



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES–CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, October 5, 2020 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:34 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. Vanneriah Wynn and Attorney Valorri Jones later joined the call.

II. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilman Dodd motioned to approve the October 5, 2020 City Council Agenda with additions; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Additions: Councilwoman Howard; Other Business (letter b.) City Hall Annex, Councilman Dodd; Other Business (letter h.) Grant Money for the upgrade on Main Street.

IV. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

a. September 14, 2020 – Special Called Executive Session Virtual Meeting; Police Department Vehicle Use and Chief of Police Selection @ 3:00 PM

Councilman Dodd motioned to approve the Special Called Executive Session Virtual Meeting Minutes for September 14, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Councilman Dodd noted correction for Item IV. as, *"The Special Called Virtual Meeting reconvened"*.

b. September 21, 2020 – City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting @ 5:30 PM

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting Minutes for September 21, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

V. Public Comments (Limit 2-minutes per person)

Ms. Sharon Inman; 2601 Johnson Street, grass and limbs have been in the yard for 2-3 months and are terrible eye soars, a sofa is on the property next door to BellSouth. Welcome to the new Chief; on Klondike Road/Council Street towards Stonecrest there are tennis shoes hanging on the wires of the electric pole line that insinuates drug activity. Mayor Reynolds suggested that City Administrator Lathaydra Sands involve Public Works for an assessment of both locations; report to code enforcement.

VI. Presentation (Limit 8 minutes per person)

a. Mr. Michael McPherson, GMA Intergovernmental Coordinator; Governmental relations message

Mr. McPherson delivered a message from GMA's Governmental Relations Department about exciting opportunities for city governments and the importance of engaging with legislatures to communicate the needs of the community as the 2021 general assembly session is nearly over.

IN SUMMARY

Every session of the Georgia General Assembly presents exciting opportunities for city governments – and an element of danger too. GMA's political strength comes from the close relationships between city officials, their state legislators and from working closely with GMA's advocacy team.

Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to engage with legislators now and during the 2021 Session. Even if your engagement is virtual, legislators must be included in the dialogue about the needs of your community. The 2021 session will begin a new two-year term and many of these legislators will be newly-elected. As always, GMA encourages you to set up a hometown connection meeting.

GMA's policies for the 2021 session are nearly finalized, and we appreciate all of you who participated in sharing ideas to bring forth in January. GMA Governmental Relations staff is already working on many issues, including:

- **Continuing the fight against state-level preemption of locally-established residential design standards** supported by homebuilders and realtors;
- Ensuring local control over **short-term rental regulations and taxation compliance**;
- Pursuing legislation that would authorize **registration of rental properties**;
- Various revenue and finance issues that impact a city's bottom-line;
- In light of the civil unrest due to police violence against Black people, GMA anticipates debates on various public safety and police reform measures; and
- Every session there are bills introduced **to limit home rule**, aimed at preventing city councils from making decisions in the interests of their citizens and doing their jobs, which could include preemption bills on local authority in response to the coronavirus.

I also want to share the news that GMA's President has formed an Equity and Inclusion Commission consisting of 26 members, including elected officials and city staff.

- The commission aims to address, strategize and implement solutions to combat institutional and systematic racism, violence, and acts of injustice, inequity and intolerance in all of Georgia's cities.
- It is also expected that the Commission members will lead by example to urge cities and their leaders to be at the forefront of creating sustainable change in their communities.
- A mid-term report will be issued to the Board of Directors in January 2021, and a final report will be presented to the Board and membership at the 2021 Annual Convention.

- *We encourage all cities to visit GMA's Equity and Inclusion Toolkit at www.gacities.com. This toolkit includes resources that will equip Georgia's cities leaders with the tools to listen deeply, unite widely and act boldly to combat racism and social injustice in your communities. This toolkit will be updated often to include GMA initiatives and announcements, and resources from our valued partners.*
- *If anyone has questions on any equity and inclusion initiatives, I'll be glad to talk with you off-line to share more information.*

Your city's involvement with GMA and with your legislative delegation strengthens all city governments. I hope you will reach out to me or any of the governmental relations team to schedule a date to participate in-person at the capitol.

b. Mr. David Kendrick, Vice President N.A.M.I. Dekalb

Mr. Kendrick represents the National Alliance on Mental Illness as the DeKalb affiliate. NAMI is the largest grass roots organization for mental health in the United States; providing mental health educational services and four programs that provide support for families, peer to peer, NAMI Homefront for Veterans, NAMI Smart for advocating state and local issues to Washington DC when it comes to funding. In Our Own Voice, if you own a business you can request that speakers come to your business and speak to the community. October 4-10 is mental illness awareness week with an annual walk. All programs are free for enrollment, toll free helpline for referral information and support. If anyone has questions please reach out to City Clerk Robin Blount for contact information.

