

**MINUTES
COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2015
12:00 P.M.
COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD JAIL BUILDING**

Colleton County Council met in Special Session on Wednesday, June 24, 2015 at 12:00 PM, at the County Council Chambers, Old Jail Building. Steven Murdaugh called the meeting to order with Council Members, Gene Whetsell, Dr. Flowers, Evon Robinson, Phillip Taylor in attendance.

Others present included: Dennis Averkin, Johnny Stieglitz, Barry McRoy, David Green, Andy Strickland, Buddy Hill, Ed Williams

Mr. Robinson gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive Session

- a) Contractual – Proposed Lease Agreement, Project “L”

Dr. Flowers had a prior commitment/obligation and had to leave the meeting after executive session was completed.

Regular Session

Mr. Murdaugh said during executive session we discussed the contractual matter concerning the proposed lease for Project “L”

New Business

1st Reading Ordinance 15-O-09, BY TITLE ONLY Granting a Lease to Project “L” and to Authorize the County Administrator to Negotiate, Finalize, Execute and Record a lease Document in Regards to Project “L” and other Matters Related Thereto.

A motion to approve 1st reading was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Whetsell.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussion of County Response to the Victims of the Charleston Shooting

Mr. Murdaugh said we have had a lot of ideas that we have talked about amongst the council members. We had a recommendation to honor Senator Pinckney from one of the media, Mr. Salsberry, who is here. He sent me a recommendation about naming the Farmer’s Market. You know Senator Pinckney was real instrumental in the whole Farmer’s Market Project and name the outside of the plaza, I don’t know what you call it. I call it the shed for the lack of a better term. I will open the floor for discussion among the council members.

Mr. Robinson said in our last meeting I brought up the idea to council that I thought it would be something that we should go forward with so far as a resolution or something from the county to show the appreciation to Senator Pinckney's family for the work that he has done in this county over the last 21 years. As you know he served in the House of Representatives I believe a couple of years and then on to the Senate. He has always been a positive fella to try to make a difference in the life of his district and he assured me that Colleton County was no different than any of the other districts he represented. I thought it would be proper and fitting from this county to have something of a resolution that we could present to that family along with other people from across district 45 who says thank you for your service. I think it is something we ought to do. They will have a prayer vigil here Saturday at 2:00 at the high school and we thought that would be the proper time to present something. However, we are short handed as we discussed here in the county, while we may not be able to make that happen Saturday for the meeting even if it is after Saturday, we can inform whoever is going to be in the leadership of the service that a resolution or whatever we do would be presented to the church later after it is properly done.

Mr. Taylor said he could support something like that. I looked at some strategies that we've been pursuing. We saw Charleston made a sizable contribution and maybe we could make some kind of a contribution to the fund and look at it legally to see what actually could be done. I think what would actually be more fitting would be for us to establish a fund that anyone could support from Colleton County, establish a fund that we could make contributions to the Mother Emanuel Fund that has been established.

Mr. Robinson said in other words you are saying if we establish this fund we are going hold it to everyone and it will not be specifically /directly from the county, it would just be sponsored by the county.

Mr. Taylor said right. That was just one of the considerations. I know everybody realizes we had to raise taxes this year and how tight the budget has been and other issues we are dealing with, we are not trying to make a qualm about budgetary issues, but we need to be very careful about how we approach spending taxpayer's dollars to do things, but I think this is something we can do. I think the hearts of people are open to support things such as this.

Mr. Whetsell said he seconded both of those motions ya'll have. Both starting this fund; I think we should start it as a county fund supported by county council and the general public can add in and certainly what Rev. Robinson has asked about a resolution, I support that idea too. I second and support both those.

Mr. Murdaugh said I'm not sure it was made in the form of a motion. We talked about the establishment of a fund and a resolution to be drafted. I think there needs to be some thought. A lot of our staff is out on business and other things this week. I don't want to rush into a resolution and leave something out that needs to be said. We can certainly make our comments at the service. Even when we decide a resolution, we can also consider the idea that was suggest about naming the plaza at the Farmer's

Market. We may be able to do both at the same time. We talked about a committee, whoever is on the Public Health & Safety Committee, we will assign the task of writing the resolution with the assistance of Mr. Griffin when he gets back, draft the resolution and also we can discuss the plaza. The fund will have to be established at a bank and I assume there are some guidelines that will have to be followed. I think we can all vote today to do it, but it has got to be drafted so that when people donate. There is always the issue whether the donations are tax deductible or not IRS Guidelines have to be followed, but if we can at least get the motion to start those things.

