



**CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES—CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, October 3, 2022 @ 5:30 PM**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds. A roll call was taken, and the following City Council Members were present: Diane Howard, Darold Honore, Vanneriah Wynn, and Yolanda Sheppard. Amelia Inman joined during Action Items.

Noting: 11 participants were on the Zoom Call.

II. Opening Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

Pastor Paul Brewer, Abundant Faith Christian Church provided prayer, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilwoman Sheppard motioned to approve the agenda for October 3, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0.

IV. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

a. September 6, 2022, City Council (5:30 pm)

Councilwoman Sheppard motioned to approve the September 6, 2022, City Council Meeting Minutes, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved by a vote of 4-0.

b. September 19, 2022, Work Session (5:30 pm)

Councilwoman Sheppard motioned to approve the September 19, 2022, Work Session meeting minutes, the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore and approved by a vote of 4-0.

V. Public Comments Response

a. Ms. Cindy Butler (Business Owner and Resident) expressed complaints regarding the Grand Crystal Ball Room/Swift Street.

Response: A third officer was added to police detail to further ensure all compliance. No parking signs and cones were placed on the street to block the areas affected. The owner was informed that fines would be enforced if an event continued beyond 3:00 am. The owner was present at an event on Sept. 24 and began closing the event at 2:45 am to ensure 3:00 am closure.

b. Ms. Dawn Massey (Business Owner and Resident) In 2020 came before council concerning amending the event ordinance, acknowledged that council agreed to allow for a variance, intends to move forward, asking for clarity on whether a hearing is required. Councilwoman Howard summarized that a few years ago a moratorium was placed on events, recalled considering the women's club to give it purpose and that Dawn declined the variance offer, the ordinance would have to be changed, however there was no interest to do it at that time. Dawn would like to revisit this to apply for the Women's Club and her personal home for wedding events.

Response: Mayor and Council are working toward a response.

VI. Action Item

a. Restoring Electricity at Kelly Park

Mr. Monson and Chief of Police DJ confirmed that the insurance company will reimburse the removal of the tree struck by lightning at Kelly Park and restoring the repair required by electricity. Noting that Councilwoman Howard suggested contacting the city's insurance company. A vote is not required to proceed.

VII. New Business

a. Cemetery Fees

City Clerk Robinette Blount stated the only fee assessed is a \$125 interment fee, there are no fees for opening/closing a grave, no inventory of available plots, or long-term grave care. Mayor Reynolds confirmed that no plots are available at either cemetery, opening/closing graves are fees assessed by funeral homes, and a maintenance fee for grass cutting should be enforced and asked that council give consideration recommending \$400-500 annually. Mayor Reynolds made recommendation for the city

to appoint a board for the Bruce Street Cemetery.

b. Tree Protection Ordinance Fees

City Clerk Robinette Blount provided council with the Tree Ordinance, highlighting considerations that have not been adopted such as fees, an arborist, and a Tree Protection Board. Councilwoman Howard was not in favor of promoting fees to have trees removed. Councilwoman Wynn is in favor of the permit and involving an arborist in the process.

Noting: Section 5-22-103 General Applicability, Section 5-22-104 Exemptions, and Section 5-22-105 Procedures.

VIII. Old Business

a. Old City Hall Building

Mr. Monson has no new updates. the architect.

b. Masonic Lodge Repairs

Chief DJ indicated the youth violence prevention grant is still a work in progress, included in the grant are 10 desktop computers and desks, furniture, and software. The grant is \$100 ML up to \$1.5 ML per department, deadline November 14.

Councilwoman Howard asked about the construction of the building and if the old city hall building is a consideration. Chief DJ replied that construction is included in the grant. Councilwoman Sheppard recommended that council revisit touring the old city hall building as a group and decide how to move forward with leasing the building. Mayor Reynolds stated that Amphitheater Manager Renee Miller recently proposed hosting a Sunday brunch at the Old City Hall building and will provide a presentation before council. Councilwoman Sheppard recommended the Bruce Street Recreation Center would be perfect for the youth violence prevention program. Councilwoman Howard is in touch with Commissioner Mereda Davis's office to confirm the city's ownership as a trade over the new senior center.

c. Vacant Building Ordinance

Councilwoman Inman recommended that all fees are doubled and to provide the attorney with a draft.

Councilman Honore motioned to submit the draft to the attorney for approval, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

d. Trucks

Councilwoman Howard recommended the need to revisit the truck ordinance. Councilman Honore recommended the placement of speed bumps in that area. Councilwoman Sheppard recommended that speed bumps are placed on Bruce, Conyers, and Swift Street(s). Chief DJ stated that a variety of 36 truck tickets were written in the past 2 weeks, recently in court an attorney for a defendant cited State Law that if a truck starts their route in the city (Polaris is located in the city) trucks are allowed to come through the city. Currently working with google to take the City of Lithonia off the truck route.

IX. Other Business

a. Police Department Report

Chief of Police DJ introduced Officer Brooks as the new part time code enforcement officer during the week and will attend all council meetings to provide updates and information of new reporting. Introduction of Officer Daily, formerly with Snellville with a forte in advanced peer support. Currently processing another full-time police officer. "Memphis" (black German Sheppard) the new canine, 1 year old, exceptionally proficient, will be out on the road in 1.5-2 months once training is complete. Detailing of the new police cars should be complete within 3 weeks. Faith in Blue will be held at the church on Parkway this weekend, 2 officers will be attending. Addressed the outcome of the Grand Crystal Ballroom as noted under public comment response. Councilwoman Sheppard and Councilwoman Howard expressed concern of an upcoming event at Grand Crystal Ballroom being promoted with exotic dancers on a flyer October 25 on Swift Street.

b. Mayors Report, Councilmember District Update

Mayor Reynolds attended the 50th anniversary at Arabia Mountain and the Local Mayors GMA luncheon. Commissioner Larry Johnson is bringing the vote float to the city on Saturday October 8.

Councilwoman Inman, in touch with Dekalb Probation Officer Brown who will provide community service persons for clean-up. Roundtable discussion on October 20th at 5:30 pm virtually.

Councilwoman Howard, Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, October 6 at 3:30 pm virtually.

Councilwoman Wynn acknowledged a thank you to Mr. Monson from the Pine Mountain residential community, they are also working with Dekalb County to erect no dumping signs. Reminder of the meeting at Stonecrest Library October 6 regarding the new rail system.

Councilman Honore, LDDA in communication with the housing authority negotiating the Bruce Street housing property lease payments to be received, making progress. Trunk or Treat is coming up, will get with the Chief of Police, looking to host a movie as well.

Councilwoman Sheppard noted recently visiting the new Stockbridge Amphitheater, revisiting improvements proposed of the Lithonia Amphitheater and Dekalb County.

VIII. Executive Session (None)

IX. Adjournment

Councilwoman Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sheppard; the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 pm.