



**Minutes**  
**Sumter County Council Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, June 13, 2023 -- Held at 6:00 p.m.**  
**Sumter County Administration Building**  
**Third Floor, County Council Chambers**  
**13 E. Canal Street, Sumter, SC**

*Social Distancing Is Encouraged At All County Council's Meetings, And Seating Is On A First Come First Serve Basis.*

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAHjiqzPaonQ9LFS2kO37tA>

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** James T. McCain, Jr., Chairman; James R. Byrd, Jr., Vice Chairman; Artie Baker, Eugene R. Baten, Charles T. Edens, Vivian Fleming McGhaney, and Carlton B. Washington.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Gary Mixon, Mary W. Blanding, Johnathan Bryan, Joe Perry, Valerie Brunson, Helen Roodman, Greg Hawkins, and two Sheriff Deputies.

**MEDIA PRESENT:** Shelbie Goulding, The Item Newspaper, was in attendance.

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** There were six members of the public in attendance at this meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Or Vice Chairman Of Sumter County Council  
Chairman James T. McCain, Jr. called to order Council's meeting of June 13, 2023.

**INVOCATION:** Councilmember Vivian Fleming McGhaney gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by US Retired Air Force Veteran Tony Myers who served our Country from November 1950 to May 1984 with 34 years of honorable service. He was a fighter pilot stationed at Shaw AFB upon retirement. He decided to make Sumter his home and he currently lives in County Council district 6. Thank you for your service.



**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Regular Meeting Tuesday, June 13, 2023  
Chairman McCain asked the Clerk to Council if there were any changes to the May 23, 2023, agenda. Mrs. Blanding asked Council to consider removing Item #3 under Old Business (Ordinance #23-986 - Third Reading) from the agenda. Then Chairman McCain called for a motion on the proposed amended agenda.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Byrd, seconded by Councilman Baker, and unanimously carried by Council to approve the agenda as amended.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Regular Meeting Tuesday, May 23, 2023  
Chairman McCain asked for a motion concerning approval of the minutes of May 23, 2023.

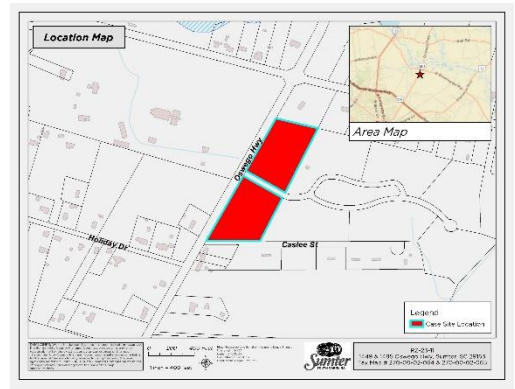
**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Councilman Baten, seconded by Councilman Edens, and unanimously carried by Council to approve the minutes of May 23, 2023, as presented.

**LAND USE MATTERS AND REZONING REQUESTS:**  
Planned Development/Rezoning Requests:

**NOTE:** RZ = Rezoning Of Property As Applicable In Sumter County Zoning and Development Standards.  
AC = Agricultural Conservation As Applicable In Sumter County Zoning and Development Standards.  
NC = Neighborhood Commercial As Applicable In Sumter County Zoning and Development Standards.  
LI-W = Light Industrial-Warehouse As Applicable in Sumter County Zoning and Development Standards.

- (1) **RZ-23-11, 1449 And 1485 Oswego Highway -- (County) - First Reading -- A Request To Rezone +/- 9.97-Acres Of Property Spanning Two Tracts From Agricultural Conservation (AC) To General Commercial (GC). The Property Is Located At 1449 And 1485 Oswego Highway And Is Represented By Tax Map #S 270-00-02-064 And 270-00-02-065.**

Ms. Helen Roodman, the Planning Director, presented this rezoning request to Council members for first reading. She stated that the applicant and authorized Agent, Stephanie Tisdale, is requesting that the 9.97 acres of property be rezoned from Agricultural Conservation to General Commercial. The property is located at 1449 and 1485 Oswego Highway on the east side of the road. The property is currently undeveloped and the property in the area has residential and agricultural zonings. Ms. Roodman stated that they have a potential buyer for the property and the authorized agent and owner desires to make sure that the property is zoned properly for the potential buyer.



