



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
City Council Chambers
Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 3:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Mayor Becky S. Smith called the meeting to order.

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Joe Will, Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, and Donnie Griffin were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross and department heads were present as well. Council Members, Dan Boling and Kay McCathen were absent. A quorum was present.

Department Head Reports

Bessemer City department heads gave reports on their department's status:

JoD Franklin, Parks and Recreation Director- Mr. Franklin addressed Council regarding the 2nd Annual Brew & Que event. The Bessemer City High School booster club made over \$12,000 in barbecue sandwich sales. This money will be used to support the high school's football team. Additionally, City Staff will be working to move the Community Concert & Cruise-In Series to Friday nights instead of Saturday. By changing the date the City will save money by significantly reducing Staff overtime and providing the needed staff to Stinger Park events. Also, by doing staff will have their weekends back for personal time. Currently, staff has to come in around 8 AM on Saturdays to clear the roadway, and the event isn't done until 10 PM.

Tom Ellis, Police Chief – Mr. Ellis addressed Council regarding a new grandbaby born to a police department employee.

Bessemer City Water and Sewer Master Plan

McGill Engineering Associates, Doug Chapman, Jared Wright, and Kyle Lotier addressed Council regarding the water and sewer master plan. Said plan will be used to help City Staff do long range planning of utility service management and asset planning. A report on the current infrastructure was discussed. As the City's population grows, additional systems will need to be set in place to continue providing quality service. McGill reviewed previous reports and inventories of water and sewer lines, water and sewer pump stations, water tanks, and other system appurtenances, as well as distribution and collection system mapping and modeling to assess current system needs and capacities. Review of the water system considered water age and quality, pipe and pump station locations and capacities, and existing and anticipated demands. Review of the sewer system considered pump station capacities, tributary and allocated-but-not-yet-tributary wastewater flows, and pipe sizing and importance.

McGill met with City staff to review proposed residential, commercial, and industrial developments. The central areas of the City are mature and developed with limited potential for infill construction. Future

development is concentrated to the north, east, and south of the City Center; development potential to the west is limited by density restrictions within the Long Creek water supply watershed and the presence of FMC Lithium USA. WS-II water supply watershed regulations prohibit medium and high-density residential development.

Areas -- within the Bessemer City Limits -- to the north and northwest of the city center are, generally, zoned rural, neighborhood residential, or urban residential. Areas beyond the Bessemer City municipal limits where zoning is governed by the Gaston County Unified Development Ordinance are generally zoned for single-family residential development. Certain areas which are currently zoned rural or single-family residential may be good candidates for medium-to-high-density residential development but could require Planning and Zoning Commission approval to proceed.

City Manager's Report

Josh Ross, City Manager- Mr. Ross addressed Council regarding the following:

Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments: City Staff would like to abolish and re-establish the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments. Currently, the Board only has 5 members and staff would like to have 7 members to increase productivity. For each variance there has to be 4/5 of the Board present to hear and deliberate the case. Thus, it has been hard to issue variances due to Board absenteeism. Once re-established, Board members would have staggered terms.

Speed bumps and Tables: City Staff has reached out to several surrounding cities to collect a copy of their speed enforcement policy. We will be generating one for the City of Bessemer City and bringing it before the board.

Public Safety Grant: The City has received a \$2.15 million grant for public safety infrastructure. Representative, Kelly Hastings and Senator, Brad Overcash will be coming before Council soon to conduct a formal presentation.

General: The Bessemer City area Chamber has contacted City Staff to share that there will be a change in leadership soon. The City is currently not a member of the area chamber. City staff would like to see the City explore the possibility of rejoining the chamber after they've selected new leadership. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project is still underway. Unfortunately, the City was informed by our Rehabilitation Specialist that one of the homes had not yet been started. Subsequently the completion date for the funding and work on the homes was September 13, 2023. The City Attorney is reviewing the contract to recommend next steps for the City.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Donnie Griffin inquired about the fence at Stinger Park. Staff informed him that the fence work will commence soon.

Closed Session

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, City Council entered in to closed session to discuss a personnel matter pursuant to NCGS143-318(a)(6) at 4:00 PM.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, City Council came out of closed session at 5:05 PM. No action was taken.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 PM by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk