



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES—CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, August 3, 2020 @ 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The City Council Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:35 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, Vanerriah Wynn, and Ric Dodd. Zoning Administrator Bill Johnston and City Attorney Valorri Jones joined the call.

I. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

II. Approval of Agenda

Councilman Honore motioned to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

III. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

a. July 20, 2020 – City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting @ 5:30 PM

Councilman Dodd motioned to approve the July 20, 2020 City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wynn, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. July 27, 2020 – Special Called Chief of Police Selection Process Virtual Meeting @ 11:30 AM

Councilman Dodd motioned to approve the July 27, 2020 Special Called Chief of Police Selection Process Virtual Meeting Minutes; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

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

Ms. Cora Fortuchang, business owner of 6836 Main Street expressed disappointment in councils decision taken during the July 20, 2020 City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting. Plans to submit her re-zoning application without payment as she is financially distressed, and feels that her tenant has been harassed. Zoning Administrator Bill Johnston provided a recommended approach as outlined in *Exhibit A*. Councilman Honore recommended further discussion to take place during the August 17, 2020 Work Session.

Ms. Olitha Reid, resident 2500 Park Drive expressed concern that the community is plagued with a dumpster at the Good News Church with garbage debris that has not been maintained consistently for the past 3 years with different church ownership. The community neighbors are requesting that the dumpster is completely removed from the property and replaced with a roller unit. Mayor Reynolds indicated that code enforcement would get involved to resolve the situation.

Ms. Aileen Harper, resident 6992 Braswell Street expressed concern that a regular cleaning of Braswell Street is not being performed regularly, edging and curbside. Additionally there are 2 abandoned properties that are unkempt, asking that code enforcement is involved. Mayor Reynolds indicated that City Administrator Lathaydra Sands will enact Public Works. Councilman Honore requested that Ms. Harper provide pictures and send them via text to share with Council.

Ms. Sharon Inman, resident Johnson Street expressed concern about properties; Martin Tire Shop piling of tires, a property on Johnson Street that burned down with remaining debris, 2644 Johnson Street bushes and grass is unkempt with drug activity, another property at the corner with graffiti (obscene language) on it. Mayor Reynolds will ensure that code enforcement gets involved for resolution. Ms. Inman will provide the exact addresses to City Clerk, Robinette Blount. Councilwoman Inman will provide pictures of those properties and provide them to Councilman Honore for the "Lithonia Beautiful" / Code Enforcement project that will return to the Work Session agenda.

VI. Public Hearing for 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update

a. Discussion on the process to be used to develop the plan

Mayor Reynolds stated the purpose is to brief the community on the process and development of the plan, and asked if any residents from the community would like to be involved. The plan due date is end of December and will be presented to Council in January. There are currently 8 members on the committee at this time and a total of 12 are needed. Mayor Reynolds is requesting that City Administrator Lathaydra Sands forward the survey to all council members, police department, and public works to post on their social media pages. Councilman Dodd will share the survey with one of the apartment complexes and Mayor Reynolds will provide the survey to Granite Crossing. Mayor Reynolds is requesting that this item remain on the agenda for discussion.

b. Public Discussion

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Reynolds closed the hearing for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Revisit monthly; September 21, October 19, November 16, December 21, 2020 Work Session(s).

VII. Presentation (Limit 8 minutes per person)

a. Ms. Chinara Aklilu; LifeLink of Georgia, National Minority Donor Awareness Month

Ms. Chinara Aklilu, Education Specialist provided presentation; LifeLink is an organ procurement organization providing tissue and organ donation. There are over 4,800 people that are in need of life saving organs, 67% are African American for kidney donation. Ms. Aklilu is asking the City of Lithonia to join LifeLink in celebration of recognizing August as "Minority Donor Awareness Month" to bring awareness to the community.

