



UPTOWN

a publication of the municipal association of south carolina



Greenville Mayor Talks Downtown Reinvention at Annual Meeting



Courtesy City of Greenville, SC

The City of Greenville has built a reputation for national accolades in recent memory. In its list of best places to live in the nation, *U.S. News & World Report* highlighted Greenville’s downtown as well as its growth in manufacturing jobs, while the *Condé Nast Traveler* 2018 Readers’ Choice Awards for the best cities in the nation described the city’s farm-to-table restaurant scene as rivalling Asheville, N.C.

Despite this praise, Greenville is only a few decades removed from an era of disinvestment that emptied out its downtown. The story of its transformation from that time to now is one that Mayor Knox White will tell at the Municipal Association of SC Annual Meeting in Greenville, July 18 – 21. It’s also one that he told at the joint meeting of the SC Community Development Association and Main Street South Carolina in Aiken and North Augusta in May.

[Reinvention, page 2 >](#)

In This Issue

Hometown Economic Development Grants Are Coming

Page 4

Building for Past and Future Growth

Page 6

Special Section: Resident Engagement

Communicating Through Disruptions

Page 8

Keeping Public Participation Productive

Page 11

In this ISSUE

Get Ready for the Annual Meeting With the Meeting App..... 2

Annual Meeting 2019 Tech Talks 3

Hometown Economic Development Grants Are Coming 4

Association Highlight: Council Goal Setting Facilitation 4

Regional Advocacy Meetings Start Mid-August 5

Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government Monthly Quiz 5

Building for Past and Future Growth 6

**Special Section:
Resident Engagement**

Communicating Through Disruptions 8

Keeping Public Participation Productive 11

Adding Value and Interactivity to Downtown Experiences..... 12

Keeping City Boards and Commissions Filled 15

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Reinvention, from page 1 >

White credited the first steps to the city leaders of the 1970s, who he said had the foresight to “bulldoze” the four-lane Main Street to open up space for the wide sidewalks and the large tree canopy the street now enjoys. From there, he said, the push could begin to create substantial activity on evenings and weekends with an intense focus on mixed-use development. Now, he said, the busiest time downtown is 3 p.m. on Sundays.

“No matter how you cut it, no matter how you slice it, to get vibrancy on the street, you’ve got to get residential. You’ve got to get people living in the downtown area,” he said.

Efforts in the mid-1990s focused on creating residential space on second floors above storefronts. It continued through projects like Fluor Field in 2006, a development that included condos and is now surrounded by residential development.

Mixed use, White concluded, is capable of having “a magical effect,” adding that Greenville’s leaders have been stunned by what it has accomplished. He encouraged his audience to push for it at any scale, even if they are pushing for just a single block.

“Whatever the scale, the rules are the same,” he said.



Greenville Mayor Knox White. Photo: City of Greenville.

Mayor White will speak during the opening general session of the Annual Meeting Friday, July 19 at 9 a.m. Downtown Greenville revitalization efforts will also be spotlighted in a preconference mobile workshop Thursday, July 18 at 8:30 a.m. Learn more about the agenda for the Annual Meeting and registration information at www.masc.sc (keyword: Annual Meeting).

Get Ready for the Annual Meeting With the Meeting App

Learn all about the Municipal Association of South Carolina Annual Meeting in Greenville, coming up July 18 – 21, by downloading the Annual Meeting app.

With it, users can learn about all of the sessions and can plan ahead by creating a personalized schedule from the meeting agenda, which is also available online at www.masc.sc (keyword: Annual Meeting). The app also gives users information on their fellow attendees and the exhibitors.

Download the app from either the App Store or Google Play by searching for MuniAssnSC.

To learn more about the app, contact Russell Cox at 803.933.1206 or rcox@masc.sc. Additionally, Association staff will be available at the Annual Meeting to provide assistance.



Annual Meeting 2019

Tech Talks

Information technology is more important than ever for cities and towns, and it's also evolving extremely fast. For this reason, the Municipal Association of SC and its technology partner, VC3, are offering Tech Talks throughout the Annual Meeting — quick, 15-minute sessions to show critical new information to elected officials and municipal staff.

- **Cybersecurity Checklist: How Do You Rate?**

It's easy to become overwhelmed with cybersecurity needs and requirements. Explore how focusing on a few key items, like email encryption and cyber liability insurance, can go a long way in keeping cities and towns safe.

- **Building ADA-Compliant Websites**

Residents are using municipal websites for everything from paying bills to researching local laws. Find out how to make sure a site is accessible to all, and learn about tools that can help in the process.

- **Text Message Archiving Basics**

Recent court cases have put the spotlight on properly retaining text messages in order to meet Freedom of Information Act requirements. Learn about the options available for retaining and archiving text messages.

- **Crafting a Social Media Policy**

Social media provides a new opportunity for municipal officials to communicate with their residents. Explore the building blocks needed for a solid social media policy.

