

COUNCIL CHAMBER

Regular Meeting

February 23, 2016

The fifth meeting of the City Council of Charleston was held this date convening at 5:00 p.m. at the City Hall.

A notice of this meeting and an agenda were mailed to the news media February 17, 2016 and appeared in The Post and Courier February 21, 2016 and are made available on the City's website.

PRESENT (13)

The Honorable John J. Tecklenburg, Mayor

Councilmember White	District 1	Councilmember Waring	District 7
Councilmember Williams	District 2	Councilmember Seekings	District 8
Councilmember Lewis	District 3	Councilmember Shahid	District 9
Councilmember Mitchell	District 4	Councilmember Riegel	District 10
Councilmember Wagner	District 5	Councilmember Moody	District 11
Councilmember Gregorie	District 6	Councilmember Wilson	District 12

Mayor Tecklenburg called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

The Clerk called the roll.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Councilmember Moody, can I call on you for the invocation and to lead us in the Pledge, please?"

Councilmember Moody opened the meeting with an invocation.

Councilmember Moody then led City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. We will now have a presentation by the Lowcountry Food Bank, which will be given by Sarah Pinson, the Agency Relations Manager, and Chris Moken, who is also with the Lowcountry Food Bank. Would you all please proceed?"

Councilmember White was excused from the Chamber at 5:43 p.m.

Sarah Pinson said, "Thank you. Good evening, everyone. My name is Sarah Pinson, and like Mayor Tecklenburg said, I am the Agency Relations Manager at the Lowcountry Food Bank. We are doing these meetings with all of the City and County Councils in our service area. We want you all to know that we are here for you, and we're here for your constituents. We really just want to spread some awareness about what we do as a food bank. Our three guiding principles are to feed, advocate, and empower people experiencing hunger and poverty in the Lowcountry. So, that guides all of our work and everything that we do. We want you all to know how hunger is affecting the City of Charleston and the surrounding area, how we, as the Food Bank, help your

constituents, and how you can be involved in the kinds of anti-hunger efforts that we do. You will see that we passed out to you all some statistics about Charleston County and our whole service area. They are also listed here. Currently, about one in six people in Charleston County experiences hunger. The number goes up to one in four for children and seniors, so very high numbers. We're really trying to bring those down, and we're going to talk a little bit about how we do that. Our mission is to lead the fight against hunger. We cover the ten coastal counties of South Carolina. Our main office, of course, is in Charleston, and we are a member of Feeding America. That's the national network of food banks. Through Feeding America, the entire country is covered. Every county is covered and is provided food. We are basically a clearinghouse, so we take in food from retailers, from manufacturers, and from donors, and then we distribute it out to our network of partners. This just gives you a little bit more information about what our service area is (referring to an electronic presentation). You can see it is pretty large. We have three different offices. Our main office is in Charleston. We also have one in the Myrtle Beach area and one down in Yemassee. Raise your hand if you know where Yemassee is. Okay, so, a few of you do. It's down near Beaufort. A lot of times, we just tell people we're in Beaufort because people have no idea where Yemassee is.

These are some numbers about how many people we're serving specifically in Charleston County. Last year, we served about 8.5 million pounds of food to 70,000 people, and we did that with the help of 93 partners. Those are places like soup kitchens, food pantries, places that you give food to people who need it. Those places typically get most of their food from the Food Bank, although, they do typically have other sources that they use. We have a few other programs that we wanted you all to know about. Not only do we provide food directly to those agencies, we also feed people fresh produce through our Fresh for All distributions. Those are farmer's market-style distributions. We have our Kids Café and Summer Food Service Program, which feed kids during the school year, as well as during the summer. Backpack Buddies is another way that we do that. We feed kids on the weekends through that. Cooking Matters is a nutrition education course that we provide through Share Our Strength, which is a national organization. We really wanted to let you guys know that we are here, so that you can come visit us and see what we do. We wanted you to know that we're here for your constituents. If you would like to see a list of partners that are in your district, we would be happy to pass that on to you. That way, if you know anyone who is in need of assistance, you can let them know where they can go. We also are starting a big Summer Feeding push. Currently, Kids Café is during the school year, and Summer Feeding is during the summer. I'll let Chris talk for a second about what we're trying to do with that."

Councilmember White returned to the Chamber at 5:45 p.m.

Chris Moken said, "Hello, my name is Chris Moken. I'm the Child and Senior Assessment VISTA at the Food Bank. In front of you, there is also a flyer about the Summer Feeding Program. As most of you know, kids that are eligible for free and/or reduced meals during the school year are also eligible for free meals during the summer. However, only about one in five are participating, and the main problem is that we don't have enough sponsors or sites that are actually allowing kids to come and get meals. So, if you could help us reach out and build more relationships, we'd like any help we could get doing that."

Ms. Pinson said, "Finally, we just want to thank you all for your service. We know you care a lot about the people you serve, and we care about those same people. If there is any way we can work with you and help you, we are here, we are available, and we wanted to let you know that. I'm happy to take any questions, if there are any. Yes."

Councilmember Riegel said, "I just wanted to compliment you. I've had the opportunity of visiting the Food Bank on many occasions. You folks have an unbelievable kitchen."

Ms. Pinson said, "Yes, we do."

Councilmember Riegel said, "I think some of the meals that I partook of would rival some of our wonderful Downtown restaurants. I did want to bring that out and commend you on that. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Ms. Pinson said, "I appreciate that. Thank you. Yes, we do have a kitchen."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Yes, you do. Wonderful."

Councilmember Wilson said, "I know that a lot of the food going into the Food Bank is more of the long shelf life type of thing. What is involved, or how are things handled? I know there are a lot of restrictions. This is such a party town with so many caterers, hotels and things like that. As for the vast amount of food and the vast amount of leftover reception food and things like that, is there any means of reducing the amount of waste?"

Ms. Pinson said, "Great question. We have done a little bit with that. Typically, we wait for businesses to come to us in that area. We don't really have a person whose job it is to seek that out, but I know that there are a number of restaurants and particularly food trucks, I think, because they have that mobile ability, caterers probably would as well, that will donate some of the food that they have left over. Typically, we can't distribute that to our agencies because they're pantries, and so they don't have a way to get out meal-style food, but we do use a lot of that food in our kitchen that he mentioned. If we are cooking meals for typically children and seniors, there is a possibility that we can use food that has already been prepared in some of the meals that we serve there, but it is definitely something that we would love to see streamlined. Currently, I think there is a fair amount of red tape around that. Yes."

Mr. Moken said, "We also do a lot of Fresh for All distributions where we actually go out to the communities. It's pretty much an 18-wheeler full of fresh produce, and we just let clients come up and take what they like. They just can take as much as they need for their household. We have a goal of distributing about 20 percent of all of our food as being fresh produce. Now, I think, we're at about 23 percent."

Ms. Pinson said, "Yes."

Councilmember Lewis said, "I certainly want to thank you all for the great work that you all do within the City of Charleston. I am with one of the agencies that comes and gets food twice a week. I was just up there today, and we distributed over 160 boxes of food to needy people Saturday past, but it is just amazing the amount of work that you all have to do up there, the number of people that you all serve. I certainly want to thank you on behalf of City Council, members of the City, and this Mayor for the work that you all do for serving the needy in Charleston County."

Ms. Pinson said, "Thank you. May I ask which agency you're with?"

Councilmember Lewis said, "New Israel Church."

Ms. Pinson said, "Yes. My official job title is Agency Relations Manager, so I work with all of the agencies, so I definitely know your name. Thank you. Anything else? Wonderful. Well, thank you all so much for letting us be here, and we appreciate everything you do."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Sarah, and thank you, Chris, and thanks for all the good work you do through the Lowcountry Food Bank. Please give our regards to Pat."

Ms. Pinson said, "Absolutely."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Next, we're going to have a public hearing. Mr. Morgan."

---INSERT PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE---
---INSERT PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT---

Christopher Morgan said, "The first item before you all this evening is 652 Rutledge Avenue. It's a rezoning to go from DR-1F to RO Residential Office. It's an existing structure on Rutledge Avenue. I'll orient you to the map here. This is Moultrie Street. The playgrounds of Hampton Park are over here kind of catty-cornered. There is a Lutheran Church just to the North of this property, residences on Dewey Street to the rear. The old Jabers Supermarket, that's now the BoomTown and Coastal Community Foundation Center, is across the street, as well. I believe we have an aerial image of the property in question. Again, it's an existing residential structure, and there you can see it. It's the fairly large structure there, and that's a street view. The request is to go to Residential Office to allow office uses in the residence, as well as residential uses. There are a number of restrictions on the Residential Office uses, such as keeping the residential character of the dwelling, limited signage, things like that. Both staff and Planning Commission recommend approval."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard on this matter? Yes, ma'am."

1. Erika Harrison said, "My name is Erika Harrison, and I represent the owner, Abigail Walsh, who has acquired this property. We are seeking this RO designation, and we believe that this is consistent with the rich history and diverse uses that are along Rutledge Avenue. We have also obtained the full support of the neighborhood association, that being North Central Neighborhood. Between the block of Race Street to Moultrie, you will find a consistent pattern of Residential Office uses at 602 Rutledge Avenue. You will see grocery stores, convenience stores, but also at the same time, you will see churches, food stores, food restaurants, all sorts of businesses that have Limited Business or General Business designation. RO, as Mr. Morgan explained, is a very restrictive and prohibitive type of use, and this is consistent with what we had discussed originally with the North Central Neighborhood Association because my client desires to use this particular facility as a law office for two suites. We will provide ample amounts of parking on this particular site, and, in addition to that, we believe this is also a less intensive use than what the former building was utilized for, which was a half-way house. Again, we believe this is more restrictive than the Limited Business, Commercial Transition and the General Business zoning designations that you see between Race Street and Moultrie Street along Rutledge Avenue. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone else like to be heard?"

No one else came forward to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "The matter now comes before City Council."

Councilmember Lewis said "Move that we approve this application."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Second."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have a motion and a second. Is there any discussion?"

