

**CITY OF CAYCE
Special Meeting
January 29, 2008**

A Special meeting of Cayce City Council was held today at 8:40 a.m. in the Conference Room. Those present included Mayor Avery B. Wilkerson, Jr., Councilmen James Jenkins, Kenneth Jumper, Robert Malpass, and Rick Myers, City Manager John C. Sharpe, and Municipal Clerk, Tammy Barkley. Ms. Clare Morris and Ms. Karen Owens of The Clare Morris Agency were also in attendance. Mayor Wilkerson advised that members of the press and the public were duly notified of the meeting in accordance with the FOIA.

Mr. Malpass invocation Mayor Wilkerson opened the meeting. Mr. Malpass said the invocation and Mayor Wilkerson led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Other

- A. Presentation – Clare Morris Agency – Review of Public Relations Program Initiative and Deliverables.

Ms. Morris thanked Council for the opportunity to meet with them. She stated that when her firm starts with a new project, they perform a great deal of research and wanted to meet with Council first to get their opinions on several items. She provided Council with a list of questions for review.

Ms. Owens stated that they have been working with several entities in the interim including the Municipal Association of South Carolina, the West Metro Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center and has had discussions with Mr. Charlie Thompson. She stated that they have been reviewing some of the existing City materials and need to get Council's opinions on their perspectives of Cayce. She stated that from the information gathered today, they will draft a strategic plan for Council's review at a future Council meeting.

The following questions were presented to Council:

1. Name three of Cayce's best assets as a community.

Mr. Jenkins expressed his concern in the following areas--addressing phone calls, beautification of the city, and how much it would take to get started on the project. Ms. Owens stated that she felt the gateways to the City should be an asset. Mr. Jenkins inquired as to which area would be considered. He stated that the city has several areas that are gateways and felt that the area with the most traffic should be on a priority list. Mr. Myers felt it would be important to address these areas and asked that Council be provided with ideas on how to handle this issue.

Mr. Malpass stated that the City's recreational facilities, particularly the Riverwalk Park, is a great asset.

Mr. Jenkins inquired as to how the City could provide notification to citizens of things that are happening stating that not all citizens have access to internet service. The City Manager stated that it has been discussed in earlier conversations with the agency that the Sunrise newsletter should be produced on a quarterly basis rather than bi-yearly.

Mr. Malpass stated that convenience of location was another asset. Mayor Wilkerson stated people, public safety, and the Riverwalk were assets. Mr. Myers stated that he felt utilities are a big asset to the City's community. Other responses were traffic in and out of the city and the fact that the City is economically affordable for residents and businesses.

2. Name its three worst aspects.

Mr. Myers stated that lack of communication, selling the City's vision to its citizens and inter-department communications top his list. Mayor Wilkerson stated that providing correct information to the citizens is an issue. He stated that there are times when someone will state part of the problem or part of the issue which leads to providing half-information to the public. Mr. Myers stated that he felt the City tends to be reactive rather than proactive.

Ms. Owens inquired if Council members were engaged in speaking at various events. Mayor Wilkerson stated that he is asked most often to speak to groups and he has offered that other Council members take on that role. However, he stated that in most cases, the groups have specifically requested the Mayor's presence.

Mr. Myers stated that there is a certain level of discomfort in speaking on all the information because unless the Municipal Clerk prepares a program or presentation or talking points, he is not sure Council would have all the information needed to make a presentation.

Ms. Owens inquired if Council felt that there was some lack of communication between the governing body itself. Council agreed that some miscommunication does occur. Mr. Malpass stated that if Council had some type of presentation prepared in advance, Council would feel more comfortable in speaking to groups.

Mayor Wilkerson stated that one of the points he made early on in discussions Council has had, 15 years ago the Mayor and Council members positions may have taken six hours a week. He stated that today, he is spending 20-25 hours a week doing various activities and felt that over the next five years, this time will increase.

