

**MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

{Summary minutes of City Council meeting. Audio tapes of the meeting are on file and are included by reference as part of this meeting. An agenda of this meeting has been either mailed or made available to persons, organizations and local news media as per their request. The agenda gives the date, time and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Section 30-4-80 (e).}

A public hearing was held on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Municipal building with the following present:

COUNCIL: Mayor Harold Thompson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Garner, Councilmembers Tommy Anthony, Vicki C. Morgan, Pamela Sloss, Ricky Todd Harris and Sonja J. Craig.

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF: Gloria Rogers – Municipal Clerk/Personnel Director; Walker Gallman – Finance Director; Sam White – Public Safety Director; Perry Harmon – Public Service Director; Joe Nichols – Utility Director and Adam Harris – Assistant Utility Director.

CITY ATTORNEY: Larry Flynn

PLANNING COMMISSION: Lynn Eaves – Chairman; Bobby Joe Gibbs; Mary Norman; Hutch Hall and Oscar Gist (arrived at 6:11 p.m.)

NEWS MEDIA: Mike Stevens – WBCU Radio and Graham Williams – Union County News

OTHERS: Tommy Mann, Kathy Teague, Chris Woodson, Neil Valentine, Dan O’Shields, Kathy O’Shields, Libby Oliver, Rhonda Harmon, Brad Goodale, Robert Jarvis, Sybil Crow, Curtiss Hunter, Lynda Casey-Clark, Barbara Rippy, Margie Ruff, Rebecca Rochester, Kathy Stepp, Linda Kelly, Jack Kelly, Elise Ashby, Rieta Drinkwine, Jared Smith, Sammy Smith, Earl Coleman, Joan Sprouse, Diane Coleman, Susan Balkum, Bill Balkum and others.

1. Call To Order

Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order.

2. Business

- A. Hearing To Solicit Public Comments Pertaining To A Request Made To Amend Section 109.12 – Table Of Permitted Uses For Non-Residential Districts To Allow Bars/Taverns In The A-1 District Located In The Downtown And Section 129 – Definitions Of The City Of Union Zoning Ordinance

Mayor Thompson asked if there was anyone that wanted to comment on the zoning request.

James Chris Woodson, 123 Park Drive, addressed council. He states that as an amendment to the ordinance, provided there is food served along with alcohol, he personally has no problem with this. Mr. Woodson states that that there are other restaurants in town where there are several church members and preachers that go to these restaurants that has bars, one in particular that probably serves more alcohol on a weekly basis than the other restaurants do combined. However, he is completely against just a honky-tonk bar. He does not think that we need that in the City but he does think that as part of a revitalization plan that the City is going to have to grow and we are going to need somethings that is going to promote growth. A bar/restaurant downtown, he feels is acceptable. He also states that there are tons of tax dollars that are leaving our county because of this issue.

Rev. Tommy Mann, 3698 Buffalo West Springs Hwy, Buffalo, SC addressed council. He states that he is not here to try to make Union a dry city but he does want to speak on an institution's primary purpose is the consumption of alcohol. Rev. Mann states that he is sure that this will generate a lot of revenue but at what cost; as in not just how much money can we get from it but what would we pay out as a result. He mentioned a fact sheet from Minnesota where they did an investigation to see how much money they generated by their sale of alcohol and they found out that there was a staggering \$296 million dollars brought into the state by selling alcohol but they also had the wisdom to think beyond alcohol sales. In their report they factored in alcohol related homicides and suicides. They factored in falling and other accidents, drowning when alcohol was a factor, certain types of cancer directly attributed to alcohol consumption, liver disease and other chronic illness, vehicular accidents, unintended pregnancy, birth defects and alcohol and other substance dependence programs. They paid out 5.06 billion dollars a year. He states that they took a net loss of 5 billion dollars a year. These are state wide numbers and not city wide. He further states that alcohol always cost us more than it brings in. Rev. Mann states that S.C. leads the nation in vehicular deaths on country roads and DUI's. He also states that it would not be good to open a business that served just alcohol a couple hundred yards from our City's only University, especially now that we are discussing opening up campus housing for these students that are going to be driving around, especially when his own kids are on the road, he don't like the thought of it. Lastly, he stated that in his personal opinion, that a tavern or a bar on Main will not be a bright spot for our City. He believes it would be blight on our City.

