



CITY OF LITHONIA
MINUTES–CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, September 21, 2020 @ 5:30 PM

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The City Council Work Session Virtual Meeting was called to order at 5:33 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, and Ric Dodd. Vanneriah Wynn was absent.
- II. **Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was observed.
- III. **Approval of Agenda**

Councilwoman Howard motioned to approve the September 21, 2020 Work Session Agenda with the addition of an action item to extend the contract for the Chief of Police selection; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and approved by a vote of 4-0.
- IV. **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes**
 - a. **September 8, 2020 – City Council Virtual Meeting @ 5:30 PM**

Councilman Dodd motioned to approve the City Council Virtual Meeting Minutes for September 8, 2020; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman, and approved by a vote of 4-0.
- V. **Public Comments Response for September 8, 2020 City Council Virtual Meeting –City Administrator Lathaydra Sands**

City Administrator Lathaydra Sands stated that Mrs. *Fortuchang's* (Donald Maddox) request for the waiver of an application fee for 6836 Main Street is on today's agenda as an action item.
Ms. Radford's 2018 refund request is on today's agenda under other business for discussion.
Ms. Reid's request for speed bumps; DeKalb was emailed and an out of office was received, hence the information was routed to the traffic engineers for which a response is pending.
- VI. **Presentation (Limit 8 minutes per person)**
 - a. **Mr. Larry Reed, Reed, Quinn & McClure, LLC; 2019 Audit Approval**

Mr. Reed provided a highlighted summary of the audit. No questions were asked from Council.
 - b. **Mr. Marion Williams, Commercial Agent**

Mr. Williams introduced himself as a Commercial Broker with Adams Commercial Realty provided council with a capabilities statement; noticed the city has vacant properties as assets that are not being productive and would like to propose managing those properties through contract.
 - c. **Pastor Jill Burcham, Push Ministries; Proposing to lease the Old City Hall Building or Masonic Lodge**

Pastor Burcham introduced herself; Push Ministries is an outreach ministry that enhances social services programs in the community for youth and seniors. Pastor Burcham has a strong

background in economic development and business, owned a multi-million dollar manufacturing company. Social programs include partnership ministries, teen crisis, a parenting network, senior services, job services, support groups for women, bible studies, and support groups for felons. Pastor Burcham expressed an interest in leasing the old city hall or masonic lodge building, and is requesting a list of buildings that are available in the Lithonia area, if they are available would like to know what the rent cost is. Councilwoman Howard feels that the programs offered would be a benefit for the community and asked for clarity on whether the bible study mentioned would be for church purposes in addition to the program. Pastor Jill indicated that the bible study would be a separate entity under her husband at a different location in McDonough. Councilman Honore referenced Georgia laws/ordinances that may pose a conflict based on specific distance measurement requirements for restaurants that sell alcohol in the Main Street area where the old city hall building is located, prompting the question if other areas in Lithonia are being looked at. Councilman Dodd indicated the Masonic Lodge just received a grant for improvements, uncertain at this time what the qualifiers are for use of the grant funds.

d. Code Enforcement Cases Update

Officer Stephens stated that the report provided for mayor and council contains cases that are actively being pursued with an additional seven (7) that are not on the report. Councilwoman Howard would like to see specific detail and will speak with Officer Stephens outside of this call. Councilwoman Inman inquired about the tree located at Johnson Street/Bellsouth building; Officer Stephens indicated that it is not an active case and is scheduled for follow up.

VII. Action Items

a. Stormwater Contract for Lowes Engineers

Councilwoman Inman motioned to approve the Lowes contract; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

b. Nuisance Ordinance 09-21-2020

Councilman Honore motioned to adopt Nuisance Ordinance 09-21-2020; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

c. Cora Fortuchang Application Fee for Rezoning

Councilman Honore made a motion for discussion of the situation with Cora Fortuchang; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard.

Discussion

Councilwoman Howard indicated the importance of keeping the area as an office use look and not allowing over-sized large trucks. City Clerk Robin Blount indicated that Bill Johnston's recommendation provided an option to rezone the area to C1 which would allow large trucks; thus defeating the purpose of maintaining the use for office only. Council is not in favor of rezoning.

Councilman Honore motioned to waive the \$300 application fee for Cora Fortuchang; the motion was seconded by Councilman Dodd, and denied by a vote 0-4.

The application fee will not be waived for rezoning.

d. Contract for the new Chief of Police

Councilman Dodd motioned to hire Nathan Pollard as Chief of Police without a contract; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Howard, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

VIII. Other Business

a. Annette Radford 2018 reimbursement

Councilwoman Howard asked if anyone had an opportunity to review the file documents for 2017 to 2019; council has not reviewed the information. Councilman Honore wants to table until Craig returns with the recording date of the 2018 payment entry. Council is in agreement to table the discussion for the next meeting.

b. "Lithonia Beautiful"

Councilman Honore mentioned a resident concern about a fence being placed around Lithonia Park for which he will have a conversation with LDDA to address this. Working with City Administrator Lathaydra Sands on obtaining the code enforcement software; once the police department completes payment on the radios, the software can be obtained. Feedback was solicited from council on the digital signage images that were emailed to everyone.

c. Masonic Lodge

Mayor Reynolds will have the Public Works department to perform any pre-work that can be addressed. Councilman Dodd inquired about funding awarded for the lodge, City Administrator Lathaydra Sands indicated that no funding was awarded to the lodge at this time, funding was awarded for the street scape funds. Councilwoman Howard is working with Public Works Director Quinton Monson; received quotes for tree removal along the sides of the building, the next project will be work on the awnings.

d. Comprehensive Plan Update

Councilwoman Inman and Councilwoman Howard participated in a meeting that was held with ARC this past week, along with a few residents; a lot of headway was made, properties with existing issues are included in the beautification vision that will allow for affordable housing, a topic of consideration is to offer a benefit to the community of a mixed-use commercial area.

e. City Accountant Position

City Administrator Lathaydra Sands stated that Craig Lymburner the current City Accountant shared feedback with her on the candidates; his response is that it needs to be someone who can work on-site and not remotely. Mayor Reynolds recommended that this item is on the agenda every meeting until candidates are narrowed down.

f. City Administration-LDDA-LBA Team Building Initiative

Councilwoman Inman is seeking council's thoughts on an every meeting basis as a reminder for collaboration, put team initiatives together, and target dates for zoom discussions. Councilwoman Inman is requesting that City Clerk Robin Blount email all parties (Mayor/Council, LDDA, and LBA) to secure dates of availability to schedule a team building session. Councilwoman Inman wants to know if there would be any protocol issue with scheduling a meeting to include all parties; Mayor Reynolds and City Administrator Lathaydra Sands will look into it.

g. Mayors Report: COVID-19 Update, Councilmember District Update

Covid is still here, be prayerful and safe. Councilwoman Inman had a meaningful conversation with Charles Anderson recently and in conjunction with the Farmers Market would like to close Main Street on October 10, the last day of Cities Week.

h. Special Events; Cities Week, Farmers Market, Trunk or Treat

Mayor Reynolds solicited ideas from council for Cities Week; Councilwoman Howard and Councilman Honore feel that gatherings of people could be a concern. Councilwoman Inman is in favor of closing Main Street on October 10 the last day of Cities Week in conjunction with the Farmer's Market to allow for more of a socially distanced event. Councilwoman Howard feels that the Wayfield parking lot would be a better option. Mayor and Council feel the need to cancel Trunk or Treat this year.

IX. Executive Session for Litigation

Councilwoman Howard motioned to adjourn for executive session to discuss litigation; the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore, and approved by a vote of 4-0. The council entered into executive session at 7:27 pm.

Councilman Dodd motioned to end executive session at 8:00 pm; the motion was seconded by Councilman Honore, and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Council and Mayor reconvened from Executive Session at 8:02 pm.

Mayor Reynolds indicated that the City Attorney will move forward with the recommendations that were presented.

X. Adjournment

Councilman Dodd motioned to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Inman; the motion was approved by a vote of 4-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.