



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES–CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, February 7, 2022 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds. A roll call was taken, and the following City Council Members were present: Diane Howard, Amelia Inman, and Vanneriah Wynn. Darold Honore joined during the approval of meeting minutes. Yolanda Sheppard later joined.

II. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

III. Approval of Agenda

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the city council meeting agenda for Monday, February 7, 2022, with the addition of Item (b) Clarification on property 7206 Center Street, and Item (c) 2400 Bruce Street under New Business; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved by a vote of 3-0.

Councilwoman Howard requested the addition of Item B, Councilwoman Wynn requested the addition of Item C for discussion.

IV. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

a. December 20, 2021, Work Session (5:30 pm)

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the December 20, 2021, Work Session Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0.

b. January 3, 2022, Organizational City Council (5:00 pm)

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the January 3, 2022, Organization City Council Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0.

c. January 10, 2022, Special Called: Presentation Commissioner Mereda Johnson for Amphitheatre (5:30 pm)

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the January 10, 2022, Special Called Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved by a vote of 4-0.

d. January 13, 2022, Special Called: Old Boy Scouts Hut and COPS Grant (5:00 pm)

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the January 13, 2022, Special Called Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman and approved by a vote of 4-0.

e. January 18, 2022, Work Session (5:30 pm)

Councilwoman Wynn motioned to approve the January 18, 2022, Work Session Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard and approved by a vote of 4-0.

f. January 26, 2022, Public Hearing: An appeal of a determination by the zoning administrator that the proposed landscape contractor business with outdoor storage is not permitted at 7037 Swift Street (3:00 pm)

Councilwoman Wynn motioned to approve the January 26, 2022, Public Hearing Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore and approved by a vote of 3-0.

Councilwoman Inman abstained, she was not present at this meeting.

V. Public Comments Response

City Administrator Sands stated the only public comment was from Mrs. Harper regarding code enforcement, and an acknowledgement was made that because code enforcement did not attend the meeting that Mrs. Harper would contact code enforcement on her own by phone. Mrs. Harper then acknowledged that she had not made phone contact, Mayor Reynolds agreed to have code enforcement's contact Mrs. Harper by phone.

VI. Presentation (Limit 3-minutes per person)

a. Ms. Dion Russell: Intentions Bistro, location 6926 Main Street

Proposing an application for a full-service restaurant, hours of operation proposed open between the hours of 11:00 am until last order 10:30-11:00 pm midnight, with closure between the hours of 2-5:30 pm to prepare for the dinner crowd. Family style affordable sit-down dining and delivery, menu pricing up to \$40, lowest \$2 for sides. 16 years legal litigation, ran a local restaurant in Ohio for 5 years, relocated to Georgia, hoping to be granted a permit to be open fairly soon.

Council questions:

Councilwoman Howard asked about the hours of operation, former business in Ohio Just Jerk Caribbean Grille in Springville Ohio, \$115,000 in revenue her first year.

Councilman Honore asked for the website for the restaurant in Ohio, and mentioned direction of codes for the location, loud music coming from the location this past Saturday, and if there would be a dancefloor, covered direction of codes for this location, heard an advertising for music this past Saturday. Response, website information can be found on yelp as "just jerk" for on-line ordering and checking reviews. That was not us playing loud music, we were cleaning and painting, the other establishment had a big event, lots of loud music and the parking lot was full, there will be no dance floor, just tables and chairs, not enough room for a dance floor.

Councilwoman Inman asked to verify the hours, because of the break to switch from lunch to dinner, only concern is that restaurants don't stay open continuously throughout the day. Response, once a full staff is employed they can stay open throughout the day, those are just proposed hours, need of staff to clean in order to be open throughout the day to be prepared for dinner.

Councilwoman Wynn wondering what drew you to the city of Lithonia, will the proposed hours be changing. Response, has been looking for spaces and noticed that it has been closed for a while, noticed there are no local eateries in the area, noticed nothing open during the day, no breakfast places either that are open every day of the week, yes, those are proposed hours, if customers are there and if enough workers, would prefer serving throughout the day.

Councilwoman Sheppard would be key to study the neighborhood traffic.
Mayor Reynolds thanked Ms. Russell for presenting and will be in touch.