Ms. Roodman noted that the intent of the AC Zoning District is to protect and preserve areas of the county which are presently rural or agricultural in character and use and that are uniquely suited to agricultural use. Where urban development is permitted within the district strict quality standards should be required.

She also mentioned that the intent of the General Commercial zoning District is to accommodate the broadest possible range of commercial uses, determined principally by market conditions, while protecting the environment from potentially objectionable uses.

It was also noted by the Planning Director that the property is in the Suburban Planning Area, and the northernmost tract is influenced by the Priority Commercial Mixed-Use Area. The goal of the Suburban Development Planning Area is to scrutinize and manage development patterns, foster intentional mixed-use development, and identify new commercial and industrial locations where form and design are a focus.

Additionally, priority Commercial Mixed-Use areas are intended to direct future, high quality commercial and residential mixed-use development. These locations encourage destination retail commercial uses and neighborhood commercial uses as appropriate. The request is in general alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. However, if approved, the request does not approve any development plan.

Mrs. Roodman stated that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the request as presented.

After Mrs. Roodman's comments, Councilman Edens asked why there was a need for both parcels. Mrs. Roodman stated that at the time of the application the information about a buyer was not known;

however, it was mentioned during the Planning Commission meeting. Mrs. Roodman informed Council that the applicant was present and could answer questions for Councilman Edens.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Byrd, seconded by Councilman McGhaney, and unanimously carried by Council to grant first reading approval for this rezoning request.

**OTHER PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- (1) None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- (1) Request For Approval Of A Proclamation Proclaiming June 15, 2023, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Santee Lynches Regional Council Of Governments Four County Region (Clarendon, Sumter, Lee, and Kershaw).

Chairman McCain introduced the proclamation and County Council acted on its adoption.

***WHEREAS;** Members of Sumter County Council and Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments believe that older adults deserve to be treated with respect and dignity to enable them to serve as leaders, mentors, volunteers and vital participating members of our communities; and*

***WHEREAS;** In 2006, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, in support of the United Nations International Plan of Action, proclaimed a day to recognize the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue; and*

***WHEREAS;** June 15, 2023, marks the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Its recognition will promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older adults; and*

***WHEREAS;** The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments (SLRCG), and members of Sumter County Council recognize the importance of taking action to raise awareness, prevention, and address elder abuse; and*

***WHEREAS;** As our population lives longer, we are presented with an opportunity to think about our collective needs and future as a nation; understanding that ageism and social isolation are major causes of elder abuse in the United States; and*

***WHEREAS;** Preventing abuse of older adults through maintaining and improving social supports like senior centers, human services, and transportation will allow everyone to continue to live as independently as possible and contribute to the life and vibrancy of our communities; and*

***WHEREAS;** Where there is justice there can be no abuse; therefore, NCEA, SLRCG, and members of Sumter County Council urge all people to restore justice by honoring older adults, and join us in our engaging and empowering movement, and putting an end to elderly abuse.*

***NOW THEREFORE; IN WITNESS WHERE OF,** I, James T. McCain, Jr. on behalf of Sumter County Council, along with Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments, do hereby proclaim June 15, 2023, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and encourage all of our four-county region to recognize and celebrate older adults and their ongoing contributions to the success and vitality of our counties, states,*

*and our nation. I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the County to be affixed this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June 2023.*

(2) **Ordinance #23-989 – First Reading -- An Ordinance Authorizing The Sale Of The Property Located At 14 Law Range.**

The County Attorney, Johnathan Bryan, presented this proposed ordinance to Council for first reading consideration. Mr. Bryan indicated that this ordinance would allow for the contract of sale for property located at 14 Law Range, to be sold to Mr. Erick Hodge with an offer of \$101,000. (See ordinance below.)

After all comments, Council acted on first reading.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Councilman Baker, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd, and unanimously carried by Council to grant first reading approval as presented.

