



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES—CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, August 17, 2020 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds. A roll call was taken and the following City Council Members were present: Diane Howard, Darold Honore, Amelia Inman, and Ric Dodd. Councilwoman Wynn joined the call shortly thereafter. Zoning Administrator Bill Johnston joined the call as well.

II. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilman Honore motioned to approve the August 17, 2020 Work Session Agenda; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

IV. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

a. July 31, 2020 – Special Called Virtual Meeting Music Video, “My Vote Don’t Count” @ 2:30 PM

Councilman Honore motioned to approve the Special Called Music Video, “My Vote Don’t Count” Virtual Meeting Minutes for July 31, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. August 3, 2020 – City Council Virtual Meeting @ 5:30 PM

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the City Council Virtual Meeting Minutes for August 3, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

c. August 10, 2020 – Special Called Virtual Meeting, Cares Act IGA @ 11:00 AM

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the Special Called Cares Act IGA Virtual Meeting Minutes for August 10, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

V. Public Comments Response for August 3, 2020 City Council Virtual Meeting

City Administrator Lathaydra Sands stated that Ms. Fortuchang is on the agenda to speak later tonight. The dumpster located at 25 Park Drive is being worked on by Code Enforcement, Mr. Monson has taken care of Braswell Street, Johnson Street has been looked at by Code Enforcement, and other items are being worked on as well on the list. Councilwoman Howard requested more detail on specifics. City Administrator stated that Interim Chief of Police provided a report of all properties that were addressed (a copy of the report was then emailed at that time to Mayor and Council). Going forward, a report will be provided during the City Council meeting each month.

VI. Presentation (Limit 8 minutes per person)

a. Clint Garibaldi & Kemoy Josephs, Premier Restaurant and Lounge; soft opening parking lot block party event located at 6924 Main Street on September 6, 2020

Mr. Clint Garibaldi stated that he would like to promote a soft opening on September 6, Labor Day Sunday, and to use the parking lot outside, adhering to social distancing, providing masks for everyone, limiting the number of people to come inside, selling food, playing music with a speaker outside starting at 4pm and ending at 11pm. Councilman Honore asked for clarity on the number of persons allowed for social gatherings. Mr. Garibaldi indicated limiting to 25 persons at a time to enter the restaurant, and the remainder would be in the parking lot, promoting to keep the crowd moving. Council and Mayor were in agreement that controlling the crowd to 50 people could be problematic, in addition to playing music in the parking lot that may potentially be a nuisance for the residents. Mayor and Council are more in favor of having a transitional crowd on the inside of the restaurant, and not outside with the attraction of music

which may draw a larger crowd that would not meet covid standards as per the current State of Georgia's Executive Order. Mayor Reynolds is asking that Mr. Garibaldi provide the City Clerk with a revision of this proposal to have the soft opening.

VII. Action Items

a. Adoption of Resolution No. 20-08-11 for Coronavirus Relief Fund

Councilwoman Howard motioned to adopt Resolution No. 20-08-11; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. Use of Courtroom for DeKalb Entertainment Commission Film App

Councilman Honore motioned for discussion to establish a DeKalb Entertainment Commission Film App fee for use of the courtroom; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

The motion was amended.

Councilman Honore motioned to approve and establish a courtroom fee for the DeKalb Entertainment Commission film app at \$200 per hour; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

c. City Logo

Mayor Reynolds would like to revisit selection of the new logo. Mayor and Council are in agreement to use the original logo seal and the new logo.

Vote to take place during the September 7, 2020 City Council Meeting.

VIII. Other Business

a. Ms. Dawn Massey; requesting amendment of the event ordinance to exempt historical landmarks and cultural assets, The Women's Club and the Camellia House

Mayor Reynolds solicited council's input; Councilman Honore led the discussion and suggested having a separate ordinance for historical landmarks, Mayor Reynolds suggested a meeting space for the community, Councilwoman Howard provided factual commentary that the City donated the Women's Club to Arabia Mountain and raised concern that it should have been gifted back to the City and not privately sold, Councilman Dodd emphasized the vast amount of historic properties that are within the city limits that may have the same claim, Councilman Honore asked for clarity on the number of current event centers and in the event that one of the four were to close, would that leave an opening – it was further confirmed that as per the adoption of this ordinance there should be one event center per 1,000 person population within the city and no replacement would be honored, Councilwoman Inman remains in posture that there are too many event centers in the city, Councilwoman Wynn is in agreement with Councilwoman Inman and further stated that her preference for the Women's Club use would be as a meeting space for the community. Mayor Reynolds then asked Ms. Massey if she would consider a different use of the Women's club and Camellia House.

b. Ms. Cora Fortuchang; 6836 Main Street, seeking to allow her tenant to utilize the parking lot on the property to park commercial vehicles for his landscaping business