VII. Action Item

a. Traffic Detail

Councilman Honore would like to have something in writing and can be discussed after executive session as it relates to liability.

b. 2022 Holiday Schedule

Councilman Honore motioned to approve the 2022 Holiday Schedule; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman and approved by a vote of 5-0.

c. Speed Limit Ordinance #2022-01-01

City Clerk Blount provided a second reading.

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the Speed Limit Ordinance #2022-01-01 except for 25 mph on Max Cleland, Conyers, and Swift Street to 30 mph; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn for discussion.

Councilwoman Howard first stated that initially 25 mph would be great however after riding through Avondale Estates this past weekend noticed their speed limit was 30 mph which would not inconvenience the citizens. In addition to the lowered mph for designated areas there should be reduction of speed coming through the city especially Max Cleland-Swift-Conyers 25 or 30 mph.

Councilwoman Inman asked for clarification on the street names, agree on Swift and Conyers, suggestion that Max Cleland has multiple lanes and exit from busy streets such as 124 and the speed limit should remain the same at 35 mph.

Councilman Honoré suggesting to put a map together to Councilwoman Howard.

Councilwoman Sheppard does not want to mimic Pine Lake and agrees with Councilman Honoré to make a map and look at other alternatives such as a speed detector, does not agree with taking the speed limit down, the city does want some level of traffic to increase business in the city.

Councilwoman Wynn does want a level of traffic to come through, would like to see the speed limit lowered on Conyers Street, witnessed someone running into a tree because of the speed, sees speeding quite a bit.

Councilman Honoré suggested an approval for now and tweaking it later.

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve Speed Limit Ordinance #2022-01-01 to reduce the speed limit from 35 to 30 mph, the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore and approved by a vote of 5-0.

d. Truck Route Access Ordinance #2022-01-02

City Clerk Blount provided a second reading.

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve Truck Route Access Ordinance #2022-01-02; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn and approved by a vote of 5-0.

e. Moratorium on Auto/Truck Services and Repair

City Clerk Blount provided a first reading. Council raised concerns about adopting before the second reading. City attorney informed that a second reading is required prior to adoption. City Administrator Sands indicated that code enforcement would like to be involved in the approval process for new business licenses and renewals to review for compliance.

f. Park Hours and Management

Councilman Honore motioned for discussion to make park hours from sunrise to sunset, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard.

Councilwoman Howard asked about specific hours for park activities and/or for events, and to approve each event application individually.

Councilman Honoré motioned to make park hours from sunrise to sunset excluding special events that would be approved by council during the application process, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn.

After continued discussion, Councilman Honoré withdrew his motion and will wait until Mayor Reynolds reaches out to DeKalb Director of Parks and Recreation for clarification and to mirror the hours of the surrounding parks.

g. VISTA Project Grant #14VSSGA004

City Administrator Sands stated that AmeriCorps is asking that the city contribute to cost sharing at \$13k for the renewal of the Vista program and the application is due on 2/28, Charlie Anderson is in his final year, currently have 3 vistas and 1 cost share person. The farmers market grant from Fulton Dekalb hospital is not being issued this year at all, creative ways are needed to get the farmers market up and going. Some of the farmers are now with Stonecrest. Asking council if we should do the cost share.

Councilwoman Howard asked if the city could bring on 3 Vista's and eliminate the cost shared position. Councilman Honoré had no comments. Councilwoman Inman asked for clarification on the cost share amount and what changed from last year to this year, City Administrator response \$13,809 annually, we are currently not cost sharing, will check with the representative to see what our options are.

Councilwoman Wynn asked since Grady and Dekalb are not giving out the grant, is that where we are falling short, City Administrator response the grant was exclusively for the farmer's market. Councilwoman Sheppard had the same question as Councilwoman Howard and Councilwoman Inman, if one Vista is eliminated where do we stand. Council would like to table until Administrator Sands finds out how the city got out of the cost share in past years.

Councilwoman Inman motioned to table the action item on moving forward until Administrator Sands finds out from the Vista representative what can be done financially when eliminating the cost share position, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sheppard and approved by a vote of 5-0.