Councilmember Lewis said, "That particular project is in my district, and they have done a good job of coming to the neighborhood. That piece of property has been vacant now for years. It's been a troublesome piece of property for that neighborhood, and I am glad to see that they are going to use it for a law office. The lawyers that are going to use it all live in the neighborhood in the district, so it's really good that they will be able to walk to work. There won't be extra cars or anything on the street, but we have a piece of property that will be utilized for the best use it can be in that particular area. I thank you, and I thank staff for working with them. I thank you for the recommendation because it went to the BZA (Board of Zoning Appeals) for something else, but then staff recommended this and worked with the applicant, and now we are going to have a piece of property that will be preserved. It will be a nice office for people to walk to work. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Would anyone else like to be heard? We will call for the question."

On a motion of Councilmember Lewis, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, City Council voted unanimously to give first reading to the following ordinance:

An ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Charleston by changing the Zone Map, which is a part thereof, so that 652 Rutledge Avenue (North Central - Peninsula) (0.0728 acre) (TMS #460-03-02-149) (Council District 3), be rezoned from Diverse Residential (DR-1F) classification to Residential Office (RO) classification.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next, we have a public hearing on amending the Planned Unit Development for Marshes at Cooper River."

Mr. Morgan said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This property, shown on the map in front of you, is out on Clements Ferry Road, not quite as far as the Charleston Regional Business Park. It's about halfway between I-526 and the Charleston Regional Business Park. It is a PUD that was previously approved last year, that they have now been able to add a small additional portion of the adjoining land to the PUD. They had always intended and hoped to include this piece of property into the PUD, but they heard there had been some complications, I believe, some heirs property issues or things like that in the past, but this is bringing it into the PUD now. The PUD documents are in the Council packages today. These are just some aerial images of where the parcel is. It's actually at the rear of this image that is in front of you. It's actually off the end of that, but it's in your Council packages. What it shows is that this additional land in this PUD would be used for Single Family Residential and for open space as part of the overall Master PUD Plan. Both Staff and Planning Commission recommend for approval."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would anyone like to be heard on this matter?"

No one wanted to be heard.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "This will come before City Council later in the meeting because we need to accept the annexation, which will happen later in our meeting. So, we'll come back to vote on the amendment at that time. Next on the agenda is to approve our recent City Council minutes."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2016 City Council meeting as presented.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Next, we will have our approximately 30-minute Citizens Participation Period. Who would like to be heard this evening? Please indicate by raising your hand, just so I get a sense of how many folks we've got. Let's call a two-minute limit on our presentations this evening. Would you like to be heard first? Please come forward. Thank you."

1. John Wright said, "Thank you. My name is John Wright. I live at 145 Rose Lane in Mt. Pleasant. I wanted to come before you, newly-elected Mayor, distinguished members of Council, and your staff, and I want to give a note of thanks. A couple of weeks ago, I put together a water drive that took water to Flint, Michigan. Councilmember Waring was very glad to hear, which you mentioned, the issues that we don't have here in Charleston versus what they do have in Flint. That water drive that I put together, again, I'm retired military, and spent 22 years, 8 months and 13 days in the Army. I've been away from this community for 29 years. I came back two and a half years ago to continue to do good things. That water drive I put together in Mt. Pleasant a couple weeks ago started out as a very small humanitarian mission hopefully to supply water to five or ten families. Well, the outpouring of support from Charleston County and the residents, the citizens, ended up making me have a problem, a good problem. I ended up having to rent an 18-wheeler to carry up almost 700 cases of water and 200 and something one-gallon jugs of water to Flint. The 18-wheeler drove, and I flew to Flint. However, we did get the water delivered. Overwhelmingly, the people in Flint, and the Mayor, as you saw, were delighted that we here in the Lowcountry took the time to step up. One of the ideas I had to make sure that they know that we did our part was to make sure I got signatures on a board, so I could present it to the Mayor there, so it didn't appear that we just took water and left and that was all we did. It was quite interesting being there in Flint and to look at their situation. Basically, each of us here is very grateful that this is not our situation. In speaking with the Mayor and one of the members from the Water District . . ."

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Wright continued, ". . . his comment to me was, 'Flint operates on 11 million gallons of water a day. Try getting that out of the 12 ounce bottles'. Thank you, Mayor, and Council, for your time."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Mr. Wright, thank you. I want to commend you for what you've done. That's wonderful. Thank you very much. You've been a great ambassador."

Applause filled the Chamber.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Mr. Wright, I would note, has a picture of himself with the Mayor of Flint, Mayor Karen Weaver, with the signed board, and they send a huge thank you to the City of Charleston. Thanks to you, again, Mr. Wright. God bless you. Who next would like to be heard? Yes, sir. Please come forward. State your name and address, please."

2. Greg Vick said, "My name is Greg Vick. I live at 302 Ashley Avenue, Charleston, South Carolina. I'm here to discuss kind of a recurring problem that we're having on some properties around the area, and I'm talking in particular 313 and 315 Ashley Avenue. I'm pretty sure that you're very familiar with this from the news report. Historically speaking, this property has been a flow-through for water off Ashley Avenue for many, many, many, many years. A developer now has come in and they have put 30 truckloads of dirt in there, and they're going to put 30 more in there. This is going to have serious impact on the surrounding houses. What we are asking you to do, and I have a letter here and it goes into much more detail, and I'll make sure all of you get a copy in your Inbox tomorrow, so please check your e-mail and don't delete it. We want this property developed, but there is a saying 'just because you can, doesn't mean that you should'. This is one of those right now. So, what we're asking you to do, as a City, is to purchase this property through these developers and then develop this property once the drainage is fixed in our area. It would be a great parcel. There are two parcels. It would be great to put four single-family homes on there. You could use it for moderate and low-income, and bring families into the neighborhood, which is what we want. That would, thus, bring additional taxes into the neighborhood, which would also possibly have children come to our schools. That's what we're asking. We're not asking that this never be developed. We're just asking that it be developed at the right particular time, and that the Mayor and the City Council do what's right for this community and the neighborhood."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir."

Mr. Vick said, "Thank you, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I appreciate it. Yes, sir."

3. Julius H. Stanton said, "Good evening. My name is Julius H. Stanton. I reside at 133 Hester Street on this Peninsula. The reason I come to you members of this Council is because, on Wednesday, I attended a meeting concerning a Comprehensive Analysis of the operations of the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA). It was a very interesting meeting. I come before you now to ask each member of this Council and our Mayor to get involved with this. There are plans under the CARTA Comprehensive Analysis that will be detrimental to this community. Plans are in place to redesignate certain bus routes, to change certain bus routes, and all of this is to be implemented in the summer of 2016, this year. As I pointed out to a couple members of CARTA staff, this is going to be a terrible thing, because when they implement it, they usually implement it on a Monday. This is coming on the heels of October of 2015 where they tweaked, for lack of a better word, the schedules and the rate increase included therein. Lady and gentlemen of this Council and Honorable Mayor, I ask you all to get involved with this. This is an issue that will affect people's livelihoods. This is an issue that will affect the elderly and the disabled going to doctors and getting healthcare, and this will affect also livability, so I ask you to go to CARTA, as members of this Council, and tell them to postpone the implementation of their Comprehensive Analysis until March of 2017. You will hear..."

The Clerk called time.

Mr. Stanton continued, "...many reasons for it, but I ask you to do that for me. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Mr. Stanton. Yes, sir."

4. Will Freeman said, "Hi. My name is Will Freeman, and I reside at 137 Ashley Avenue. I'm here today to speak about the moratorium on hotels. I would ask Council to please consider the possible message this will be sending to people looking to invest down here in the Charleston area or looking to seek development and perhaps maybe take a pause. I haven't seen anything published yet showing any kind of significant dialogue with the hospitality and tourism industry on this issue, and I think that is an important step you do before throwing out a moratorium. I think it's something you need to consider. I am not asking for you to stop it completely. I'm just asking for more patience and do some dialogue and do some steps with the community first before we start stopping developments in their tracks, or sending a message to people who perhaps want to put their money and tax dollars into this fine City, saying that they're probably not going to be welcome here in the next year or so. I think you need to take those factors into consideration and I would just ask for patience and not act on it tonight."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, sir. Yes, sir. Would you like to be heard?"

5. Mohammed Idris said, "Mayor, City Council, Mohammed Idris. The Rabbi Rosenberg, I think that is his name, said something here when he spoke on the 26th of January. He said 'we should not be hypocrites; we should practice what we preach.' A gentlemen came here at the last City Council meeting and called everyone on this Council a bunch of crooks, and when Councilman Moody jumped up and said, 'prove it' and Councilmember Waring backed him and told him to prove it, the gentleman backed away from it and said, 'I'm not talking about you all. I'm talking that the system is a crooked system', and we didn't see any of that in the newspaper. None of that was in the newspaper, but when I spoke, it was in the newspaper, 'Muslim said so and so. He's anti-Semitic' and all of that. We've got to practice what we preach if we are going to be successful. Now, we are saying that the people below Broad Street are the troublemakers. The people below Broad Street are not the troublemakers. The people over in West Ashley are the troublemakers, but they want to make people think that it's the people below Calhoun Street so everybody can focus on that while they start building West of the Ashley, so you all better stop that playing. Thank you."

6. Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, sir."

Christopher Cody said, "Thank you. Good evening. Mayor Tecklenburg, members of Council, my name is Christopher Cody, and I represent Historic Charleston Foundation. With me this evening is our President and CEO, Kitty Robinson. Historic Charleston Foundation applauds the Mayor for raising the issue of the proliferation of hotels on the Peninsula. It is an issue that is very much of concern to us and one that we are pleased to see addressed. We urge City Council to study the issue, perhaps with the assistance of the City Planning Department. We hope that this issue can be resolved expediently and separately from larger discussions like those concerning short-term rentals and our outdated Zoning Code. We, again, applaud Mayor Tecklenburg for raising this issue and thank the Council for their consideration of it."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Would anyone else like to be heard? Yes, sir."

7. Matt Doszkocs said, "Before I begin, Mayor, I was asked to represent Serrita Kennedy and Ellen Pfeiffer, and I don't want to take too much time but I ask, could I have three minutes instead of two so we can all be . . ."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I've got to keep you to two minutes, sir. Thank you."

Mr. Doszkocs said, "My name is Matt Doszkocs, 36 Moultrie Street. I want to thank all of you, particularly Mayor Tecklenburg and his staff, Mike Whack, for being so responsive to this issue of short-term rentals and home sharing, and also, to Councilmembers for asking questions and for looking into things. In that spirit, I have left a deposit on your desk this evening, just some additional information, statistics and things like that. Particularly of interest would be some of the documentation related to short-term rentals and homeshares across the rest of the U.S. The rest of the world, as well, would be good to look at, but particularly San Jose because, I think, they have the best overall policy that they've kind of crafted. I want to emphasize that all of these cities delineate between homesharing, which is owner-occupied short-term rentals. It's a traditional model where the owner is onsite, and there is supervision, and non-owner-occupied vacation rentals, where the owner is not onsite, so they are separate issues. Please look them over. These cities have all gone through this process before. We don't need to reinvent the wheel, but at the same time, I also would encourage all of us to look really carefully and closely. Some of the legislation is a little bit lazier than others in my view. Again, San Jose, all of these cities allow owner-occupied homesharing, unrestricted, virtually. It's a residential use. It's a traditional use. San Jose has said that non-owner-occupied can operate 180 days a year. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Mr. King."

8. Christopher King said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor, members of Council. I'm Christopher King with the Preservation Society of Charleston. I just read on my telephone that the Post and Courier said we're not discussing the moratorium tonight, so I'm not exactly sure what I'm talking to you about tonight. Earlier this month at the meeting of the BZA, we saw four hotels approved. Three of the four hotels were within a block of each other. Two of the hotels were contiguous with each other all in a delicate area in the City. So, I think, this perception is reality that we have a large expansion in the hotel rooms on the Peninsula. This is a great problem to have, but we support the City taking an initiative to look at this, a careful assessment to study the Accommodations ordinance, the Accommodations test and the Accommodations zone. This is not only supported and consistent with the Tourism Management Plan that this Council approved, but this is best practice. We know that our system is under immense stress and pressure, and that's only growing. So, we think that this is the right thing to do. We need to look at the zones, we need to look at the boundaries, and we need to look at the proportionality of the number of hotel rooms in particular residential areas. The Accommodations test is the gatekeeper for maintaining balance, and, we think now is the absolute appropriate time to ensure that that test is doing what it was intended and what Council intended. We encourage this Council, the Mayor, and the City to please study this issue further. Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Yes, ma'am."

9. Betsy Cahill said, "My name is Betsy Cahill. I live at 2 Ladson Street. I'll explain what I'm here to talk about, which is the hotel initiative, but when I was listening to Councilman Moody's lovely invocation, the opening verse of Psalm 127 popped into my mind which I will paraphrase, 'Unless the Lord build the hotel, those who build it, labor in vain.' I'm not sure how the Lord would come down on this, but I am here as a representative of the Steering Committee of the Tourism Management Advisory Committee whose plan you approved last year as Christopher (King) referenced. As it happened, we had a meeting today, and I was asked to convey to you a message of support for the initiative of studying the proliferation of hotels. I just want to read you briefly the statement from the Tourism Management Plan that pertains to this. The recommendation was that the plan address concerns over recent substantial hotel room increases on the Peninsula and beyond by monitoring their impact on congestion and moderating future hotel room increases. It is the belief of the Steering Committee, and, I hope by extension, the larger

Tourism Management Advisory Committee that a study would address these concerns, and I recommend that we begin it forthwith. Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you very much. Yes, ma’am.”

10. Ginny Bush said, “My name is Ginny Bush. I live on Water Street. I’m here to represent the Charlestowne Neighborhood Association. We also would like to support the proposal to study the Accommodations hotel initiative that I understand is going to be proposed tonight with 250 or 300 new hotel rooms coming on board for each of the last two or three years. It’s time to re-examine the Accommodations Overlay Zone that was imposed in 2013 and to monitor the effects on the Downtown economy. It is essential to achieve and maintain a balance of uses in our Downtown area among residential, commercial, office and hotels for the benefit of all the citizens and all the businesses including the accommodation and tourism business. So, we would urge you to support this proposal. Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, Ms. Bush. Would anyone else like to be heard? Yes, sir. Mr. Rupp.”

11. Frank Rupp said, “Thank you. My name is Frank Rupp. I live at 122 Rutledge Avenue, and am a member of the Harleston Village Association Board of Directors. Three items tonight. We support what the Preservation Society, Historic Charleston, and Charlestowne Neighborhood just presented about further study of the accommodations in downtown Charleston. Secondly, I’m not going to propose a moratorium because that’s a long four-letter word, but we think that the issuance of parking variances in the Peninsula ought to be looked at seriously and would propose, instead of a moratorium, an impact fee be charged to developers to offset the costs of not requiring them to provide parking spaces. Right now, parking garages are being built. The spaces in those garages are rented for a year for \$50,000 to \$75,000, maybe even \$100,000, so they have a value. Why should we just give away parking spaces and revenue when an impact fee could help offset that? The last thing is a personal request. Please put in a stop sign at the corner of Bennett and Rutledge Avenue. It is a dangerous intersection, with cars cutting through Harleston Village to bypass Calhoun Street traffic backup. That’s an intersection right where Cannon Park is. A lot of children, mothers, and fathers, go back and forth at that intersection to the Park. Cars speed down because they don’t have to stop until they get to Bull Street, so please take a look at that. Thank you very much.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, sir. Would anyone else like to be heard? Yes, ma’am.”

12. Angela Drake said, “Good evening, Mayor Tecklenburg. I’m Angela Drake of 28 Anson Street and, I’ll say, the President of the Historic Ansonborough Neighborhood. I would say thank you to all of the neighborhood support for support of your study. My neighborhood, as well as Vangie’s neighborhood, is one of the most impacted neighborhoods. Two out of four of the last approved hotels are in Ansonborough. We feel the squeeze. We feel the need for your study that you’ve recommended. We feel that the latest statistics with all the new hotels have not been evaluated. We feel for the need of the ordinances to be re-evaluated. As Mr. Krawcheck, who chairs the BZAZ (Board of Zoning Appeals-Zoning), kept saying before each proposal, ‘please go before your City Council so that we can have changes in these ordinances.’ Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, Ms. Drake. Yes, ma’am.”

13. Vangie Rainsford said, "Vangie Rainsford, 34 Chapel Street. I've been representing my neighborhood for almost two decades now, Mayor Tecklenburg. I feel like I'm on either a short leash or a long leash. I'm not sure which. I'm here tonight to support all of the other efforts of the neighborhood presidents, as well as Historic Charleston and the Preservation Society. I affectionately tell my Councilman that we are hotel central. Most of the hotel rooms that were approved in the last four years are within two blocks of my neighborhood, with three hotels within our boundaries. So, what I'm asking tonight, in support of the Honorable John Tecklenburg, is give it thought. We all have a remote. We all like to go fast forward. I'd like to ask that you put it on pause and do the study that would be necessary. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much. Would anyone else like to be heard? If not, that will be the end of our Citizens Participation Period. Thank you so very much. I do have a communication that I would like to share with Council, about a contribution that the City is making through the Palmetto Project, to help facilitate current residents of Tent City to relocate into more permanent housing and get a new start on life. I gave you an update at our last Council meeting about our plans to address Tent City and help our homeless citizens. We started on a 10-point plan, which included initially clearing the tents and cleaning up the areas on the east side of Meeting Street. That has already been performed and accomplished. We are continuing to work with the DOT not only regarding jurisdiction, but they're going to, for example, add some lighting underneath I-26, so the area is better lit. We are going to temporarily provide trash collection and sanitation by the way of Port-O-LetSM to help over the next six weeks or so as we continue to move folks out so that basic needs are met.

We are working with One80Place, Family Services, the Lowcountry Homeless Coalition, church groups, and even individuals who have stepped up to the plate to try to help those folks that are living in Tent City to find a better place because, as I think I've said before, the real solution to homelessness, it sounds simple, is to provide a home for someone that doesn't have it. When you have a place that you can call home, you can stabilize your life and start to address things that you need to work on, from finding a job to getting medical care to addressing any additional problem you have. It's hard to make those kinds of changes in your life when you're living in a tent on public property without the owner's permission. There is no place to take a shower. It's just not a good place to get a good new start in life, so we're going to try to help those individuals. One of the parts of the 10-point plan was for the City to sponsor a fundraising effort. The Palmetto Project has graciously agreed to manage the fund with no overhead. It will be overseen by three individuals: Steve Skardon of the Palmetto Project, Linda Ketner and Reverend Chuck Watkins of Morris Brown AME Church. We've started the fund with an initial \$35,000 from the City of Charleston. We've added \$15,000 that was left over from my inaugural account. The fund is open. We have a website. It is www.homelesstohopefund.org. You can give online, or we have a mailbox, of course, that folks can mail checks to. The express purpose is to give direct assistance in way of security deposits, utility deposits, first or second month's rent to help locate folks that are in Tent City, and then provide the kinds of services that they need from our service providers to help with job placement, any mental health or medical services that they may need. We were required by State law to make an official announcement to the public since we are giving the \$35,000 through a non-profit, being the Palmetto Project, and I wanted to give you that communication and update. If you have any questions about Tent City, I'd be happy to address them if I can."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I commend you for your leadership on this issue. You and I discussed back before the holidays when you were still Mayor-Elect Tecklenburg. The Metro Chamber of Commerce had a wonderful delegation reception at the South Carolina Aquarium. I was bombarded by several State legislators that will remain nameless, about how could the great City of Charleston allow the homelessness, the Tent City under Meeting

Street, which they saw as they headed back to Columbia to fulfill their duties. It was ironic to me that the South Carolina DOT actually was a bit of a hurdle, as I understood, in us being able to move forward on this jurisdictional issue. Many people said just move them out, just load up their belongings, put them in garbage trucks, haul them to the landfill, and what you did, sir, was unbelievable. You took the holistic approach. It wasn't just addressing the issue, but it was a holistic approach of food, medical care, housing, clothing, giving them a sense of who they are, and I still remember those bombardments. I commend you for what you've done, Mayor Tecklenburg."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Well, thank you, sir. Thank you very much. We have in place excellent service providers, such as One80Place, but we've just got an abundance of folks beyond the capacity of that facility, and so beyond giving money, I also just want to publicly ask any property owners, any landlords that have extra apartments or properties that you could go ahead and get fixed up and make available because we really do have a shortage of affordable housing units in our community, and every unit that we can put back into service is a plus."

