

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
February 5, 2025**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a regular scheduled meeting.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Karl Sease, Vice-Chairman
Leon Fulmer Jr., Council Member
Todd Johnson, Council Member
Travis Reeder, Council Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member
Stuart Smith, Council Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator
Joanie Winters, County Attorney
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator
Katherine Cook, Human Resources Director
Debbie Cromer, Finance Director
Captain Ben Chapman, NCSO
Eric Nieto, I.T. Director
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

ABSENT: Robert Shealy, Chairman

Mr. Sease called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Fulmer led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda:

- a. Newberry County Council Work Session – January 8, 2025.
- b. Newberry County Council Meeting – January 8, 2025.

- c. Newberry County Council Work Session – January 15, 2025.
- d. Newberry County Council Meeting – January 15, 2025.
- e. Newberry County Public Safety & Courts Committee – January 27, 2025.

- Mr. Johnson made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

2. Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda.

- Mr. Scurry made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented; Mr. Johnson provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

3. Personal Appearances:

a. John Snow, CEO Newberry County Memorial Hospital.

- Mr. Snow provided an update on the hospital, which included: from summer of 2023 through March of 2024, they successfully completed the process of developing their strategic plan; opening of the Newberry Medical Center of Newberry College; partnering with Midlands Anesthesia Group; partnering with Lovelace Family Medicine for an inpatient medicine program; completed construction on a new office building that is the home of the Newberry Hospital Center for Adult Physical, Speech, and Occupational Therapy Services.
- This year marks the 100th year of the hospital. Mr. Snow then announced a new name for the hospital, Newberry Health.

b. Steven Knapp, Executive Director of The Newberry Museum.

- Mr. Knapp reviewed what The Newberry Museum accomplished in 2024, and what they expect in 2025 and

beyond. In 2024, he said they partnered with several organizations including the Newberry Fire Department and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. They also had new artifacts loaned and donated to the museum.

- The Museum also opened a Botanical Garden in 2024, which they can use for programs and events.
- At the end of 2024, The Newberry Museum had 3,634 visitors, a five percent increase over 2023. This number represents 39 states, one territory and 11 foreign countries.
- Looking at 2025-26, Mr. Knapp said they are working on expanding and redoing some of their permanent exhibits. One project is to look at all of the churches in Newberry County, as a rotating exhibit. They are also working on research projects, including the Hope Rosenwald Schools. They are also looking into the Reconstruction period and the Union occupation of Newberry County.
- Mr. Knapp said they recently received a request from the National Museum of American Diplomacy, affiliated with the Smithsonian, that they want to borrow some artifacts relating to the Samsung plant.
- Mr. Knapp is also working to get a rifle, owned by the British Royal Family, that was originally owned by a Newberry County resident. He is working to get that loaned to The Newberry Museum.

4. Ordinance No. 02-01-2025. An Ordinance acting on a request to amend the official zoning map established pursuant to Zoning Ordinance No. 12-24-01 as revised and amended by Zoning Ordinance No. 06-11-16 and codified in Chapter 153 of the Newberry County Code of Ordinances, establishes Zoning Classifications and Districts so as to rezone one (1) real estate parcel totaling three and nine hundredths (3.09) acres designated as TMS No. 295-7 from RS-Single Family Residential to R2-Rural.

- a. First Reading

- Mr. Smith made a motion to approve first reading; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 5-1, with Mr. Scurry voting against.
- Mr. Shacker said this property is located between Newberry and Silverstreet. He said it is currently zoned RS-Single Family Residential, and the owner is requesting that it be rezoned to R2-Rural to place a manufactured home on the property. The requested rezoning, R2, is consistent with the Rural Development Overlay, as is the current zoning, RS.
- The Joint Planning Commission has recommended the rezoning.

5. Ordinance No. 02-02-2025. An Ordinance acting on a request to amend the official zoning map established pursuant to Zoning Ordinance No. 12-24-01 as revised and amended by Zoning Ordinance No. 06-11-16 and codified in Chapter 153 of the Newberry County Code of Ordinances, establishes Zoning Classifications and Districts so as to rezone one (1) real estate parcel totaling two and seventy-eight hundredths (2.78) acres designated as TMS No. 741-79 from RS-Single Family Residential to GC-General Commercial.

a. First Reading

- Mr. Reeder made the motion to approve first reading; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.
- Prior to the vote, Mr. Shacker said this request is to rezone 2.78 acres, on Hwy 76 between Little Mountain and Chapin, the owner has a potential buyer for the property, and they are proposing a gymnastics center. The rezoning would allow for the business. The rezoning would be consistent with the comprehensive plan.