*WHEREAS, Sumter County owns the real estate located at 14 Law Range, identified as Sumter County Tax Parcel numbers 249-09-01-022 (the “Property”); and*

*WHEREAS, Putting the Property on the real estate market produced a number of offers and Erick Hodge has made the best offer to purchase the property; and*

*WHEREAS, Sumter County does not currently need the Property for any public purpose.*

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF SUMTER COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AT ITS REGULAR MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED AND BY THE AUTHORITY THEREOF:**

*That Sumter County authorizes the sale of the Property located at 14 Law Range to Erick Hodge according to the terms of the Agreement/Contract: To Buy and Sell Real Estate attached hereto as Exhibit A, the terms of which are incorporated herein by reference.*

*The County Administrator is authorized to sign the Agreement/Contract: To Buy and Sell Real Estate attached hereto as Exhibit A, the Quitclaim Deed and any document(s) deemed necessary to convey the Property to Erick Hodge, or his assignee, pursuant to and in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in the Agreement/Contract: To Buy and Sell Real Estate.*

*Proceeds of the sale will go to the Sumter County Infrastructure Fund.*

(3) **It May Be Necessary To Hold An Executive Session To Discuss An Employment Matter, An Economic Development Matter, A Legal Briefing, Or Other Matters Pertaining To An Executive Session, And Take Appropriate Actions Thereafter In Open Session If Necessary.**

No executive session was held.

**OLD BUSINESS**

(1) **Ordinance #23-988 – Third Reading -- An Ordinance Authorizing The Issuance And Sale Of General Obligation Bonds, Series 2023, Or Such Other Appropriate Series Designation, Of Sumter County, South**

Carolina, In The Principal Amount Of Not Exceeding \$3,500,000; Fixing The Form And Details Of The Bonds; Authorizing The County Administrator To Prescribe Certain Details Relating To The Bonds; Providing For The Payment Of The Bonds And The Disposition Of The Proceeds Thereof; And Other Matters Relating Thereto.

The County Administrator, Gary Mixon, presented this proposed bond ordinance to Council for third reading consideration. He stated that there have been no changes to this ordinance since second reading. After Mr. Mixon's comments, the Chairman called for a motion on this ordinance.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Councilman Baker, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd, and unanimously carried by Council to grant third reading approval and adoption of this ordinance as presented at third reading.

- (2) Ordinance #23-987 - Third Reading -- An Ordinance To Provide For A Levy Of Taxes For County Purposes Of Sumter County, S. C., (Known As The Budget Ordinance) For The Fiscal Year Of Said County Beginning July 1, 2023, To Direct The Expenditures Of Said Taxes And Other Funds Of Said County, And To Provide For Other Matters Related Thereto.

The County Administrator presented the proposed budget for Council consideration with one change to the budget ordinance which was discussed and approved in the Budget Workshop held earlier during the day.

The change to the ordinance was for additional funds (Up to \$250,000) from the County's Fund Balance previously \$657,745 to \$907,745 to allow for the Sheriff's Department's starting salary to move from \$42,000 to \$45,000 which will reflect what the City of Sumter is doing for the Police Officers. The Administrator also stated that he and the Sheriff as well as the Human Resources Director will work on this matter to ensure that the adjustments are worked out as presented at this meeting. Therefore, the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget for the County is now presented at \$60,422,521. After all the comments, Council acted on third reading of the budget as presented at third reading.

**ACTION:** MOTION was made by Councilman McGhaney, seconded by Councilman Edens, and unanimously carried by Council to grant third reading approval and adoption of this ordinance as presented at third reading.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- (1) Special Meeting And Budget Workshop Scheduled For Tuesday, June 13, 2023, At 5:15 p.m. In The County Administrator's Conference Room, 13 E. Canal Street, Sumter, SC 29150.

The Chairman McCain reported that there were two items on the agenda and Mr. Mixon reported out the matter concerning the Budget Adjustment.