Councilmember Riegel said, "If I could add, Mr. Mayor, one of the obstacles to any number of those folks entering into a homeless shelter was they did have pets or dogs, which are like family to them. As you know, I serve on the Executive Board of the Charleston Animal Society. You reached out to us, and we gratefully took those animals in, gave them a home and gave some of those unfortunate folks assurances that their pet, their family member, was being taken care of. That's a little side thing that you never think about, the pets or the animals that were living with them. So, thank you again for that, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir. We moved about 19 people last week into the shelter and then about 17 people last week into more permanent housing so we're making progress but we've got a ways to go. Yes, sir."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "I would like to echo Councilmember Riegel's comments. Your leadership on that, as briefly as you've been in office, I really commend you for taking that big step that quick. I would hope we can reach out to other municipalities in a positive way. We can always point the finger of what somebody's not doing, but this is a regional problem. Certainly, it's our nation's problem, quite frankly."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "That's right."

Councilmember Waring said, "So, it's not ours alone. Many people came from all over in goodwill trying to help. Not in the long term way, but maybe there is a way we can channel that in a positive direction towards giving to the fund that has just been established."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

Councilmember Waring said, "Can we reach out to the Mayor and Council of Mt. Pleasant? Can we reach out to the Mayor and Council, certainly, of North Charleston? I know they have a good bit of affordable housing there, but it is a fact that the only officially recognized affordable housing project in the Town of Mt. Pleasant is actually owned by the City of Charleston's Housing Authority. There are 23 units, I believe, that we own, our Housing Authority owns, in the Town of Mt. Pleasant. There are good-meaning people and good hearts over there. I think, if we would were to convene and reach out in a regional way, obviously, to the County, we can help to grow that

fund significantly and have a larger impact. Again, leadership has to start some place and thank you for what you did.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you, sir. Yes, sir.”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said, “Mr. Mayor, I want to applaud you for what you have done and what the staff is doing. If you know where the homeless situation is, the Tent City, it’s all in the district I represent. Everything is in the district I represent. I had some problems with my constituents because they wanted to see it gone because of the safety, the health issues, but then we always have to remember that we are still dealing with human beings. In dealing with human beings, we’ve got to take careful care in dealing with them, also. Some of them are mentally challenged and have to be counseled. That’s why, Mr. Mayor, we are working with One80Place, so they can receive counseling and go to the doctor. If they need mental health, we can refer them to those different places. I’m asking, as a Councilmember, that even businesses out here in the community, if you say we are working together, we are one City and we are working, and we want to help one another, let’s try to give something to this fund that the Mayor started. That’s what I’m asking the people in the community to do, because it’s going to be a long drawn-out procedure. If you know, affordable housing is really null and void, if you’re looking around. I’ve been in housing for 33 years working as a Certified Housing Counselor, so I know what the housing aspect of this is. It’s going to be pretty rough, so I am asking that we work as a City and come together as we do on many occasions when we have a disaster. This is a big disaster when we are dealing with human beings. They are out in the cold, they are out in the weather, they are out in the flood. There are a lot of things going on there, so I’m asking you all to reach out to others and ask them to give to this fund, so that we can help and try to create housing and put more housing out there for these people that are homeless. That’s the only way we are going to do it. We are going to have to do it together. The City alone can’t do it. We need the County, and we need the State because we are in the County of Charleston and the State of South Carolina. We have to come up to the plate also. Not only the City taking the lead on everything and doing it, they have to come to the plate also, and that’s what I’m pushing for. Thank you.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you very much. Once again, I want to commend, in addition to our service providers. I’ll give you an example. Last weekend, I sent out an e-mail to a few pastors, and the word got around. We had a meeting here last Monday night, and this whole Chamber was full of pastors and individuals who want to help and want to get engaged. You can’t just send anybody out to help one-on-one, but there is a program called Next Steps that will be training churches and any other organization that wants to help mentor individuals in need, and that’s going on at St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church on Fridays. That training and our faith-based community is also coming together well to help in this effort, so I want to commend them. So, thank you very much. Next, we’ll move to our Council Committee Reports. First up is our License Committee.”

Councilmember Gregorie said, “Mr. Mayor and Council, the Licensing Committee met on the 22nd, and we met to review the ordinance to amend the Business License Ordinance for the City of Charleston, which would decrease the class rate from \$1.55 per thousand to \$1.10 per thousand, which is consistent with the NAICS Code Numbers. The Committee recommended approval unanimously, and I would recommend that we approve the amendment as submitted.”

Councilmember Mitchell said “Second.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "We have the motion and a second."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "Yes, I spoke with Councilmember Gregorie concerning an issue as this was proposed last meeting. It was explained that this was a revenue neutral license bill. One of the constituents in my district that has a grocery store indicated that his business license went up 21 percent. I said, 'well, let me check into it and see what it is'. Overall, it is revenue neutral. In his case, at his grocery store, his tax went up 21 percent, and it wasn't because he had more sales. It was because of a change in the, and I understand we got away from SIC codes, we went to another system, but since his went up, that meant somebody had to go down. So, I asked the question who went down, and the ones that went down were those awful accountants, doctors, lawyers and professional people."

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Councilmember Moody continued, "I kind of felt like that didn't feel right to me. I called Councilmember Gregorie to tell him my concern. Then, I saw this one reduction, and I was wondering why didn't we tweak some of the others to maybe make that more reasonable. This might be revenue neutral, but it's not individually revenue neutral."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "We did discuss it, and I'll ask Amy to give you the results of that discussion."

Amy Wharton, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, said, "A lot of the reason why some of those professionals went down is because they moved from a class so, they moved three classes down from where they were before. That's a lot of the reason why those professional organizations or companies had their tax rates decrease so much. So, what happens with it is, the Municipal Association assigns them into different classifications that we have to put them in based on, the IRS does a profitability study and so, with the switch from SIC Codes to NAICS Codes, that forced some companies to change classifications downward where their tax rates were a little bit less. In trying to do this and balance everything out, it was a little bit difficult to make it equitable, I guess you could say. There are so many different moving parts with it."

Councilmember Moody said, "I kind of understand all that. It is kind of all based on profitability, and the professionals are generally more profitable per dollar."

Ms. Wharton said, "Right."

Councilmember Moody continued, "That's why they pay a higher rate."

Ms. Wharton said, "Right."

Councilmember Moody continued, "Regardless of whatever class they're in, and one of the reasons that grocery stores are not taxed that way is that they have to sell a lot of groceries because they're not as profitable per sale. Even with the explanation that you're shifting categories here, it just doesn't seem right to me that we're kind of balancing this thing on the backs of maybe the wrong people."

Ms. Wharton said, "I understand. The grocery stores stayed within the same classification, and so they were in class 1 before, and they stayed in a 1 for the NAICS Codes, as well, but in

trying to make it revenue neutral, we have to play with a declining rate. That declining rate before was 50 percent, so for every \$1,000,000, you would pay five percent less. It would be 95 percent each \$1,000,000 down, and you will go down five percent per million until 50 percent. We had to change that to 75 percent just to try to keep us revenue neutral. Some of the increases that people are seeing are because of the declining rate we had to change.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “So, it’s complicated.”

There was laughter in the Chamber.

Ms. Wharton said, “It’s very complicated.”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Wagner.

Councilmember Wagner said, “Yeah, I might have been doing my personal business license the other day, and I ended up calling Alan (Horres), and I said, ‘what happened? It’s a whole lot less than it was last year.’”

Ms. Wharton said, “You have winners and losers in this, so we’re trying to work with it.”

Councilmember Wagner said, “He explained it all to me, and I just happened to be a recipient of it, as one of those awful accountants, that Bill (Councilmember Moody) is talking about but, I knew we had passed the budget. My big question was ‘Well, we’ve already budgeted for ‘X’ amount of money, how come mine went down? Is everybody going down? What are we doing here?’ He did explain it. It made sense, but it just happened that my class was one of those that benefited.”

Ms. Wharton said, “It’s very complicated and has a lot of moving parts trying to make it all come out equitably.”

Councilmember Gregorie said, “I’m not sure if that answered your question.”

Ms. Wharton said, “I don’t know if it did.”

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “All I can offer to you is, this particular amendment was for a couple of categories where the increase was significant, but the category that grocery stores are in is mixed with many other uses. So, we’re just going to have to monitor additional complaints or comments that we get and see if we need to take any future action, but we felt like the increase was so much for 4411 and 4412 that we would go ahead and address them. It was literally over a 50 percent increase for this category. Yes, sir.”

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Seekings said, “Do we have a system in place, a failsafe, to capture the people who are on the other side of that, who have the huge increases like the grocery store. I understand the car dealers got hit pretty hard, too, and a few others so, do we have a failsafe so we can go and look at this equitably?”

Ms. Wharton said, “We are looking at it now to see if there are any other large percentage increases for certain classifications. We haven’t really seen that yet. I’m kind of looking at that now

to be honest with you. We haven't had a whole lot of complaints, other than from the car dealerships and from the one grocery store, yes."

Councilmember Seekings said, "Cars and groceries."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "One grocery store."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "I'm going to vote against this because I think there needs to be maybe some others in here. I'm not voting specifically about these particular ones, but where's the line, 21 percent, 50 percent? I guess it's somewhere between there."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Understood. Is there any further discussion?"

No one else asked to be heard.

On a motion of Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted to adopt the report of the License Committee as presented.

---INSERT LICENSE COMMITTEE REPORT---

An ordinance to amend the Business License Ordinance for the City of Charleston to decrease the class rate from \$1.55 per thousand to \$1.10 per thousand for NAICS Code Numbers 4411 and 4412.

First reading was given to the following bill:

An ordinance to amend the Business License Ordinance for the City of Charleston to decrease the class rate from \$1.55 per thousand to \$1.10 per thousand for NAICS Code Numbers 4411 and 4412.

The vote was not unanimous. Councilmembers Waring, Seekings, Riegel, Moody, and Wilson voted nay.

