

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL
MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2021

11:30 AM

CHAIRMAN

JASON STEEN

VICE CHAIR
ADMINISTRATOR
CLERK TO COUNCIL
COUNTY ATTORNEY

CORRIE PLATO
RON MUNNERLYN
PATRICIA BUNDY
ANDREW MCLEOD

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN
CHARLES P. MIDGLEY, JR.
KENNETH STROMAN
STEVE BLACKMON, AND

DR. DAMIEN JOHNSON
CORRIE H. PLATO
VERD ODOM
ANTHONY WOODS

- Absent

Others Present: Ms. Doris Sumpter, Administrative Services Director; Mr. Doug Carabo, Public Services Director; Mr. Wes Park, Finance Director; and Ms. Jacqueline Hough, of the Herald-Advocate.

A copy of the agenda was emailed to Ms. Jacqueline Hough of the Herald Advocate and posted on the front door of the William P. Wallace, Sr. Administration Building and on the county's website (www.marlbocounty.sc.gov).

INVOCATION – Mr. Anthony Woods

APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS

Motion made by Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., seconded by Mr. Anthony Woods, to approve the agenda as presented. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION # 11-21-01 – A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MARLBORO COUNTY TO ACQUIRE AND/OR PURCHASE PROPERTIES LOCATED IN MARLBORO COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK IN BENNETTSVILLE, SC

Mr. Jason Steen, Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this Resolution.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated copies of plats and maps were included in the agenda packets in section 2. He stated this Resolution would authorize staff to swap or exchange a piece of property located in the Marlboro County Industrial Park containing approximately 1.06 acres. He stated this parcel was a portion of the property which the County had previously agreed to provide to Industrial Performance Partners, Inc. at no charge for an expansion and this parcel would be exchanged for two tracts totaling approximately 1 acre. He stated the 1-acre tract would be sold to a company for an economic development project. He stated the Ordinance authorizing the sale would be included on the agenda for third reading and public hearing at the December 6, 2021 Council meeting.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated the second part of the Resolution would authorize staff to purchase a tract of land located near the convenience store so that improvements could be made to the entrance of the industrial park. He stated the Resolution also serves as a budget amendment authorizing the use of economic development funds for the purchase price of the property, as well as the costs incurred to include attorney's fees, surveying costs and site cleanup.

Mr. Anthony Woods asked if more information would be provided at the final reading with respect to the amount of funds needed for the project. Mr. Munnerlyn stated the purchase could be authorized by Resolution but the sale of any properties owned by Marlboro County has to be handled by Ordinance and the Ordinance was scheduled for third reading on December 6. He stated the purchase price for the tract of land near the convenience store was \$85,000.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked how much acreage the tract contained that was being considered for purchase. Mr. Munnerlyn stated the tract being considered for purchased contained about 6 acres.

Chairman Steen asked if there were any other questions or comments. There were none.

Motion made by Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., seconded by Mr. Anthony Woods, to approve Resolution # 11-21-01 – a Resolution Authorizing Marlboro County to Acquire and/or Purchase Properties Located in the Marlboro County Industrial Park in Bennettsville, SC. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

ACCEPTANCE OF BIDS

MARLBORO COUNTY EXTERNAL DIGITAL SIGN

Mr. Jason Steen, Chairman, recognized Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, to make comments on this item.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated proposals for the external digital sign were requested and staff received five proposals. He stated members of staff judged the proposals on seven different factors. He stated Mr. Doug Carabo and Mr. Steve Akers reviewed the proposals and ranked Stewart Signs as the highest. He stated staff would recommend that Council accept the proposal from Stewart Signs to purchase two signs which would be within the amount authorized by Council. He stated Council amended the budget to include \$60,000 for the purchase of a digital sign and it may be that the County could purchase two signs for that amount.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked if the sign design was available. Mr. Munnerlyn stated it is and it is like the ones Mr. Stroman had reviewed earlier.

Mr. Stroman asked if the sign was digital and could it be controlled off site. Mr. Munnerlyn stated it was digital and could be controlled remotely. Mr. Munnerlyn stated the lead time on this type of sign is 12-14 weeks, but Stewart Signs has advised that it could be delivered sooner.

Dr. Damien Johnson asked if they could review the sample of the sign. Mr. Munnerlyn stated they could share the sample copy with members of Council, but it was the same type of digital sign that was initially shared.

Mr. Stroman asked if was possible to put a face and message on the sign. Mr. Munnerlyn stated the sign would be able to display video and graphics.