Chairman McCain also reported that Council had an executive session to discuss the extension of the County Administrator's employment contract. After the executive session the matter was voted on during the meeting and unanimously carried to extend the Administrator's contract. *(Motion by Councilman Baker, seconded by Councilman Edens, and unanimously carried by Council to extend the County Administrator's Contract (Gary Mixon) for 4 years commencing on July 1, 2023.)*

- (2) Report From Council Members On Other Meetings, Trainings, And/Or Conferences.

No comments from Council members.

## MONTHLY REPORTS

- Public Works Department

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

- Meeting Between Sumter County Council and Sumter School Board: Mr. Mixon announced that there will be a meeting between Sumter County Council and Sumter School Board Trustees on Monday, June 19, 2023. He also said that the time and location will be worked out and sent to each Council member. (See Attachment A in reference to the meeting between the School Board and the
- Employment Contract: The Administrator thanked Council members for their support and extending his contract.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** *Citizens desiring to speak during public comment are limited to no more than three minutes. Comments are to be made through the Chairman of Sumter County Council. If there are any questions, they will be answered after the meeting.*

The following citizens spoke during public hearing:

- Lorraine Muhammad spoke about the condition of the road she lives on (*Cannery Road*) in Dalzell. She asked Council for some help with this matter – potholes, lack of maintenance on the road, and causing problems for their vehicles.
- Siddiq Musa stated that he appreciates the comments from his wife, Lorraine Muhammad, but he wants to know who can fix the problem. He has lived on the road for over 20 years and the road is deteriorating.

Councilman McCain asked for clarity as to what road was it that they were speaking about. Mr. Musa said it is Cannery Road. Councilman McGhaney further stated that part of Cannery Road is in her district and the other part is in Councilman Baker's district. She also stated that this road was one of the roads that was supposed to be worked on if the Penny For Progress had passed. However, it did not pass and now Council must find ways to try to help citizens with their roads. Yet at this time, there are no funds to pave the road.

- Amanda Price spoke in support of LBGTIG Month and the Celebration of Pride month on June 30, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. on the front steps of Sumter County Courthouse. Amanda also asked Council members to attend this event.
- Tasha Gardner spoke about the upcoming Stash-The-Trash Litter Pick-Up Day. She asked the audience and Council to contact Mrs. Karen Hyatt if they would like to be a part of the Pick-Up Day on June 17, 2023.
- Melvin Riley stated that he lives in the Stateburg area; he has been before Council several times talking about the problems with the roads in the area. Although Sumter County has helped him with the problem of the rain washing the dirt from the road onto his problem, the problem is persisting and there has not been any help in stopping the problem which is constantly causing him money. He asked Council for help.

- Dee Hoehn spoke to Council concerning contamination in the water at Shaw AFB, please see attached information attached from Ms. Hoehn’s comments.

After Ms. Hoehn’s comments, Chairman McCain stated that he has been working with Shaw to set up a meeting concerning PFAS with the Commander of the 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing and his engineers. Chairman McCain also mentioned that it has been discussed to send letters to the Congressional Members; however, Council will hold off on that until the meeting with Shaw’s Officials is held, which will be in July. This meeting will be with Shaw’s Officials, Chairman McCain, Councilman Washington, and Gary Mixon. (See attachment of Ms. Hoehn’s comments.)

- Jenner Rivers lives on 102 E. Patricia Drive spoke to Council about the potholes in the road. She asked Council for help in ensuring that the potholes are covered. Ms. Rivers also stated that there is a natural gas leak on East Patricia Drive, Wilder Street, and Gordon Street. Chairman McCain said that he would look into this matter since those streets are in his Council District.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for Sumter County Council, and no additional comments from the public, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m. after a motion by Councilman Baker, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd, and unanimously carried by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

James T. McCain, Jr.  
Chairman or Vice Chairman  
Sumter County Council

Mary W. Blanding  
Clerk to County Council  
Sumter County Council

Approved: June 27, 2023

\*\*\*\*\*

I certify that public and media notification of the above-mentioned meeting was given prior thereto as follows required by Freedom of Information:

