

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL
MINUTES
October 15, 2025**

Newberry County Council met on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 6:01 p.m. in Council Chambers at the Courthouse Annex, 1309 College Street, Newberry, SC, for a regular scheduled meeting.

Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.

PRESENT: Robert Shealy, Chairman
Karl Sease, Vice-Chairman
Leon Fulmer Jr., Council Member
Todd Johnson, Council Member (virtual)
Travis Reeder, Council Member
Johnny Mack Scurry, Council Member
Stuart Smith, Council Member
Jeff Shacker, County Administrator
Joanie Winters, County Attorney
Karen Brehmer, Deputy County Administrator
Sheriff Lee Foster
Eric Nieto, IT Director
Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council/PIO

Mr. Shealy called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Mr. Fulmer led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance in place of Mr. Johnson who was attending virtually so that he could be at his church's revival, where he is the pastor.

1. Adoption of Consent Agenda:

- a. Newberry County Council Work Session Minutes – October 1, 2025.
- b. Newberry County Council Meeting Minutes – October 1, 2025.
 - Mr. Reeder made a motion to accept the minutes as presented; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

2. Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda.

- Mr. Sease made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented; Mr. Fulmer provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

3. Public Appearances:

a. Colonel William Matheny Jr., Commander of the 117th Engineer Brigade, South Carolina National Guard.

- Colonel Matheny gave some background on the 117th Engineer Brigade. He said about 15 years ago the Brigade headquarters, that were here, moved down to Charleston, and in that time, the Newberry Armory had had small sized units there. They identified that was sort of a mistake and the patriotism and the support they had in the City and County of Newberry were greatly underappreciated and they rectified that about five years ago with the establishment of the 117th Engineer Brigade here in Newberry.
- The Engineer Brigade is one of the newest in the Army inventory, but their historical ties take them back to World War I when President Woodrow Wilson established the 42nd Infantry Division and the 117th Engineer Regiment at that time was established with three companies from South Carolina and three companies from California. Those engineer companies came together to form the 117th Engineer Regiment and they were in combat in France in World War I, and they carry that legacy on with them.
- The 117th Engineer Brigade will be deploying this month in support of the 42nd Infantry Division overseas.
- At home, the 117th commands two engineer battalions that are scattered across the state, as well as multiple engineer companies. In times of need, they will have the engineer resources that the county and the residents of Newberry County need to recover from any type of natural disaster that may occur.
- Colonel Matheny thanked Newberry County Council for their support and hospitality and make sure they understood exactly what they felt

was needed here and they have reestablished part of that and thanked them for their continued support.

- Mr. Shealy thanked Colonel Matheny for attending the meeting and for all they do for the community and protecting them. He added for God to protect each and every one of them.
- Colonel Matheny requested prayers for the families, and they will have multiple events throughout the state, but Family Readiness Groups will be having events here as well.

4. Special Recognition:

a. Employee Recognition:

- Katherine Folk 10 years Communications.
- Garrett Lominack 30 years NCSO.
- Odell Schumpert 30 years NCSO.

- Mr. Shacker recognized the above employees for their service to Newberry County, highlighting their accomplishments and pivotal moments while working for Newberry County.

5. Ordinance 09-03-2025. An Ordinance to amend the text of the official Zoning Ordinance of Newberry County, South Carolina, as codified in Chapter 153 of the Code of Ordinances of Newberry County, South Carolina, to repeal §153.090 Cluster Development, Single Family Residential.

a. Third Reading.

- With there being no changes, Mr. Fulmer made a motion to approve third reading; Mr. Reeder provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

6. Ordinance 09-04-2025. An Ordinance acting on a request to amend the official Zoning Map established pursuant to Zoning Ordinance No. 12-24-01 as revised and amended by Zoning Ordinance No. 6-11-16 and codified in Chapter 153 of the Newberry County Code of Ordinances, establishes zoning classification and districts so as to rezone one (1) real estate parcel totaling twenty-nine and ten

hundredths (29.10) acres designated as TMS No. 340-3-2-111 from RG-General Residential to R2-Rural.

a. Third Reading.

