



CITY OF THOMSON
PUBLIC HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
May 13, 2021

6:30PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

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

Also Present:

Acting Chief E J Bess, TPD
Chase Beggs, Planning & Zoning Dir.
8 Interested Citizens
9 Thomson Police Officers
Wayne Parham, McDuffie Progress

PUBLIC HEARING

At 6:30pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry welcomed all to the Public Hearing concerning the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation concerning the request of CVS at 109 West Hill Street for a Signage Variance.

Planning and Zoning Director Chase Beggs presented the CVS request to grant a variance for additional signage on their building in excess of the square footage allowed. The recommendation of the Planning Board is to deny the request. The vote was 6-Nays and 0-Yays at the Planning & Zoning Board meeting.

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

There being no questions, comments, or other concerns, Mayor Usry closed the public meeting at 6:32pm.

COUNCIL MEETING

At 6:32pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order. Councilmember John Smalley gave the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN COMMENT:

Precious Wiley owns the property at 630 Martin Luther King, Jr. Street. Renovations were put off for some time, and now she's being told that it must be torn down. She maintains that she was not aware of this until recently. Mayor thanked her for coming and explained that Council cannot do anything at this

meeting about her complaint. Code Enforcement and Building Inspection offices must comply with Code.

Nora Douglas commended CA Waller for the cleanup of an overgrown lot that was fostering rats and snakes in her neighborhood. She then spoke of grass not being cut in a yard below 829 Mobley Street and explained about drainage at the corner of Mobley Street and Lincoln Drive that is eroding a yard. The Mayor thanked her for her kind words and for bringing the Mobley Street problems before the Council. The City is already working to correct the overflow of ditches at Mobley and Lincoln.

Danielle Lubell spoke next, and as the owner of 151 Lincoln Drive, it is her property that is being eroded by the ditch and under road pipe water overflow. She was also questioning the yard trash pickup, which seems very erratic or non-existent. She was assured that those problems were being addressed.

Devin Pinkston was the last to speak to the Council. He is working to have an event at the Pitt Street Park on June 19th and announced that Recreation Department Director Trevor Welch had given his permission earlier in the day. He asked that the Mayor and Council approve it also. The Mayor said that the City had not yet received any notification from Mr. Welcher, but that there were several requirements for an event license. The permission to have it at a certain place was a good beginning. Mr. Pinkston was directed to contact Planning & Zoning Director Chase Beggs for further guidance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the agenda as written.

A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Council Meeting, April 8, 2021—A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

BUSINESS:

a. Recognition of Thomson Police Officers and Personnel

Acting Chief E.J. Bess presented officers Angela Lefebvre and Dewayne Deloatch each the Community Service Medal. As a surprise, Terrie Blye, who is the Administrative Assistant as well as the heart and soul of our Police Station, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for all the extra time she gives to community events.

b. CVS Request for Signage Variance

A motion and vote was called for on the CVS signage variance explained by Chase Beggs in the earlier Public Hearing. Mayor Usry reminded all that the recommendation of the Planning Board was to deny the request for a variance. A motion by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Corley to uphold the recommendation to deny the variance was passed by a 5-0 vote.

c. Land Bank

Mayor Usry presented photos of 111 Main Street. The property known as the Hughes Building and also as the original Bank of Thomson building, needs to be marketed and put to good use. He would like to see the Council agree to deed the Hughes Building and the Jackson Street Fire Station to the Land Bank and/or the Downtown Development

Authority. Councilmember Belton made the motion to gift the Hughes Building and the Jackson Street Fire Station, one each to the Land Bank and Downtown Development Authority. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Johnson, and passed by a 5-0 vote.

d. Ordinance #575 Broadband Ready Community

The second reading of the ordinance was held. No questions were posed, so Councilmember Smalley made the motion to adopt Ordinance #575. Councilmember Whittle seconded the motion and it was passed by a 5-0 vote.

e. Ordinance #576 De-annexation of 14.92 acres on Mesena Road

The second reading was held. The Council was shown the corrected map with all metes and bounds that was provided by the petitioner. Councilmember Belton reminded the group that the City Limits sign would need to be moved. Councilmember Corley made the motion to adopt Ordinance #576 and was seconded by Councilmember Johnson. The ordinance was passed by a 5-0 vote.

f. Resolution 02-2021 and GEFA Loan CW2020015

The GEFA Loan is in the amount of \$8,361,000 for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. There will be no added capacity, but long awaited repairs and improvements will be implemented and the whole system will run more efficiently and will be able to meet updated EPA requirements. The Water and Sewer Commission recommended the approval of this loan. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle to approve the recommendation of the Water and Sewer Commission. The loan was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Resolution 02-2021 is a part of the loan packet stating that the loan is approved by the governing body and sets forth that Mayor Usry will execute the documents. A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to adopt Resolution 02-2021. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

g. GEFA Loan DW2017007 increase of \$500,000

It was explained that the acquisition and installation of radio-read meters is funded by the GEFA loan that stipulates a completion date of November, 2022. The original loan of \$1,194,000 was partially used for the MUNIS software upgrade that was required along with the new meters. The City's manpower is not sufficient to have new water meters installed by the deadline. Carter & Sloope, the City's engineering contractor, estimates that to contract the installation of the remaining meters would cost \$380,000, but recommends requesting an additional \$500,000. This would increase the current loan to \$1,694,000, at 0.91% interest. A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Corley to request a modification of GEFA Loan DW2017007 of an additional \$500,000 for meter installation assistance. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

h. Solid Waste Contractor

Bids from three solid waste companies were received on April 23rd. Waste Management, Capital Waste and Meridian Waste all submitted proposals for Residential and Commercial Solid Waste collection. Councilmember Johnson asked when they would start, if chosen. CA

Waller said he hoped around July 4th. She also asked about our employees that will be affected. All bidders indicated that if an employee wanted to work with them, they will certainly interview them and if appropriate, offer them a job. A motion to enter into a 12-24 month contract with Waste Management to handle the City's Residential and Commercial Solid Waste was made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

i. Thomson-McDuffie Regional Airport Easement GDOT Contract

This contract for a federal grant will cover work to acquire land/easement for Runway 28 approach: 1.96 Acres Fee Simple & 6.14 Acres Avigation Easement at the Thomson-McDuffie Regional Airport. The grant will reimburse the City for \$252,000 that has been paid out since 2017. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the GDOT contract for acquiring real property and an Avigation Easement concerning Runway 28 at the Thomson-McDuffie Airport. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Administrator:

CA Waller spoke on the Police Chief search. There were fourteen applications for the job received by the deadline. Of these, seven were invited by the Georgia Association of Police Chiefs to testing. Three candidates declined for various reasons, and the remaining four will finish testing next week. Our long awaited Code Enforcement Officer, Jerry Pitman, will begin work on June 1st.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:


There being no other public business, at 7:25pm a motion was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to adjourn to executive session to discuss a Personnel issue. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

At 7:35pm a motion was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Belton to return to regular session. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

Mayor Usry broached the subject of moving the Council Regular Work session on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30pm to 6:00pm. A motion to move the meeting to 6:00pm was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson. City Attorney Jimmy Plunkett will check to see if an ordinance is necessary to change the meeting time. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

Having no other business before the Council, Councilmember Whittle made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Corley and a vote of 5-0 passed the motion at 7:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor

