



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2020

The Columbia City Council conducted a virtual meeting on Thursday, April 9, 2020 using video conferencing technology. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 4:42 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Howard E. Duvall, Jr., The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tempore Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, and The Honorable William Brennan. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

INVOCATION

The Honorable Mayor Pro Tempore Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. COVID-19 Update

Mayor Benjamin said we are all thankful to the City of Columbia team. They have stepped up and lead from the front to try and address this pandemic. We are still at the beginning of the work we are doing to flatten the curve and making sure our health care resources are not overwhelmed. Today, our state recorded a record number of deaths due to COVID-19. Our officers have been enforcing our stay home stay safe ordinance and the governor's executive order. We relied on the City of Charleston's ordinance and the Department of Homeland Security Administration essential businesses list as a way of encouraging uniformity throughout the state. The challenge presented to our law enforcement officials is trying to enforce our ordinance as well as the governor's executive order. We don't need officers operating in gray areas, we need them to be able to clearly interpret and execute the law in Columbia and in South Carolina. Because of this, our ordinance will expire today. We are going to follow-up on communication with the governor and plea that his executive order become transparent and adhered to. We have seen examples of exceptions being given to businesses throughout the city that are included in the executive order nonessential list being able to continue to stay open during this crisis. Under state law and operating within the confines of the constitution, Council is going to reserve the right to revisit this topic if in fact we see that the governor's executive order is not being properly carried out. There was a strong unanimous decision of Council to continue with the curfew. It's a tool that has been proven effective to our law enforcement officials. We have a long journey and we have to figure out how to continue leading in the best interest of our citizens' health and preserving human life.



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EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

2. Ordinance No.: 2020-037 Emergency Order Imposing a Curfew

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance No.: 2020-037 Emergency Order Imposing a Curfew.

Councilor Brennan suggested that we work with fire marshals to post the capacity of people allowed in the businesses based on the square footage of the location. If businesses don't follow the rules it can lead to social resistance. I wanted to put forth the idea to Chief Jenkins and our fire marshal division.

Councilor Rickenmann said there is some confusion about the capacity allowed in businesses. I think we need to get clarity for people to avoid confusion. We need to get more information for folks so they can adhere to the guidelines.

Councilor Devine said instead of us taking the responsibility of posting allowed capacities in stores we can suggest to require the stores to post it themselves based on the guidelines given. If they want to stay open, they can require the stores to post signs with the regulations and allowed capacity.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ryan Orr, City of Columbia resident asked for clarification on the expiration date of the stay home, stay safe ordinance.

Mayor Benjamin said the ordinance was authorized for 14 days from the day it was passed. That will be two weeks ago today. In order for our citizens to adjust we delayed the enforcement. The ordinance will expire today.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

3. Receipt of legal advice related to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2) – *Withdrawn*

Legal advice pertaining to COVID-19 and City operations



We Are Columbia

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ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore, CMC
City Clerk