- Mr. Shacker said this request is basically a downzoning from General Residential to R2-Rural, and the Joint Planning Commission has recommended it.
- Mr. Reeder asked if anyone disagreed with the rezoning; Mr. Shacker answered in the negative.
- Mr. Sease made a motion to approve third reading; Mr. Smith provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.

7. Ordinance 10-01-2025. An Ordinance amending the Newberry County Code Of Ordinances, Chapter 154, Newberry County Land Development Regulations, adopting updated standards for the subdivision and development of land in Newberry County, and providing for the repeal of all ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict herewith to the extent necessary to give this Chapter full force and effect.

a. Public Hearing.

- Mr. Shealy declared the Public Hearing open.
- Mr. Tyler Johnson said the only thing he saw that he thought might need to be added would be the zero wetland mitigation allowed for residentially developed properties so that stream beds existing in those properties can't be destroyed and later on developers go somewhere else and mitigate them there. He said he doesn't think they need to have any damage done to the waterways because of the adverse effects it would have on neighboring landowners.
- Ms. Liesha Huffstetler said she would persuade the council to think about no lot lines, and it is just not safe. She also asked they go with no mitigation to preserve the natural beauty and natural streams. She said they have had issues in Chapin where they destroyed streams, and they had massive flood down their road because the water had nowhere to go. She said civil engineers are able to design

developments based on the topography of the land with saving the trees with the other things they need to save.

- Mr. Tyler Turner said looking over the new LDR, one of the things that goes to his mind while he lives in Newberry County, he has a business outside of the county, there are a lot of times you see subdivisions approved and once they are approved, they disappear into a developer's filing cabinet for a dozen years or so. He said when an approval is given, there needs to be some kind of time limit in place, there needs to be a start date. The approval of that subdivision should be based off where the county is, at that time. He said the last thing they want to do is look at a road with no developers and several approved, and then 10 years down the line that causes issues. He said he'd like something with a start time, end time, something that won't be stretched out over a long period of time.
- With no one else signed up, Mr. Shealy declared the Public Hearing closed.

b. Second Reading.

- Mr. Reeder made a motion to approve second reading; Mr. Smith provided the second.
- Mr. Fulmer said to address a couple of the comments, starting with the wetlands, he knows there is a requirement you cannot damage wetlands, but there is a possibility you can do wetlands mitigation and that is a state law, he thinks they have the ability to not allow that, but asked Mr. Shacker to take a look at that. Regarding the timeframe comments, Mr. Fulmer said he believes the permits do actually have a time frame, to which Mr. Shacker said they do.
- The motion carried 7-0.

8. Ordinance 10-02-2025. An Ordinance to amend the text of the Official Zoning Ordinance of Newberry County, South Carolina, as codified in Chapter 153 of the Code of Ordinances of Newberry County, South Carolina, to establish a new zoning district, RMPD – Residential Master Planned Districts.

a. Public Hearing.

- Mr. Shealy declared the Public Hearing open.
- Mr. Randy Subser voiced his concern about the land development and houses per acre. He said they live in Prosperity and right now they are developing. He said they have lived here all their lives, and they are not used to a lot of traffic and a lot of development. He said they have neighbors who moved in close to them who used to live in Lexington County, and he moved from there to Chapin to find a good place to live and now he is worried about land development in Newberry County. He said Newberry County has always been a great place to live and why can't they keep it that way, not close to everyone in one place and you have many problems when you have that.
- Mr. Tyler Johnson said to coincide during the work session, they are already requiring a 10 acre minimum development side, raise it to 25, you solve that problem. In the current ordinance, he would like to see the zero lot lines removed, he said he knows it was misrepresented by accident during the Joint Planning Commission when they were discussing it as zero lot lines being the same as duplexes, he said he now knows they are not. He said they would be serving themselves well by removing that from there. He said go along with raising the minimum, he'd like to see them create a maximum and they discussed how this is a living, breathing document, he said currently Newberry County is not set up as far as infrastructure for these gigantic projects and why not go ahead and put a maximum in there to cap it. In the last one, currently they require a two-year notice to begin, he said he is pretty sure the Joint Planning Commission voted to drop that down to one year, from the time they get approval they have time to start the project.
- Jonathan Wedaman had overall comments about development in Newberry County, he said he has been here all his life and has seen how things have grown in neighboring counties and things seem to have gotten out of hand, quickly. He said hopefully they can come up with some things to prevent that. He thinks the development fees are very important to take the burden off the taxpayers. He said all these developments come in here and they will need updates to the water/sewer, emergency services. He said the number of houses per

acre to him is very important, a lot of people around the county have seen people move here to escape what they are talking about and are talking about having to move again. He said they need to try and do what they can, he also knows they can't stop it, and it is probably coming. However, they can make the best of it and make sure the proper measures are in place.