Mr. Myers stated that when the City has something big coming up, and in preparation, the PR firm has to be involved to release something to the public and Council will need to speak using that same information.

Mayor Wilkerson stated that he felt the City also has an identity crisis. He stated that when you have 20-30% of citizens who do not know where West Columbia and Cayce limits separate, that is an identity problem. Mr. Myers stated that he was not sure how important the boundaries are, but the identity crisis is correct. Mayor Wilkerson stated that the City did a good job with the "Cayce by the River" promotion. The City Manager stated that he felt that the identity issue has a lot to do with the Post Office and their designations of zip codes.

3. What do you think is Cayce's biggest communications challenge?
4. What are the top three- give things you want people to know about Cayce?
5. Where do you see Cayce 5-10 years from now?

Ms. Owens stated that Council touched on the above issues in previous responses. Mr. Malpass reiterated that he felt the City should concentrate on improving the beautification of the City to make it more attractive.

6. What do you think is Cayce's biggest barrier or misconception?

Mayor Wilkerson stated that over the years there have been several misconceptions of Cayce, like that of the old Olympia image. Mr. Myers stated that he felt the City was still trying to overcome several social issues from the 50s, 60s, and 70s, and problems that occurred with Public Safety many years ago. Mr. Jenkins stated that there are some citizens who are afraid of the Public Safety Department. Mr. Jumper noted that the perception is changing some as can be seen by the new developments coming into the City.

7. How closely should Cayce align itself with developments (Innovista) in Columbia? What about West Metro communities?

Ms. Owens inquired if Council wanted to have some type of symbiotic relationship with Columbia. Mayor Wilkerson stated that he felt it was important that the City build on the relationship. He stated that no matter what happens in Columbia, West Columbia, or Springdale, it will benefit the City of Cayce and building on this relationship would be best for the City. He stated that Mayor Coble has always included Cayce in Columbia's events and activities and felt a mutual relationship is heading in the right direction.

Ms. Owens asked Council to rate the City as far as working with developers and if they felt the City was permit friendly and competitive with costs. Council agreed that the city has a great process and works well with developers to move through the process quickly and efficiently. The City Manager stated that the City does not have the red tape that other communities have in working with developers. Mr. Malpass stated that thoughts should be geared toward USC as a whole and not just the Innovista project.

8. How comfortable do you feel dealing with the media? Do you want media training/advice?

Ms. Owens stated that one thing her agency would like to see happen is that when Council receives calls from the media that a quick email be sent to the agency to keep them up date and in the loop. Council stated that they would be amenable to training. Mr. Jumper stated that news will hit the newspapers or you may be asked about an issue even before Council is aware of what is happening.

Mayor Wilkerson stated that it was important to take the correct information to the public and felt that it is incumbent upon Council to do this. He stated that taking information out of Council packets and giving it to the public prior to a Council meeting was a problem as well as sharing confidential information received from the City Attorney.

Mr. Jenkins stated that if it is a big issue, Council needs to be contacted prior to it being leaked to the public. Ms. Owens advised Council not to speculate on issues as there are too many ways to trip up if you do so. She advised that if you do not know or have the answer, do not be afraid to say you don't know, but you'll get the information for them. Ms. Morris stated that Council has been given business cards for both Ms. Owens and herself which included their cell phone numbers and advised Council not to hesitate to contact them if there is a question on how to respond.

9. Are you willing to act as a spokesperson for the City on critical issues?

Ms. Owens stated that this has already been discussed.

10. After recently completing the annexation of Vista Farms property, what do you want to communicate to your residents? Your business community? The rest of the Midlands/outside world?