b. Mayor Shameka S. Reynolds; Reading of LifeLink Proclamation

Mayor Reynolds read the LifeLink Proclamation

c. Park Pride Report: President Allen

President Allen made correction that he is providing a Friends of Lithonia Park Report, Park Pride is a separate organization. City of Lithonia in 2018 was awarded a \$42 thousand grant matched by DeKalb County, now in progress for music metal and fitness equipment installation (near the basketball court), and other items, to be completed by October 2020. Mr. Allen advocates park related issues and concerns for the 5th district and will advocate for completion of this project. Until this project is complete the City of Lithonia will not be able to participate in the current grant year cycle. Asked that council and mayor revisit the vision plan to identify projects for the August 2021 grant funding due date; there are also a lot of COVID-19 matching grants to pursue. Park concerns; trash pick-up volunteer opportunity for trash removal near the basketball court area. All county athletic fields are closed, however a tackle football group was identified practicing at Lithonia Park and was asked to leave recently. Working with DeKalb County on covid safety protocols for allowable non-contact sports and asking if there could be support consideration to use Lithonia Park. In the process of forming a new Facebook page for the friends in the park group. Asked about signage for social distancing with the equipment installation, Mayor Reynolds responded that it would most likely be DeKalb. Councilwoman Wynn asked about Bruce Street Park; Mr. Allen indicated that the visioning plan is for parks (emphasis on "s" as parks) and while Bruce Street was not originally included in the visioning plan, asked for suggestions of improvements to advocate improvements. Additionally, Mr. President Allen has volunteered to assist with the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

VIII. Action Items

a. Black Lives Matter Initiative

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the Black Lives Matter Main Street painting initiative contingent upon Mr. Doug Thompkins providing the paint type is similar to street paint (yellow) and upholding COVID-19 distancing , the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd; and the motion was approved by a vote 5-0.

b. Fees for landscape maintenance of abandoned residential lots

Councilman Honore motioned to approve the fee starting at \$200.00 for landscape maintenance of abandoned residential lots; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

c. Music Video, "My Vote Don't Count"

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve J-Squared Productions to film between the hours of 11:00 am until 3:00 pm in the City of Lithonia; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and the motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Production scaled down; no street closure (will hold between takes) ITC Intermittent Traffic Control)
8-11 am Barbershop shoot
11:30 am until 3:00 pm for the Street scene shoot

IX. Other Business

a. Ms. Dawn Massey; Requesting amendment of the event ordinance to exempt historical landmarks and cultural assets, The Women's Club and The Camellia House

Councilman Honore stated, "We should keep our cultural assets in line for survival". Zoning Administrator Bill Johnston provided Background, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendation; see *Exhibit B*. Dawn Massey is requesting that historical properties are considered to be exempt from the event ordinance. Mayor Reynolds and Council are in agreement for further discussion during the August 17, 2020 Work Session.

b. Alcohol Ordinance (47 pages)

Bill Johnston commented that he had some involvement on this similar to the mural ordinance. Had occasion in recent weeks when evaluating applications to review closely Lithonia's alcohol ordinance application which does not address on premise consumption for restaurants, a coffee shop, or special event facilities. There is no guidance on food to alcohol sales, hours of operation, does not address a variety of uses that are associated with alcohol consumption. Very familiar with the City of Hapeville and the City of Snellville ordinances which are well written, that is the genesis and the city attorney has taken this task over, not sure if it has been tailored to Lithonia. Mr. Johnston is more than happy to participate in the review of the ordinance.

City Attorney Valorri Jones commented that she reviewed the first draft of the first version and no changes have been provided.

Deferred to September 21, 2020 Work Session.

c. "Lithonia Beautiful" / Code Enforcement

Councilman Honore is requesting that councilmembers provide photos when troubled areas are identified to comprise in a "watch book" with involvement of code enforcement for concentration. Mayor Reynolds is suggesting that a report is provided once per month, i.e. Watch Book Report by Interim Chief Minafee (code enforcement).

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d. Masonic Lodge

Mayor Reynolds wants to keep this in the forefront; there have been challenges in communicating with DeKalb since the pandemic. Councilman Dodd proposed having a community day; open the doors for clean-up on a Saturday or Sunday, provide a dumpster, place an invitation in the newspaper for visitors, channel ideas for future involvement of its use. Councilwoman Howard indicated that a Certificate of Occupancy must be obtained to ensure the building is safe to allow visitors to enter the building. City Administrator Lathaydra Sands will provide council with the CDBG Feasibility Study which contains photos with recommended repairs (safety issues) of interior areas.

Revisit September 21, 2020 Work Session.

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

Mayor Reynolds indicated the numbers are still being monitored and shared through the website, 2 citizens have succumbed. Mayor Reynolds thanked Ms. Paige Sanders and Ms. Amy Garner for bringing recent neighborhood challenges to the public forum to ensure that our citizens are safe. Ms. Garner gave a shout out to Interim Chief Minafee, Sargent Stephens, and police force for doing a really good job of being seen and keeping the lines of communication open. Councilmembers provided no updates.

X. Executive Session (if needed)

Councilman Dodd motioned to adjourn for executive session to discuss personnel matters; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 5-0. The council entered executive session at 8:11 pm.

Executive Session reconvened at 8:37 pm.

Councilwoman Inman motioned to extend an offer to Christopher L. Patterson for Chief of Police; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

XI. Adjournment

Councilwoman Howard motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd; the motion was approved by a vote 5-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.