

**CITY OF NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH MYRTLE BEACH CITY HALL
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, February 1, 2021, 7:00 PM**

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Hatley called the meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Marilyn Hatley
JO Baldwin
Fred Coyne
Nicole Fontana
Hank Thomas
Terry White, Absent

A quorum was established.

Mayor Hatley asked the City Manager to deliver the invocation.

The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. MINUTES:

The motion to approve the minutes for the City Council Meeting of Monday, January 4, 2021 and the Special Called City Council Meeting of Wednesday, January 27, 2021, as presented, was made by Councilwoman Fontana and seconded by Councilman Coyne. The motion to approve passed 5-0.

3. COMMUNICATIONS:

Mayor Hatley stated that the Departmental Monthly Reports for December 2020 were available online.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL:

Mayor Hatley thanked Tom Keegan, from Representative Tom Rice's office, for being at the meeting.

5. CONSENT AGENDA: None

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. **ORDINANCE/FIRST READING:** Amend the Code of Ordinances of the City of North Myrtle Beach for Gender Neutral Language. Mayor Hatley read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. The motion to approve was made by Councilwoman Fontana and seconded by Councilman Thomas. Mayor Hatley motioned she would like to change the wording from gender neutral to gender inclusive. She stated there were many reasons why the City needed to make this change, because there were many women in leadership roles, lady firefighters, and lady police officers. She considered this house cleaning; cleaning up wording that was in the older ordinances. The motion to accept the changed wording was seconded by Councilwoman Fontana. The motion to accept the changed wording was approved 5-0.

Mayor Hatley opened the floor for public comment.

Kenneth Oliver, 1805 24th Avenue North, North Myrtle Beach, stated he moved to the area from Long Island, NY where he was a police officer for 23 years. He moved down here for several

reasons; he loved the culture, the people, the manners, and God was kept in everything. He ran away from the liberal state of New York. He did not understand why this was necessary. It created more confusion. In respect to applications, would they all be thrown out? Mayor Hatley asked Manager Mahaney to address the question, since it was Staff that brought this change to their attention. Manager Mahaney stated he was not aware of any applications that would need to be changed and asked Tammy O'Berry, Director of Human Resources. Mr. Noury stepped in to clarify that the language was only to correct the Code of Ordinances, not any other forms or applications that may exist now. Mr. Oliver inquired if the changes that were listed online would be all or if there would be more. Mr. Noury stated those were the only changes to be made and it would only apply to the Code of Ordinances. Mr. Oliver wanted to know if there was going to have to be reprinted documents or if another job was going to have to be created. Manager Mahaney stated this was done by a computer through Municode, a national company that maintains the Code of Ordinances for municipalities. Mr. Noury stated the City would not have to hire someone to do this, but Municode would make the changes on behalf of the City. Mr. Oliver asked what created the need for this. Mayor Hatley stated it was house cleaning of the Code of Ordinances and the Council was doing what was recommended by Staff and Manager Mahaney stated it was recommended by Municode.

Emily Florio, 516 Hillside Drive, North Myrtle Beach, inquired who was bothered by the language and complaining about it. She stated the intention of house cleaning was to remove clutter, but this was adding clutter. Mayor Hatley asked why it would bother her that he/her was added. Ms. Florio stated she was paying taxes and it was the language she lived with. It hasn't bothered her before and it bothers her that it has to be changed. She stated we didn't need to change it and maybe the people wanted a Republican kind government. Mayor Hatley stated this was not political; left or right. Councilwoman Fontana stated it was recognizing a woman in position. Ms. Florio stated we were recognized before. Councilwoman Fontana stated there were a lot of new firefighters that are women, new police officers that are women, and a Mayor that has been in that position for years and is referred to as 'him.' Councilwoman Fontana also stated she has been referred to as a councilman, which she takes as offensive and corrects them. Ms. Florio stated it didn't bother her, because it was the state of South Carolina and this was a step in the wrong direction. Mayor Hatley stated she believed people were reading too much into the ordinance and it didn't have anything to do with politics. Ms. Florio stated it had to do with language. Mayor Hatley stated she was a very conservative person and didn't see the harm in adding 'her.' Ms. Florio stated she didn't understand the difference between neutral and inclusive. Mayor Hatley stated if it's neutral, it's not recognizing anyone. She stated they were trying to include both genders. Ms. Florio stated when the word inclusive was used, it means you are trying to include all the 78 genders. Mayor Hatley stated the ordinance would only include his/her. Manager Mahaney stated an example would be chairman to chairperson. Councilwoman Fontana stated it was not political, but housekeeping that was recommended to the City by Municode. Ms. Florio stated in the House of Representatives they end their prayer with amen and 'awomen.' Mayor Hatley stated that amen was not related to gender and this is not what the Council was doing. Ms. Florio stated that was the direction this would lead to. Councilman Baldwin stated when the terms were made, there were not many women as firefighters, etc. This is not politics, but respect. Councilman Thomas agreed it was a matter of respect and could keep the City from a future lawsuit. Mayor Hatley stated they were only trying to clean the ordinances up and this had nothing to do with our faith or trust in God. Ms. Florio stated it was a waste of time and tax dollars should not be used on this issue.

Having no further comment from the Council or public, Mayor Hatley called for a vote. The motion to approve passed 5-0.

- B. ORDINANCE/FIRST READING: Petition for annexation and zoning designation for 0.28 acres on 1st Avenue South. Mayor Hatley read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilwoman Fontana. Mayor

Hatley explained this designation would be R-1, single-family residential. Having no further comment from the Council or public, Mayor Hatley called for a vote. The motion to approve passed 5-0.

- C. **ORDINANCE/FIRST READING:** Petition for annexation and zoning designation for 0.36 acres on Cenith Drive. Mayor Hatley read the ordinance by title and called for a motion. The motion to approve was made by Councilman Coyne and seconded by Councilwoman Fontana. Mayor Hatley explained this designation would be R-1, single-family residential. Having no further comment from the Council or public, Mayor Hatley called for a vote. The motion to approve passed 5-0.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

9. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Hatley thanked everyone for coming and asked Cheryl Kilday, President/CEO of Destination NMB, how the Chamber was doing. Ms. Kilday stated the Chamber was doing very well. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Allison K. Galbreath, Clerk to Council

MARILYN HATLEY, MAYOR

Minutes approved and adopted this 1st day of March 2021.