Mayor Wilkerson stated "the truth." Mr. Malpass stated that he wanted to let the residents know what the plans are for this future development. Mr. Myers stated that he wanted residents to be involved in the process. Ms. Owens asked if Council would hold a Town Hall meeting on the issue. Mayor Wilkerson stated that he felt the problem with the entire annexation process, was that the public did not focus on the main issue. He stated that Council, bound by law, was reviewing annexation totally and felt this refers

back to miscommunication from Council and the City, as a whole. He stated that most South Carolinians and most people in the U.S. have a slight distrust of government. He stated that at this point, there is no other information to share with citizens until the developers come back to the City with a definite plan for the property. At that time, Mayor Wilkerson stated that citizen input would not only be welcomed, but essential. He stated that stating the truth is the key to the whole process.

11. Please rate the effectiveness of the following exiting communication tools:

Press releases – Council rated this as medium. Mr. Myers stated that he would like for the PR agency to get involved on the front end of issues to guide the City on the timing of press releases, if a press release is needed, etc.

Newsletters – Council rated this as average. Mr. Myers stated that the newsletter provides good information. Mayor Wilkerson stated that the citizens use the information. The City Manager stated that citizens inquire about the availability of the citizen's calendars ahead of time as useful information is contained in that publication as well. Mr. Myers stated that the newsletter reaches people inside the city and asked for ideas on how to reach those outside the city.

Web site – Council rated this as fair. All agreed that some work needs to be done to the layout of the pages to make it more user-friendly and to attract economic growth.

Speaking engagements – As noted earlier, Mayor Wilkerson is doing most of them and Ms. Owens stated they would work on that issue.

Ms. Owens asked Council to rate the effectiveness of their Council meetings. Mayor Wilkerson stated that he would like more people to attend. He stated that when you review the agenda, probably 90% has already been discussed several times. He stated that when action is taken on the items and people are in attendance, it gives the impression that not much time has been spent on the issue. He stated that most people think Council meetings are boring. Mr. Myers stated that this is typical with all municipal Council meetings as a whole. Mayor Wilkerson stated that if the PR agency has suggestions on how the meetings can be improved, Council would be very receptive to receiving input.

The City Manager suggested that a press release be prepared for the roll cart program in advance. It was also noted that it would be important to notify residents affected in advance via postcard. Ms. Morris asked that the City provide them with a copy of its media list.

Mr. Myers stated that he would like to have Ms. Morris' and Ms. Owen's perspective from the outside looking in standpoint. He stated that Council would like to know what they can do better. Mr. Myers stated that he would also like to know Mr. Cliff LeBlanc's perspective on what the City can do better to make it easier on him when he

reports on activities for the City. Mayor Wilkerson stated that the City and Council needs to be unified in nature, and needs to speak from one page. He stated that the City and Council needs to be sure the correct information goes out, but also needs to know of anything that is being handled incorrectly.

Mr. Malpass inquired as to when Council would receive a final report on the citizens' survey that was conducted by USC. The City Manager advised that Mr. Lambries of USC is scheduled to make a presentation on the final report at the February 5, 2008 Council meeting. Council asked that the final report be forwarded to them and the PR agency to review first and then schedule a meeting for the presentation.

Ms. Owens stated that she has met with Reba Campbell at the Municipal Association to discuss the Cities Mean Business campaign. She stated that one of the things that was recommended in their RFP was some sort of a Business forum, maybe a half day program, where department heads would attend as well to provide information. She inquired if this would be of value to Council. Mr. Myers stated that Lexington does a good job with this type of function. Mayor Wilkerson stated that the city is a very lunch-time driven community and in order to attract owners or managers of restaurants, etc., may be better to have two different sessions, early morning or late afternoon meeting. Council agreed that this would be valuable.

Ms. Owens stated that she needs to get additional information on the activities of the City's committees. She thanked Council for their input and stated a more detailed plan of action would be submitted for their review.

Mr. Malpass stated that he felt a lot of the citizens do not understand Council's roles and responsibilities, or which governmental entity has responsibility for different areas—paving roads, etc. Mr. Myers stated that this is something whereby citizens would need to be educated over time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Avery B. Wilkerson, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Tammy P. Barkley, CMC, Municipal Clerk