



CITY OF THOMSON
PUBLIC HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 8, 2023

6:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney

Also Present:

Assistant Chief Robert Brown, TPD
45 Citizens
Erin Burdette, McDuffie Progress

Not Present:

John Waller, City Administrator

PUBLIC HEARING

At 6:00pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry welcomed all to the Public Hearing concerning the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation on a sign variance.

With the absence of a Planning and Zoning Director; Mayor Usry presented the variance recommendation of the Planning Board.

150 Main Street: 150 Main Street, LLC requested a variance in the size of a sign in Zoning District TB-2. Code Section 22-202 – Permitted Signs, restricts the maximum size of a hanging sign to two-feet by six-feet (twelve square feet). 150 Main Street, LLC requested to have a three-feet by eight-feet (twenty-four square feet) hanging sign. The P&Z Board recommended that the requested variance be approved with the stipulation that the setback not be reduced to less than sixty feet from the road's centerline.

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

There being no questions, comments, or other concerns, Mayor Usry closed the public meeting at 6:05pm.

COUNCIL MEETING

At 6:05pm, Mayor Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order. Councilmember Smalley gave the invocation, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN INPUT: John Jump addressed the excessive speeding on Ellington Avenue in the White Oak Park area. The Police Department worked the area and gave tickets, but as soon as they left, the racing started

again. However, when the City Street Department was repairing the street all speeding stopped. Georgia State Patrol has been helpful also. Mr. Jump noted that a speed hump or two would slow them down. Mayor Usry noted that the speed monitor can be deployed for recording speeds. Julie Klare spoke on her dissatisfaction that the Municipal Court has no recording of any sessions. She feels that this must be provided for transparency. City Attorney Plunkett noted that the Municipal Court is not a court of record and is not required to record or allow recordings during proceedings. Mayor Usry told Ms. Klare that the City would prepare an answer for her.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor passed the motion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

City Council Meeting, May 11, 2023—A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 approved them.

BUSINESS:

- a. Recommendation of Planning & Zoning, re: Sign Variance for 150 Main Street: As covered in the Public Hearing, the P & Z Commission recommends that the Council approve the sign size variance from twelve square feet to twenty-four square feet in a TB-2 Zoning District requested for the business at 150 Main Street with the stipulation that the setback not be reduced to less than sixty feet from the centerline of Main Street. A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Corley to approve the signage variance request. A vote of 5-0 approved the motion.
- b. Proclamation – Coach Michael Thomas: A proclamation honoring Thomson High School Boys Basketball Coach Michael Thomas was read by Councilmember Belton. A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to adopt the proclamation and a 5-0 vote in approval was taken. Several minutes of congratulations and photographs with Coach Thomas and his nineteen attending players followed.
- c. Proclamation – July is Park and Recreation Month: A proclamation honoring the Thomson-McDuffie County Recreation Department for their good works with our citizens was presented by Mayor Usry. Director Trevor Welcher and all attending Recreation Board members came forward for the presentation. Photographs taken and congratulations given were shared by all.
- d. Bike Ride Across Georgia (BRAG) Street Closing Requests: BRAG is being hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors' Bureau during their overnight stay in Thomson on June 9th. They requested that Springfield Street, from Main Street to the back entrance of the Brickyard, be closed from 9:00am on Friday until 9:00am on Saturday to accommodate the 1,500 riders who will be using the Brickyard, Tennis Courts and Gymnasium. As there will also be a free concert next to the Depot, they are requesting Railroad Street from Main Street to the Annex Cross Walk be closed on Friday from 4:00pm to 9:30pm. A motion to approve the street closings, made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Johnson, was approved by a vote of 5-0.
- e. Juneteenth Street Closing Request: The request by Mr. Devin Pinkston to close Railroad Street from O'Neal Street to Greenway Street and Greenway Street from Railroad Street to Whiteoak Street to accommodate the Juneteenth celebration on June 17th from 4:00pm to 10:00pm was

made into a motion by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle with approval by a vote of 5-0.

- f. Freedom Blast Street Closing Request: The Chamber of Commerce has requested that Railroad Street from O'Neal Street to Greenway Street and Greenway Street from Railroad Street to Whiteoak Street be closed from 6:00pm until 9:30pm to accommodate the Freedom Blast celebration at the Government Complex on July 1st. The motion made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson met with approval on a 5-0 vote.
- g. Resolution 04-2023 – Civility Pledge: Signed by City Elected Officials, they pledge to practice and promote civility in all City of Thomson proceedings and responsibilities. A motion to approve the resolution, made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson, was approved by a 5-0 vote.
- h. Resolution 05-2023 - P.I. No. 0013258 Revised Washington Road/Dallas Drive: A resolution required by the Georgia Department of Transportation to amend the project by raising a manhole and cut-off valve, to approve the additional \$6,550 cost and appoint Mayor Usry to sign the contract. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Councilmember Smalley, seconded by Councilmember Johnson and approved by a 5-0 vote.
- i. Postponement of Second Reading of the Zoning Policy Update Ordinance: Mayor Usry noted that City Attorney Plunkett is working with County Attorney Dave Dunaway to make sure that the areas of the law that cross-over to the County Zoning will match the City Zoning changes. The Second Reading is postponed until at least July or until the required Ordinance changes can be completed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council Report: Councilmember Corley brought up a concern that she was approached about; a citizen on Michael Street recently had 2 bullets shot into their home. The residents in that area would appreciate a step up in patrols. She also noted that the Gas Department has started their annual check for gas leaks. This will be done first in District 1, the area north of Main Street and west of the Railroad tracks by a golf cart-like vehicle with sensors attached. Mayor Usry noted that the City is currently looking for a Gas Engineer with the help of the Gas Authority. Councilmember Belton spoke on his appreciation for the City's help with Coach Thomas' proclamation.

City Administrator: CA Waller is not present due to a family illness. He sent updates to the mayor.

Mayor: Mayor Usry gave updates on the Sweetwater Bridge on the Augusta Highway. The road has closed, but GDOT hopes to have it open again in 90 days. That timeline includes the moving of a twelve-inch water line that serves the entire southern end of the county. He spoke on the City Department responsibilities while the BRAG riders are in town and that the Waste Water Department is in the process of submitting for their plant permit. Mayor Usry reminded all to be alert for bike riders around town and encouraged everyone to come out to the free concert tomorrow night.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

There being no other business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Smalley. A vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 6:53. (5-0)