

CITY CONTINUES STORMWATER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

As part of the recent changes to the national stormwater act, the City is continuing to work with the Florence Stormwater Advisory Board (SWAB) to coordinate new requirements under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II with the community in the Florence area.

The goal and mandate of Phase II states: The City must develop, implement and enforce a program to reduce pollutants to the maximum extent practical to improve water quality and to satisfy the appropriate water quality requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act.

As part of satisfying this goal, the City has reached an agreement to enter into a partnership with the "Carolina Clear" program to enhance public education and participation as Phase II

is implemented. Carolina Clear, a program run by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, has received South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) approval in aiding urban communities in the required educational components of Phase II.

The public education and outreach portion of Phase II calls for media outlets, such as the Florence Fountain and the Florence local government access channel, to be used to help educate citizens about Phase II and the need to improve the quality of our stormwater.

The public participation and involvement calls for the utilization of a SWAB to provide guidance in the implementation of these new regulations. This volunteer board has been actively involved in tough policy decisions that must be made to chart a

course of action, such as the drafting of ordinances, which will bring about real change in the way land is developed and maintained in Florence. Comprised of local stake holders in the area of land development and real estate, the local SWAB will continue to be used as a sounding board as Phase II moves forward.

Carolina Clear will help support these efforts by using public service announcements, television and radio spots, workshops, and various other activities to foster public awareness about, and involvement in, the new clean stormwater initiatives.

As a result of the City's partnership with Carolina Clear, both the Public Education and Outreach and Public Participation and Involvement program components required by SCDHEC in regards to NPDES Phase II program will be fully satisfied.

DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS RECEIVE PERMITS

The proposed new cultural and economic center of the Pee Dee region is moving closer toward becoming a realization.

Recent steps have been taken, moving the project closer to completion, as the Florence Little Theatre's new complex recently received its certificate of appropriateness from the City's Department of Urban Planning and Development and is moving forward with construction of the 35,000 square foot building.

The City's new certificate of appropriateness reflects approval from both the City's Urban Planning and Development department and the City's Design Review Board. Both of these entities now use the new City design guidelines, which were adopted in July 2005, to ensure that all new buildings follow the same criteria when it comes to aesthetic compatibility. These aesthetics include the use of building materials and building similarity.

The new Little Theatre Complex went through a rigorous review from the City's Urban Planning and Development department and the City's Design Review Board, as will all other buildings which will be housed in the downtown sector," said Phillip Lookadoo, director of the Urban



Construction is under way on the new Florence Little Theatre Complex on Dargan Street.

Planning and Development department. "It is through the adoption of specific, stringent guidelines that we will be able to present a united, uniform downtown area for future generations."

Designed as a joint venture between Craig Gaulden & Davis, Inc. of Greenville and Goforth Brown & Associates of Florence, the Little Theatre Complex is

being constructed by Contract Construction of Columbia and is expected to be completed by Fall 2009. Funded by a \$10 million grant, the new Florence Little Theatre Complex will be a 35,000 square foot facility located on Dargan Street, between Pine and Elm Streets, just north of the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation Library.

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Florence City Council

Frank E. Willis,
Mayor

Billy D. Williams,
District 1

Edward Robinson,
District 2

Frank J. Brand, III,
District 3

William C. Bradham, Jr.,
Member-At-Large

Robert C. Holland, Jr.,
Member-At-Large

Richard L. Woodard,
Member-At-Large

City Council and the Mayor serve four-year terms. City Council meets the second Monday of every month at 1 p.m. in Room 604 at the City-County Complex, 180 North Irby Street, Florence, SC.

www.cityofflorence.com

RECREATIONAL SERVICES RETURN TO CITY

After four years of consolidation between the City of Florence and Florence County, all recreational services inside the municipal limits are once again being managed by the City.

Both City and County councils agreed to amend the previous action unanimously after adopting it in 2002 as a way to streamline operation of recreation services for city and county residents.

The idea for consolidation was originally conceived due to the fact that more than 50 percent of people taking part in the City's recreational activities are County residents. In addition to this, the County also had an interest in expanding its existing athletic programs. From this, the City and County drafted an agreement that consolidated recreation.

Through this agreement, the City transferred responsibility for maintaining its recreational athletic programs and facilities at Freedom Florence, Friendship Park, Maple Park, McLeod Park and Northside Park to Florence



Teams play on City fields.

County. The agreement also called for the City to retain ownership of its facilities but lease them

at no charge to the County. Another stipulation of the agreement called for the City to transfer 16 full-time employees and ownership of equipment to the County.

Also as part of the consolidation operating agreement, the County received decreasing annual payments from the City for transitional financial assistance. The City waived all rights for any fees collected through athletic leagues and events.

"The overall experiment of consolidation was a positive one," said Florence City Manager David Williams. "But at the end of the day, it came down to both sides realizing that the needs and issues between urban and rural areas are more distinct in recreation than other services."

As part of dissolving the consolidation, the City regained 12 employees, all facilities, programs and equipment it originally turned over to the County in the consolidation agreement. The County will continue its athletic programming in outlying areas and also pay the City \$35,000

toward repairs to the pavilion at Freedom Florence. In addition, the City and County still continue to share the responsibility of Legion Stadium.

The time period during consolidation allowed the City to focus on expanding programming opportunities and hours of operation at its three community centers and, in turn, hire additional programming staff.

"We are excited about resuming control of the athletic aspect of recreation," said Chuck Pope, Parks and Leisure Services Department Manager. "Moving forward, we plan on continuing our tradition of providing citizens of both the City and the County with the high-quality recreational activities and facilities they have come to expect."

For more information about City recreation services or schedules, call the Parks and Leisure Services at 665-3253.

GAC SWEEPS ACROSS FLORENCE

On April 28, City residents again took part in cleaning up the streets of Florence as part of the Great American Cleanup.

Held annually by Keep Florence Beautiful and in conjunction with Keep America Beautiful, the Great American Cleanup is a one day, city-wide event in which citizens band together to collect debris from throughout the City.

With Timrod Park serving as the headquarters again this year, the City collected approximately 100 tons of garbage. As an added reward for those who take part in the cleanup, volunteers were treated to an appreciation lunch.

"We are greatly appreciative of those who continually lend their time, energy and talents to the Great American Cleanup," said Drew Griffin, Public Works Director for the City of Florence. "Thanks to their help, we are able to make our hometown of Florence look better for us and for visitors."

For more information on how you can participate in making Florence a cleaner place to live, contact Keep Florence Beautiful at 665-3113 or log onto our website at www.cityofflorence.com.



This year volunteers collected approx. 100 tons of refuse in the City's Great American Cleanup.

CITY WORKS TO RESTORE IMPAIRED WATERS

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) has developed a priority list of impaired bodies of water pursuant of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). This listing identifies bodies of water in South Carolina that do not meet State water quality standards of which pollution severity and the classified uses were considered in establishing priorities and targets.

There are several bodies of water in the Florence area that are listed by SCDHEC that meet the criteria of being impaired waters. These include Jefferies Creek, Middle Swamp and Gully Branch, all of which are part of the Pee Dee Drainage Basin.

Over the last 30 years, impacts from point sources to receiving water bodies have been substantially reduced through point source controls. The City continues to work with SCDHEC to implement measures that will further reduce point source pollution as specified in the City's National Pollutant Discharge System (NPDES) permit.

The latest way the City is working to repair impaired waters is through the implemen-

tation of Phase II of the NPDES. One of the goals of Phase II is to increase the level of dissolved oxygen in these three bodies of water located around the City. Dissolved oxygen, otherwise known as oxygen saturation, is a relative measure of the amount of oxygen that is dissolved or carried in a given medium. It can be measured with a dissolved oxygen probe such as an oxygen sensor or an optode in liquid substance, usually water.

To do this, the City is limiting the amount of chemicals, fertilizers and other materials that are part of stormwater runoff produced by City businesses and residents, therefore protecting these waters from further degradation.

In addition to the City working toward improving these waters, several private citizens and advocacy groups have recently joined in the cause. The most outspoken has been the Florence-based R.E.D. (Responsible Economic Development) Group.

This group recently lost their court battle with discount giant retailer Wal-Mart over the pollution of Jefferies Creek through lowering the dissolved oxygen levels via materials in the company's stormwater runoff.

"Nurturing these impaired waters back to health is a top priority for the City," said Drew Griffin, Public Works director for the City of Florence. "We understand the importance of the environment to our well-being and are working with SCDHEC to correct the level of dissolved oxygen in Jefferies Creek, Middle Swamp and Gully Branch."

For more information about impaired waters or helping do your part during the implementation of Phase II regulations, call the Public Works Department at 665-3236.



Jefferies Creek is one of three water bodies around the City in need of repair.

CITY TAKES MEASURES TO CURB RUSTY WATER ISSUES

From time to time, the City's Utility Department fields calls from customers complaining of "rusty water." Rusty water is often experienced in houses with galvanized iron plumbing. The rusty water is caused by iron that leaches out of the plumbing. However, rusty water episodes also result from small amounts of naturally-occurring iron and/or iron oxide that are not removed in City filtration plants.