VIII. New Business

a. Monetizing the City's Digital Sign

Councilwoman Inman proposed to charge businesses \$25/month to advertise, brought this idea up at the Roundtable Discussion with mutual interest from the audience. Potential revenue generated from 50 businesses is \$1,250 per month, annually \$15K, also looking into digital possibilities, wants to know what council thinks about it.

Councilwoman Howard asked if there will be enough space on the sign for our regular business in addition to room for advertising, response will have to be discussed with our digital marketing person, wanted to see what your thoughts are first, 8 seconds to one minute for viewing the slide, Councilwoman Howard is good with it as long as it goes through the proper channels and a great idea. Councilman Honoré stated that it sounds like an excellent idea, and we should find out if advertising can alternate throughout the day. Councilwoman Wynn stated that it is a great idea. Councilwoman Sheppard is excited about the idea. Mayor Reynolds is thankful that it is affordable.

b. Clarification on property 7206 Center Street

Councilwoman Howard has a concern with this property that adjoins the truck parking property on Center Street listed as G&J Parking Company, code enforcement is currently looking into the legalities of this trucking company, it was approved in the past however changes have occurred throughout the years that the company has not adhered to, afraid the home purchased next to the trucking company will increase the number of trucks that will be carrying asphalt for which oil will go into the stream, in the city's best interest to keep trucks away from the residential area. Wanted to know if anyone else has any information on the property, the house and owner are the same. Councilman Honore stated that we should look into it, does not recall changing the zoning with that property, asked if the EPA was contacted because it is close to a stream, also for our tax records storm water runoff to ensure the city is receiving that revenue. Councilwoman Inman is interested into further research and conversation. Councilwoman Wynn agrees that more investigation should take place. Councilwoman Sheppard agrees there should be further conversation. Mayor Reynolds thanked Councilwoman Howard for bringing the item forward on the agenda.

c. 2400 Bruce Street

Councilwoman Wynn expressed concern that recently brought to her attention, a truck stop would like to come there. In the meantime, received confirmation that the use proposed will not be approved. This property is the Historical Bruce Street Cemetery. Councilwoman Howard stated that we must be very vigilant about truck companies trying to encroach on residential areas. Councilman Honore asked Councilwoman Wynn to continue monitoring and everyone keep an eye on it, more people are getting into the trucking industry. Councilwoman Inman agrees that we remain vigilant not to allow just any type of business into our city. Councilwoman Sheppard whole heartedly agrees that we should continue to keep this monitored. Mayor Reynolds thanked Councilwoman Wynn for bringing this to the attention of council.

IX. Old Business

a. Stormwater Truck

City Administrator Sands stated that storm water expenses were being assessed at this time to come up with a budget for April deadline. Hari (Lowes) obtained the amount that will come from the Dekalb list of parcels, Public Works Director Monson feels the need to see what the budget looks like first. Councilwoman Howard had no questions. Councilman Honore asked if the new truck was on hold, City Administrator response yes until the budget is received. Councilwoman Inman thought that quotes were previously reviewed during the last meeting and a decision was pending to approve, City Administrator response Mr. Monson would prefer waiting until the final budget comes in. Councilwoman Wynn and Councilwoman Sheppard are fine with Mr. Monson's decision.

b. Masonic Lodge Repairs

Public Works Director Monson stated the power is on, the ac unit is in but no power is running through the unit, 3 quotes for wiring have been provided to get the power running to the units, bathrooms have not been completed.

Councilwoman Howard indicated an area on the floor has a big chunk of concrete that needs to be removed, a concrete contractor needs to look at it, needs to be addressed, needs to be looked at before working on anything else. Councilman Honore would like to review the electrical quotes at the Mayors pleasure which will return to the next work session as an action item. Councilwoman Inman, Councilwoman Wynn, and Councilwoman Sheppard are in agreement with Mr. Monson's recommendation.

Public Works Director Monson asked if anything will be done with the old city hall building on Main Street, can it be rented out. Councilwoman Inman asked if the title issue were resolved. Mayor Reynolds stated that she would have a conversation separately and report back with

council during the Work Session, the Old City Hall building will stay on the agenda as the masonic lodge has, and the electrical quotes will be on the work session agenda for vote.