- Alyssa Wedaman said many families have lived in this county for generations and built this county with their hard work. She said the residents of the county value open space, the peace, the quiet, the roads, sense of connection to the land, and the freedom that comes with low density living. She said this type of development or overdevelopment threatens this way of life for everybody. She said overdevelopment doesn't just mean more houses, but more traffic, strained systems, overcrowded schools, loss of farmland, wildlife that Newberry County residents love. Packing five houses, six houses per acre, that makes it a suburb, and it is not rural anymore. She said that is not what Newberry County wants, that is what developers want. This type of development is overcrowding, and people are coming for less expensive housing, and they are going to stay 3-5 years and then they're going to want bigger lot sizes, nicer house and then they'll leave. She wants people to come here and invest in Newberry County. She said give people larger lot sizes and make them the permanent place they are going to live and stay for generations. She said as council members, they are elected to be their voice and how many residents of Newberry County have they heard from that are in favor of this, probably not many. She said whatever happens should not be on the backs of the taxpayers and the developers should pay their fair share. She said her final note, if council would not want six houses per acre in her backyard, don't put it in hers.
- Mr. Tyler Turner said he agrees with a lot that was said before him. One thing he wanted to highlight, part of him is concerned as a parent, what those larger subdivisions brings in as far as overcrowding in schools, the stress upon those schools, the taxpayers that fund those schools, teachers that work at those schools and the kids that attend those schools. He said he wants to see his kid go to the same type of schools he went to, for him seeing

his child attend the same kind of school he did and not have to worry about it being overcrowded with classrooms at the maximum number of students. He asked they keep that in mind, the schools.

- With no one else signed up, Mr. Shealy declared the Public Hearing closed.

b. Second Reading.

- Mr. Shealy said that they have heard the residents regarding this Ordinance. He said a lot of work goes into these ordinances, starting with staff, then to Joint Planning Commission, then to Newberry County Council. He said that they think this is a good package, and they are not going to stop growth, but they want to control growth, and they think this is a good avenue to control growth. He said it may need more work, but there has been a lot of work put into it so far.
- Mr. Fulmer made a motion to approve second reading; Mr. Smith provided the second.
- Mr. Fulmer said before they move forward he wanted to make one thing clear, everything they are voting on tonight, everything they have discussed, is an effort that they are trying to do what the residents are asking, he said it is a start, may not be the end game, but it's a start. He said there are things he thinks they need to tweak in order to fully hit what they want to hit, but it is a start. He said everything they are voting on and discussing is an effort to maintain that control. He also requested staff to come back and consider some of the comments they heard and come back with possible recommendations for changes. He said he certainly understands the density issue, and that is a starting point and that is not end game.
- Mr. Johnson said both the moratorium and the extensive effort by the Joint Planning Committee, and this is trying to say we heard the residents, he said they cannot just pass this and put it on a shelf, it has to be living and breathing because things keep changing. He thinks they have laid a good foundation. He doesn't want any resident to think they haven't heard them, and they understand the

integrity of Newberry County and the specialness of it, and they want to keep that and manage and control what they are doing.

- Mr. Sease said he knows they started out with eight houses per acre and now it is six, maybe look at it again to make a compromise. Mr. Shacker said he would bring them back a recommendation on a reduction. Mr. Shacker reminded them that they will have the minimum open space requirement and the 100 foot minimum permitter buffer.
- Mr. Sease said they are trying to manage the growth because if they don't, it will be the Wild West out there. He said they appreciate the input, and it helps them to make better decisions.
- Mr. Shealy said they all live here, and they all love Newberry, and he hopes this is a step toward managing the growth instead of letting it overrun them.
- The motion carried 7-0.

9. County Council may take action on matters discussed during the 5:00 p.m. work session.

- No action was taken.

10. Appointments.

- There were no appointments.

11. Public Comments (Three Minutes).

- Ms. Liesha Huffstetler said for information an EMS vehicle itself is \$400,000, to fully equip it with staff is over a million. She said she doesn't know the cost of a fire truck, but she is sure it is not cheaper. She said it cost \$1 million to pave one mile of road. In regard to development fees, she said to keep these figures in mind because \$2,500 for the 200 development housing division is only \$500,000 and that would pay for maybe one truck. She said they need a little bit more of a development fee. She said \$10,000 on a 200 house subdivision is \$2 million and that would pay for a truck, staff, recycling centers, whatever is needed. She said Lexington County only allows 20 acres to be

developed at a time. She said she is in full agreement with two houses an acre with a yard.

- Ms. Becky Boland said two houses per acre is one house too many and she would like to see it still be one house per acre, one year development to start and she would like to know what the starting actually looks like, she would like to see where the existing development that she fought hard to stop on Jollystreet Road, she would like to see everything they need for that area to be serviced before another housing development even comes to the forefront. She said if they cannot provide for what's already here, there is absolutely zero point to even entertain for someone to come back and bring it to this council until the county can pay for what we already have. She said she wants to make sure the tax implications are not passed on to the current taxpayers, and has to come from development fees, she said the number they heard from the Work Session would not come close to covering it. She said the turnover stats of 3-5 years you see people to start selling houses in the developments, she said it takes between 5-8 years for what we thought was a nice housing development to go to pot. She said she wants all of those things to be thought about, but the tax implications to the current people have got to be in the forefront of what they are thinking, and safety. She said do you want your grandbaby to be on the second floor of a house that is only 10-feet away from the house on fire next door.

12. Comments/Requests from County Administrator.

- Mr. Shacker said the Prosperity parks project, a CPST project, have bids due November 4 and will have a recommendation during the second meeting in November. There will be a recommendation during the same meeting on the award for the Safe Streets for All Grant. There will be recommendations for items that council would like for changes in the two ordinances.

13. Comments/Requests from Council.

- Mr. Sease said they can try and mitigate what goes on in the county, but they have no control over what the City of Newberry

does, and sometimes they annex it in, and they did so before. He said if the city is next to a piece of property and that owner wants to annex into the city and they can do that, and the property then comes under city zoning controls. He said they are trying to control what happens in the county and minimize what happens.

- Mr. Reeder said as long as you have input, they can try and make those changes and if they keep coming out and let them know what they want and need, they will try and work with everybody in the county because this is their county too.
- Mr. Fulmer said if you are a landowner in Newberry County, a landowner with farmland or timber land in the county and they want that to stay as it currently is; he encourages them to look at land trusts. He said if you look at USDA numbers on loss of farms and farmland nationally, it will scare you to death. He said it starts here at home, so if you are a landowner or farmer, look at the possibility of land trusts.
- Mr. Shealy said they haven't taken this lightly at all, through staff, Joint Planning Commission and Newberry County Council, he said you are being heard, and they are trying to manage the growth.

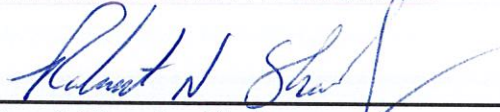
14. Future meetings:

- a. Newberry County Executive Committee – October 27 at 5 p.m.
- b. Newberry County Council Work Session – November 5 at 5 p.m.
- c. Newberry County Council – November 5 at 6 p.m.
- d. Newberry County Council Work Session – November 19 at 5 p.m.
- e. Newberry County Council – November 19 at 6 p.m.
- f. Veterans Day – November 11 – Offices Closed.
- g. Thanksgiving Holiday – November 27-28 – Offices Closed.

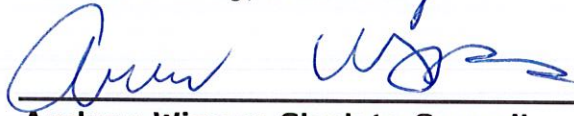
15. Adjournment.

- Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Scurry provided the second and the motion carried 7-0.
- Newberry County Council adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL



Robert Shealy, Chairman



Andrew Wigger, Clerk to Council

Minutes Approved: 11-05-2025