6. Ordinance No. 02-03-2025. An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 154 of the Code of Ordinances of the County of Newberry to Adopt Updated Newberry County Land Development Regulations.

a. First Reading

- Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept first reading; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

7. Consideration and approval of proposals to provide Consulting Services for Disaster Recovery and FEMA Public Assistance (RFP# 2024-10).

- Mr. Shacker said Hurricane Helene, back in the fall, did a good bit of damage to the county. FEMA will fully fund the services of a consultant to help prepare all the paperwork and the reimbursement request for storm related expenditures.
- The county issued a request for proposals with eight respondents, two firms scoring very high, Rostan Solutions LLC. And Berquiest Recovery Consulting, with Rostan scoring one point higher.
- However, staff recommended to council they award the contract to Berquiest because of the March 14th deadline and Berquiest is located in Columbia.
- Mr. Johnson asked why there would be a scoring system, but then not follow the scoring system.
 - Mr. Shacker said the way the ordinance reads; it gives council the ability to select the firm that is most advantageous to the county's interest. He said with the scoring being in such a dead heat, and geography not being one of the criteria and that would be the "tiebreaker."
- Mr. Johnson asked if they should have made that part of the scoring process. Mr. Shacker said when they started

the process, they did not realize they had the March deadline and that is why it wasn't originally considered.

- Mr. Fulmer asked what the scale was, to which Mr. Shacker said it was 1-100 and they were weighted. He added the scores ended up being 92 and 91. Mr. Fulmer said statistically, they were the same.
- Mr. Johnson made the motion that council accept the staff's recommendation, because he has that much trust in their staff, but he does think for future reference, if they consider something like geography, that should be in the scoring criteria. Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

8. Appointments.

- Mr. Scurry appointed Torchia Werts to the Board of Zoning Appeals; Mr. Johnson provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.

9. Public Comments.

- Mr. Tommy Boyd came to address a road problem where he lives, Seagull Lane. He said this road is in need of assistance, he said it never was constructed like it should have been. He said if they cannot get it paved, can they get it surfaced in certain areas where they have potholes.
- Mr. Chuck Fellows said he was here to note something that is in the Newberry County Comprehensive Plan, he said it talks about two golf clubs, he said there are two very fine clubs, but there is something omitted from the Country Club of Newberry, it is 102 years old and that was significant. Mr. Fellows then shared a book with council regarding the country club. He said regarding economic development, he'd like the county to consider vertical farming, it has a presence in South Carolina and the county has facilities that are vacant,

and property and it might be an entrepreneurial opportunity for people in the county.

- Ms. Kimberly Crone said she lives just down from the land that is up for rezoning (agenda item four) she said she understands living near to family in order to help them in times of emergency, because they are all family and friends in that community, and they look out for each other. However, she said the homeowners who want to rezone the land have other options for placing a mobile home for their daughter and her children so they can assist them and be close, without having to cross the busy highway. She said the current landowner owns an approximately 13-acre tract across the highway 34-121 from the discussed three-acre tract. She said the 13-acre tract includes RS and R2 zoning and they could utilize that land rather than requesting a deviation from the current use and there is no need for rezoning. She said the current landowner has not paid the 2024 property taxes on the three-acre tract and that should be a prerequisite to submitting an application to rezone.
- Ms. Erin Willis said she owns property adjacent to the three-acre tract being discussed in agenda item four. She said she objects to the rezoning because they have property already that doesn't have to be rezoned. She said the rezoning would affect all three-acres and this allows for three mobile homes on the property, and they must consider the future use and not just today's effects. She said they own 13-acres across the road that does not require rezoning. She said there is only one landowner in support of this rezoning.
 - Mr. Reeder asked if there are currently any other mobile homes, to which Ms. Willis said there are no other mobile homes in the area.
- Ms. Kristie Metts said she also owns adjacent land to the land being discussed in agenda item four; plus, the 13 acres the landowner has across the road. She said she also does not support the rezoning.

