

Greetings from the Mayor and City Council,

Clemson City Council and Staff have had a busy year navigating the ongoing pandemic while continuing to conduct the business of the City. This year is presenting many of the challenges we faced in 2020 but that has not put the brakes on our ability to get things done. In an effort to be transparent and accountable to our citizens, we would like to share several areas of progress since the first of the year.

Most notably, Council launched, conducted, and accepted the recommendations of ClemsonNext. ClemsonNext is the process by which we engaged the public to develop a citywide vision for future growth and development. **This is the biggest planning effort the City has ever undertaken.** A process like this typically takes between 18 to 24 months to complete to ensure inclusivity and comprehensiveness. We have been able to reach this milestone in 14 months thanks to the hard, hands-on work of the ClemsonNext Steering Committee, as well as numerous volunteers and commission members.

The strategic plan is a work in progress, but we are moving swiftly.

SAFETY, TRANSPARENCY, INCLUSIVITY

This year, the city hired a project manager and council has passed an ordinance that starts to address high-density housing within city limits. We also are developing the partnerships needed to undertake a regional transportation study that considers long-term traffic volume and how it impacts our roads here in Clemson. Additionally, other initiatives are moving forward across various recommendation areas including but not limited to the Shaw Center and other initiatives to address affordable housing, an Uptown Development workshop that will occur this fall, and consolidating economic/business development efforts.

In addition to ClemsonNext, Council also began holding its first Conversations with Council, which are meant to be informal, open discussions with the public. The issues discussed at our meetings are recorded, delegated to the appropriate parties to be addressed, and updates are provided via a report card posted on our website.

Council has also

- created a process to consider annexation requests.
- added parks as an institutional use appropriate to qualify for Planned Developments.
- implemented a biased-based crime ordinance.
- Hosted the first Black History Month program in February with the theme of “Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, and Planning Our Future.” The City recognized both historical figures and current residents for their contribution to the well-being of the lives of black people.
- allowed franchise authority for WC Fiber to expand broadband access.
- reinstated the city’s Police Advisory Board.
- approved the purchase of tasers and new automated cameras for our law enforcement officers.
- approved three new diesel CAT buses to replace aging buses.
- adopted a new vision and values statement to guide decision making.

RECREATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Council voted to take over operations of the Twelve Mile Recreation Area and annex this lakefront park into the City. This was done to preserve a beautiful community amenity that the US Army Corps of Engineers was forced to abandon due to budget shortfalls. The Parks and Rec staff, in partnership with the Parks and Rec Advisory Committee, have been planning for additional improvements and enhancements in the area. The Rec Department has also hired a new park attendant to focus on Twelve Mile and also hired an athletic director who can focus on our athletics programs, freeing up Parks and Recreation Director Jay Bennett to work with the community to provide a diverse array of athletic programs. Additionally, the third gym at the Central Clemson Recreation Center has been completed, the first phase of the Green Crescent Trail, including the Clemson Fast Track, is nearing completion, access walking trails have been added at Nettles Park, and the Nettles Park Master Plan is in development. The Horticulture Staff has also re-built the one-mile walking path damaged by the tornado at Mountain View Park. Additionally, Council voted to establish new park hours so that all City parks will be closed between 11pm and 6am, and the restrooms will be closed and locked at this time.

Most exciting, the Parks and Recreation Department also hosted the 2021 Dixie Youth 8U state tournament. The 8U and 12U teams went on to win the programs' first Dixie Youth World Series Championships!

In July 2020, the City of Clemson established two new departments: the Arts Center and Clemson-Area African American Museum (CAAAM). This was done to ensure their longevity and to expand their programming in areas that matter immensely to our diverse and growing city. Arts Center Director Joan Phillips became an employee of the City, and we hired Angela Agard Solomon as the first Executive Director of the CAAAM. Angela comes to Clemson from New York where she worked with the NY Transit Museum for 20 years.