Chairman Steen asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

Motion made by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, seconded by Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., to approve the recommendation of staff to award the bid to Stewart Signs in the amount of \$32,663 and approval to purchase two signs within the approved budget amount of \$60,000. Vote in favor: Mr. Jason Steen, Mr. Charles P. Midgley, Jr., Ms. Corrie Plato, Mr. Kenneth Stroman, Mr. Steve Blackmon, and Mr. Anthony Woods. Opposed: None. Abstained: Dr. Damien Johnson. Vote: 5/0/1. Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

REDISTRICTING PROCESS INTRODUCTION – MR. FRANK RAINWATER, SC REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

November 22, 2021, County Council Meeting

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, County Administrator, introduced Mr. Frank Rainwater, Executive Director, and Mr. Paul Athey, Mapping and Operations Division Director, of the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office.

Mr. Frank Rainwater thanked Council for allowing him the opportunity to work with Marlboro County on their redistricting. He stated his office has done this for several years. He stated he would discuss two important things today (1) the process; and (2) the criteria. He stated there were some decisions that Council members would need to make.

Mr. Rainwater stated a copy of his report was included in the agenda packet and he would provide some highlights.

Councilman Verd Odom arrived at the meeting at 12 noon.

Mr. Rainwater stated the population of Marlboro County has decreased 7.83%. He stated based on recent court decisions, the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office recommends excluding the prison population of 2,558 to better reflect 'one person, one vote'. He stated in the past, the redistricting was subject to preclearance from the Department of Justice, but that requirement has now been removed. He stated the good part is you are on your own but are a little more at risk. He stated you need to make sure we identify all the key factors in the process.

Mr. Rainwater mentioned the first requirement of 'one person, one vote' under the Equal Projection Clause of the 14th Amendment. He stated it was important for everybody's voice to be the same. He stated it was important for each district to have the same number of residents so that all votes are the same. He stated this does not need to be perfect.

Mr. Rainwater mentioned the 2020 Census Benchmark Report and stated the ideal number of residents in each district should be 3,014. He stated there was a deviation range of 16.29% which is above the maximum range of 10%. He stated the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office recommends a deviation range of 5%. He stated Districts 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 must give up some folks. He stated Districts 1 and 2 need to give up the most and need to be added to Districts 4, 5 and 8. He stated these numbers exclude the prison population to avoid prison gerrymandering concerns. He stated the final decision to include or exclude the prison population was at the discretion of council.

Mr. Rainwater mentioned that we must follow Section 2 criteria of the Voting Rights Act, and we cannot use race as a predominant factor. He stated Marlboro County was about half white and half black so that should not be an issue.

Mr. Rainwater stated there were factors that Council should consider: (1) Districts should be drawn contiguously so that all parts of the district are connected to each other; (2) Districts should be drawn to minimize the division of voting precincts; (3) Districts should be geographically compact to the extent practicable, so that nearby areas of population are not bypassed for a more distant population; (4) Districts should be drawn to comply with other

application court decisions and federal and state laws; and (5) Districts should be drawn when possible with respect to existing districts and communities of interests, which will require input from Council and the citizens.

Mr. Rainwater stated the bottom line is you must tell us where to move the folks from the districts that have too many residents.

Mr. Rainwater stated that was the end of his presentation. He asked if there were any questions.

Chairman Steen thanked Mr. Rainwater for the overview. He stated some of the Council members dealt with redistricting a few years ago but there were a couple on Council that were new. He asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Anthony Woods stated the information was much and very thorough. He asked if they needed a representative from Council to have a representative to negotiate the split?

Mr. Rainwater stated it would be good to have an initial contact but they had until summer. He stated he felt it was important to have all of this done by the middle of March in time for the primary election filings. He stated one person needs to give us the information and once we have a plan, we can share it.

Mr. Kenneth Stroman asked if Council could come up with their own plan and provide to him. He asked if he was the only contact, they would be working with on this. Mr. Rainwater stated his office does this as a service and he does not get paid any more or less if the county uses their office to assist in this process. He stated the county could handle themselves if they have a good GIS department. He stated his office has done this for 40 years.

Mr. Stroman mentioned that Mr. Rainwater had stated that the prison population was taken out, but could he be sure it was just the prison inmates. Mr. Rainwater stated that census block was taken out and he felt that was just inmates but could not say for sure.

Dr. Damien Johnson stated he felt Council needed to hear from different perspectives. He stated he was concerned because he felt the numbers are different on other reports that are out there. He suggested County Council do their due diligence and make sure we look at all aspects.

Chairman Steen stated the numbers presented by Mr. Rainwater came from the actual census.

Mr. Munnerlyn asked Mr. Rainwater if he could provide them with a copy of the census blocks with the number of residents in each block. Mr. Rainwater stated they could do that, but we could also pull from their website.

