

City Council Minutes, April 25, 2024

Mayor West called the meeting to order at 6:30PM, April 25, 2024. Those in attendance were, Nick Sears, Monty Parks, Kathryn Williams, Tony Ploughe, Spec Hosti, and Bill Garbett. Also attending were Michelle Owens, Interim City Manager; Bubba Hughes, City Attorney; Tracy O'Connell, City Attorney; and Jan LeViner, Clerk of Council.

Opening Ceremonies

Call to Order

Invocation: Rev. Sue Jackson, Trinity Methodist Church

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor West thanked everyone that contributed to a successful weekend to include the City's leadership for putting together a collaborated public safety and successful implementation plan. He also thanked those who cleaned the beaches Saturday, Sunday, and Monday; local businesses; local churches; STR rental companies; and Staff and individuals who came to help serve food and clean. Mayor West continued to thank those who contributed to include CEMA who contacted GaDOT to turn all the lights green to clear traffic. The City is aware of an impending event, Peach Fest, another unpermitted event, anticipated for Saturday, April 27, 2024 and the City is monitoring the situation and will be prepared to handle if the event occurs.

Chief Hayes approached Mayor and Council to give an update on the weekend. Chief Hayes stated, "How do you measure success for something like this?" Everyone arrived safely and everyone went home safely. There were 54 arrests, which included 17 DUI's, 18 felony arrests, and nine (9) firearms taken. There were no shots fired and no shootings, which in years past the City has had both. She thanked everyone, especially those who maned the barricades which kept traffic out of the neighborhoods.

Mayor West asked Julia Pearce to come forward to introduce the delegation from Cape Coast, Ghana. Ms. Pearce thanked the community for supporting their visit. She then introduced the Honorable Mayor Ernest Arthur, Cape Coast, Ghana. There was an exchange in gifts and Mayor West thanked the delegation for visiting Tybee. He also said that he looked forward to a visit to Cape Coast, Ghana.

Consideration of Items for Consent Agenda

- Minutes: City Council Meeting, April 11, 2024, as amended
- Budget Amendments
 - Amendment #1: To use unassigned fund balance to cover the unexpected and/or additional costs related to information technology and legal.
 - Amendment #2: To use unassigned fund balance to cover three quarters of costs related to the City's dune monitoring project with Skid-away Institute
 - Amendment #3: To use fund balance reserved for beach related projects to fund the City's planning work for the beach nourishment project with US Corps of Engineers.
- Second Reading, 2024-02, GMEBS-R, City of Tybee Island Defined Benefit Retirement Plan

- Resolution: Tybee Island Resilience Resolution. **Discussion: Mayor West** stated Chatham County has requested all municipalities in Chatham County to sign and adopt.

City Manager Discussion and Action Items

Ms. Owens stated the City hosted the DNR Commissioner and two deputies for a tour of the beach.

James Bennett approached Mayor and Council. Mr. Bennett welcomed the delegation from Cape Coast, Ghana and thanked Mayor and Council for the “open arms” extended to the delegation. He also commended Mayor and Council for a successful weekend. Mayor West thanked Mr. Bennett for his comments.

Dawn Shay approached Mayor and Council. Ms. Shay read from a prepared statement (attached) regarding Item #5 on the agenda, Budget Amendments. Mayor West thanked Ms. Shay.

Spec Hosti made a motion to approve the consent agenda. **Tony Ploughe** seconded. Vote was unanimous to approve, 6-0.