c. Mr. Allen, President Friends of Lithonia Park; Update

Mr. Allen covered 4 items and asking for guidance and assistance. 1. Activity camp at Lithonia Park has been going on for about three to four weeks and the numbers are on target with 50-75 students promoting physical activity and will continue up until the week of Thanksgiving. 2. During the DeKalb County Board of Commissioners meeting, funding was approved for the release of funding for the bathroom buildout, and the fitness center and music metal equipment are scheduled to be completed before Thanksgiving. 3. Future projects; meet with Park Pride for to make them aware of interest for upgrades and improvements to the Bruce Street Park in conjunction with the East DeKalb Senior Center to make it more senior friendly, the goal is to make the creek look like a river walk, submission date by August 2021 with the goal to continue planning during the next 8 months looking for input and additional guidance for future projects. Visioning project in conjunction with park pride to have the Luscious Sanders Recreational Center a focal point, built in Lithonia Park and asking that Mayor and Council work with their legislative channels. 4. Finally with Friends of The Park in the process of submitting paperwork, looking for a new point of contact to replace Charlie Anderson (as he is busy at this time with the Farmer's Market) as a secondary contact. Allen will be submitting paperwork to the Parks Group to ensure

that he is the main point of contact to complete existing and future projects. On a fund raising note, as of end of September \$100 was raised for future park improvements, with a commitment from the Lithonia Lions football team to donate \$100 monthly.

Councilwoman Howard is requesting that this topic return to the Work Session Agenda; Rebuilding of Luscious Sanders Center and Lithonia Park.

VIII. Action Items

a. Comcast Franchise Fee Renewal

Attorney Valorri Jones provided explanation/interpretation for Councilmembers and will provide further research on items that were discussed. It is the pleasure of Council to table this item for the Work Session Agenda.

IX. Other Business

a. Randall Avenue; traffic calming devices

City Administrator Lathaydra Sands stated that Dekalb is requesting a Resolution, thereafter the study can be completed; Lithonia should assume cost of installation and maintenance of the speed bump. Council agreed that residents should be made aware of the cost for maintenance in writing by mail to be included in property taxes. Mayor Reynolds is requesting more research on the speed bumps for a better cost quote estimate than \$5,000 for each speed bump.

b. City Hall Annex

Council is in agreement to purchase vertical blinds for the windows. City Administrator Lathaydra Sands will coordinate the project. Additionally, quotes for HVAC system to include ductwork for 2021 budget.

c. Masonic Lodge

Councilwoman Howard stated the trees will be trimmed within the week. Council is in agreement to make repairs and upgrades to the bathroom first, and then proceed with clean-up.

d. City Accountant Position

By large council would like to move forward with Platinum Financial Services. City Administrator Lathaydra Sands will coordinate the initial interview schedule.

e. City Administration-LDDA-LBA Team Building Initiative

Councilwoman Inman in an effort to engage businesses and business funding, would like to plan a date for a Zoom call and requesting that City Clerk Robin Blount email a meeting request to LDDA, LBA, Council-Mayor, City Administration, and Police Department. City Attorney Valorri Jones indicated that Council would be subject to the requirements of the open meetings act and must be open to the public; what will be discussed, what is the purpose of the meeting, who will attend? Councilwoman Inman is suggesting a Special Called meeting as an ice-breaker. City

Attorney Valorri Jones then suggested that each group should designate a point person to return before council for continued discussion. City Clerk Robin Blount will forward the lead contact information from each group to Councilwoman Inman.

f. Mayors Report: COVID-19 Update, Council Member District Update

Mayor Reynolds announced the Cares Act Funds were received and asking for Council input on usage of funds between now and Thursday. Councilwoman Wynn joined the call to emphasize continual contact be made with our citizens to check on them. Councilwoman Howard provided recognition of Public Works' involvement with painting the park tables and managing the cutting of trees on the exterior of the Masonic Lodge. Councilwoman Inman suggested utilizing robocall services to reach out to the citizens of Lithonia as a way to check-up.

g. Special Events: Cities Week

Councilwoman Inman stated that the Cities Week event will be held on Saturday October 10 in conjunction with the Farmers Market. Councilwoman Howard indicated that one of the park tables would be reserved for Mayor/Council seating. Mayor Reynolds requested council approval for a 3on3 basketball activity for youth that Doug Thompkins (Flava's) would like to promote; Council in favor to have a basketball goal without the 3on3 activity. Mayor is requesting that Councilwoman Inman forward any logo's or form of branding for a graphic type brochure to promote cities week, all pictures for GMA should be forwarded centrally to Ms. Sands. Marta closure information should be forwarded to Chief Pollard; Chief will ensure proper coverage and his contact information can be obtained through the Clerk's Office.

h. Grant Money for the upgrade on Main Street

Councilman Dodd is requesting clarity on the \$55,000 CDBG; specifically what the money is budgeted for and the time allotted to utilize the funds. Can the purchase of the city annex blinds could come out of the Main Street Beautification Grant (City's Grant Bank Account)? Further suggesting that planning commence on how the funding is utilized so that when the CDBG is received, that it is utilized in a timely manner which allows for the ability to apply for another grant at a higher amount.

City Administrator Lathaydra Sands indicated that the funds have not been received. Further stating that the grant was for Street Scapes beautification on Bruce Street around the recreation center; will confirm with Mayor and Council during the week.

X. Executive Session (None)

XI. Adjournment

Councilman Dodd motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore; the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.