Iron has no adverse health implications and, therefore, is not regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) as a pollutant in drinking water. However, rusty water in the City water system can stain clothing and plumbing fixtures. It can also cause discoloration in drinking water, which is

aesthetically unacceptable.

Under normal flow conditions, water in the City's distribution system is normally used before iron oxide can form in sufficient concentrations to cause rusty water episodes. Small amounts of iron oxide also tend to be deposited in the bottom of distribution system piping under normal flow conditions, and when flow conditions change, these sediments can be re-suspended, creating a rusty water episode. These changes in normal flow patterns can be caused by water main breaks, waterline flushing, fire hydrant testing or the installation of new water mains.

Investigation of rusty water events by the City has revealed that the majority of incidents are related to flow testing of fire hydrants by local fire departments. Fire service personnel, who may be unaware of the water quality

consequences, often initiate a rusty water episode by testing hydrants for only a few minutes. The temporary increase in velocities in the mains allows re-suspension of iron oxides, which then enter city residences and businesses.

As an educational outreach method, the City's Utility Department continues to work with area fire departments to educate their personnel on customer water quality issues and the proper methods of flushing and hydrant testing.

Customers who experience rusty water can contact the City's Water Production Division at 665-3271 or the Public Works dispatcher at 665-3236. Problems that occur at night or on weekends and holidays may be reported to Police Dispatch at 665-3191. Utility Department personnel will respond to check water quality and clear the system as soon as possible.



A City water production operator properly flushes a hydrant.

FLOOD INSURANCE IS AVAILABLE IN FLORENCE

Did you know that 25 percent of flood insurance claims come from areas located outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped floodplain? Did you know that floods and flash floods happen in all 50 states? Did you also know just an inch of water can cause costly damage to your property? Did you know that most homeowners' policies across the country do not cover flood loss? And perhaps the biggest question is did you know that you can now protect your home and its contents through the National Flood Insurance Program?

The National Flood Insurance Program is available in all areas of Florence County, whether homeowners are in a FEMA mapped floodplain or not.

This flood insurance is designed to provide an alternative to disaster assistance to reduce the escalating costs of repairing damage to buildings and their contents caused by floods. Flood damage is reduced by nearly \$1 billion a year through communities, like the City of Florence, implementing sound floodplain management requirements and property owners purchasing flood insurance. Additionally, buildings constructed in compliance with NFIP building standards suffer approximately 80 percent less damage annually than those not built in compliance.

Not only can homeowners obtain flood coverage through the National Flood Insurance Program, but renters can as well. Renters can buy contents coverage, even if the owner does not insure the structure. However, there is a 30-day waiting period before the policy becomes effective. Also, flood insurance is required by law in order to obtain federally secured financing to buy, build or renovate a structure located in a flood hazard area.

To find out more about flood insurance, contact any licensed property/casualty insurance agent or broker, as premiums for this program are the same price through all insurance agents and brokers or visit the City's website, www.cityofflorence.com.

FAMILY DONATES LAND TO CITY

A recent gift has expanded the acreage of conservation properties held in trust by the City for its residents. A four-acre site adjacent to Middle Swamp has been donated to the City in memory of Robert H. and Alice C. Faber by their children and grandchildren. The Fabers, who were long-term residents of the City, acquired the property in 1993 to insure its protection and preservation.

The Faber Tract is an undeveloped wetland bordering Parkwood Subdivision. A classic example of cypress tupelo bottomland, the site provides habitat for a variety of native plants and animals. Deer, beaver and wood ducks frequent the area during all seasons. The land also serves as a riparian buffer, which helps to

protect water quality in Middle Swamp. According to the desires of the donors, this site will be preserved in perpetuity in its current, natural state.

With this gift, the Faber family has made a significant contribution to enhance the quality of life for City residents both now and in the future. Their foresight and generosity are greatly appreciated. The City expresses its gratitude to the following heirs of Mr. and Mrs. Faber:

- **Robbin F. Hill**
- **Linda Stagg**
- **Andrea Nicole Locklair**
- **Robert Christopher Locklair**

PERMITS

(continued from page 1)

The facility will be used for theatrical and musical performances.

The other new downtown anchor will be the Francis Marion University (FMU) performing arts center, which is currently in the process of architectural design and receiving a certificate of appropriateness from the City.

FMU is partnering with the City to build the FMU Center for the Performing Arts, which has an estimated price tag of \$17 million

and will be located on a nearly four-acre lot on the corner of Dargan and Palmetto Streets. FMU's performing arts center will be used for the school theatrical and musical performances and the center will also include office and instructional classroom space.

