

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, February 4, 2019
Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**

MINUTES

Members Present: Kathy Landing, Chair; Bob Brimmer, Joe Bustos and Rick Crosby (MPW)

Staff Present: Eric DeMoura, Town Administrator; John Holladay, Business Development Manager

Ms. Landing called the meeting to order at 11:12 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from the [December 3, 2018](#) meeting

Mr. Bustos moved for approval; seconded by Mr. Crosby. All present voted in favor.

2. Public Comments

Will Haynie, 316 Mallard Court, stated that he would like to thank Ms. Landing and Mr. Crosby for sitting on the Mayor's Economic and Business Development panel. He said they have had two meetings chaired by Alan Bolduc, and what was decided in that group is to devise strategies with goals and objectives that have been done previously, but the whole economy has changed since the last one was accomplished. Mayor Haynie said that one of the things he wanted to mention today is an agenda item which flowed from his meeting as well. He stated that we can brand Mount Pleasant very successfully as a community that takes care of people, takes care of the environment and takes care of business. He said all three of those mix together very well. He said one of the members of his panel, Stephanie Yarbrough, has a great article that she posted on Linked In, that when corporations look to relocate, there are five factors they look at and Community Culture is one of those. He said

last week at their request, six Publix executives asked him to meet with them. They walked him through a store and showed him their attempts to comply with the Town's plastics ordinance. He asked them if it was a burden for Publix and they said that it was not, as it is being done in other areas and is beginning to become the expectation. He said this is something that can be done and branded and will allow businesses to say that they are proud, because if you come to Mount Pleasant and do business here, you are doing business with a firm or a retail establishment that was not just made to take care of the environment and the quality of life, but voluntarily does so. He believes this will be a feather in the Town's cap.

3. Discussion on branding Mount Pleasant with an EcoFriendly Partners initiative

Ms. Landing stated that she created a PowerPoint in March 2018 and in April, was facing the 2nd reading on the plastics and polystyrene ordinance. She said the reason for bringing this up is because Council was considering an ordinance that had been introduced in February for first reading and there was a fairly short period of time. She said apparently there was a lot of time beforehand, where some of the Council members worked hard (Councilman Jim Owens and others), on this concept. She said one of her thoughts was what if they could do this as a positive working together grass roots effort, collaborating with the community. She said there was an 8-1 vote going with the ordinance direction; however, many people commented that night that had they known about some of these ideas ahead of time, perhaps they could have accommodated and/or incorporated those in a better way than was presented. She said the Mayor mentioned the idea to her for branding Mount Pleasant and this is exactly the concept here, which is, if Mount Pleasant has eco-friendly partners, businesses that are willing to participate in the idea of taking care of the environment and promoting a positive message, that it can become collaborative. She said when you are forced to do something with fines or revocation of business licenses if you do not comply, it is not the same as being a partner. What she has

seen is over the last year as the rollout period is passing and will go into effect in April 2019 and the Town will be enforcing it, there are a number of businesses that you go into right now and they are not just working through their inventory, but they are still putting a straw in your cup, that perhaps you did not ask for or want. This still ends up being discarded. What she is hearing from people is that they are struggling with bits and pieces. She has reached out to several businesses and would welcome anyone who has any companies they are aware of that are either fully compliant and have no issues, or those who do. She would like to work together to see how this can be more palatable and something that can be done without having to issue citations and revoke licenses, which she hopes never happens. She stated that one of the things the Town can do, which was Councilman Brimmer's idea, is to have an educational aspect. To get people really thinking about this, the Town could sponsor the idea of taking the pledge and having businesses actually take the pledge and sign up, although it is an ordinance, but sign up to say "yes, we want to be part of this". She said an art contest could be held which would be a very low cost project, where the people of Mount Pleasant design a reusable bag and put them online and have the residents vote. She said we would then have the design for Mount Pleasant Eco Friendly Partners.