- Public Notified: Yes
- Manner Notified: Agendas posted on Television on first floor of the Administration Building.
- Date Posted: June 9, 2023
- Media Notified: Yes
- Manner Notified: Agenda Information is listed on Sumter County’s Home Page, and E-mailed to The Item, The Chamber, WIS-TV, WBTW, and Spectrum Cable.
- Date Notified: June 9, 2023

Minutes – Regular Meeting - Sumter County Council  
Tuesday, June 13, 2023  
Page 8

Respectfully submitted,  
*Mary W. Blanding*  
Clerk To County Council



**The Comments read by Dee A. Hoehn, M.A., L.P.C., Grace Counseling, LLC, during  
Sumter County Council’s June 13, 2023, meeting.**

*(Due to time restraints, Ms. Hoehn skipped over some of the written comments that she intended to say. This document was shared in its entirety to Councilman Washington.)*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen of the County Council,

Thank you for your service and advocacy for our community. Mr. Washington, thank you for inviting me to this meeting this evening. I especially thank you for opening in prayer and inviting the presence of the Lord as you all steward the many issues with which you are faced.

My name is Dee Hoehn and I stand before you to request your help to address the concerning presence of PFAS contamination within Sumter County, specifically identified and unidentified sites surrounding Shaw Air Force Base.

As a resident of Florence County with property in Sumter, I am adversely affected by this contamination as direct border neighbor of Shaw Air Force Base, and also as an advocate for my tenants at Terwood RV Park. My tenants include Army, Air Force, and retired Navy as well as civilian government contractors and medical providers. My RV park is the only one north of Shaw that is not affected as it is connected to High Hill water, however, my house well and pond are affected. Because of my position, I have enjoyed the unique opportunity for 39 years to observe and pray for our military on the other side of my fence.

The potential impact of PFAS contamination on our residents' health and well-being cannot be underestimated. It is our collective responsibility to educate ourselves and educate your constituents in easily understood layman's terms about this so we can act swiftly and decisively to mitigate future damage. I am first going to give you a micro level thumbnail of how this affects us with a few examples, and then widen the lens to the macro level to help you understand how you may be the bridge we need between those two views.

PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a group of highly persistent synthetic chemicals commonly found in a wide range of everyday products. PFAS is what we made Teflon out of, and it is in many things that we use every day including food wrappers. Although the substance is unique in that it does not break down in nature, we have found it's very toxic in large amounts. That is why these are called "forever chemicals". These substances have been linked to numerous adverse health effects, including increased risk of cancer, reproductive problems, and immune system disorders.

Recent studies and emerging measures indicate that our community is already at risk due to the significant PFAS exposure from firefighting foam at Shaw Air Force Base 30 years ago. This foam contaminated our water supplies and underground aquifers. This contamination currently poses a direct threat to the health and safety of our residents, including vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

As has been in the news for quite some time, Shaw Air Force Base used this firefighting foam in the 80s and has been tracking the plumes of contamination for a long while. Millions of dollars have been spent just underground with research as well as above to test water samples within the community, clean ground, as well as clean water. In light of these Herculean efforts, my larger concern when I first learned of this was that

the only thing that Shaw was doing at that time to impact civilians was identifying wells affected providing bottled water service for the residents. When I learned of this, I called our then house representative, Wendy Brawley, Shaw, and then EPA for the Southeastern United States. By the time I heard back from the EPA, they already knew the date and time of my meeting with Shaw Air Force Base to ask questions.

As Juvénel Solomon and many others from Bioengineering at Shaw knew my father, who was on the RAB and the High hills water board, we continued conversations that they had had in previous years with my father before he passed away. I invited Shaw Bioengineering to my property after my first participation as a community member in the restoration advisory board. At that time during Covid, I was very concerned that people were only notified by mailing post card, and this was two or three days before the meeting. My asks were very simple then, and they were captured by our mediator, Leanne Fabianke with Galen Driscoll out of Texas. My biggest ask was to provide more broad and clear PSA's to educate the public in a way that they could understand, and to provide statistics or charts that were more easily understood. The only call to action I had then were simple PSA's and transparent numbers, and I have those meeting minutes for you from a few years ago if you would like to see them.