- **Visualizing Your Data**

Quickly spot trends and anomalies in data with dashboards using the Power BI service. Take a look at how business intelligence dashboards are helping municipalities and public safety

departments work more efficiently and drive smarter decision making.

- **Protecting Your Municipality From Human Error**

Employees are frequent targets for sophisticated phishing attacks. Learn the options available for security awareness training and how to stop an attack before it begins.

- **Safekeeping Data: Beyond Password Protection**

Everyone knows the importance of unique passwords for websites and applications, but there are additional actions that can help make sure that data is safe. Learn about these additional safeguards and the risks of not protecting data.

- **Be Prepared With a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan**

Ransomware attacks on municipalities are occurring frequently, and it's important to be prepared in the event of an attack. Learn how to ensure that a municipality can quickly respond in the event of an attack.

- **Streamlining Business License Applications**

Attracting new business is key for growing cities and towns, but starting a new business can be a frustrating process. Take a look at how a standardized business license application can save time and reduce hassles for new business owners.

- **Smart Cities 101**

Many cities and towns want to be a "smart city," or a city that uses sensors to collect data and manage resources, but they don't know where to start. Explore the steps needed to become a smart city with a simple readiness plan useable by municipalities of all sizes.

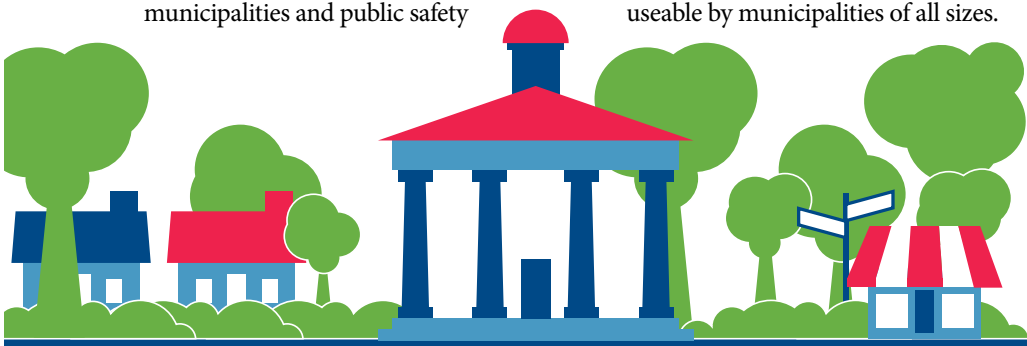
NEWS BRIEFS

Members of the **Building Officials Association of SC**

elected their 2019 – 2020 board of directors. They are President Patrick Brown, Town of Edisto Beach; President-Elect J. Shawn Brashear, Florence County; First Vice President Chris Stover, City of Greenville; Second Vice President Ruthie Helms, City of Greer; Past President Buddy Skinner, City of Greenville. Directors are Tink Barnes, City of Clinton; Ward Braswell, City of Newberry; Rebecca Brown, Dorchester County; Barry Holcombe, Anderson County; Rollie Reynolds, Kershaw County; Kiawana Tucker, Richland County; and Curt Whaley, Florence County.

Members of the **SC Community Development Association**

elected their 2019 – 2020 board of directors. They are President Imma Nwobodu, Greenville County Redevelopment Authority; Vice President Jessie Walker, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments; Secretary Shawn Bell, City of Fountain Inn; Members at Large Doug Polen, City of Moncks Corner; Vickie Nichols, Town of Marion; Mauretta Dorsey, City of Andrews; Martha Whitaker, SC Department of Commerce; Emory Langston, Lower Savannah Council of Governments; Barbara Johnson, Lowcountry Council of Governments; Kimberly Herndon, Catawba Regional Council of Governments; and Past President Shannon Munoz, City of Hartsville.



Hometown Economic Development Grants Are Coming

The Municipal Association is offering the Hometown Economic Development Grants for the fourth year. These grants help cities and towns bring economic development projects to fruition.

The 2019 grants will include a total of \$325,000 of investments delivered through grants up to \$25,000 each.

The cities and towns that receive grants are required to provide matching funds, with the required amount of the match determined by the municipality's size. Cities and towns may use grant funds to augment funding from other sources.

The grant application will be available Thursday, July 18, online at www.masc.sc (keyword: Hometown Grants). The deadline for entries is Friday, September 27 at 5 p.m., with the awards announced no later than Friday, October 25.

Applicants should ensure all of the questions on the application are completed. Applications are accepted online only. Incomplete applications are not accepted. A city or town may be awarded a Hometown Economic Development Grant once every two years.

Applicants must plan ahead to ensure council resolutions in support of applying for a Hometown Economic Development



The City of Pickens used Hometown Economic Development Grant funding to create a mural at Doodle Park. Photo: City of Pickens.

Grant are placed on meeting agendas for consideration before the application deadline. A sample resolution of council can be found on the grant program's webpage.

Previous winners have used grant funds to establish parks, create master plans, support business incubators, or build and upgrade tourism facilities:

- The City of Laurens received grant funds to engage design professionals to develop its Small Business Learning Lab in a downtown building, which will act as a development center for the city and as a resource center for entrepreneurs.
- The Town of Saluda received funding for modern audio, video and lighting

equipment for the historic Saluda Theater, allowing the town and Saluda Historical Society to use it for movies, plays and concerts.

- The City of Anderson received funding for the "Shock This Block" initiative for a unified, site-specific downtown development plan.
- The City of Pickens used its funds for a Doodle Park mural and the expansion of its "Turtles on the Town" campaign, promoting the city and its small businesses.

For more information, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: Hometown Grants) or contact Scott Slatton at sslatton@masc.sc.

Association Highlight: Council Goal Setting Facilitation

The Municipal Association of South Carolina's two field services managers travel the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultations to help cities and towns address challenges.

Their work includes helping with goal-setting sessions for city and town councils — a way of talking through the goals desired by each councilmember into an overall set that the council agrees

should be addressed in coming years. In recent years, the managers have led about 15 of these meetings per year.

For these sessions, councilmembers are asked to be prepared to share the goals they want, which members then rank in terms of "must do" items as well as "should do" and "could do" items. Councils can then vote to adopt the final compiled and ranked list by resolution.

Learn more about field services at www.masc.sc (keyword: field services) or by contacting one of the managers, whose territories are divided by councils of governments regions. Contact Jeff Shacker at jshacker@masc.sc for the Appalachian, Catawba, Central Midlands and Upper Savannah regions. Contact Charlie Barrineau at cbarrineau@masc.sc for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester, Lowcountry, Lower Savannah, Waccamaw, Santee Lynches and Pee Dee regions.



Regional Advocacy Meetings Start Mid-August

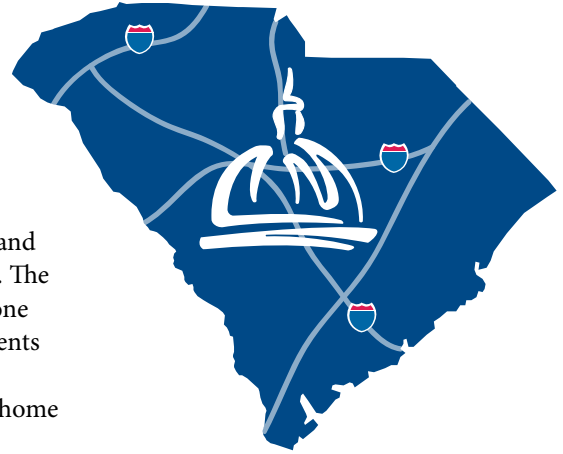
The Municipal Association's Regional Advocacy Meetings, which serve as a time to learn about the past and upcoming legislative sessions and a time to plan out the Association's future advocacy initiatives, will take place around the state.

- **August 13** – The Arts Center of Greenwood, City of Greenwood
- **August 14** – Myrtle Beach Train Depot, City of Myrtle Beach
- **August 15** – Goose Creek Fire Department, City of Goose Creek
- **August 20** – Beaufort City Hall Conference Center, City of Beaufort
- **August 21** – North Augusta Municipal Building, City of North Augusta
- **August 22** – Mauldin Cultural Center, City of Mauldin
- **August 27** – Bean Market Museum, City of Lake City
- **August 28** – Sumter City Centre, City of Sumter

- **August 29** – Rock Hill Operations Center, City of Rock Hill
- **September 4** – Lexington Municipal Complex, Town of Lexington

Each meeting begins at 11 a.m. and ends by 1 p.m. with lunch included. The locations are organized to include one session in each council of governments region, but officials may attend any session even when it is not in their home region.

“It's critical for elected officials and city staff to use these meetings to get their local issues heard, but the exciting part for us is that they don't share just their challenges, they also get to share their ideas on what potential solutions might be available through statewide legislation as well,” said Tiger Wells, the Association's director of governmental affairs.



There is no charge for the meetings, but registration is required for an accurate head count for lunch and handouts.

To register, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: RAM). For more information, contact Ashleigh Hair at ahair@masc.sc or 803.933.1288.



Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False: Clear, easy to understand rules of procedure form a solid foundation for efficient and effective council meetings.

Answer: True

Officials should review their city's rules of procedure and amend them as needed for clarity and simplicity.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. Basic Budgeting and Municipal Finance is offered as an on-demand course online. The next in-person courses,

Forms of Municipal Government as well as Municipal Economic Development, will take place September 17 at regional councils of governments locations. Learn more at www.masc.sc (keyword: MEOI).



Building for Past and Future Growth

Aiken Showcases New Department of Public Safety Headquarters

In 2016, the City of Aiken commissioned a space needs analysis of its 1970s-era Department of Public Safety building. The analysis confirmed that the physical space in the public safety building had become inadequate for the growth experienced by the department over the decades. It was an issue that was causing operational and morale concerns.

“We literally had folks in closets,” Charles Barranco, chief of the department, said. In the hallways, “you couldn’t pass each other without turning sideways.”

This began a process that eventually led Aiken City Council to convert a shuttered grocery store into the new

headquarters. Now, the J. Carrol Busbee Headquarters has become a showcase for adaptively reusing a property to effectively meet the needs of a large city department. When the South Carolina Community Development Association met in North Augusta and Aiken in May, one of the attendees’ stops was a tour of the new public safety headquarters, led in part by Barranco.

Aiken’s Department of Public Safety combines police and fire protection services, and its new facility reflects that with space for police and fire functions, a courtroom capable of serving as meeting space, an emergency operations center and a dispatch center. The side of the building associated with firefighting

functions has the fire engine bay, a day room, individual bunk rooms, and a bell mounted outside. The bell, in service for the City of Aiken for more than a century already, was once used to summon firefighters. At 46,000 square feet, the public safety building is nearly double the size of the previous location.

Work began in 2018 with stripping the building down to exposed trusses. This year, the various functions of the department moved into the space over time. On March 31, Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon cut the ribbon. The building’s namesake, J. Carrol Busbee, became the first director of Aiken’s Department of Public Safety in 1970, having served as fire chief prior to that.



Charles Barranco, chief of the Aiken Department of Public Safety, showcased the department’s new headquarters for the members of the SC Community Development Foundation.

Barranco noted that the new location substantially increases the space they have available and the building includes unused space, allowing for the future growth of the department. The project cost more than \$10 million, but it was an amount significantly less than what upgrading the existing location would have cost. Repurposing an existing building has benefits beyond saving the cost of constructing the structure's shell; for example, the storm-water infrastructure for the property was already in place. The former headquarters location now has a new life as a substation.

"It's not grandiose," Barranco said of the new headquarters. "It's clean, it has some space to it, it's neat, and it's functional."

The project made use of a grocery store that became commercially unviable when a new bypass shifted traffic. While the department's relocation closed out a significant property vacancy for Aiken, it also achieved another purpose — it is located directly across the street from an apartment complex that had been known for crime.

Those apartments were the scene of the line-of-duty death of Master Public Safety Officer Scott Richardson in 2011, one of Aiken's fallen public safety officers, whose sacrifice is memorialized in the lobby of the new headquarters. The Department of Public Safety moving in next door to the complex has greatly helped that community, Barranco said.

"Our call volume has gone to just about zero across the street," he said.

A later session at the SCCDA conference covered repurposing structures, and Aiken has several such developments in the works, like the Aiken Mall and old Aiken County Hospital. Aiken Assistant City Manager Kim Abney discussed the financial details of the Department of Public Safety project, noting that the city changed its procurement ordinance to allow for things like a design-build contract. The contracted developer, she said, brought a plan to City Council showing a building plan and its price.



The City of Aiken transformed a shuttered supermarket into the new J. Carrol Busbee Headquarters for its Department of Public Safety. Photos: City of Aiken.

To help finance the project, the city created a nonprofit, the Aiken Public Facilities Corporation, made up of members including the mayor, local residents, attorneys and former developers, among others. That corporation issued installment purchase revenue bonds with low interest rates on a 20-year note.

Barranco highly recommended hiring a project manager for a build like the Aiken Department of Public Safety, and he discussed how staff was involved in the design process.

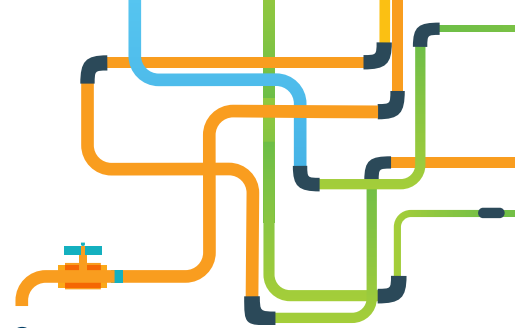
From the beginning, the department knew it did not want the project to have the appearance of a former grocery store and nothing about the finished product is visually connected to a retail purpose.

Barranco noted the installation of more than 40 windows, something not typically found on any part of a grocery store other than its front facade. The planning process included a careful look at operations to see how to improve efficiency — for example, placing an area for writing police reports next to where the officers' supervisors are located.

The public safety department outgrowing its previous building was a significant reason why the project became necessary and Barranco noted that future growth figured into the plan for the new space — 30 percent of the office space was not immediately put to use.

"We were very fortunate to be able to do that and have the space to do it," he said.

Communicating Through Disruptions



Cities and towns rarely win people over with extensive infrastructure projects that require streets to be torn up, traffic rerouted and access to businesses restricted. However, some South Carolina cities that have taken on projects say that their efforts to keep the public and merchants informed has led to fewer complaints and even some excitement about the final product.

“Our mayor and council like to ‘overcommunicate’ with residents — and they specifically use that term ‘overcommunicate,’” said Rachelle Moody, assistant to the Cayce city manager.

This was just what the city needed as it took on a \$29 million effort to replace

three-quarters of its water infrastructure during a 20-month period. The effort won the city one of the Municipal Association’s 2019 Achievement Awards.

“We were literally in the front yards of most of our residents,” Moody said. “Because we would have such a large project going on, impacting so many of our residents, we knew that educating them upfront about what was going to happen was important as well as maintaining communication throughout the project to let residents know if we were going to be working in their area and also give them a clear line of communication to the city if they had comments, concerns or questions.”

In the same way it contracted for the work of replacing water lines, meters, hydrants and even an elevated water storage tank, the city also contracted out its communications so city staff could continue its regular work.

Elected officials and the city engineer gave presentations at neighborhood meetings and other community events while every city staff member, including code enforcement and police officers, carried business cards to hand out when people asked about the project. The Waterline Replacement Project cards had contact information for customer complaints and questions. Contractors doing the water line work left door

Resident Engagement



While replacing most of its water infrastructure, the City of Cayce mobilized its contractors, staff and elected officials for an equally massive communications effort. Photo: City of Cayce.



Downtown streetscaping may look like it's blocking access to businesses, but the CenterG project in Greer is emphasizing communication on how to get into downtown during the project and is providing parking lot shuttles. Photo: City of Greer.

hangers notifying residents and businesses when work would begin in their areas and what to expect.

The city also decided to take on another project while it was tearing up the streets — safety improvements to the Knox Abbott Drive commercial corridor.

Most municipal projects of such size and scope are typically done over longer periods of time, but thanks to a low-interest State Revolving Fund loan, Cayce got it done all at once. While that created an almost chaotic level of moving parts, Moody said, it worked out better for the city and residents to get it all done at once.

Finding synergy

Creating a beautiful downtown will do little good if shops and restaurants go out of business in the 18 months it takes to complete the work.

That is the driving mission for the City of Greer and Greer Commission of Public Works during the ambitious \$13 million

downtown streetscaping project, called CenterG, which has already attracted a new hotel. The goal is to have businesses thrive, not just survive, during the construction work, said City Administrator Ed Driggers.

“We took the approach that we had to do everything we could possibly do to inform and continue that communication about what we were doing, when and for how long, so businesses could decide for themselves how they would operate through this process,” he said.

Work began in January 2019 and will wrap in July 2020. The goal is to create a more visually appealing and pedestrian friendly corridor on the main business artery, Trade Street.

The city is using many different channels to get its information to the public and to businesses, said Rosylin Weston of RAWeston Communications, who is working with the city on its communications during the project.

“We had to communicate that downtown Greer is very much open, that the merchants are open during this process and that was key to having those businesses thrive during this process,” Weston said.

To that end, the construction team has worked with local businesses to help provide alternate routes for customers to access parking and businesses. Shuttles carry shoppers from more “remote” parking to downtown and riders can follow the shuttles via a smartphone app so they know when the shuttle will be where.

“They have exceeded my expectations professionally and personally,” said Jennifer Jones, president and CEO of CBL State Savings Bank on Trade Street. “I have been surprised by the walkability of the area.”

Jones said her bank had some issues with construction vehicles blocking the driveway, but those were quickly fixed and the construction crew provided the bank with signage to help reroute traffic to drive-through windows.

Disruptions, from page 9 >

“We haven’t had to spend a dime on anything [to communicate] to our customers because of the construction,” Jones said. “For us, it has largely been business as usual.”

CBL State Savings Bank, like several other downtown businesses, has also become something of an ambassador for the project, helping to spread official information provided by the city to customers asking questions.

The project has even become something of a spectator event, said Steve Owens, communications manager for the City of Greer, with one restaurant hosting a “hard-hat happy hour” for customers.

“Every time I am down there, I see groups of people watching the work,” Owens said. “We went down to do a Facebook Live event, and there were people on the sidewalks. We met an 89-year-old gentleman who walked from his home a few blocks away. He worked at one of the department stores on Trade Street and he was just as excited as he could be.”

Keeping the town’s best asset open

Hilton Head Island found people were also excited to watch work on the refurbishment of its biggest asset — the beach. Every eight to 10 years, beach renourishment helps protect wildlife habitats and keeps natural erosion in check by dredging sand from the sea floor hundreds of yards off shore, piping it under the ocean and spraying it onto the beach. Heavy earthmoving equipment — complete with the annoying, but necessary, backup safety beeper — pushes it into place.