The Arts Center held socially distanced art classes and put together pick up "Take and Make" craft kits, including seasonal ornaments. The Arts Center has also been working closely with Parks and Rec to implement art projects at events, including holiday art classes and upcoming "Drop and Shop" nights. In August, The Arts Center Hosted a Family Art Day for City employees and their families as well as a Weekend Art Retreat for Adults. The Arts Center will host the "Un-masked" exhibition of art created during the pandemic in September, a Jack-O-Lantern event in October, and the Holiday Market in November. They also have partnered with the Botanical Gardens for a Clay Butterfly installation that is ongoing, and they plan to partner with Parks and Rec on the upcoming holiday events. Additionally, two new public art pieces are in place downtown: the mural on Judge Keller's store and the Unity mural on the police substation.

CAAAM Director Angela Agard has been inventorying stored artifacts and has been busy planning events and exhibitions. Earlier this year, CAAAM cohosted an online Fireside Chat with Dr. Ashra Kwesi, a Historian and Lecturer on ancient African history and religion. Dr. Kwesi offers firsthand information from the ancient temples, tombs, and papyrus papers recorded when African people were teachers of the world. This summer, CAAAM held an outdoor concert series on Sunday afternoons, creating a safer way to return to the museum. CAAAM also hosted a Community Digitization Day, allowing area residents to have historical records scanned and saved to a flash drive. This December, CAAAM has planned a five day Kwanzaa celebration with events based

around the seven principles of Kwanzaa. Also, thanks to our IT Director Lowell Arwood, the CAAAM now has a redesigned website.

This Summer, Community and Economic Development Coordinator Lindsey Newton spearheaded the hugely successful Outside on the Ave event, bringing traffic to downtown Clemson for outdoor dining, live music, and games and fun for the whole family. Partnering with CAAAM, the city's first public Juneteenth celebration was held at Littlejohn Community Center. And this Fall, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of September and October, a similar event called Rock the Block will be held at Patrick Square.

CAPITAL AND OPERATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The city has taken steps to fill quite a few open positions that will keep the city connected and current, including the newly created Systems and Web Developer. We also hired a new Finance Director, Chief Municipal Judge, and a new City Administrator. We are currently in the search process for the Associate Municipal Judge and Assistant City Administrator.

This year has also seen the completion of the Littlejohn Community Center expansion and renovation. We have also seen significant progress made on the Police Department expansion and renovation. These projects will allow us to better serve the needs of the community for years to come.

The City recently launched the MyCivic App, thanks to the work of IT Director Lowell Arwood, which allows our community to engage with us more efficiently and effectively. Citizens can use this portal to submit public comments for Council and report a variety of issues around the City such as malfunctioning equipment, damaged infrastructure, or service delivery issues. Our GIS Technician, Tyler Jones, worked with Public Works Department to develop a brush pickup dashboard so citizens can see where the brush crew is and when they can expect their brush to be picked up. Clemson Area Transit also now has a more up-to-date and real time GPS bus locator.

Our Engineering department assisted Transit in installing three new bus shelters at CAT HQ, Sardis on Hwy 93, Calhoun St at Church of God. They also designed and self-constructed neighborhood drainage improvements for Shadowood, Creekview, Cottonwood, and Oneida Court.

TOWN-GOWN RELATIONS

Over the past few years, we have been working to improve and strengthen the relationship with Clemson University. When the pandemic hit, we saw the best versions of ourselves step forward to make sure the school and the town were working together to keep us all safe and healthy. Wastewater/sewer testing and public dashboards have given us advance notice when our case numbers were spiking. Additionally, the partnership to offer free community testing and same-day results let us "skip the swab" and better understand our risk and exposure when battling the countless unknowns of coronavirus.

This summer, before the Delta variant led to us reinstating some previous Covid guidelines and precautions, we worked with the University to bring August graduation back to Clemson's main

campus in hopes of generating much-needed foot traffic to our downtown business owners. Graduation also helps our local hospitality, retail and food service businesses. .

In recent exciting news, Clemson was awarded the 2022 International Town Gown Association Conference. City Council and staff will be working with officials and staff at the University to organize this conference to be both an informative and enjoyable experience for all attendees. We of course want the attendees to leave Clemson with great experiences in our community.

The past nine months have netted enormous progress for our community and we anticipate ending the year with another robust list of accomplishments. Much of the work we have completed this year is due to the efforts of countless volunteers and is a testament to the tremendous social and civic consciousness of our community. Clemson is a special place to be and we are dedicated to being responsive and accountable to our citizens to make it the best it can be.