The Clerk said, "Let me call you out by name. Councilmember Waring, Councilmember Seekings, Councilmember Riegel, Councilmember Moody, and Councilmember Wilson. Okay, thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Alright. Next, we have the Committee on Public Works and Utilities."

Councilmember Williams said, "The Committee on Public Works and Utilities met. We had two acceptances and dedications, rights-of-way and one parcel right-of-way on Daniel Island. Both were approved unanimously, and I move for adoption."

On a motion of Councilmember Williams, seconded by Councilmember White, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the report of the Committee on Public Works and Utilities as presented:

---INSERT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS REPORT---

- (i) **Acceptance and Dedication of Rights-of-Way and Easements Daniel Island Parcel J-2 (29.31 Ac) to Create a New Variable Width Right-of-Way (1.71 Ac) and New Pump Station (0.06 Ac)** – acceptance and dedication of a portion of Robert Daniel Drive (variable width right-of-way). All infrastructure improvements are completed, inspected, and accepted.
- a. Title to Real Estate and Affidavit
 - b. Plat
 - c. Exclusive Stormwater Drainage Easement
 - d. Exclusive Stormwater Drainage Easement

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Thank you very much. I meant to mention when we were on business license, just to report to you, this year is the first year that we’ve accepted online payments for business licenses. We’ll be rolling out a lot of other online services later in the year, but we did get 3,881 businesses to register online and pay their business license fee online, and it was 34 percent of the total. I’m told that for year number one, that’s excellent. We are going to be soliciting the other businesses during the year to go ahead and get pre-registered because you have to do that before you can pay online so, next year we hope to even double that number and make the payment at least and filing of those returns as efficient as possible. Next is the Committee on Traffic and Transportation.”

On a motion of Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the report of the Committee on Traffic and Transportation as presented:

---INSERT COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION REPORT---

- (i) Application for Original Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity:
-- SC Express, LLC, DBA Aiken Limousine (Limo)

Mayor Tecklenburg said, “Councilmember Moody, the Committee on Ways and Means.”

On a motion of Councilmember Moody, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the report of the Committee on Ways and Means as presented:

---INSERT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS REPORT---

(Executive Session

- Firefighter Litigation Settlement
- Update on Gaillard Center Litigation
- Action, if any, on Executive Session Matters

(Bids and Purchases

(Police Department: Acceptance of the 2015 SC Department of Public Safety Victims of Crime Act Grant in the amount of \$2,780 for outfitting the Family Violence Reception Center. A City match of \$695 is required.

(Parks-Capital Projects: Acceptance of Federal funding in the amount of \$298,688 for four electric backup power systems at four fire stations. This would be matched with \$99,562 in City funding, and is for the purpose of removing the existing undersized generators and providing new permanent generator sets capable of providing full power. The approval of the grant award will institute a \$398,250 project budget. The funding sources for the project are: FEMA

Hazard Mitigation Grant Funds (\$298,688) and 2013 General Fund Reserves (\$99,562).

(Parks-Capital Projects: Approval of Gaillard Center Fee Amendment #4 with Earl Swensson Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$590,817.48. The fees included in this amendment are inclusive of additional time and travel as a direct result of construction delays and includes Construction Administration (CA) services from August 1, 2015 through the projected time of February 29, 2016. Project services in February 2016 will be billed on a not-to-exceed hourly rate. The City agrees to this amendment subject to a full reservation of rights. The City reserves all rights to assert any and all defenses to ESa invoices for additional fees including, but not limited to ESa acts or omissions creating, in whole or in part, the need for the additional services. The contract amount will increase by \$590,817.48. The total project budget will also increase by \$590,817.48. The approval of Fee Amendment #4 will increase the Earl Swensson Associates, Inc. contract by \$590,817.48. Funding Sources: Gateway TIF, Accommodations/Hospitality Funds, Capital Contributions, GO Bond, NEA Grant and GF Reserves.

(Public Service: Approval of Amendment #11 for an extension of the Engineering Services contract with Davis & Floyd. Payment to Davis & Floyd pursuant to this Amendment #11 will not exceed \$66,905. This extension includes additional utility location, surveying for alternate locations of SCE&G equipment, and production of easement plats for said equipment for the Market Street Drainage Improvement Project. The funding source is the Drainage Fund.

(An ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of Waterworks and Sewer System Refunding Revenue Bonds of the City of Charleston in one or more series in the aggregate principal amount of not exceeding \$135,000,000 and other matters relating thereto.

(An ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of approximately \$12,775,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds of 2016 of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds of the several series of bonds shall be expended, to provide for the payment thereof, and other matters relating thereto.

(An ordinance authorizing the execution of documents relating to the Lease-Purchase financing of the acquisition of 50 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina, for the City of Charleston, South Carolina in an amount not exceeding \$600,000; authorizing the execution of a Base Lease Agreement and a Project Lease Agreement in connection therewith, and other matters relating thereto.

(Consider the following annexation:

-- 1827 Mepkin Road (TMS# 353-14-00-183) 0.18 acre, West Ashley (District 2)

First reading was given to the following bills:

An ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of Waterworks and Sewer System Refunding Revenue Bonds of the City of Charleston in one or more series in the aggregate principal amount of not exceeding \$135,000,000 and other matters relating thereto.

An ordinance to provide for the issuance and sale of approximately \$12,775,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds of 2016 of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, to prescribe the purposes for which the proceeds of the several series of bonds shall be expended, to provide for the payment thereof, and other matters

relating thereto.

An ordinance authorizing the execution of documents relating to the Lease-Purchase financing of the acquisition of 50 Broad Street, Charleston, South Carolina, for the City of Charleston, South Carolina in an amount not exceeding \$600,000; authorizing the execution of a Base Lease Agreement and a Project Lease Agreement in connection therewith, and other matters relating thereto.

An ordinance to provide for the annexation of property known as 1827 Mepkin Road (0.18 acre) (TMS# 353-14-00-183), West Ashley, Charleston County, to the City of Charleston, shown within the area annexed upon a map attached hereto and make it part of District 2.

The Clerk said, "That included all of our bills that were up for first reading and resolutions."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "It includes bills and resolutions. Okay, now, bills up for second reading. We have an ordinance for annexation of a property."

On a motion of Councilmember White, one (1) bill (Item K-1) received second reading. It passed second reading on a motion of Councilmember Mitchell and third reading on motion of Councilmember Mitchell. On further motion of Councilmember Gregorie, the rules were suspended and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2016-031 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ANNEXATION OF PROPERTY KNOWN AS CLEMENTS FERRY ROAD (1.01 ACRE) (TMS# 267-00-00-049), CAINHOY, BERKELEY COUNTY, TO THE CITY OF CHARLESTON, SHOWN WITHIN THE AREA ANNEXED UPON A MAP ATTACHED HERETO AND MAKE IT PART OF DISTRICT 1.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If you give me one minute, I will sign that. There we go. So, now we're up to bills for first reading."

The Clerk said, "Mayor, would you like to go back and pick up that Cainhoys bill for second reading?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I thought we did that. Sorry."

The Clerk said, "We had to do the annexation first, which you ratified. Now, we're going back to the 2nd reading under the Public Hearings."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I thought we were doing that just a moment ago. Back to our public hearing on the PUD from Marshes at Cooper River, correct?"

Councilmember White made a motion to approve.

Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is there any discussion? Thank you very much."

On a motion of Councilmember White, one (1) bill (Item E-2) received second reading. It passed second reading on a motion of Councilmember Lewis and third reading on motion of

Councilmember Gregorie. On further motion of Councilmember Mitchell, the rules were suspended, and the bill was immediately ratified as:

2016-032 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 54 OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CHARLESTON (ZONING ORDINANCE) BY AMENDING THE MARSHES AT COOPER RIVER PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES LOCATED OFF CLEMENTS FERRY ROAD (CAINHOY) (APPROXIMATELY 33.57 ACRES) (TMS# 267-00-00-004, 005, 010, 050 THROUGH 057, 069 AND 071) AND BY CHANGING THE ZONE MAP TO INCLUDE PROPERTY LOCATED ON CLEMENTS FERRY ROAD (CAINHOY) (BERKELEY COUNTY) (TMS# 267-00-00-049) (COUNCIL DISTRICT 1), AS PUD CLASSIFICATION.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now we will go up for bills for first reading."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "L-1, move for approval."

Councilmember Gregorie seconded the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "If I may take a few minutes and discuss this matter. A couple of weeks ago, before the Board of Zoning Appeals, came approvals for a number of hotel applications. There were four of them approved in one night, for 44 North Market Street, 2 Anson Street, 595 King Street and 28 Cumberland. We approved in that one night, the BZA did, by a special exception, 200 rooms. So, it occurred to me that it was time to bring to the table a discussion about the increase in hotel rooms in our community. I know that Council, just a few years ago, thoughtfully considered this. They extended the physical jurisdiction of the Overlay District north to the Septima Clark Parkway to extend the area that only 50 rooms would be allowed. You all tightened these special exception criteria on a few points and also removed 70 properties from the Accommodations Overlay District. What we've seen since Charleston has become so successful as a center for tourism, and I'm very proud of that business, is our hotel rooms increased at a significant rate. In 2013, the year that you all passed those improvements, we had a 26 percent in hotel rooms, and last year, we had another 300 hotel rooms added. I think the count right now for this year and next year is another 730 rooms. So, we have about a 10 percent increase per year, and you have to really question whether that's sustainable or not, and whether it leads to a good quality of life for citizens, particularly on the Peninsula where a lot of this growth has occurred. So, I certainly have everyone's attention by proposing that we have a moratorium, because it's not just we disallowed four-letter words as part of our decorum, and some people would say, 'well, that's a ten-letter dirty word'. I've quickly understood, I'm a listener, that this Council has what I would call 'moratorium fatigue'. We've had a moratorium on Gathering Place. We had the moratorium on bars and restaurants on upper King Street. I respect your feelings about not wanting to have another moratorium, and I'm respectful of the message that we send to the business community, as well. So, what I would like to propose, but I do think it's important to bring this issue back to Council, put it out there on the table because hotel rooms have been growing, I wouldn't say at an alarming rate, but close to that, and at an unsustainable rate. I would propose to you that over the next 90 days we have another study. We'll keep it as short as possible, so that we don't allow a lot of the business community not to know what it is they are expected to do. Hopefully, we won't get a lot of applications over the next few months, but I can assure you that we will not support any variances of any kind during that period. If anyone comes forward with an application they will have to dot every 'I' and cross every 'T' to get any kind of support from City staff. So, we would

want to include our Planning Department, and consult with the folks at the College of Charleston, who do a lot of statistics on hotels and their occupancy rate and so forth, with our Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the industry, with the motel and hotel industry to get their input, from the Preservation groups, and particularly from the Downtown neighborhood groups. The focus of the study is on the Peninsula, and, as many of you know, I've proposed that we have, in essence, a workshop for Council. It will be a legal meeting, so we will have a public meeting. This will be in March. I think we've agreed that we'll do this on March 18th, and I would propose to you that we get enough of our initial study done so that when we meet on March 18th, one of the items on our agenda for Council will be to let this body really dig into the issues that face our community regarding hotels and the number of hotel rooms that we can support on the Peninsula. Subsequent to that, with the additional input that I've just described, within 90 days we come back to you with any proposed ordinance changes, both to the Overlay District itself and subjects like, 'is a 50 room limit still appropriate', or 'are there some sites where a different number of rooms are appropriate', but also those requirements that are necessary to get a special exception in front of our Board of Zoning Appeals. I think I probably covered it pretty well, but if I may call on Jacob Lindsey to add anything that I might have left out."