MOUNT PLEASANT ECOFRIENDLY PARTNERS CRITERIA

- BUSINESSES CHOOSE FIVE OPTIONS FROM THE LIST OF ECOFRIENDLY PRACTICES
- BUSINESS OWNERS/MANAGERS SIGN A PLEDGE TO FOLLOW THESE PRACTICES FOR ONE YEAR
- THE TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, WORKING TOGETHER WITH ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS, LOCAL MEDIA, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTNERS PROVIDES POSITIVE PUBLICITY FOR BUSINESSES THAT "TAKE THE PLEDGE"
- THE TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT WILL PROVIDE FIFTY REUSABLE BAGS WITH THE SLOGAN AND DESIGN FOR THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED BUSINESSES IN TOWN WHO "TAKE THE PLEDGE"

She said it may be too aggressive to get this accomplished by April, but to at least move towards this and have it be a part of this initiative. She said having a design that is on reusable bags, the idea was to have the first 100 Eco Friendly partners sign up and they would each receive 50 bags.

She questioned who would pay for this; however, once the cost for 5,000 bags is determined they could then be sold in various stores as a souvenir. She said hotels also provide a take-a-way to tourists. This would be great for the hotels to purchase and give away to their guests. She said it could pay for itself over a fairly short period of time.

Ms. Landing stated that if the Town gets into a situation where we find that someone is struggling to replace a certain item, there are “exceptions” and if granted, why not present the idea that, instead of just getting an exception, they could choose to adopt a highway or road of approximately one or two miles. She gave an example of an individual whose neighborhood adopted a highway on 41 and picked up a tremendous amount of trash. She said these are ways to address the environment and give companies choices rather than having them feel as if everything is forced.

ECOFRIENDLY PARTNERS POSSIBLE LIST OF OPTIONS

- PROVIDE STRAWS ONLY ON REQUEST, AND SWITCH TO NON-PLASTIC STRAWS
- SWITCH ALL TAKE OUT CONTAINERS TO COMPOSTABLE MATERIAL
- SWITCH ALL CUPS TO COMPOSTABLE MATERIAL
- STOP USING/PROVIDING PLASTIC BAGS
- PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE EMPLOYEE PER QUARTER TO PARTICIPATE IN CLEAN SWEEPS OF MARSHES, CREEKS, ETC....
- ADOPT A ROAD OR HIGHWAY ONE MILE SECTION IN MOUNT PLEASANT FOR THE BUSINESS TO KEEP CLEAN ONCE A MONTH
- STOP SELLING POLYSTYRENE (STYROFOAM) PRODUCTS TO CUSTOMERS (FOR RETAIL STORES)
- PROVIDE RECYCLING FACILITIES ON PREMISES
- CREATE A COMPOSTING AREA (WHERE FEASIBLE)

BENEFITS OF THIS INITIATIVE

- BUSINESSES WILL SEE THAT THE TOWN IS REACHING OUT TO PARTNER WITH THEM, CREATING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.
- THIS INITIATIVE CANNOT BE STOPPED BY THE PROSPECTIVE ANTI-HOME RULE LEGISLATION IN COLUMBIA.
- OUR POLICE WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR GREAT WORK FIGHTING CRIME, NOT PLASTIC AND STYROFOAM.
- MANY BUSINESSES MAY CHOOSE TO ADOPT A HIGHWAY AND/OR HELP CLEAN THE MARSHES AND CREEKS. NOT ONLY DOES THIS ADDRESS THE RESULTING PROBLEM OF LITTER, IT MAY CONVINC THEM WHY WE NEED TO GET RID OF PLASTIC AND STYROFOAM AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT A BAN.
- THIS INITIATIVE WILL START IMMEDIATELY AS OPPOSED TO WAITING ONE FULL YEAR. LET'S GET GOING NOW TO CLEAN UP MOUNT PLEASANT AND KEEP HER THAT WAY!
- THE COMMUNITY BUILDING SPIRIT IS INFECTIOUS – RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS ALIKE WILL SEE OUR EFFORTS AND WANT TO PARTICIPATE.
- WE AS A TOWN MAY SERVE AS A MODEL FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. MANY PLACES WHERE BANS ARE IN EFFECT ARE DEALING WITH NEGATIVE ISSUES; WHEREAS WE WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU CAN GET IT DONE WORKING TOGETHER!

