



## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2015



CLINTON  
*South Carolina*

### TIME TO GET IN ON THE ACTION: TRY THE NEW CITIZEN ACTION CENTER

I like technology. My love of technology manifested itself last summer when I discovered an app for my phone which would allow me take a picture of something and by pushing one button, I could send a picture, a map of where I took the picture, and an email to a person. Some of you might have thought of how you could use this app to keep up with your kids or keep your friends informed of what you are doing. Not me. No sir. I used it to track streetlights.

I discovered that if I waited until it got dark to walk the family dog, I could push the button on this app every time I found a streetlight that was not working correctly along my walk. Streetlight number 5437 out - click. Streetlight 6923 flickering – click. Streetlight 2364 looking a little dim – click. Public works personnel joked that they could follow my dog walking routes by opening their emails the next morning and see all of the pictures, maps, and notes about the streetlights that were not working correctly. Then I figured out how to set it up for potholes. Click, click, click, click and click.

I also like history. Just as I believe that technology has the opportunity to make our future better and our city more efficient, I know that history holds the keys to lessons learned and can help guide our decision making now. History shows us in clear view the mistakes, the failures, and the successes that we may face or hope to have along the road.

Not too long ago I used my DVR (technology) to records the PBS documentary on the Roosevelts (history). While I knew a little about Teddy Roosevelt, our 26<sup>th</sup> President, I had never heard this quote from him: “Get Action. Seize the moment.”

Get action. I think that sums up your expectations of your local government pretty well. Fix the pothole. Fix the sidewalk. Fix the streetlight. Be here when we need you in an emergency. Don't waste our money. Get Action on fill-in-the-blank.

I could write in these pages, as I have in the past, of the enormous challenges these economic times and decisions of the past have brought upon our city and inhibited our

ability to “get action”. I could write, as I have done in the past, that we function better as community of people working hand in hand, citizens and government, to achieve the dreams we have for this city and our children’s children by “getting action” together. I could write, as I have done in the past, that we must all work together and not be a city of consumers consuming government services, but an organization of concerned citizenry focused on each citizen performing a part to make our city function effectively and “get action” for the whole.

Instead, I want to give a tool to help you help us help you. It’s called the Citizen Action Center and it has been available for about a month. Visit our website at [cityofclintonsc.com](http://cityofclintonsc.com) and look at the top right hand corner. Click on Citizen Action Center and you will be taken to a website that will allow you to browse frequently asked questions, and submit a service requests to get something in your neighborhood fixed. You, the citizen, can get in on the action.

The Citizen Action Center is more than just sending us a glorified email regarding your concern. It is a powerful tool that allows you to register your concern, and then monitor our response. That’s right. I said you get to monitor our response. You’ll get a confirmation email that we have received your concern, and when the work is done, you’ll get an email from us too that lets you know that your concern has been addressed. Supervisors, and your truly, can monitor the system to make sure that our divisions in the field are responding quickly to your concerns.

What you won’t see is how the system works in the background. However, it’s pretty impressive so I want to give you glimpse behind the current today. When you submit a request the system automatically routes your request to the right person to address it. Streetlight needs go straight to the electrical division, were a supervisor in the field is notified of the need to fix your light. Other requests get routed to the right people all throughout our organization. You might tell a meter reader about a pothole when you see him, built he can’t fix it – but the streets division can. Tell your concerns to the Citizen Action Center and your request goes straight to the Streets Division.

Once you submit a request, the clock starts. As time passes, the concern gets escalated automatically from a division, to the appropriate Department, and ultimately to the City Manager if the project is not completed in a preset time frame. This process is designed to keep your requests from falling through the cracks. Unfortunately, that has happened in the past. We get hundreds of requests a month, and we also have our own plans about what needs to fixed, improved, or maintained. The new system will allow us to track these work issues better, ensure that they don’t fall through the cracks, and allow you to stay informed about where your request is in our organization and our planned response.

Now is the time! Seize the day! Get Action! Go to your computer, visit the website, open a free account, and tell us all about that streetlight on your street that needs to be fixed because its incessant evening flickering is driving you crazy. Then sit back relax, and know we are on the way.