

BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING – July 18, 2024

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were mailed to all members of Council, County Attorney Richard Ness, Lower Savannah COG, *The Bamberg Leader*, *The Times and Democrat*, SouthernCarolina Regional Alliance, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website, Bamberg County Courthouse Annex and a copy posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the County Courthouse.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 1:00 p.m., July 18, 2024 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside livestreaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Spencer Donaldson, Phil Myers, Larry Haynes and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Absent:** Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Alisha Moore, Fredy Madrid and one additional guest. *Bamberg County Leader* representative.

Bamberg County Council Special Called meeting was called to order by Chairman Evert Comer, Jr. at 1:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Larry Haynes, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Chairman Comer called for public comments on an ordinance to certify the Rockland Industries Property as a Textile Mill Site under the South Carolina Textiles Communities Revitalization Act. No public comments were made

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Dr. Goodman, II, council gave third and final reading to an ordinance to certify the Rockland Industries Property as a Textile Mill Site under the South Carolina Textiles Communities Revitalization Act. Gibbs International Special Projects and International Business Development representative Fredy Madrid was present and expressed gratitude to Bamberg County for partnering with Gibbs to enhance economic development, which will positively impact the entire community. He said the project is progressing and they will announce more details in the future. Under SCTCRA, a tax incentive may be granted by local governments for the “rehabilitation, renovation, and redevelopment of abandoned South Carolina textile mill sites.” According to the Act, abandoned textile mill sites have “resulted in the disruption of communities and increased the cost of local governments by requiring additional police and fire services, posing safety concerns,” and they have caused a decline in the value of private investments and real estate. Restoring the textile mill sites to productive assets will benefit both the public and corporate sectors by potentially increasing job opportunities and nearby property values. Furthermore, the redevelopment of abandoned textile mills will restore the “sound growth and the tax base of taxing districts in these areas.”

Chairman Comer said that adopting this ordinance is the first step in transforming the old mill site into something new. Councilwoman Sharon Hammond said she is “excited that Gibbs International will develop the former Rockland property and looks forward to it once again enhancing economic growth and stability in Bamberg County.” Councilman Dr. Jonathan Goodman thanked Mr. Madrid for attending the meeting and Gibbs International for investing in Bamberg County: “Thank you for seeing the potential in this property, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial partnership with Gibbs.” Councilman Spencer Donaldson stated, “We always welcome new industrial development in Bamberg County and believe with continued partnerships like this one with Gibbs, we have a bright and prosperous future.” County Administrator Joey Preston emphasized the importance of the mill site’s

July 18, 2024....continue

restoration: “Rehabilitating this property will benefit nearby property owners by increasing property value and can ultimately lead to more job creation. It will also save the County resources spent monitoring the overall safety of the area.”

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council