Rev. Robert Jarvis, 107 Stonecrest Court, Pacolet, SC addressed council. He states he is a resident of Union County and owns some property in the City of Union. He represents his congregation who some of which lives in the City and all would be affected by the downtown area. He feels that it would be a huge mistake to have a place of business that served only alcohol. He states that it would be a huge mistake to have alcohol on Main Street. Rev. Jarvis states that he is concerned because he has an 18 year old daughter who attends the University. He is concerned about people coming out of a downtown bar under the influence of a strong drink and the danger it would be to his daughter for instance. And he is also concerned about 21 year old students who come into town here and might be tempted to walk down the street and have a few beers in between classes. He states that if such an establishment was not here, there wouldn't be such a temptation because the effect the alcohol would have on students would be detrimental. He also states that they have formed a unanimous program at the church and they are trying their best to get people off of or un-addicted to things such as alcohol and it's just within two miles of here. He also talked with a lady at the other end of Main Street who is running an alcohol addiction program and to open an establishment such as this would have a tendency to get people on something that they are trying to get them off of which doesn't make a lot of sense. He discussed families that were affected by alcohol related accidents. Rev. Jarvis asked council to consider these things.

Rev. Brad Goodale, 321 Philippi Church Road, Union, SC. addressed council. He states that he represent a lot of people from a congregation the Lord has blessed him with which many of them live in the City and many that voted for City Council who ran on the name of Jesus Christ. He spoke out against a bar/tavern on Main Street; not a restaurant. Rev. Goodale states that our University, where his two children go, is growing by leaps and bounds without bars/taverns and the City is seeing economic prosperity without bars/taverns.

Elise Ashby, 1870 Berry Farm Road addressed council. She presented a map that the State puts out to encourage folks to do things in S.C. It shows places to go and things to do. Ms. Ashby states that if we want people to come here, spend money here and enjoy being here; we have to give them a reason to come. She states that she is not saying that beer, booze or a bar is a reason to come here but when they come here, they don't have a reason to stay. She further states that we want people to come on Main Street; we want to have something for them to do. A bar/pub would be a nice place for someone to go after they go to the museum; after they go on a walk or after they go to the library. And bars just not only have alcohol, they have food to eat. It's just not solely a place to go and drink. And the type of bar that was talked about in the first meeting was a craft beer. There are 50 craft breweries in the State of South Carolina. She states that in 2016, those 50 craft brewery's had a 650 million dollar economic impact on the State. S.C. is the 5th state in the country for DUI's and that was data compiled by the CDC MADD in 2017. The average age of the USC-U student is 25 years old; well above the legal drinking age. She states that most accidents occur when drivers go out of town to drink and then drive the long dark road to come back home. She states that there are only 3 full service restaurant in Union and there are no restaurants on Main Street. Again she states that we need to give people a reason to come to Union to watch a movie, have a beer and a burger.

Councilmember Sonja Craig states that she moved here 40 years ago and there were a lot of things on Main Street. There was a theater, nice restaurant and places to shop on Main Street. Now we have nothing. She would like to see a nice restaurant that sells alcoholic beverages on Main Street.

Councilmember Anthony asked if they were talking about a bar, not a place to go sit down and eat. According to what they are voting on is a bar and a tavern.

Councilmember Morgan states that the entire council started out wanting a restaurant downtown and it changed to the word bar. She states that this is not council's goal. The goal is to have a restaurant downtown. She also states that she found out the City already have an ordinance in place where there can be a restaurant downtown that serves alcohol.

Mayor Thompson addressed the Chairman of the Planning Commission. He states that he understands they are going to have a meeting next Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

3. **Adjournment**

Public hearing adjourned at 6:28 P.M.

Gloria J. Rogers, Municipal Clerk

Minutes approved _____ 2017