It is to be noted that our EPA advisory for PFAS to be considered toxic is 70 ppt. Last year a ground-breaking new proposal was given to reduce this level to 4 parts per quadrillion. This first advisory was last put into effect in 2016 and unfortunately with the new advisories are being proposed. Our US military chose to only use the 2016 level as actionable for people who are affected. I say that not to be inflammatory, but to highlight several important points and say I was hopeful when they said they are now considering emerging data that is pointing towards a lower data point.

As I discuss this with you, I would also remind everyone that PFAS is a legacy problem and Shaw Air Force Base is a pass-through as they purchased the firefighting foam from 3M. So, I, as people in your community approach you in anger about their health and property values, obviously their concerns are justified and valid. We should also be reminded that our men and women in military are not personally responsible for this. It is a legacy issue. It's imperative that as we advocate for the least of these, we also respect Shaw and their service and do not put these good people on opposite sides. We need to approach this in a way that is professional, collaborative, with partnerships in city and state and the military that allow us all freedom to decide how to act laterally and the ability to act together when needed.

So, while my first concern was the methodology of communication with the public, my second concern was use of data, statistics and acronyms in a way that allows it to look as if the situation has been handled, but also to indirectly, avoid more pressing questions and legal culpability. As I have told Shaw bioengineering, of course they have to hold themselves in a way that keeps themselves accountable but also avoids legal battles. I believe that you, our council members present at that, witnessed this tension firsthand, and saw that it was not a positive experience. There was an embarrassing lack of progress as the public was angered as there was a lot of backlash in outcry at our last meeting.

I am the only RV park north of Shaw that is on High Hill water. But my back farmhouse and pond and well are not. One example of this blurring of evidence and how we can clarify it within my ask, was information about the values of another RV park cross from Shaw. I openly discussed this and how alarming the level was which no one would've even known, unless it had been published somewhere. At that time the EPA advisory was 70 ppt and across from Shaw Air Force Base, and this other I believe American mobile home park was tested above 220 parts per trillion. I have the exact chart now from DHEC, but when I asked in an

early advisory board meeting where this was published, it was on a very obscure website that someone would have to know existed and then go to, and then search for.

The other thing that I learned from this interaction with Shaw is they are very responsive to concerns when presented requests from the community in a positive way. I also learned that we do have an intermediary in Galen Driscoll, Leanne Fabianke reiterated and captured my request. It was written in to record, and they responded the following week with a site visit to my property, and a correction of those values to be made more easily known to the public. I would ask if you wanted a meeting with Shaw to go through Leigh Ann Fabianke as an advocate.

I believe if we were to begin to discuss the actual scope of this which is worldwide, you would be drowning in information, so I am highlighting a few points to offer to you a later time for conversations to assist in furthering and developing community awareness call to action and more robust collaboration with Shaw.

I would like to now widen the lens to a macro level to help you understand the latitude and depth of this. It is proposed now that everyone in the world currently has PFAS in their body. This contamination affects over 400 US military bases worldwide. It is in the soil, water and can be an aerosol in the air. If you burn it, it doesn't go away. Contaminated sites absorb rainwater, and it is in rain. The deer on my land and fish in my pond have PFAS in their body. These chemicals are even in purchased Lacroix water and other purchased mineral water. Although it's not endemic only to our area, the statistical load of lots of PFAS and PFOA from multiple vectors that tips the table of destiny for those unfortunate people who get sick.

Every state has an MCL or maximum contaminant level that they determine within their legislature to decide what is actionable in a lawsuit or for companies and individuals to strive for. Please know that our legislators already know about PFAS and that there are super-funds in every state connected that our legislators, governors and our president signs off on. Why are MCL's important? If our MCL is 70 ppt, then suits will become actionable above that level. I believe each state differs so significantly that if our property were in New Jersey or, Hawaii it would be lower than 20 ppt. I don't have that data, but what each state considers as toxic is what allows people parameters for advocacy. Our suggested MCL of 4 parts per quadrillion is very much a game changer, and what we should aim for.