Jacob Lindsey said, "Mayor, you did cover all the high points. Of course, everyone who worked on the Tourism Management Plan update of 2013, thank you. We would be dealing with a much more severe situation today, were it not for that good work, so, that has set good footing for what we need to do. Now, of course, as you all know, the City is changing every day. It always changes. We would like to be able to continue updating, so that we are always operating the best practices. Staff concerns are that, first of all, we're maintaining a balance of the economy downtown, and that we are a vibrant and functioning City. We're concerned about the displacement of beneficial uses such as residences and offices. We're also concerned about the displacement of parking that would support other good, beneficial uses. So, we think that a lot of positive things could come out of the study that could give us a better toolkit to continue the work that we do, make sure that we regulate the tourism and industry properly."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "So, I will open the floor for any discussion."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Riegel.

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Are you couching this in terms of a resolution, and we pull the moratorium aspect off of it? Is that correct, sir?"

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, I would respectfully suggest that we withdraw the motion to approve the proposed ordinance that includes the moratorium, and I would seek, if it's the pleasure of Council, to have a resolution to support what I've just proposed, in terms of a study over the next 90 days and your involvement as well."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Yes, I'd like to move that we, as a Council, review and approve that resolution. I'm in favor of that and need a second."

The Clerk said, "So, right now, the motion is to withdraw."

Councilmember Mitchell said, "I second that."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "First, we have to withdraw. Is there any discussion about that?"

On a motion by Councilmember Riegel seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, City Council voted unanimously to withdraw Item L-1 from the agenda.

An ordinance to amend Chapter 54 of the Code of the City of Charleston (Zoning Ordinance) by amending Article 9 thereof by replacing the current Part 6 thereof with a new Part 6 to provide for a Temporary Moratorium until no later than December 31, 2016 on the processing of zoning and development applications for accommodations uses located on the Peninsula south of Mount Pleasant Street. (WITHDRAWN)

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Now we can entertain a resolution, not an ordinance, to support a study going forward as described by myself and Mr. Lindsey."

Councilmember Riegel made a motion to approve and Councilmember Shahid seconded the motion.

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Moody.

Councilmember Moody said, "Let me address this whole thing with regard to a moratorium and it stopping things. I'm in favor of this study, but here's my concern about just how we study it, and I addressed this to Mr. Lindsey and also probably Mr. Martin, who has, obviously, a lot of experience with planning. I'm going to throw some numbers out here, and I'd ask that you give me your feedback, if I'm in the ballpark. I'm not saying these are completely accurate, but if you take an apartment building, an office building, and a hotel, 100,000 square feet in each one of them, basically you would have somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 or 100 guest rooms, in the apartment you'd probably have 300 apartments. The number of daily occupants in a hotel would be about 150. In the office building, it would be about 600. In the apartments, there would be about 300. The total cost of a hotel, 100,000 square feet, would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40 million. An office building would be \$25 million. An apartment building would be \$20 million. The gross revenue in the hotel would be about \$15 million. In the office, the rent would be about \$3.6 million, and in the apartment about \$4.8 million. So, when you start boiling all this down, the annual accommodations tax on the hotel would be about \$1.6 million. Obviously, you wouldn't have any of that on the office or the apartments. You would have the food tax, hospitality tax would be about \$300,000 on the hotel and zero on the office and zero on the apartment. The property taxes would be about \$750,000 on the hotel, \$600,000 on the office, and about \$375,000 on the apartment building. The car parking requirements on the 100,000 square foot hotel would be about 66. On the office, it would be 400, and on the apartment, it would be about 150. If we're going to have a moratorium, we ought to have it on apartments and retail, not on hotels."

There was some laughter in the Chamber.

Councilmember Moody continued, "That's part of what my concern here is, are we studying the right thing? Are we looking at the right things? I know that if we study just hotels, I don't think it's going to be the right study because, if we say we're going to have no more hotels Downtown, that means we're going to have hotels in West Ashley, and we welcome all of them over there. We'll have hotels in North Charleston, we'll have hotels in Mt. Pleasant, and now we'll have all of these cars coming downtown because we can't move the historic sites and the residents and everything to those areas. So, we're going to still have the people coming Downtown, looking for a place to park, parking in neighborhoods, creating all this stuff. I don't have an answer here. I guess I just have a problem. I don't know whether those numbers

make any sense. Jacob and Josh may say, 'you're crazy', and I'll accept that, but there's something, intuitively, I know that's about right. I want this Council to take into consideration what we're getting ready to do here. I think this is very important information, and I don't want to go down a study that's going to come back and not have addressed all of this stuff, and those are really my comments. I think we need to study it, but the answer may be we need more hotels. I'm not saying that, I'm just saying that might be. I agree with you. Rather than have four or five fifty units, maybe we need a big hotel. I know the people in the village around The Jasper wouldn't want to hear this, and I know Mr. Darby wouldn't want to hear it, but maybe we ought to have a big hotel there. It would be less people. You would really have less people, less impact maybe on the neighborhood. Anyway, I just threw that out for whatever it's worth. So, I welcome your comments."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Would you like a response now?"

Councilmember Moody said, "Yes, I'd like that."

Jacob Lindsey said, "I can't speak to the validity or otherwise of all your numbers. They sound accurate off the cuff. I will say this, that hotels generally do park at a slightly lower ratio than comparable uses and they also generate less traffic than comparable uses, as a rule of thumb. All the things that you stated, I think, are reasons why we should study it, and the real core of this is the fact that we want to maintain. It's not just quantitating, we want to make sure that we're doing everything we can to maintain a real, living, vibrant city at the core of this place, so when tourists come here, they see real folks walking around who live here and go to work, not just a place that's really nothing more than a tourist destination. So, that's really what we think is the main reason."

Councilmember Moody said, "My point is the hotels are going to go somewhere. There are a lot of people down here. What are the unintended consequences? We need to study all of them."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you very much."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Shahid.

Councilmember Shahid said, "Thank you, Mayor. In my very brief time of serving on this Council, I've learned two new words, 'Gathering Place' and 'moratorium', words that were passed around this Chamber. When I was approached concerning this moratorium, I told the Mayor I would support it, and I still would, if it was up for a vote today. I have to tell you, I really appreciate Councilmember Seekings calling me and bringing to my attention some of the restrictions that this ordinance 54-220 has in place regarding the overlay, regarding the restriction on the location of hotels and other accommodations that are allowed, and the other restrictions regarding the number of rooms and full service hotels that can be incorporated within this very restricted geographical area. I appreciate the concerns particularly that Councilmember Moody has brought to our attention regarding revenue and income, but I think this is a bigger issue. I think it is a tremendous issue that we need to address head-on, and it needs to be comprehensive. I hope we can do it within the 90-day period that the Mayor is proposing on this resolution. Having a 50-room accommodation facility may be a very good idea, but it may be a very bad idea. Do we need more of those or less of those? I don't know. Do we need to include more full service facilities? Do we need to expand over to the West Ashley area? I don't know the answer to those questions because those are things we need to take into consideration. Who's coming to Charleston? People are coming to Charleston.

That's not going to end any time soon, but we have to be mindful that we flood this market, and by flooding the market, we're going to hurt the existing hotel accommodations. We're going to hurt the existing residents on the Peninsula. We certainly don't want an increase of people traveling from West Ashley and Mt. Pleasant or Summerville and Johns Island into the City, creating more of a traffic issue that we have to address. Those are all very admirable and very serious problems that we need to take into consideration. We don't want Charleston to turn into just a destination City. People come to Charleston because it's Charleston. People come to Charleston because it's a living City. People come to Charleston because of the folks that inhabit the City, but if we continue down this path of unchecked and unfettered hotel building, we're going to create an area in which we're not a residential community. We're going to affect the amount of affordable housing that is a big issue with us, we're going to affect transportation, and we're going to affect all the other areas that we need to take into consideration. So, I support the study. I support this resolution. I think if we could get all of this accomplished in 90-days, it would be worth the effort. I applaud the Mayor for not being shy on any of these types of issues. I think that we've got to get on board with him, and support this study to make sure that we are comprehensive regarding all of these other factors that we need to take into consideration that I just mentioned. Thank you, Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Riegel.

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "I'm next."

The Clerk said, "He raised his hand first, but I have you next, and then, Councilmember Moody."