Ms. Landing stated that next month, the Committee will follow up and have some businesses present some of the struggles and challenges in order to figure out the best way to address this.

4. Discussion on current and future projects for focus on proactive economic development

Ms. Landing stated that she brought this up some time back. She said this has been happening in the Economic Development Advisory Board but wants to have this be something that the public can participate in as well. She said there have been a number of things that have come up over the last year. For example, when the news hit the paper about the potential of another storage unit on Coleman Boulevard. She said this is an example of where she wanted residents to know that several members on Town Council have reached out to talk to various business owners to find out how they can help to bring something to Mount Pleasant that the people of Mount Pleasant can really benefit from and a significant profit can still be made along with a wonderful business. She said there are ongoing discussions on this topic with at least two or three major projects. She also spoke to Strategic Advisors (commercial real estate leasing), who have property currently listed on Bessemer. She said this area has a lot of new housing going up. She said if there were businesses for the remaining parcels of land, it would alleviate more cars and the cars that are in the area may even stop for work or other business. She had a conversation with Strategic Advisors regarding the property, which

is approximately 1.5 acres that is listed, although there are other parcels. She said a business the size of 10,000 sf is allowable on this property, but some of the things that were brought up were concerns regarding impact fees. She stated that some businesses were not interested because of the high impact fees. She stated that there is a jigsaw puzzle of issues that the Town is dealing with. She said on one of the social media groups, someone posted, "what is missing from Mount Pleasant, in terms of businesses and services", and she posted something similar last year. She said the list was numerous. She would like to hear more from the public in order to compile a list and proactively go out and talk. She said the Economic Advisory panel spoke about all the property on Highway 17 North. She said there is a tremendous amount of property on Highway 17 North for sale; however, much of it is in the County. If it is in the County now and they want to bring a business, they must first apply for annexation to receive water and sewer. The issue she is bringing up is that they will have the costs associated with obtaining water and sewer, the impact fees associated with water and sewer, the impact fees associated with Mount Pleasant, in addition to the cost of buying and developing the property. She said there are a number of issues that can almost act as a detriment to try and get the businesses that the people of Mount Pleasant really want. She said they are going to work very actively on this and would like to hear as much input as possible. She said they do need to address some of the items that make a stumbling block situation for the great businesses the Town would like to have.

Mr. Bustos stated that the Town has worked very hard to have growth pay for growth, as well as to implement impact fees. He said any suggestion that the public should subsidize businesses is wrong. He said we also have to go back to what economic development really is. He said opening a car parts store would have 4 or 5 employees, which is not economic development or building a new Burger King is not an economic development. He said if we can find something that is true economic development, that is one thing. He does not believe the Town can excuse or not have someone pay impact fees in order to attract them. He said

the Town can work with business license fees, but impact fees are development paying for development which is solid; it is here to stay.

Mr. Brimmer stated that Bessemer Road is a very good example of the fact that originally in the Park West Plan, this area was going to be warehouse office primarily, not residential. Over the years, some of those parcels changed because of decisions of Council or the Park West Developer. He said the Town spent approximately a year and a half going back through Park West and putting the zoning back on there. He said he was unable to convince the majority of Council for less residential and more commercial; therefore, a lot of those parcels now have residential zoning. He said, in his view, the way the Town should address these issues is by taking a close look at the zoning rules that are placed on properties and decide whether that property is properly zoned for what they want at that location. He does not know that dictating and looking for a particular business, because the community says so, is right. He said the Town's role is to put those rules in place on that property, making sure it is appropriate for the infrastructure in place, and then market those. Let the businesses decide whether Mount Pleasant is the place for them to do business or not. He does not want to be too heavy-handed with the Town dictating what goes in parcels. He stated that he believes the Town can do a better job of looking more closely at the rules that are put in place to ensure that when a business is interested in coming to Mount Pleasant, they have a very clear understanding of what is allowed or not, instead of looking for exemptions. He is in favor of being proactive but does not want to go too far and be prescriptive for each parcel. He said this can also be bad for business as well.

