

**CHAPIN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday November 10, 2022
4:00 p.m.**

Town Hall

Members Present: Mayor Al Koon, Mayor Pro Tempore Mike Clonts, Council Member Vicky Shealy, Council Member Gregg White

Members Absent: Council Member Leland Teal

Staff Present: Town Administrator Nicholle Burroughs, Police Chief Thomas Griffin, Director of Finance Laura Culler, Director of Utilities Karalyn Miskie, and Town Clerk Shannon Bowers

Call to Order: Mayor Koon called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Mayor Koon then determined there was a quorum and acknowledged the appropriate notifications in compliance with the SC Freedom of Information Act had been met.

Public Comments Related to Agenda Items

There were no public comments

Request for Action

Design Implementation For Dog Park

Administrator Burroughs explained in 2016, the Town of Chapin hired RB Todd Consulting Engineer and Grimball Cotterill to create a Chapin Town Hall Park Rendering to demonstrate the full plans for the Chapin Town Hall property, which included a dog park. Council was presented with information from a public member and business owner regarding the community desire for a dog park in 2021. Council directed staff to move forward with the creation of a dog park, but did not appropriate funds at that time. Initial costs estimate the creation of a dog park to be approximately \$637,500. At the same time, an economic development project was presented and staff has been able to leverage a possible funding source through that opportunity, but will need Council approval to move forward. If Council prioritized the design implementation of a dog park, staff is requesting \$15,000 to \$20,000 would be requested to start the design process.

Council questioned the design, cost, maintenance, community interest, safety, and financial impact of a dog park. Administrator Burroughs noted that the Irmo/Chapin Recreation Commission had a dog park as a highly desirable item on their strategic plan, but no immediate plans for a dog park at either Melvin Park or Crooked Creek Park have been indicated. She noted that through research, the liability for a dog park is minimal if the proper safety protocols are followed. She also noted that funds from the oyster roast were designated for a dog park, and if Council desired not to move forward, those funds would need to be donated to an organization for the use of a dog park. Mayor Koon indicated that he will be scheduling strategic planning sessions and would like to move the discussion about a dog park to those sessions.

Council Member White made the motion to direct staff to prioritize the economic development project and do not move forward with the implementation of the dog park at this time. Council Member Shealy seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Al Koon: Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Mike Clonts: Yes

Council Member Vicky Shealy: Yes
Council Member Gregg White: Yes

Presentation: Tarpon Towers

Brett Buggeln with Tarpon Towers presented information on a communications tower to locate in the Town of Chapin. Located in Florida, Tarpon Towers has approximately 500 towers, to date with around 150 of them located in the southeastern United States. They have been in business for 15 years, and currently lease ground from 37 municipalities. They then spoke to the coverage in the Town of Chapin, and through research and surveying, have identified the areas around Town Hall and closest to the center of town to have little cell signal. The communications tower would be a 150-foot mono pole (least intrusive, rather than a self-support pole), Tarpon Towers would lease ground space from the Town (minimum of 30 years, maximum of 50 years), and they recruit tenants for the towers. The benefit to the Town would be in the ground lease from Tarpon Towers and business license fees for the tenants that rent the tower. They will also provide regular maintenance on the pole and will provide appropriate screening based on local regulations. Cell service and service to emergency services greatly improves for areas with little service.

Request for Action

Indigent Defense: Administrator Burroughs explained the direction needed from Council regarding indigent defense. The Town of Chapin has an obligation to provide indigent persons charged with municipal code offenses by the Town police, speedy and efficient access to a Public Defender. The Town traditionally maintained a list of several defenders for use where appropriate. Under the former Mayor, an evaluation of the fee the Town offered for this service was conducted. Based on the rates other municipalities were compensating their Public Defenders, a decision was made to lower the available rate for the Town. Over time this made it difficult to obtain efficient access to Public Defenders. In benchmarking other municipalities, a possible solution arose of issuing a standard contract for representational services. Administrator Burroughs stated this would be within the Mayor's powers to execute, but staff needed direction from Council to proceed. She complimented and thanked Director Culler, Municipal Court Clerk Bri Eargle, and Town Attorney Lisa Smith on the work they did to identify this problem, research other municipality practices, and provide an acceptable solution.

Council Member White moved to direct the Administrator to proceed with issuing an RFP to contract for indigent defense counsel. Mayor Pro Tem Clonts seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Al Koon:	Yes	Council Member Vicky Shealy:	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Mike Clonts:	Yes	Council Member Gregg White:	Yes

Executive Session

Mayor Pro Tem Clonts moved to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations with Tarpon Towers pursuant to SC Code section 30-4-70 (a)(2). Council Member Shealy seconded the motion. Council entered executive session at 4:43 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Clonts moved to return to open session. Council Member Shealy seconded the motion. Council returned to open session at 5:06 p.m.

Council Member Shealy made the motion to allow staff to proceed with contract negotiations with Tarpon Towers for the development of a communications tower. Council Member White seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Al Koon:	Yes	Council Member Vicky Shealy:	Yes
Mayor Pro Tem Mike Clonts:	Yes	Council Member Gregg White:	Yes

Town Administrator Comments

Administrator Burroughs briefed council on items that will be forthcoming, to include: 3 open positions – 2 utility maintenance technicians, communications specialist, and police officer, purchase of a new Tahoe for the police department. Funds remaining will be added to the general reserve funds. She also reported that two new utility billing clerks will be starting in the next few weeks and a water main break in the Timberlake area happened earlier in the day and those residents are currently under a boil water advisory. She also informed Council that, with the help of Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative, the Town's Christmas decorations will be going up soon, with a 20ft tree installed at the park next to the railroad tracks at Lexington Avenue.

Adjournment: Mayor Pro Tem Clonts made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member White seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

COUNCIL APPROVED: _____

Albert R Koon, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST: _____

Shannon Bowers, Town Clerk