

Council Connect: Camden Council Advances Property Proposals, Hears Residents on Street Safety and Trees

At its Sept. 22 meeting, Council recognized Constitution Week, considered plans for several properties and heard from residents about Halloween traffic and the care of Camden's trees.

Mayor Vincent Sheheen presented a proclamation recognizing Sept. 17 through 23 as Constitution Week. Kathryn Watkins, vice regent of the Hobkirk Hill Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, accepted it on the chapter's behalf.

Council also gave first reading of a proposal to rezone property at 1009 Rippondon Street. The proposal will require another reading before it can be final.

A separate proposal involving 1008 Broad Street also received first reading. Becky Rodgers, owner of Camden Jewelers, described plans to renovate the building. Under the Bailey Bill, the property's pre-improvement tax assessment could be locked in as an incentive to rehabilitate the historically significant building. The proposal requires another reading before it can take effect.

A plan to give Little Midget restaurant space for a new drive-through exit passed its first reading. City Manager Matt DeWitt said customers currently exit through neighboring property, but that route would no longer be available after redevelopment of the new Midtown property. The land would return to the City if the new exit is not built.

Artist Colt Shirley presented a revised concept for a metal mural being considered at the Revolutionary War Visitor Center. The mural would feature painted images depicting a Revolutionary War timeline. After discussing its size and cost, Council carried the decision over so Shirley could provide a budget update.

With Halloween falling on a Saturday this year, Fair Street resident Lisa Moore asked the City to consider temporarily limiting traffic on part of the street during trick-or-treating. She said Fair Street draws a large number of children even when Halloween falls on a weeknight, and she worries about the volume of vehicles among them. Moore said neighbors support her request.

William Browning of Horse & Hound gave Council an update on the event scheduled for Sept. 26 and 27, including its regional promotion, equine activities, and dock diving competition. He thanked the City and its fire department for their support.

The recent removal of two large trees prompted comments about how the City evaluates trees. Former City urban forester Liz Gilland spoke about the trees' significance and encouraged continued tree planting. Bob Williams, chairman of the Camden Parks and Trees Commission, said he would like to be involved in these decisions when possible.

DeWitt said the City evaluates trees before removing them and sought an additional assessment from the South Carolina Forestry Commission for the trees discussed. He said falling limbs had raised safety concerns and that the liability was far too great not to address these problem trees.

He also noted the City's planting efforts and reminded residents that a free tree giveaway will be held Oct. 10, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at City Hall.

Council also approved requests to allow alcoholic beverages at the Hero Fest Motorcycle Ride After Party and the Southern Gothic Festival Downtown Concert. Before the meeting ended, Mayor Sheheen shared compliments the City had received about staff members' work with a downtown business and the City's enforcement of building and code violations.

Agendas, approved minutes, meeting dates, and additional information are available at www.experiencecamdensc.com.