Ms. Landing stated that the purpose for being proactive is not to say that these are the businesses we want or that the people want them. This is not the idea. She said the idea is that there is feedback she had heard from a number of businesses who have been considering doing something in Mount Pleasant; however, there is a fair amount of fear because of the past. Business developers who were going to bring something whether it was true economic development or business

development, they elected not to come, not just because of impact fees, but what they may have to face if they had to bring some sort of a request for a variance or any other request. We can promote the message that the Town really does want to work with business to bring the best that Mount Pleasant can have for the citizens. She said there is a business being built on Bessermer Road that is relatively sizeable and happens to be a childcare center called Kids are Kids. She said there was another childcare center that was close to Wando High School not too long ago which closed due to other issues. She said there was an outcry in the community due to the closure. She said the neighborhood was concerned when they realized that a childcare center was going to be built in their backyard. However, the developer worked very hard to convince the neighbors that there would be enough of a buffer. She said that had he missed a deadline on impact fees where he could not get in by a certain date, it was going to go up by \$200,000. She said the fees were already a large six figure amount. He said if he would have had to pay the additional \$200,000 he would not have built. He said at this point, families are holding their breath until this facility is open. The point is that families will be able to drive very short distances before going to work, as opposed to having to drive their children on crowded Highway 41 and US 17 to go to another childcare center. This is an example that although this is not economic development, it serves an incredible purpose for those families in that area. She said regarding impact fees, she is not saying to undo the past and understands impact fees and traffic and why growth has to pay for growth. But she also understands future values projections, which is a large portion of the business she has been in for the past 34 years. When you begin looking at the cash flow that you can have when a business is here paying property taxes at 6% instead of 4% and business license fees for many years, the dollars can be way more significant than they would be just by paying an upfront impact fee. If they never come here and build that business, we will never know as you cannot prove a negative. She said we need to pay bills for the next 20 years, not just short term.

Mr. Crosby stated that we just need to be mindful of business development versus economic development which he believes are different. He is most hopeful that the Mayor's panel can put together a plan that is strategic in nature where we can focus on the economic benefit aspect. He said that we are getting more into the business development piece and is not sure that should be the focus.

Ms. Landing stated that she was simply using that example because it is a business. She stated that she is very much involved in spearheading a project that is very much economic development. She said economic development is money coming from outside Mount Pleasant, not simply recirculating what is in Mount Pleasant – jobs that could have gone anywhere that come to Mount Pleasant, and money that comes from other sources outside.

Mr. Bustos said that we have to be careful, because we do not know what is happening with Highway 41 yet. He said we should have a firm grasp on this before we begin thinking about what to encourage or not encourage. He said that one option could remove a great deal of our tax base by ripping through Park West and Dunes West. He said we need to be in control on the Highway 41 process and those monies.

Mr. Brimmer stated that he would add as an additional strategy for the Town to take another look at the annexation policy and be more aggressive with annexation. He said perhaps offer incentives for property owners along US 17 to aggregate properties. He said if the Town could get several properties to aggregate that may provide the Town with opportunities to zone something economic development instead of commercial. He said there may be residents outside the Town limits who have an interest in projects that are not currently allowed, but if we incentivize in some way for annexation and bringing those parcels together and aggregate them, it may be an opportunity to create economic development properties that have been lost over the years through rezoning.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Ashe

February 4, 2019