The work goes on around the clock, weather permitting, typically blocking a 1,000-foot stretch of beach on any day.

“It was all about letting people know what to expect when they got here, and more importantly, with the beach being one of our top draws, that we were open for business,” said Rene Phillips, website administrator for the Town of Hilton Head Island. “You don’t want everybody canceling their vacation.”

About a year before the first grain of sand was sprayed onto the beach, the town’s communications staff partnered with the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce and all of its members who were involved in seasonal rentals.

The town staff prepared a resource toolkit, including a video about beach renourishment and explained why it is done. The communications team provided nuggets of information that property and hotel managers could drop into confirmation emails to notify visitors of how to get more information. The communications project netted the town a Municipal Association Achievement Award in 2017.

Phillips said the variety of communication tools helped reduce the amount of complaints.

“You are always going to have that one or two people who aren’t happy,” Phillips said. “But one day, I went down to take some pictures, and people weren’t facing the ocean, they were facing the work going on because they found that more interesting.”



Many of the people most impacted by beach renourishment are tourists, and so the Town of Hilton Head Island provided project communication material to property owners and hotel managers so they could include it in confirmation emails. Photo:Town of Hilton Head Island.



Keeping Public Participation Productive

Residents expect their local elected officials to be accessible. And officials are usually accessible outside of city and town council meetings, through social media, at the grocery store or at the office. However, public comment at council meetings can bring challenges to accessibility that municipalities must address.

State law requires public hearings for purposes like budget adoption and adoption of fees, but it does not require public comments at every council meeting. Even so, many councils allow public comments through local rules of procedure or through municipal ordinance.

Speakers sometimes run on too long, behave abusively or disrupt the business meetings of the council, so rules and ordinances generally limit the time allowed, the conduct or the number of speakers. Some municipalities require signup for addressing council by a deadline before the meeting.

The City of Westminster's council meetings have public comments close to the beginning of the meeting with a notation in the agenda — those who have registered with the clerk have three minutes to speak, but this can be extended if the person speaking "is recognized in advance as representing a larger group with similar concerns." It also states that "In order to preserve the decorum of this public meeting, and to allow adequate time for discussion among the elected membership of City Council, this will be the only time we will receive unsolicited comments tonight from the public."

City Administrator Chris Carter said that residents will sometimes "want to stand up and speak after the meeting has started, not realizing the importance of preserving the decorum of a public meeting."

"I think it helps when someone tries to speak we can point out the existence of this statement [on the agenda]," he said.



The Town of Summerville is one of numerous municipalities to provide a timer to show the time allotted for public comments during its town council meetings.

In some cases, a resident making contact with city staff ahead of the meeting can allow staff to resolve his or her issue before the council meeting. For example, City of Columbia Clerk Erika Moore said, "I try to identify the [resident's] issue and work towards a resolution without him or her having to appear [at the council meeting]."

If staff doesn't resolve the issue, the city provides a sign-in sheet at council meetings for attendees who want to speak. Moore also places callers who want to speak at the meeting on the sign-in sheet. And she includes submitted letters and emails about specific agenda items in the council's meeting agenda packet.

The Town of Seabrook Island faces an interesting situation for its public

hearings: its ordinances require the town to send hearing notices to property owners of record, but sixty percent of property owners live out of town, and that has led to low public participation levels at council meetings.

When the town launched a new website recently, it included a feature for residents and property owners to review pending action items and comment on them through the website, according to Town Administrator Joseph Cronin. When users enter comments, they see which body — council, board or commission — will receive them, as well as a submission deadline to make sure the comments enter the agenda packet. They're also notified that the comments will be public record and subject to potential release under the SC Freedom of Information Act.

"We see this as an effective tool to promote participation by making it more convenient for our residents and nonresidents to participate," Cronin said.

The Town of Summerville, meanwhile, is finding success regularly connecting residents with Mayor Wiley Johnson outside of council meetings. The "Chat with the Mayor" session, which takes place the day before regular council meetings, is streamed live on Facebook. Residents can ask questions in person by attending or by sending in questions through Facebook — and the videos show a steady stream of questions and comments running down the screen.

In describing the effort, Summerville Town Administrator Colin Martin pointed out that active social media engagement is something that happens with many of the town's departments as well — police, public works as well as parks and recreation.

"I believe the future of citizen engagement is taking the message and the meetings to the public," he said.

Adding Value and Interactivity to Downtown Experiences

Resident and visitor engagement with downtown districts is on the rise in South Carolina cities and towns — taking such forms as splash pads to cool off in the summer heat, free mini golf, or scavenger hunts for bronze mice and Boykin Spaniel puppies. With a combination of whimsy and history, these installations help draw people to the centers of town.

Consider Camden — where the South Carolina state dog was first bred just a few miles away in the community of Boykin. The idea for capitalizing on this began when the Boykin Spaniel Society staged a gathering in Camden, and the city wanted to give visitors more reason to explore the downtown, said Rickie Good, curator of collections at the Camden Archives and Museum.

“The Boykin Spaniel Society was begun in Camden to protect the health and integrity of the breed,” Good said. “It seemed fitting that South Carolina’s state dog, with so many connections to our area, take visitors on a tour of our city.”

During the first year, the city staged a scavenger hunt with businesses displaying images of Boykins in their shops. The hunt was so successful the city decided to make it part of the permanent tours of Camden, and, after two years of looking, found a small statue of a Boykin puppy that would make the perfect tour marker. The Boykin Spaniel Invasion had begun.

The statues were created by Mary Deas Boykin Wortley, the great-granddaughter of the founder of the Boykin Spaniel breed, who modeled them after one of her own Boykins. Now, bronze puppies



The Boykin Spaniel Invasion is one of the newest downtown scavenger hunts in the state. Photo: City of Camden. Inset: Mice on Main has now been a downtown Greenville icon for about two decades. Photo: Linda Kelly.

are located at 11 points of interest around town, with clues to find the pups posted online and in a brochure available at the Camden Archives and Museum.

Visitors can discover interesting places around Camden as they search for the pups, and then post photos of themselves on the Facebook page to receive a Certificate of Discovery. The Camden Archives and Museum staff prints the brochures and maintains the Facebook page and website — www.boykinspanielinvasion.com.

Downtown scavenger hunts have found success around the state for years now. While Camden’s hunt is relatively

new, Greenville’s Mice on Main project began in 1999 – 2000, when James Ryan, then a high school student, devised a senior project that would draw people to downtown involving nine bronze mice. It was inspired by his favorite childhood book, *Goodnight Moon*, which features a mouse hidden on pages throughout.

The Greenville mice are tucked away on the city’s bustling Main Street, and finding them is a favorite outing for children, families, couples and tourists.

Upkeep and maintenance falls to city workers and to three people who make up the partnership of Mice on Main – Ryan,





The 2019 splash pad season at Greenwood's Uptown Market runs from May 25 to September 2.
Photo: City of Greenwood.

“We constantly get requests to run it longer hours and to extend our season. It gets use from locals and those out of town...”

– Stephanie Turner,
Manager of the Uptown Market in Greenwood

sculptor Zan Wells, and Linda Kelly, who wrote the *Mice on Main* book.

“In addition, every business and all the city workers are on the side of *Mice on Main*,” Kelly said. “They support us because the mice are important to Greenville’s amazing success as a wonderful place to live and visit.”

The Greenville project has grown from a scavenger hunt for tiny bronze mice into something of a cottage industry, with all of the proceeds going to charity.

“Greenvilleans and visitors buy the [*Mice on Main*] books, the T-shirts, the hats, the mugs to remind them of the mouse hunt and of their time in Greenville. The *Mice on Main* book has been sent to people all over the world,” Kelly said.

Down the road in Greenwood, the addition of the open-air Uptown Market was identified in the city’s master plan as a way to use a key intersection for a farmers market and to draw people to the area.

Before construction, Greenwood city staff and council members visited several other markets, including the farmers

markets in Walterboro and in Winter Garden, Florida. It was the Florida trip that gave the city the inspiration for a splash pad, according to Stephanie Turner, manager of the Uptown Market.

Children are able to cool off as they run through the fountains, which use a state-of-the-art water recirculation and treatment system to minimize environmental impacts.

“The splash pad has been an absolute hit,” Turner said. “We constantly get requests to run it longer hours and to extend our season. It gets use from locals and those out of town, and frequently a busload of children will arrive from a local camp or daycare.”

This year, Greenwood budgeted money to install more shade and seating around the splash pad, she said. The fountains have been a strong addition to the Uptown Live Concert Series, where the adults can enjoy the music while the kids play in the water.

Spartanburg, meanwhile has found a new twist on an art installment to drive downtown traffic. A partnership

between the city and a group of artists turned a long-time vacant lot into a free miniature golf course open to the public. The Sparkle City Mini Putt came about when Hub-Bub, an artist-in-residence program hosted by the Chapman Cultural Center, the city and an anonymous donor joined forces. The former artist-in-residence, Robin Schwartzman, designed the nine-hole miniature golf course, something she has done all over the country, said Christopher George, communications manager for the City of Spartanburg.

“She was available to do it, and they were looking for a use for that space. The city agreed to take over the upkeep of the space; that’s our responsibility. We provided some funding, but it’s largely privately funded,” George said. “It started in 2015 and the reaction has been great. Downtown businesses and partners have the putters and balls available there. It’s all free. You just show up and tell them you want a putter.”