Dr. Johnson stated it was obvious that the lines will need to be changed but the county is broken up and we need to take this process with proof and fidelity and do the right thing.

Mr. Rainwater stated he was a professional, not an attorney. He stated it was Council's plan and if anyone gets sued, it will be the council or county.

Mr. Verd Odom stated we had 113 days from filing for re-election and asked what the final timeline was to adopt the new lines. Mr. Rainwater stated Council should adopt an Ordinance in title only in December, if possible. He stated the Ordinance would require three readings and a public hearing. He stated Council would want to have a rough plan for the second reading and the final plan for the 3rd and final reading.

Mr. Odom asked if it needed to be finalized by June. Mr. Rainwater stated it really needed to be finalized by March for election filings. He stated it would take his staff two weeks to provide feedback once information is presented to them.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated he would do what Council asks him to do. He stated he felt we needed copies of the census blocks so that they may reviewed. Mr. Rainwater stated they would provide the website link for the census blocks, and we could have them printed.

Dr. Johnson stated he felt Council needed other perspectives as well. He stated we need to do our due diligence.

Chairman Steen stated Mr. Rainwater has provided guidelines on the process. He stated copies of the census maps will be obtained and copies made for everyone to review. He stated once we have the maps in hand, we can all look at them together and share our thoughts.

Dr. Johnson stated the interpretation could be different.

Mr. Woods stated there was only one map.

Ms. Corrie Plato stated she felt we should get the maps and then review and discuss. She stated we could discuss this all day but until we have a map to look at and discuss, we will get nowhere.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that Mr. Rainwater is the mechanic. He stated we will provide him with information, and he will come up with a plan based on what we give him. He stated the facts are the facts.

Mr. Woods stated we only had a limited amount of time and there was a lot of to be done. He suggested we view the maps and we all can chime in. He stated at the end of the day, it is up to Council as a team to do the best we can do. He stated this is a big decision. We know that we can be ok to disagree. He stated we needed to get started as soon as possible.

Mr. Rainwater stated he understood that the School Board folks will use these same district lines. He stated he has all the addresses for Council members as well as the School Board members.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated he felt there was some interest in bringing someone else in to do this work. He stated the numbers are the census numbers. He stated Council will need to decide who they would like to assist us with this process. He stated he would work on getting maps printed for all Council members to review.

Mr. Woods asked if we needed a vote or if any action needed to be taken on this today. Chairman Steen stated someone would need to get things going. Mr. Munnerlyn stated a vote was needed.

Dr. Johnson stated he did not have all perspectives on this. He stated he was certain that Mr. Rainwater was very efficient with what he does. He stated he felt more information was needed.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated public hearings will be held and Council will provide Mr. Rainwater their input. He stated Mr. Rainwater will not be attending any public hearings on this but will wait for our input and draft new lines based on our input.

Mr. Stroman stated this process was important and new to the African community. He stated the process may be different, but he wanted this Council to be fair not just for Council but for everyone in the county.

Chairman Steen stated we must start from somewhere.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated he would get the census tract maps and schedule a meeting for Districts 1 and 2 and then work on other districts.

Mr. Odom stated it was important to keep the districts compacted and not skip around. He stated there would be some give and take involved for everyone.

Chairman Steen stated it was a complicated process.

Dr. Johnson stated he did not feel that Council should move too quickly. He stated he wanted to make sure it's done correctly. He stated he was not concerned about re-election, but he wanted the lines drawn fairly. He stated it was important for folks to know who their Council members are without any question.

Chairman Steen stated that would be up for Council to decide.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated Bennettsville is a tough area. He stated you go into Richardson Park, and it gets tough. He stated he would get Council members copies of large maps so they can begin looking at them.

Mr. Woods suggested a meeting after the Thanksgiving holiday. He asked if a work session was needed.

November 22, 2021, County Council Meeting

Motion made by Mr. Kenneth Stroman, seconded by Ms. Corrie Plato, to have Mr. Frank Rainwater of the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office assist Council with the redistricting process. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

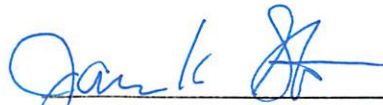
There were no non-agenda items.

ADJOURN

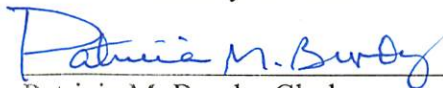
Mr. Jason Steen, Chairman, asked if there were any other comments or business. There being none, he adjourned the meeting at 12:49 pm.

(SEAL)

ATTEST:



Jason K. Steen, Chairman
Marlboro County Council



Patricia M. Bundy, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: December 6, 2021