As Mr. Washington rightly suggested that we contact Tim Scott, my hope is that there is already someone in Tim Scott's office assigned to this subject who can visit with us and be an advocate. As he begins to face a larger constituency his sensitivity to this problem and ability to advocate may be even more influential.

There is a larger MDL for \$143 billion that involves large constituency's all over the world against 3M. This suit is a part of our multi-district litigation in Charleston, South Carolina, and involves many, many law firms from all over the nation and represents over 400 groups of people. It was supposed to begin the week before last and was put off by a few weeks. I believe the SC firm is representing our nations water supply companies. Our US government/military/Shaw is confident that they will not be named in this suit and the judge or judges overseeing this will grant them immunity. So, in many ways, our US military is spending millions of dollars to mitigate a problem that is not completely theirs and in which they may not be considered legally culpable. I don't even believe that that decision regarding their immunity will be finalized until February 2024.

The reach of this problem does not diminish the importance. That being said, if any indirect lack of transparency exists due to poor PR in the meantime, it may cause pregnant mothers to drink water that is not

filtered that could adversely affect their growing child within the next 9 months. If this mother doesn't know about this due to lack of PR on Shaw's part, she could also be cooking for and bathing her family in this water. Considering the prior instance, a simple solution, such as a Berkey water filter, could make life-changing trajectories in her developing child's health. Let us widen the Lense and consider how this affects our property values which we fight to protect. The real estate agents that I brought to the advisory board meeting stated they are hesitant to sell any property around the base because they want to avoid liability. This is a hardship for many people, and I am sure that you as councilmen and women have heard these concerns.

As I mentioned earlier, you are the bridge between your constituents and these larger opportunities for advocacy with senior legislators. If Sumter County wanted to join this lawsuit against 3M now, we would likely be too small I believe to be represented. If we had to get in line against 3M, we would probably have to get in somewhere behind the entire Netherlands. I do believe if we were to join forces with our state or a larger environmental agency who already has attorneys well-versed in this, we could create change. We may be able to partner with our legislators, those attorneys and Shaw to come up with simple solutions that can quickly bring education, fresh water and relief to your constituents. People well-versed in this would understand the statute of limitations, MCL's, and how emerging legislation affects us as a state.

Given the potential severity of the situation, and the complexity of legal constraints we must navigate, it is imperative that we take immediate action to partner with Shaw's restoration Advisory posed in a collaborative fashion with transparent and frequent communications. The comprehensive investigation by Shaw is ongoing and it does provide crucial data to assess the magnitude of the problem, identify potential sources, and evaluate the associated health risks. I propose that you invite our congressional leaders, Ralph Norman, Tim Scott and Lindsay Graham to a joint meeting with Shaw, so that you might submit a request as a part of the RAB to have 5 action groups led by military and civilians. Each working group can investigate, problem solve and present to the RAB ways to address the PR issue, the emerging health concerns, real estate impact, legal process and legislation.

Furthermore, the current investigation will enable us to implement targeted mitigation measures, ensure the provision of safe drinking water, and establish effective guidelines for managing and preventing future contamination incidents. By acting swiftly, we can safeguard the well-being and future of our community.

I implore you, Mr. Chairman and members of the County Council, to prioritize the health and safety of our constituents by allocating the necessary resources and support for a comprehensive investigation into PFAS contamination. Does this feel like a David and Goliath issue? Yes, it does. I would suggest that instead of looking at the giant, we look for 5 stones. Our five stones are not thrown at Shaw as they are not the enemy; they keep our skies safe and fight for our rights to even speak to you in this forum. Our stones are identified areas of collaboration and working groups. Our community deserves transparent information, robust solutions, and a commitment to protect their welfare. Together with our legislators and Shaw we can ensure the well-being of our community and safeguard a better future for generations to come. Thank you for your attention, concern, and thoughtful consideration.

--

Dee A. Hoehn, M.A., L.P.C.  
Grace Counseling, LLC  
3609 Hoffmeyer Road  
Florence, SC 29501  
Phone: 843-407-3979  
Fax: 843-407-3967