



CITY OF THOMSON  
PUBLIC HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MAY 12, 2022

6:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

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

Also Present:

Chief Courtney Gale, TPD  
Chase Beggs, Planning & Zoning Dir.  
Karen Fioretti, McDuffie Progress  
5 Interested Citizens

Not Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor

**PUBLIC HEARING**

At 6:00pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Belton welcomed all to the Public Hearing for the zoning change request for the property at 117 Greenway Street.

P&Z Director Beggs presented the zoning change request and Planning Board recommendation.

**117 Greenway Street:** Agape Ministries submitted an application, signed by the property owner, asking for a change in zoning designation from B-2 (Business) to S (Special). They would like to use the old Hughes Furniture building for their church. At a previous meeting the Planning Board unanimously recommended that the change in zoning be denied. The Board cited inadequate parking for an 11,000 square foot building and the impact on alcohol-licensed restaurants and other established businesses. Four downtown restaurants, if sold, would not be able to obtain alcohol licenses due to the church's proximity.

**CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Margaret Sharpe, of Agape Ministries, spoke on their current location having been sold, having one service weekly and the food and clothing ministry being open daily. Councilmember Smalley questioned the parking that would come with the building's rent. Ms. Sharpe said there are approximately twenty parking spaces, other than public parking. There was general discussion concerning business growth, zoning designations and parking. There being no further questions, comments, or other concerns, Mayor Pro-Tem Belton closed the public meeting at 6:13pm.

**COUNCIL MEETING**

At 6:13pm, Mayor Pro-Tem Belton called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order. City Attorney Jimmy Plunkett gave the invocation, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

**CITIZEN COMMENT:**

Reverend David Lambert of First Baptist Church Thomson (FBC) deferred until such time as the Council had questions when discussing the agenda item pertaining to FBC's request for the City to deed Borders Street and part of Church Street to them.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 4-0 in favor was taken.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

City Council Meeting, April 14, 2022--A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle to approve the minutes. A vote of 4-0 was taken to approve them.

**BUSINESS:**

a. Recommendation of Planning & Zoning, 117 Greenway Street:

Mayor Pro-Tem Belton noted that the Planning Board vote to deny the application was unanimous. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the recommendation of the Planning Board to deny the requested zoning change. Councilmember Smalley reaffirmed the motion and spoke on the need for the Council to be consistent, as there were two churches that moved from the downtown when zoning was changed to B-2. Councilmember Johnson reaffirmed her second. A vote of 3-0 passed the motion. Councilmember Corley abstained, as she is the Executive Director of Manna, a faith-based food pantry.

b. Resolution 06-2022: GDOT PI 13258 Utility Contract Agreement:

This will allow the City to fund \$3650.00 +/- for GDOT required work to adjust a water valve and manhole during the pedestrian crossing upgrades to the intersection of Washington Road and Dallas Drive. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle. A vote of 4-0 was taken in approval.

c. Borders Street and Church Street Request:

First Baptist Church Thomson requested that the City deed to them all of Borders Street and the portion of Church Street bounded by church property on both the east and west. This would allow them to safeguard their members and guests by temporarily closing those roads or portions thereof to thru traffic during church functions. Reverend Lambert explained that the church would maintain the roadways and honor all easements, and the plan is not to "close" the streets, but to "control" traffic during the church's activities. A motion to approve the request was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Smalley. A vote in favor passed the motion 4-0.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Council Report:** None.

**City Administrator Report:** CA Waller spoke on the nearly 600 building lots that have been recently approved throughout the City and County. GDOT is concerned particularly about White Oak Landing. The entrance is on a 55 MPH section of highway. GDOT requires a right-hand lane passing lane added to allow traffic to flow even when a car has stopped to turn left into the subdivision, with a full left hand turn lane in place soon after. The developer of the subdivision would like to implement the less expensive right pass lane initially to be able to afford the more expensive full left turn lane after Phase I lots have sold. The City and developer are in discussions and expect to have a Memorandum of Agreement on the issue soon. In addition to new subdivisions, there are two new hotels coming to Washington Road, and new gas stations on Jackson Street and Cobbham Road. This a lot of new construction for which the City will provide water, sewer and potentially gas services.

**Mayor Report:** Mayor Pro-Tem Belton reminded the Council about the annual Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Convention in Savannah in June. He also thanked those in the room for attending the City Council meeting.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

There being no other business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Smalley. A vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned at 6:31pm. (4-0)

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk

  
Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor