



### ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

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OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR  
WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA

September 30, 2022

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### **Preparing for the Downtown Master Plan Consultant - Planning Advisory Committee**

The City of Westminster was recently awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to develop a Downtown Master Plan. The ARC awarded the grant to develop a downtown master plan to guide the City of Westminster in making strategic investments to revitalize its central business district. The plan will provide guidance for catalyst projects including Main Street streetscape, conceptual ideas for the reuse of a former school site, and the re-imagination of a sloped area that connects the downtown to an adjacent neighborhood. ARC funds will be used to procure a consultant to develop this plan.

The grant award included utilizing a Planning Advisory Committee. This Committee is intended to provide general guidance to the planning consultant and to be available to provide input on draft iterations as the plan is developed. Eight to twelve members from the community is ideal. The time commitment is about 16 hours total over the next 5-7 months, most meetings in the evenings with a few possible during the daytime.

*City Council is asked to begin considering names for appointment to the Planning Advisory Committee so the Committee may be appointed at the October 11, 2022 City Council Meeting.* Drawing upon those already in service on the Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Recreation Planning Committee is advisable as well as including others not currently on a committee or commission.

#### **Westminster Recreation Homecoming (September 24, 2022)**

Westminster Rec football players or cheerleaders were eligible to participate in the annual Westminster Rec Homecoming. Participants chose their escorts and were recognized in a special ceremony. This year was the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Homecoming (the first since 2019 due to COVID). Participants raised more than \$13,000, the largest amount in recent memory. Several awards were given including, Mr. and Mrs. Congeniality (voted on by the participants), Homecoming King and Queen runner-up and the Homecoming King and Queen. The King and Queen were determined by the participants who raise the most money in support of their titles. The funds raised support the operations Westminster Rec. By the numbers: 17 participants in 8 and under category; 16 participants in the 12 and under category.

#### **Fiscal Year 2022 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report – also known as the Annual Audit**

This week auditors from the independent accounting firm McKinley, Cooper & Co., LLC were on site at City Hall to conduct *fieldwork* related to the completion of the FY2022 annual audit. The auditors evaluated an assortment of financial documents, financial software reports and other randomly announced, surprise inspections of the City's finances. Once the auditors complete their analysis of the financials for fiscal year 2022, the financial audit report will be prepared and presented to the City Council. The public and Council should expect delivery of the audit report at either the November 2022 or December 2022 City Council Meeting.

#### **Flock Camera System – quick success**

City Council approved the purchase and installation of a Flock Camera System for the Westminster Police Department. Since implementing this system the Police Department is able to interface with other law enforcement agencies across the region and, in real time, pinpoint the location of vehicles that may be of interest to law enforcement.

During the month of September 2022 Westminster Police Department had two (2) Flock Cameras installed on Hwy 123. The license plate reader cameras that have the ability and technology to read a vehicle's license plate as it travels past the camera. These cameras are also linked in to the National Crime Information Center which manages stolen property, missing persons, etc. The system sends alerts to officers when a vehicle passes by that has a stolen license plate, is a stolen vehicle, a missing person's vehicle, AMBER alert etc. On Saturday September 24 an employee at Ingles reported their license plate was stolen off of their vehicle while it was in the parking lot. Westminster PD units began an investigation however we did not have any leads to follow at that point. On Sunday September 25th the Flock Camera system notified Westminster PD units that the tag stolen from Ingles was on Hwy 123. On-duty units located the vehicle at Spinx. The license plate was recovered at that time and the suspect charged.

### **Credit Card Fees**

At the September 12, 2022 City Council Meeting, the Council approved a resolution to pass through the fees charged by credit card companies to the users of credit cards. The resolution provided for an effective date of October 10, 2022 or as soon thereafter as can be effectively arranged.

Staff has conducted additional research on the matter and spoken with the City's utility billing software provider and reports the following.

- Credit card use policies provide specific rules for passing fees though to the customer;
- The utility billing software provider is developing its software to allow for the collection of whatever fees are permissible by the credit card companies;
- The utility billing software provider is working on various other improvements which will enhance financial accountability within the billing reconciliation process;
- The anticipated roll-out date of the improvements listed above is end-of-March 2023
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With this new information, the current practice of absorbing the credit card fees will continue through the implementation of the improved software installation. This is expected to take place in March 2023.

### **UPDATE: South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP)**

In the September 16, 2022 City Administrator Report the following was provided.

City staff and City Engineer applied for the 2022 SCIIP Grant Program for \$4,911,475. The project areas are shown on the attached map. The project summary:

*Construction of approximately 980 Linear Feet (LR) of 10" sewer collection lines and 7,430 LF 8" sewer collection lines, SDR38 PVC gravity mains, 39 manholes, 29 service reconnections to replace old problematic sewer mains.*

The SC Rural Infrastructural Authority (RIA) is administering the SCIIP Grants. The RIA is expected to make award notices between January-March 2023.

Update: Following the grant application deadline, the SC RIA published information that it received requests for nearly three (3) times more money than it has available to distribute. While there was not a guarantee of funding to begin with, this information sheds a new light on the competitiveness of the program.

*from SC RIA:*

*309 all applications*

*\$2 billion in all grant requests*

*\$738 million in competitive funds available*

*\$100 million for special economic projects*

## **Westminster Planning Commission**

The joint work session for the City Council and Planning Commission will be re-scheduled in October, date and time to be announced soon.

### OJRSA

Nothing to report.

### PMPA

Nothing to report.

### PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Cancelled and to be rescheduled:** September 29, 2022 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm Joint Meeting of the Westminster City Council and Westminster Planning Commission at the Depot (The Wetmore Law Firm to discuss zoning ordinance updates)

October 3, 2022 at 4:00 pm OJRSA Board Meeting at OJRSA

October 5, 2022 at 1:00-4:30 pm – Planning and Zoning Officials Training (provided by ACOG) at the Depot

October 6, 2022 at 6:30pm - Special Events Meeting at the Depot

**October 11, 2022 at 6:00 pm City Council Meeting at the Westminster Fire Department**

October 17, 2022 at 4:00 pm OJRSA Finance and Administration Committee Meeting at OJRSA

October 19, 2022 at 4:00 pm OJRSA Operations and Planning Committee Meeting at OJRSA

**November 8, 2022 at 6:00 pm City Council Meeting at the Westminster Fire Department**

November 10, 2022 at 6:30pm - Special Events Meeting at the Depot

November 11, 2022 - City Holiday – City Offices closed in observance of Veterans Day

December 1, 2022 at 6:30pm - Special Events Meeting at the Depot

**December 13, 2022 at 6:00 pm City Council Meeting at the Westminster Fire Department**

### Special Events Calendar (events scheduled for downtown)

October 7, 2022 – 5:00 – 10:00 pm - First Friday Music in the Park - Retreat Street Park\*

October 14-15, 2022 - Bigfoot Festival

October 29, 2022 – Music on Main – *The Grateful Brothers (classic rock)*

October 31, 2022 - Trick on Retreat

November 26, 2022 - Small-Business Saturday

November 28, 2022 - Christmas Window Reveal

December 2, 2022 at 6:30pm - Christmas Parade "West Who-Ville" theme, Tree Lighting to follow in Retreat Street Park

\*First Friday Music in the Park - Retreat Street Park | organizer: Reggie Dion, The Upper District