X. Other Business

a. City Administrator Report

Information was provided to our independent audit firm Reed, Quinn & McClure, LLC that a Corrective Action Plan was required because our expenditures for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2020 exceeded appropriations at the legal level of control. The City of Lithonia concurs with this finding and provides the following plan to avoid such a violation in future years.

Plan of Action

Start Date – the City has changed fiscal year ends and its short-period for the 6 months ended June 30, 2021 has passed. The City does not believe it has incurred violations during the short period, but also acknowledges these financials have not been audited so results could change upon audit. Accordingly, the City's start date for the Action Plan is January 31, 2022.

Initial Actions – The City Manager and City Accountant will review the financial statements and budget to actual comparisons for the City's General fund from July 1, 2021 to January 31, 2022 and present any budget adjustments required to the City's Mayor and Council and request the current budget be amended in accordance with the City's procedures to make such amendments, if current expenditures for operations, capital outlays or debt services have exceeded the initial budget for such items.

Ongoing Actions – The City Manager and City Accountant will review any planned capital assets requirements and verify that debt service requirement for all debt services (principal and interest expenditures) have been properly included in the budget, so that when expenditures are made, such expenditures will not exceed the legal budget amounts. The debt services requirements will include both bank borrowings and capital leases. The budget will also include any interest on Tax Anticipation Loans. The City Manager and City Accountant will also monitor all expenditures in the general fund and alert the Mayor and Council should any expenditures for operations appear to exceed amounts budgeted.

Councilwoman Howard no questions. Councilman Honore asked if a vote was required to approve the action plan, City Administrator response no- just included in the minutes. Councilwoman Inman no comment. Councilwoman Wynn asked where does this leave the city, City Administrator response the budget adjustments were not made prior to the audit. Councilwoman Sheppard no comment. Mayor Reynolds asked if this occurred because of the fiscal year change, City Administrator response thinks that our accountant was not aware that we had to do our amendments yearly prior to fiscal.

City Administrator Sands attended a Stonecrest/ARC meeting for topic discussion of the logistics of the home depot distribution center, and asked council to forward any questions or concerns.

b. Police Department Report

Chief Pollard stated that after the vote was taken last week on the COPS grant he provided an email with a solution to the 3-year funding, however no one on council responded. There were 7-9 citations issued for speeding on max Cleland. Some individuals are in holding for the 2 positions previously mentioned, looking futuristically into grants for solar lighting in the park. Nothing else major to report.

Councilwoman Howard noted that the 2021 report recently provided shows that 22 officers provided coverage and there were 15 additional officers, noticed that Stonecrest's activity was included into the report with 60 offenses at a store for Officer Williams, Chief Pollard responded that assistance was provided as per the MOU agreement when they are in a bind, and that Officer Williams was no longer assigned to that program. Councilman Honore no questions or concerns. Councilwoman Inman no comment. Councilwoman Wynn not at this time. Councilwoman Sheppard nothing at this time.

c. Mayors Report, Councilmember District Update

Mayor Reynolds will save her report for the work session with consideration of time for executive session.

Councilwoman Howard stated that a few weekends ago she had the opportunity to speak with code enforcement at length and received a progress report on her efforts, thankful for the job that she is doing, will speak with everyone one on one to express concerns that were identified.

Councilman Honore announced and recognized the passing away of Ms. Calloway, the Executive Director of the Housing Authority, that she did a great job, expressed the need to put things in place to move forward with new board members. Mayor Reynolds stated that she will have something to report once she receives the by-laws.

Councilwoman Inman provided a reminder of the Roundtable Discussion meeting for February 17 at 5:30 pm.

Councilwoman Wynn had no comments.

Councilman Sheppard does not have anything.

VIII. Executive Session (Litigation)

Councilman Honore motioned to enter into Executive Session for Litigation at 8:00 pm, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

Mayor Reynolds, Councilwoman Howard, Councilwoman Inman, and Councilwoman Sheppard reconvened at 8:58 pm.

Mayor Reynolds stated that litigation was discussed to get an update on pending items, no action was taken.

IX. Adjournment

Councilwoman Inman motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard; the motion was approved by a vote of 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.