Downtown, page 14 >





Above and below: The free Sparkle City Mini Putt takes advantage of a previously empty lot on Spartanburg's Main Street. Photos: City of Spartanburg.

Downtown, from page 13 >

The course, centrally located between East Main and East Broad streets, features holes inspired by Spartanburg landmarks, such as the sign for the famous Beacon Drive-In, a mill village iron bridge and railroad crossings, along with a map outline of South Carolina.

The city's maintenance crew handles landscaping and cleaning up the trash. There's also some occasional touch-up painting needed, he said. Last year, a few local artists pitched in to do a little course refresher.

The combination of an artist and a private landowner went a long way toward making the project a reality, according to George.

The lot was between two buildings, in a somewhat difficult space to develop.

"If you have those, particularly in your downtown, it's good to think about these interactive spaces that are different from a typical park," George said. "We hear all the time about the need for family attractions. There are plenty of restaurants and bar life, but we're always on the lookout for more family-friendly things. That's an area where a local government can play a big role."

Cities with successful installations make a point to talk about the importance of getting residents to buy into the city's plans on the front end.

"Other towns should know that we at Mice on Main have worked hard to encourage all Greenvillians to take pride and a sense of ownership in the mice," Kelly said. "We have created the book, the game, the T-shirts, the hats and so on, to keep the mice on people's minds.



We go to schools, business meetings and conventions to talk about the mice."

Or, as Good in Camden said: "Get community input before proceeding, find the perfect symbol and have fun."

Keeping City Boards and Commissions Filled



With functions like architectural review and planning or zoning appeals, boards and commissions can play a foundational role in the life of a city or town. Even so, finding members to fill the slots can be an uncertain process if it relies on recommendations or word of mouth to connect open positions with people who have the passion and available time to serve.

The City of Newberry recently responded to the challenge with an application on its website covering all boards and commissions, along with a social media campaign to promote it, City Clerk Jennie O'Shields said. The city undertook the effort with the goal of building up "an abundance of interest and qualified individuals that will allow us to refresh boards and commissions from time to time," she said.

The application form lists each body available, ranging from some bodies with just five members, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals and Construction Board of Appeals, all the way up to the Newberry Opera House Foundation Board, which has 17 members.

Each board listing includes the requirements as well. For example, service on the Accommodations Tax Advisory Commission requires city residency as well as hospitality industry employment.

In Greenville, City Clerk Camilla Pitman has several points of advice for promoting board service opportunities, starting with public speaking.

"Every opportunity you have to speak to a civic, nonprofit, church related, citizens academy, neighborhood associations, leadership group — take it," she said. "Also, it helps to have a handbill prepared that you can pass out when you go to those groups to speak."

Such handbills, she said, should have enough information to spark interest and connect people with more information and applications on the city website. After seeing media releases about board service opportunities from the City of Columbia, she began doing that as well, and soon afterward had the media running the information.

Through the ongoing contact with residents, Pitman said, councilmembers

and city staff can work together to identify candidates and encourage them to get involved. She also pointed to local festivals as an opportunity to set up an information booth where board or commission members as well as councilmembers can promote involvement.

"That way the attendees are receiving information directly from citizens who have already made the decision to serve. Also, keep an eye on your board and commission members — they could be your next mayor or councilmember. Boards and commissions are the first step to becoming a future elected official," she said.





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Calendar

For a complete listing of training opportunities, visit www.masc.sc to view the calendar.

JULY

11 SCMIT and SCMIRF Defensive Driving Training. West Columbia City Hall.

18 - 21 Municipal Association of SC Annual Meeting. Hyatt Regency Greenville.

AUGUST

6 SC Business Licensing Officials Association ABL Exam. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

6 Setoff Debt Collection Program Mandatory Training Session for Interested Participants. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia. Session is for interested participants who have never attended a training session.

8 Setoff Debt Collection Program Mandatory Training Session for New Employees of Current Participants. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia. Session is for current participants with new employees who have never attended a training session.

8 Building Officials Association of South Carolina Fall Training. Lexington Municipal Conference Center. Topics include the code provisions of solar energy systems, required permits, structural requirements for roof-mounted systems, ground-mounted arrays, electrical provisions and solar thermal systems related to solar energy.

13 Regional Advocacy Meeting. The Arts Center of Greenwood. Upper Savannah Council of Governments area.

14 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Myrtle Beach Train Depot. Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments area.

15 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Goose Creek Fire Department.

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments area.

20 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Beaufort City Hall Conference Center. Lowcountry Council of Governments area.

21 Regional Advocacy Meeting. North Augusta Municipal Building. Lower Savannah Council of Governments area.

22 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Mauldin Cultural Center. Appalachian Council of Governments area.

27 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Bean Market Museum, Lake City. Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments area.

28 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Sumter City Centre. Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments area. of Motor Vehicles.