Council, Officials and City Attorney Considerations and Comments

Tracy O'Connell introduced 2024-07: **Potential Amendment of Ordinance on the Temporary Use of Recreational Vehicles**. Ms. O'Connell stated this is dealing with two issues: (1) tighten up the definition of dwelling purposes to help Code Enforcement and (2) to assist residents who are participating in the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program so they have a place to live during the lifting process. She continued, as this is contained within the LDC, it would have to go to Planning Commission if Mayor and Council decide to take action. Ms. Williams stated she understands this is written specifically to deal with the FEMA mitigation issue but if another event hits the Island and other residents will need to lift and put an RV on their property while their house is being fixed, would we have to come back with a new ordinance. Ms. O'Connell confirmed and if it is the desire to make more board or more restrictive, they could do so. Mr. Hughes stated once there is an Emergency Declaration in place, zoning is more or less suspended and directed by the Resolution. Mr. Ploughe asked how many times this has happened in past years. Ms. O'Connell stated there was an incident in 2020 that was handled under an Emergency Resolution and has come up in the last couple of months as there are a couple of homeowners trying to figure how they can do the Grant and still financially do it instead of having two grants or two more payments. Mayor West asked if Mayor and Council need to provide direction. Ms. O'Connell made reference to Sec 3-110(c) as it allows for recreational vehicles only if they have a permit up to seven days and allowed to do it three times per year. The proposed ordinance is to address that situation and allow an exception for those inside the Grant to be able to get around that if they need to stay for six or seven months while they are building their new home. **Spec Hosti** made a motion to send to the Planning Commission for their review and comments. **Monty Parks** seconded. Vote was unanimous, 6-0.

Spec Hosti asked Mayor and Council if they would like to move forward with gathering information on **Workforce Housing**. **Mayor West** stated the City has an opportunity to obtain grant money for the specific purpose of creating workforce housing. This money could be used to purchase property as well. Mr. Parks stated this is a very loosely defined

new program and there are not a lot of guidelines or rules and questions as to who can live there and who cannot. Mr. Host would like to invite someone from the program to come and speak to them. Mayor and Council could then set the guidelines. Mr. Sears confirmed with Mr. Hosti that he would like to gather additional information prior to moving forward. Mr. Hosti stated he would move forward.

Tony Ploughe would like to move forward with funding and financial assistance options for the Savannah River side of North Beach erosion that is documented in part due to ship traffic. **Mayor West** stated this was discussed at a recent workshop and it was determined the City needed someone with expertise to speak to Mayor and Council. Alan Robertson approached Mayor and Council. Mr. Robertson gave a brief update on future re-nourishments due to dune erosion. He stated at a recent workshop, representatives from GHD, Coastal Engineers, gave an update on the assessment Mayor and Council asked them to do. It was determined it would cost approximately \$30,000 to complete the assessment. Mr. Robertson stated the permit is still in place and would provide the City the opportunity, with a simple letter of permit, a staff administrative process, to let the City do the same thing again, 20,000 cubic yards of sand, to rebuild the dune as it was in 2017. He stated the long-term solution seems to be the repair of the south jetty in the Savannah Channel that is under review by the COE and GPA as part of their new Savannah Channel expansion. He recommended to proceed with the DNR, if the permit is still in place and he believes it is, and estimated the cost at \$1M. The project has been done before and can be done again but it is a little more complicated than the south-end dune but the same size project. Mayor West thanked Mr. Robertson. Mr. Ploughe stated financing is an issue and we need to move forward with the project. Mr. Robertson reminded Mayor and Council with turtle season, the project would be delayed until the season is over in the fall. Mr. Ploughe stated he has a resolution drafted to hire GHD for \$30,000, which will help the City with solutions for the dune. Mr. Robertson responded he would reach out to GHD to see if they can assist in the stabilization of the dune. He is moving forward with DNR with a letter of permit for stabilization. Mr. Parks thanked Mr. Ploughe for pursuing this issue. Ms. Williams asked Ms. Owens how would like factor into the FY25 budget. Ms. Owens stated they have not accounted for it and they would have to revisit.

Kathryn Williams would like to have an explanation of the **IT Department and budget** at the May 9, 2024 meeting. Ms. Williams would like to know what safeguards have been put in place to preclude this happening again.

Monty Parks made a motion to adjourn. **Spec Hosti** seconded. Vote was 6-0 to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Jan LeViner, MMC

Clerk