Mayor Reynolds solicited council's input; Councilwoman Howard stated that Zoning Administrator Bill Johnston provided his recommendations during the last meeting. Mr. Johnston joined the call and provided clarification that the property would have to be zoned for C-1 to store commercial vehicles, that council may (emphasis on "may") want to consider edge conditional zoning for 1 utility trailer (no more than a 10 thousand pound vehicle behind a fence, however the applicant was looking to store 2 utility vehicles. This was not a suggestion or recommendation, but a

strategy to make an accommodation. If the number or size of the vehicles increased the business owner would be subject to a warning, and subsequently a citation. Mr. Johnston concluded that it was made clear to the applicant (Mr. Maddox) that it was not permitted.

c. Update on Lithonia Beautiful

Mayor Reynolds would like to engage the nursery that was used a few years ago to place fresh mulch especially on Main Street and other city streets as well before the end of August, tree pruning on Main Street and throughout the city due to the amount of increased traffic into the city. A subsequent meeting is scheduled with Arabia Mountain regarding maintaining the bike trail and entry signs.

Councilman Honore attempted to make contact with (Ms. Allen) Arabia Mountain to ask for participation/involvement on providing entrance signage. Additionally will obtain quotes on street sign toppers (logo branding) and entrance signs, emphasizing that flowers should be changed seasonally.

Councilman Honore has been in conversations with Officer Stephens about code enforcement and looked into project management software called GOgov and provided a summary on how it can be utilized; additionally City Administrator Lathaydra Sands informed him of project management software that can be utilized. Furthermore, before the issuance of a business license all code enforcement issues must be addressed otherwise they are subject to a cease and assist order citation and will not receive a license to operate as is the case with car lots. Recommending the Code Enforcement Officer is a dedicated full-time or part-time role for code enforcement duties only and should have access to an updated ordinance.

Councilwoman Howard recommended that code enforcement is present at meetings, requested an updated business listing for review, additional streets for beautification are Conyers, Bruce, Center, and Rock Chapel to extend the look for the city.

Councilman Dodd indicated that he recalled Arabia Mountain saying that they would upgrade the signage to include the bike trail entry signage.

d. Code Enforcement

Mayor Reynolds suggested that Councilman Honore and Councilwoman Howard coordinate to meet with Officer Stephens and Interim Chief Tamesha Minafee, get on the same page, and put something in place. Officer Stephens indicated that she is overloaded; extended-time post office visits for mailings. City Administrator Lathaydra Sands indicated that if Officer Stephens places the certified mail in her box over the weekend, that on Monday she will deliver them to the post office where she lives that is not as busy.

Councilwoman Inman expressed a concern regarding the property maintenance code not being up to date and how that affects Officer Stephens' role. Officer Stephens indicated there are code enforcement programs; cost can be based on population, # of officers, # of hours worked, and # of viewers. The software can be costly; however, a justifiable concern is that the judge is being too lenient with enforcing fines. Councilwoman Inman asked that Officer Stephens share the names of those programs with the City Clerk or City Administrator. Additionally the software can be used for permits and business licenses.

Councilman Honore expressed concern about the apparent commune on Parkway; Officer Stephens will look into it – needs the address location (DeKalb or Lithonia) to perform due diligence.

e. Grants

Councilwoman Howard inquired whether City Administrator Sands or City Clerk Blount have expertise in this area, if there are grants earmarked for specific things that the city could benefit from, and that “Grants” should be on someone’s agenda to monitor. Councilwoman Inman knows of someone (Ms. Anderson) who is retiring in September who can make a presentation for Council, and that Jahvan Green mentioned a Vista person who writes grants.

f. City Accountant Position

Councilwoman Howard asked for an update. City Administrator Lathaydra Sands indicated that an RFP went out, it is due August 21, and 2 proposals have been received thus far. Councilman Honore asked for a copy of the RFP.

g. Mayors Report: COVID-19 Update, Councilmember District Update

Mayor Reynolds spoke to Ms. Calloway with the housing authority; the executive board approved the letter presented to change ownership of the parking lot with a stipulation to ensure that DeKalb County maintain the bike trail and Johnson Street, an agreement is forthcoming for council approval, and normal procedure to take place regarding ownership. On another note the paving must be completed, Arabia Mountain wants to know if Splost Funds can be allocated; if the project can take place this year or next year. Councilman Dodd indicated that the paving project could be a 2021 budget item for Splost Funds.

Mayor Reynolds is requesting that council share ideas on anything that can be used for covid funds. Councilwoman Inman has concerns about the water build-up at the handicap ramp across from Family Dollar; Mayor Reynolds will check with Mr. Monson for an update and follow up with Councilwoman Inman. Councilwoman Howard is requesting that the tree limbs are trimmed off the masonic lodge building. Councilman Dodd suggested the bathrooms are fixed and in working order at the masonic lodge building. Councilwoman Inman inquired about the process for dead tree limb removal, location Reagin Street and Officer Stephens will perform due diligence.

IX. Executive Session (NONE)

X. Adjournment

Councilwoman Inman motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard; the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.