Mr. Murdaugh said I will put that in the form of a motion and Mr. Whetsell seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Robinson said in the wake of the recent tragedy that occurred in Charleston and the results that have triggered unity to the level I've never seen before, I would like to go on record and ask this council to fully support our Governor Haley who has request that the Confederate Flag be removed from the grounds of the capital. I would like to see us do that. There are many other people doing it. I think it is the right thing for us to do. While I do respect other people opinion and all the history related to all of this. I would like to make a motion that we support the Governor's intent to have the Federal flag removed from the state grounds.

Mr. Taylor said he fully supported that.

Mr. Murdaugh said we have and motion is there a second.

Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Mr. Whetsell asked if they had added this to the agenda.

Mr. Taylor said it is under the discussion in the response to the victims of the shooting is how he addressed it.

Mr. Robinson said right. I addressed it under the discussion in the victims of the shooting.

Mr. Murdaugh said I suppose it could certainly fit under there. I don't know if you want to do that today or later it doesn't matter to me.

Mr. Murdaugh said we have a motion and a second.

Mr. Whetsell said we discussed this with Doc and it was my understanding that he was going to be a part of the discussion.

Mr. Robinson said, well unfortunately Doc couldn't be with us he had to leave.

Mr. Whetsell said but we did discuss that we would talk about this at a later time.

Mr. Murdaugh said it doesn't matter to me and it's ...inaudible...if somebody wants to make input. From my personal perspective I will just say this, time changes everything whether, somebody told me once that a wise man will change his mind every now and then, but a fool never will. I say that to say this. I grew up in a time and I went to a small private school where our mascot was a confederate. Things have happened in my life and people have approached me ...inaudible... I have always tried to be a fair person and I think initially when the whole discussion started about the movement from the Capital, it's been removed from the dome already. I guess that was a compromise for it to be put on the state house grounds, but I think the last week has just shown and I think right now the momentum and the people across the state including the governor as well as a lot of other folks who were previous supporters the flag remain on the capital have realized that not just the events of what happened last week, but it is just costing the state in so many different ways, it's time I think to put it into a museum and end the discussion. I fully support I think what the governor did. I'm sure there will be those that are critical of my position, but I am in favor of it. That being said I think the majority of council it appears would be in favor of it based on the motion and the second. I don't know that it is fair not to give those that are not here to discuss it.

Mr. Robinson said with all respect to Dr. Flowers, Dr. Flowers was here, he left and you got a motion on the floor you can vote it and discuss the difference.

Mr. Murdaugh said and I don't want that to imply that he is for it or against it because I don't know.

Mr. Robinson said that's right.

Mr. Whetsell said I think it is going to pass, but I think it is wrong we just had a meeting a while ago and Dr. Flowers was there and it was said that we will talk about this thing later and now it is brought up and he's gone, I think it is going to pass, but I do not think that now is the time to bring it up because it was just discussed that we weren't going to bring it up.

Mr. Robinson said that was not his understanding.

Mr. Murdaugh said let's do this, certainly this will pass.

Mr. Whetsell said I believe it will pass. I think it's going to pass.

Mr. Murdaugh asked when do we meet again does anybody know?

Mr. Averkin said tentatively July 28th.

Mr. Murdaugh said why don't we put it on the agenda as a topic of discussion at that meeting? Like I said it is going to pass. It would be nice maybe to get some sort of response before

Mr. Robinson said Mr. Chairman, I hear you and with all due respect to Dr. Flowers I understand that, but he was here and I don't think it was not unknown to him and right now we have a point of order, the point of order is that we have a motion already made and a second to the motion. I made the motion and I don't feel like I need to resend that motion at this point ...inaudible... and follow the lead lockup.

Mr. Murdaugh said the only other thing that concerns me about frankly us waiting is that they are probably going to debate this next couple of weeks up at the state house It would be nice for our council to give it some sort of weigh in. Councilman Whetsell I certainly agree with what you are saying. I understand, but I think I am just going to allow so we can get the council on record before ...inaudible..

Mr. Whetsell said I just want to ask one question none of the three of you understand what we had just a while ago when Doc was there that we were going to talk about this at a later time and not bring it up today?

Mr. Robinson said that was not my understanding.

Mr. Murdaugh said I think there was some discussion of that, but

Mr. Whetsell said Mr. Taylor?

Mr. Taylor said he did not recall that

Mr. Murdaugh said I think in light it is ... inaudible... If we are going to be heard we probably need to be heard. We've been up here many times before and everybody is going to have difference of opinions and I certainly understand that and appreciate it, but I think if we are going to have a voice in this debate we probably do need, now if ya'll want to meet next week, Monday and do it we can or we can vote on it now.

Mr. Robinson said I call for the question.

Mr. Murdaugh said alright.

The motion carried 3-1(Whetsell abstained)

The meeting was adjourned.

Date: _____

Steven D. Murdaugh, Chairman

ATTEST:

Ruth Mayer, Clerk to Council

******* NOTICE OF THIS MEETING WAS GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
PROVISIONS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**