned from executive session where no decisions were made only information was shared.

Action Items

None

With no objections, Mayor Andrew Beckner adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan A. Brewer, CMC
Town Clerk

Approved: _____