Councilmember Riegel said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Once again, I must commend your leadership. You and I talked early this morning about the moratorium, and, as you saw my quote in the Post and Courier, that's a bit of a harsh word. My biggest concern was, by issuing a moratorium on new hotel development applications, are we sending a message that the City of Charleston was closed for business? Indirectly, do we also send a message to the many developers and folks looking in West Ashley that we are closed for business? To your credit, Mr. Mayor, to your foresight, to your vision, and to your courage, you decide to withdraw the moratorium in place of the study. I am a Board of Governors member for the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Convention and Visitors Bureau, speaking for Chairman Dan Blumenstock and our wonderful Executive Director, Helen Hill, they were against the moratorium. This is more than just a moratorium, and I'm going to get away from that word because it is a terrible word, about hotels. It's about the livability, the sustainability, our great City, and as Councilmember Peter (Shahid), my good friend here, said. This is going to involve, Jacob, traffic, versatile use, like office buildings. It's not going to be all about hotels. It's not going to be all about office buildings. It's not going to be about parking. This is a general study. My biggest concern, Mayor, is 90 days enough? I want to mention a couple of things, and, of course, the numbers that (Councilmember) Bill Moody was reading were the same numbers I got. I won't share the sources, but in our last board meeting the Convention Bureau occupancy rates were down, the percentages were down. What happened? The number of tourists necessarily wasn't down. As the Mayor was speaking to, the number of hotel rooms were up. So, that was speaking to this law of supply and demand, and I found that the hotel industry and developers are really self-placing. Bill (Councilmember Moody), you being a great accountant,

they're not going to invest in a hotel. They're going to invest in property. They're not going to put up mega-hotels so they can sit there empty. They know exactly what they're doing. The second thing is the rates. A lot of the downtown hotel rates are \$500 to \$1,000 a night. Suppose we had a wonderful family of maybe two or even four who wants to visit Charleston and partake of our museums, the Yorktown, our wonderful Waterfront, they can't afford that. So, the Upper Peninsula would be ideal for these types of hotels and developments, and I know that's what we're looking at. I, again, commend the Mayor. I think that this study is a great alternative to the moratorium, and I ask this body to support that resolution for the study. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "Mr. Mayor and Council, I do think that we need to study this, but I also think that we need to study this more comprehensively, and to take into account some of the things that were raised by Councilman Moody. I also want us to take into account, the job creators. Hotels create jobs. For every one room developed by a hotel, it creates around 1.4 jobs. When we start looking at this study, and look at it comprehensively, we should not do so in isolation. We should do it across the board in terms of the effect it will have on transportation. How that will be impacted. We should talk about it in terms of the impact that it would have on our economy, etcetera. The one thing that we have not talked about here yet is the job creation that hotels provide to our City. Those jobs range from service jobs all the way to management jobs. Any study that we do, I am hoping that one of the factors that we will use in making our determination is the kind of job creation that hotels do, in fact, have in our City."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir. Thank you much. Councilmember Waring."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I agree we need to study this, but in some of the entities that are going to be involved, I did not hear maybe I missed it, whether the CVB is going to be somehow involved."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I did say that. Yes, sir."

Councilmember Waring continued, "Okay. Good. I just missed it."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Yes, sir."

Councilmember Waring continued, "Also, I know one of the Societies, and we all respect them, asked that Airbnb not be included in this. If we think hotels affect neighborhoods, why wouldn't Airbnb directly affect the quality of life in neighborhoods? Instead of doing this in part, if I owned a hotel and I pay accommodation sales tax, I pay my business license fees, I pay my property taxes, obviously, I pay the costs and overhead of being in business, and somebody is picking off business in the neighborhood, and they do not pay business license fees, they do not pay accommodation sales tax, our City is one in which most people think this City runs off of property taxes. It's a wonderful diverse stream of revenue that Mayor Riley and his team, previous Councils and obviously, this Council, and now you, oversee. Roughly somewhere South of 45 percent or so comes from property taxes. We don't generate enough property taxes to simply pay for the police and fire, so where does the rest of the money come from? The second highest source of income is business license fees, right around 24 percent, and, I believe, the next highest source may be around parking fees, 16 to 18 percent, and then it goes on down from there. So, fee income is hugely important to the City of Charleston. Almost every meeting now, we have somebody here, sometimes it's the same person, sometimes it's more,

talking about Airbnb, and if they don't have it, they can't afford the house they bought and all of that, but I've got to be frank. In the neighborhood that I live in, I don't know whether I would have bought that house if I would have transient people staying in a house right next door to me, and if I didn't know who was coming, when they were going, how are they going to be parked, and how are we going to police them. So, I think, Airbnb, if we're going to look at something comprehensive dealing with hotels, those are stays, and those are stays that directly affect our community so, I think, we'd be remiss if we don't. Is it harder to do? I agree it would be harder to do so, I think, Airbnb, and I know that's coming to Community Development, but I think we need, again, a comprehensive look. We'll have a hearty discussion in Community Development, but why not have some professionalism brought to that. The reason I got on professionalism is, we had a wonderful study done by Mr. Andrew Duany.

We all know the fine gentleman that came to town with all the knowledgeable space that we had, did a study and I don't think, it was parts accepted virtually from the right, left, center. So many positive comments came out of that until we actually implemented them, I would think, in record time, okay. Were the answers right there in front of us? I think so. It split the BAR (Board of Architectural Review), I think we could've thought of that. The truthful part about it is we didn't, but that process worked admirably. I don't know whether we can incorporate a constructive view from some consultants from outside to come and work with our Planning Staff, listen to our CVB, listen to some of the people in the industry, listen to some of the people who are advocates of Airbnb, and we all emerge on the other side with a system better than we have today, because I was on the Planning Commission when the 50-room hotel piece came before us. That was, at one time, thought to be a really, really big cure to our problem, and now we're here. I guess the good news is now we're trying to, hopefully, maybe stem the growth of that, but it's not doing what we initially thought it was going to, it evolved. I would hope that if we are going to study hotels, there is no secret why those hotels are piled up at the foot of the Ravenel Bridge. It does bring additional traffic to this Peninsula. Can we put up a bar keeping them from coming across the bridge? We can't, so, that gives more impact on our Peninsula and on the quality of life on the Peninsula. Looking at this thing in a comprehensive way or in an isolated way, just looking at the Peninsula only, I don't know whether that's the smart thing to do. I certainly support the study. I certainly support a comprehensive look, but, by the same token, if we are going to do it, I hope we do it the right way and not take the easy way out. You're right, it may take more than 90 days to do this the right way, but anyway."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Right. I understand. Thank you very much. Councilmember Lewis."

Councilmember Lewis said, "I certainly, too, agree with us doing the study. We know that there still are probably six or seven hotels that have been approved for the City. When we do the study, we need to really take a serious look at if anymore hotels are going to be built in the City, where they're going to be built. The Peninsula is really tight. Like my good friend Councilmember Moody said, in the North Central area, I certainly wouldn't like to see a hotel in my neighborhood, so you could take that to Grande Oaks, because we need to be serious about what we do when we study hotels and where they're going to be built. Another thing, there have to be people who work in those hotels. We have to be mindful that the people working in those hotels, right now, half of them can't afford to live in the City of Charleston, so we need to, again, look at considering affordable housing. Something last year that this Council did, which I didn't agree with, I bring it up every time you give me the opportunity, is we did a disservice to the people in the service industry, the hotels and restaurants, when we raised the rate of taxis at night on the weekend to double the price. A lot of those service workers can't get home at night that rode into Downtown. They live in North Charleston, West Ashley, and have to pay triple to

get home. When we think about building hotels, motels or whatever, we need to think about the people that work in these service industries. We need to really think about how they're going to live. We talk about people on welfare and food stamps, but I'm going to tell you right now, we have put a lot of those people on welfare and food stamps. When you have people working in the hotels and the like that have to pay on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights anywhere from \$20 to \$50 a night to get home because we doubled the fare. We created an industry Downtown, and now we can't control the people who go in those clubs and those bars. So, what do we do? We come up with an ordinance to hurt the workers, thinking that we're going to get cabs to go down there to pick those rude kids up off King Street and Market Street at night on the weekend, when it's never going to happen. Who is suffering? The people that work in these hotels. I hope that some of these hotel workers and these hotel owners are here tonight. They need to hear this and put pressure on this City Council to rescind that ordinance, so that their workers will not be punished for something that we have law enforcement to take care of. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you, Councilmember Lewis. Councilmember Moody."

Councilmember Moody said, "I'll yield to Councilmember Seekings because I was going to talk about Airbnb."

Councilmember Seekings said, "I think, Williams, White and then Seekings is probably right."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "I'm missing some of the queue. Councilmember Williams."

Councilmember Riegel was excused from the Chamber at 7:15 p.m.

Councilmember Williams said, "I would have supported the ordinance, and I'm happy to support the change in the ordinance that the Mayor made because, listening to us, it brings out even more. We're thinking about more stuff, and this is what it is all about. We are thinking about parking. We are thinking about businesses. We are thinking about hotel workers. So, this was my thought, taking a pause, and thinking about all of this. One thing this does prove tonight, it does prove that to me a disheartening statement that was made in the paper that this was brought up by the South of Broad crowd. We disproved that, and, I think, it's very important that when we look at these larger issues of livability, we're talking entirely about the City, the quality of life of the City, and we should not be held hostage by whomever it is, the South of Broad group or any group. It's just a collective body, and I'm happy to see all of these questions. Councilman Seekings, thank you for my conversation with you because you brought me to a larger point, and we do need to think about it. We added about six more things you want to think about. We have a large professional staff and, Councilman Waring, the points you made, maybe we might need a consultant. This is a lot to put on staff for 90 days, but at least we dispelled this issue. This issue did not brew out of some special interest group, whomever is called, South of Broad group. Thank you."

Councilmember Riegel returned to the Chamber at 7:16 p.m.

Councilmember Moody was excused from the Chamber at 7:16 p.m.
Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember White.