These two buildings tie into the City's plans of pursuing a revitalization of its downtown area. As part of the City's Downtown Revitalization Strategy, these buildings will reflect key elements of identity, architecture and public improvement, all of which are outlined in the City's new design guidelines

and are key components in the City's plans for a 12-block arts and cultural district downtown.

"The expedient rate at which these projects are moving forward is both exciting and satisfying," said Mayor Frank Willis. "It shows that the City is on the fast track to providing residents a downtown that they can be proud of. When complete, we anticipate that our downtown will be an epicenter for the performing arts throughout the state."

MAYOR'S COALITION RECEIVES FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS

Florence Mayor Frank Willis' Coalition To Prevent Juvenile Crime recently received a well-deserved grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (SCDJJ) to help fund several programs to keep at-risk youth off of City streets.

The \$500,000 will be divided among Florence School District One, the Florence Police Department, the Boys and Girls Club of Florence, the City Parks and Leisure Services Department and the Florence County Department of Juvenile Justice. Each of these agencies will then, in turn, use these funds to help provide safe, crime-free after school and summer activities for 16,000 Florence youth.

Funds will go towards creating evening programs and activities for teens at three City community centers, the Boys and Girls Club and three Florence School District One gymnasiums. These funds will also be used by the Florence Police Department to provide gang prevention programs to both teens and parents. Portions of



Mayor Willis' Coalition To Prevent Juvenile Crime recently received state grant money.

the funds will also be used by Florence School District One for after school programs and to implement a credit recovery program during the summer months for at-risk students.

The JEEP program will be spearheaded by the Florence County Department of Juvenile Justice and will help youth secure jobs that will also count for school credit, while also preparing them for the workforce. The funds in place will help secure jobs for 200 Florence children.

"The coalition has a great backbone and a great leader in Mayor Willis," said Linda

Williams, director of the Florence County Department of Juvenile Justice. "The JEEP program will continue to help with Florence kids, and we appreciate the continued support."

Also with later operating hours for area youth centers and clubs, there will be safer activities. The Boys and Girls Club will provide activities for teens of age from 7 p.m. to midnight and focus on teaching gang preventative measures. In addition, the Recreation Department will focus on providing teens positive activities, which will include courses such as money management and the arts.

"We are very appreciative for the grant that has been given to the Coalition," said Mayor Willis. "It is only through the combined efforts of all citizens in the community can we continue to work diligently to successfully eliminate juvenile crime."

What started with a planning committee in June 2004, the Mayor's Coalition was formally introduced to the City of Florence in October 2004. Since this time, the Coalition has secured

help from different segments of the community in building a group that is working to have a sustained, positive impact on the problem of juvenile crime in Florence. Members of the City's law enforcement division, educational leaders, business leaders, parent groups, neighborhood associations, clergy and others throughout the community have banded together to help make the Coalition a positive force in the lives of area youth.

Continued goals of the Coalition are to reduce juvenile crime and violence, increase awareness of violence prevention and the results of violence in the community, evaluate each component to document program success and improve the health and safety of Florence youth. In addition to Mayor Willis' involvement, the Coalition's development and training is still being lead by Dr. Pam Imm, a national juvenile crime consultant, who has taught at the University of South Carolina. The day-to-day activities of the Coalition are spearheaded by Jim Shaw of Florence School District One.

NEW PLAZA TO SERVE AS CITY MEETING CENTER

Recently, the City acquired a vacant building on the 100 block of West Evans Street as a part of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan, which was developed by consultant Hunter Interest Group of Annapolis, MD. After obtaining the building, the City determined that the building should be demolished and redeveloped as a pedes-

trian plaza and corridor.

Specific plans call for the new plaza to serve as a connector between downtown Florence and new development projects such as the Performing Arts Center, Little Theatre and the County Library. It will also serve as a gathering place for citizens to enjoy a leisurely lunch or evening entertainment.

Construction of the Plaza began in January with demolition and rough grading. Throughout the winter and spring months, progress continued with the installation of a storm drain system and planting of six, 25 foot tall Willow Oak trees with root balls that weighed 10,000 pounds each.

In addition to the Willow Oaks, features of the Plaza will include brick paver walkways, decorative ironwork, decorative

lighting, benches, additional landscaping and a small stage for performances.

The Plaza was constructed and installed by City Public Works employees. The budget for the project is \$90,000 with funds coming from Hospitality tax revenue. The Plaza was completed in early Spring 2007.

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