- Mr. Gregg Turner also spoke on agenda item four, he said typically when you have a group of homeowners that own land around a parcel of property – which he is one – if council was considering something for some large commercial purpose that was going to create economic development for this community, he could see council having to weigh decisions very carefully, but when there is no true economic impact being forged, he thinks all of the landowners who own all of the adjacent property around it should be those the county council hears. He suggested they do listen to the landowners who will be impacted by this the most and would appreciate their consideration not to rezone.
- Mr. Tyler Turner – who said he was speaking on behalf of Deborah Cassidy, June Pitts and Tennie Longshore, all landowners adjacent to the property under consideration for agenda item four. He said the closest manufactured home he could find is 1.1 miles up the road, he compared values of the residence types. He said during the Joint Planning Commission there was some stuff about comparing manufactured homes versus stick built homes and the pricing comparison and provided information to council regarding that. He said there are other options available to them.
- Mr. Brandon Davis, with Carolina Home Outlet, said he'd speak on behalf of the family requesting the rezoning on agenda item four. He said 93% of the area is already zoned R2 and they were able to identify – at GIS – mobile homes that are already in the area. He said there are manufactured homes a lot closer than 1.1 miles. He said he thinks it would be great to move forward with the rezoning, one for affordability, but also attainability. He said looking at cost of housing, manufactured housing is able to be obtained for less than 60 a square foot. He said they last 30 to 50 years.
- Mr. Dwain Morris, the property owner of the rezoning request for agenda item four, said his daughter is going through a divorce and has to move and they are looking at that piece of

property because it is the most affordable place to put her. He said if they put her behind them or off the road where they are talking about, just the driveway is going to take up any money she has, same with putting water lines.

- Mr. Mitch Howard, with Carolina Home Outlet, spoke on agenda item four, he also mentioned that what they saw is 93% of that area is manufactured homes, but he does not know in what distance. He said they have come a long way with manufactured homes and the typical life is 30-50 years.
- Ms. Leesha Wessinger also spoke on agenda item four, and said she wanted to reiterate that the land will be split up into two places and there will only be two spots a mobile home can go. He said this was not their intention; she didn't want this.
- Mr. David Adams asked about the chicken issue and asked when it would be brought up again (next meeting).

10. Comments/Requests from County Administrator.

- Mr. Shacker said there is a lot going on right now. He said they have \$6.6 million in grant projects they are working on right now and \$47 million of Capital Project Sales Tax projects that are moving.
- Mr. Shacker said the budget process has started, and they are assembling that and will have recommendations for council.

11. Comments/Requests from Council.

- Mr. Fulmer thanked everyone for coming out, and said it is encouraging when folks are concerned about what is going on in their community. He added that obviously council has to make decisions, and they will never satisfy everyone, but they do the best they can and try and consider all aspects whenever they make decisions. He encouraged folks to keep

in mind there is nothing like family and whatever you can do to work things out and make an agreement, he encourages you to do that.

- Mr. Johnson thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He also thanked Mr. Shacker for helping him with a constituent issue and thanked him for being accessible and keeping projects going and they are blessed to have him as their county administrator. He thanked everyone for asking and praying for his family and he is grateful and thankful for that.
- Mr. Reeder said he thinks they had a lot of productive material today. He said he gave Mr. Johnson and his family a blessing to continue healing.
- Mr. Smith thanked Newberry Hospital for 100 years of service and what a great honor. He also thanked Newberry Museum for their hard work.
- Mr. Scurry thanked everyone for coming out, especially his community. He said they are going to make this decision together and asked them to come back on the 19th as well.
- Mr. Sease thanked everyone for coming out and giving input and encouraged everyone to come back for the public hearing. He also thanked Mr. Shacker for putting together a productive meeting. He also thanked Mr. Snow for all the services the hospital gives the residents of the county. He also thanked the museum for all the great things they do.

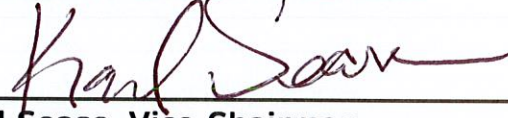
12. Future meetings:

- a. Newberry County Council Work Session – February 19 at 5 p.m.
- b. Newberry County Council Meeting – February 19 at 6 p.m.
- c. Newberry County Executive Committee – February 24 at 5 p.m.
- d. Newberry County Council Work Session – March 5 at 5 p.m.
- e. Newberry County Council Meeting – March 5 at 6 p.m.

13. Adjournment.

- Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 6-0.
- Newberry County Council adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Karl Sease, Vice-Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 2-19-2025