Councilmember White said, "I just wanted to make a couple of comments. The first comment is really kind of specific to Councilmember Moody's comments around the finances of

projects built and value created by a return on investment when you develop a hotel site, as opposed to an office building or an apartment complex. Really, when an investor looks at developing a site, and they define that the return on investment is significantly higher by doing a hotel, they're, obviously, going to be directly inclined to do that. That also creates issues within the community such as is driving up the property values holistically across the entire Peninsula and the City. Some might say, 'what is the problem with that?' Well, we just heard about the issues that we are talking about all of the time about affordable housing, and although it's not maybe directly tied to it, all of these things, over time, do sort of create those issues, and it just exacerbates the problem. The other thing that I want everyone to think about, as we talk about hotels, hotel uses and more hotels in the City, is when you build a hotel that is a very individualized, single-purpose building, and it is very hard to repurpose a building and it's costly to repurpose a building like a hotel into something else. So, when you have market demands that change, and they do, subsequently, you could end up with a lot of dark spots across the City when we have hotels that can't be filled, and, all of a sudden, can't be repurposed financially viably either. Then, lastly, I'll just make a comment that, and I think Jacob said this, diverse uses across our City are, I think, what makes us a livable City. Having office buildings, apartments where people can live, and hotels, and all of those things, I think, add life to our City, so that we don't end up like cities that we've visited across the country, and at 5:00 they turn into just deserted wastelands. People who choose to live in the Urban Core of the City do so because of the vibrancy, but that quality of life balance is critical to allow them to live in that environment, yet not having it to the point where it detracts from their quality of life so much that they no longer want to reside Downtown. Lastly, one final comment, and that is, what I have found over the eight, going on nine, years that I've been on City Council, the things that, I think, cause us the most heartburn and concern when it comes to development, are variances. Inevitably, that's what we end up finding ourselves into the significant controversial conversations because we choose to allow for variances and uses and, over time, I hate to say it, but it seems to me that's become much more of the norm than the rare exception. So, as we study hotels, and we study all of the things that we just talked about, I think what we need to be mindful of is not just putting more regulation in place so that we can turn right around and make a variance for it. We need to make sure it's something that we all agree upon, and then we all agree that the variances should be the rare exception and not the norm, so that we don't find ourselves just simply in the same circular conversation a year from now, or two years from now, after we've studied this problem. Thank you."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Seekings.

Councilmember Moody returned to the Chamber at 7:21 p.m.

Councilmember Seekings said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. The hour is late so I won't say as much as I was originally going to, although, when we do have a workshop, I would like to say a little bit more. I think Councilmember White sort of put his finger on it. We need to look at a couple things. One is, what we've got on the books, are we enforcing it? Do we even know what's on those books, and, I think, in order to take this issue up, we need to do two things, one, put it in historic context, and then put it in context of what the issue actually is. I would just like to remember and remind Council that 10 of 13 of us sitting in this Chamber, three years ago tonight, debated and accepted the amendment to the Hotel Overlay Zone, which took completely 70 properties out of the Hotel Overlay Zone, which represents a potential of over 3,000 hotel rooms. We took them out, gone completely. We also downsized a number of the properties that could possibly be hotels from hundreds to 50, so, that was the culmination by the way of a year of study by, not one, but two people full-time in our Planning Department. So, we've looked at this, and we have a good baseline to start from. We identified where we

thought we should and shouldn't have hotels, and we did an enormous amount of work on that when I talked about that today. Let's not forget, the other thing we did is that we amended Sec. 54-220, and we added some requirements on there that I'm not sure we're enforcing. One of which is, we required hotels that come into the Overlay Zone, following that amendment three years ago, to have their own forms of transportation for the people who are staying in them to get them on and off the Peninsula. We're not doing it. We're not enforcing it. We need to go look at those kinds of things because one of the things that everyone has talked about tonight is congestion and traffic Downtown. So, that's the historic aspect of it. Then, the actual issue, the actual issue, as framed by our Planning Department for tonight's discussion on the original ordinance that was before us, was anticipated future applications of hotels on the Peninsula and what we ought to do about them. The number of properties that were listed were, guess how many? Six. Now, they're big properties, and they're important properties. 176 Concord Street, what property is that? State Ports Authority which, as you all know, is currently under an RFP by the Ports Authority to sell it, and it is in the Hotel Overlay Zone. It was specifically put in that Hotel Overlay Zone three years ago tonight. We specifically put it in there, and we specifically didn't take it into the 50-room arena, so that's something that's out there. 194 East Bay Street, that one is a little bit of a head-scratcher to me. That's the Charleston Cooks Building. That is 50 rooms. Who knows whether that passes the variance test or not, I don't know. North Market between Anson and Church Streets, you all know where that is? That's the old First Baptist Gym property that is now a huge surface lot that, not one, not two, but three years ago, somebody, mind-numbingly so, paid \$15,750,000 dollars for. It's actually two pieces of property, two zoned properties, each of 50 rooms. In our debates, I can't imagine we would ever come up to the conclusion that it's good for anything other than a hotel or mixed-use. I used to, as you know, live right across the street from there. I still own that property. It's also right near 200 Meeting Street, which is a huge office building, which is a huge burden on Pinckney Street. It's a terrible neighborhood, just so you know. North of Calhoun, 475 East Bay Street, that's the corner of East Bay and Calhoun Street. That is Mr. Rivers' property. We had lots of discussions with Mr. Rivers. We wanted him to build a hotel there. We put it in the Hotel Overlay Zone, and he hasn't, so there is no fear he is going to run in and get an application any time in the near future. 46 John Street is a piece of property that's right behind Joe Pasta and Halls (Halls Chophouse), which is a surface parking lot, which is very small and awkward, and is up to 69 rooms. It would be a perfect place for a hotel. The last one is 477 King. Well, that's the across the street office for PeopleMatter. In terms of a study, and what we are talking about, and in terms of anticipated future applications, those are the six properties. We can study those in 90 days easily, easily, easily. I recommend that we do, and we look at this and think about where we are, and then we go to the actual written ordinance and see what's in that written ordinance because that, to me, is the key. It's not what's going where. It's what we do with it when it goes there, and what we require of those properties as they are built. Are they going to put an increased burden on our traffic and transportation system that is broken? I mean, we've got some issues we need to deal with. We've got to deal with all that, so I think the study is doable within 90 days. I think if we're going to have a meeting of this Council, we shouldn't do it on March 18th, which is a Friday. I don't think that's a great day to do it. I think we should do it sooner rather than later, but not a Friday. This whole idea of a resolution, I think, we should resolve as a Council. Every single day, Mr. Mayor, our Planning Department and we, as a City, are always thinking about the best thing for the people who live here, every day, recognizing we're a Peninsula of 30,000, a City of 125,000, where 5 million people came to visit last year, and it's going to be 6 million next year. They're coming, and every single one of them, with all due respect to my friends from West Ashley, from Daniel Island, from James Island, every one of them at some point during their visit, whether they're going to Daniel Island or to West Ashley, at some point, at some point, they're coming to the Peninsula. They're coming to see Downtown Charleston. Some are going to stay for longer than others. Those are

the people in the hotels. Some will drive here. I don't want to expand this debate beyond the issue that, Mayor, you've brought forward, and that's hotels, but it's all tied into how we move, how we make ourselves safe, and how we move, So, the actual study of the anticipated future applications of hotel rooms on the City of Charleston's Peninsula is six properties. We can study that, and, I think this Council will conclude pretty quickly, with the exception of one, they're all natural places to put a hotel."

Councilmember Waring said, "So, why study it?"

Councilmember Seekings continued, "Well, the Mayor has asked for that study. Let's go take a look at it, but one of the questions was, how long is it going to take us? We want to make sure everyone realizes what the scope of this is, so let's go take a look at it. Then, let's get beyond this and think about the bigger issues that are out there. So, I resolve to do this. I don't know if we need a written resolution. If we're going to have a meeting, let's do it on a date that's not the Friday after St. Patrick's Day. Thank you for bringing this up, but I don't think the scope of this is quite what we all might've anticipated."

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Waring.

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you. With all due difference to my very well-respected colleague, if I really thought that it only comprised, what is it, six properties, I would agree with you. That wouldn't even take 90 days. I agree with you on that. I do think the problem is larger than six properties. I guess I'll throw the question out. How can we study hotels or hotel rooms on the Peninsula without studying Airbnb? Am I the only one that thinks the two are interrelated? Anyway, thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "So, as Councilmember Gregorie had recommended a couple of meetings ago, we are taking the issue of Airbnb through Councilmember Mitchell's Community Development Committee, which is meeting this Thursday, and we will begin to address that issue. I believe we are going to recommend a task force get together and study that issue. I do believe it's going to take longer than 90 days to study that issue because it will just take some time. So, if you will, we are not ignoring it. We will be on two parallel tracks, and all of this information comes back to Council, so, it won't be done with the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. They may not coincide exactly on time, but we're going to get them started on a parallel track. I just felt a sense of urgency after the 200 rooms got approved and the number of rooms that are slated to open this year and next year. We do have an Accommodations Overlay Zone of other properties that should be considered, as well, that I wanted to go ahead and get this hotel issue out on the table and something for us to try to figure out in short order, in respect of the business community and letting them know where we're going with this, number one, and out of concern of the trend that I see, that any property that's entitled to become a hotel will become a hotel. We want to be respectful and have a diverse economy and City where residential uses, business, and other commercial uses thrive along with hotel uses, and not just one thing where it's allowed. That was my sense of urgency to bring this to you."

Councilmember Waring said, "Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I agree with that. Dual track is fine with me."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Councilmember Gregorie."

Councilmember Gregorie said, "I agree with your approach."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. Councilmember Lewis."

Councilmember Lewis said, "Mr. Mayor, I agree, too. With the number of hotels that we already have approved slated to be built on the Peninsula, walk around the City, I just don't see where there is that much land left to build another hotel. If someone puts in an application to build a hotel and it's in the zone that they could build it, then I see them building it, but I just don't see any more hotels, so the study is very important. It's important for me so I can clear my mind, because I definitely wouldn't want to see a hotel built in the middle of a residential neighborhood. It looks like everything that's left beyond Columbus Street is residential. If some developer hadn't bought it for one or two different reasons, either housing, or, farther up the street, restaurants or something, I think, most of the land is taken up, so we want to see what the study tells us."

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Thank you. I think, one of the things that we'll consider, they're not that many vacant properties left on the Peninsula, but the market forces could be such that a hotel could displace existing residential use or commercial use, and that's yet another form of gentrification that should be considered along with everything else. Would anyone else like to be heard?"

Mayor Tecklenburg recognized Councilmember Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said, "I'm good. Call for the question."

On a motion of Councilmember Riegel, seconded by Councilmember Shahid, City Council voted unanimously to resolve to study the issue of hotels for 90 days.

Mayor Tecklenburg said, "Is there any other business to come before this meeting of City Council? If not, we stand adjourned."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Vanessa Turner Maybank
Clerk of Council