



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers

Monday, September 9, 2024 at 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, Donnie Griffin, Nellie Floyd and Allen Hook were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross and City Attorney, Marshall Walker were present. Council member, Michael Brooks was absent.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. First Wesleyan Senior Pastor, Rev. Matt Mitchell led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the September agenda was approved with no revisions.

Oath of Office- Deputy Police Chief

Mayor Smith administered the oath of office to Deputy Police Chief, Christopher Vaughn with his family and friends present. All present were invited to congratulate the new Deputy Police Chief.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. The following came forth:

- Phillip Scates of 416 Sunset Drive: Mr. Scates addressed the Board regarding the City's new tax rate. Mr. Scates has previously addressed Mayor Smith and City Manager Ross after last year's adoption of the budget. However, Mr. Scates was still not pleased with City taxes and fees. Mr. Scates appreciated City Manager, Josh Ross meeting with him regarding the budget. If the city is in financial trouble, city officials should plan better.
- Paula Walt of 422 Sunset Drive: Ms. Walt addressed the Board regarding her concern with the new tax rate. Ms. Walt is a lifelong resident of Bessemer City. She recommends that the city cutback on the budget and lay off some people to afford operational expenses. It is not the responsibility of the citizens to carry the monetary burden of the city's finances.
- Monica Hence of 705 S. Skyland Avenue: Ms. Hence addressed the Board regarding her concern of the Ingles grocery store. The Ingles store is in desperate need of renovations and repairs. With an influx of new residents coming to Bessemer City, it should be the Council's goal to spruce up the store.

Public Comment Acknowledgment

Mayor Smith recognized City Manager, Josh Ross to provide clarification on some items discussed during public comment:

- Ingles is a privately owned business. City administration has met with Ingles corporate division multiple times to advocate for renovations and expansions. The city is in full support of renovation or a new store. However, the decision depends on the owner.

Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Allen Hook:

1. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting Regular Meeting minutes of the August 12, 2024 meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting Work Session Meeting minutes of the August 27, 2024 meeting.
3. **Temporary Street Closure - Trunk or Treat:** City administration is requesting the temporary closure of the 100 Block of West and East Virginia Avenue for the Halloween Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, October 26th, 2024.

Proclamation: Dyslexia Awareness Month

Mayor, Becky S. Smith read the Dyslexia Awareness Month Proclamation aloud and declared October 2024 as a month of awareness in Bessemer City.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy of the proclamation is available at City Hall.

Proclamation: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Mayor, Becky S. Smith read the Domestic Violence Awareness Month Proclamation aloud and declared October 2024 as a month of awareness in Bessemer City.

By motion of Nellie Floyd and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy of the proclamation is available at City Hall.

Public Hearing –Rezoning Request

City Council held a public hearing to hear public comment regarding a rezoning request from Development Solutions Group for property located at tax parcels #151640, #151644, and #151645 (35.77 acres) from Neighborhood Residential & Rural to Neighborhood Residential Conditional District to accommodate the development of a single-family residential community that will consist of 93 single family units.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the rezoning request was opened at 7:22 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the rezoning request. The following individual came forth:

- Kent Olson of Development Solutions Group: Mr. Kent informed the Board that the Sunset Ridge development plans have been presented to the Planning Board at their August and September 2024 meetings. He feels confident that the development meets standards highlighted by the Planning Board and current property owners to produce a product that Bessemer City residents can be proud of. Currently, there are no proposed sidewalks in the project, but curb and gutters will be utilized.

- Austin Hines: Mr. Hines represents the current property owners, the M.L. Kiser family. The sellers approve of this development. We expect this to be a nice single-family development and would like to appeal to the citizens of Bessemer City.

Additionally, City Manager, Josh Ross informed Council that an updated list of conditions and request for relief had been amended and recommended by the Planning & Zoning Board:

***Exhibit A - Areas of Relief and Conditions of Approval
Sunset Ridge Major Subdivision (CD-02-2024)***

1. The proposed development shall follow the requirements of the City of Bessemer City Land Development Code with the added relief of:
 - a. Sidewalks- relief from installing sidewalks on both sides of new streets within the subdivision as indicated on the site plan. The Bessemer City Land Development Code (LDC) requires sidewalks on both sides of streets in Major Subdivisions (Chapter 4, Section 4.5).
 - b. Garage Setback- relief from the six-foot garage setback requirement from front facing garages on 50% of units (Chapter 3, Section 3.3).
2. The following conditions will be applied to the development and agreed to by the developer with the vote of the City of Bessemer City Council to approve the rezoning:
 - a. Design Standards- the development is required to abide by standards as follows:
 - i. Design standards as required by the property owner, including 50% brick or stone facades, pitched roofs, architectural shingles, and all other standards as required by the property owner (additional attachment)
 - ii. Upgraded door designs on units without 6-foot setback
3. The developer is responsible for all system development fees.
4. The developer shall extend the City of Bessemer City utilities and within the site, at their expense. The development will be served by City utilities: water and sewer.
5. All off-site utility easements, if necessary to provide utilities to the site, must be obtained by the developer, at their expense, prior to approval of construction plans, issuance of permits, or commencement of construction.
6. Conditional Zoning approval is valid for a period of twenty-four (24) months from the date of approval.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the rezoning request. The following individual came forth:

- Jeff Parker of 122 Sherwood Drive: Mr. Parker expressed his concern regarding the increase traffic on his road as a result of the development. Currently, many people utilize Sherwood Drive as a cut through and speed down the road. There needs to be some traffic signs to slow down traffic, or else there will be fatalities. Mr. Parker also had concerns about how this could affect the school system.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the rezoning request was closed at 7:32 PM.

Ordinance Amending Zoning Map

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the zoning map amendment was tabled to the October 2024 regular meeting agenda. At that time City Council will consider voting on the zoning map amendment.

Public Hearing –Text Amendment

City Council held a public hearing to hear public comment regarding a text amendment to Chapter 75 of the City Code, to change the intersection of Arc Street and Costner Drive to a 4-way-stop.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the text amendment was opened at 7:34 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the text amendment. There was none.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the text amendment. There was none.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the text amendment was closed at 7:35 PM.

City Manager, Josh Ross informed the Board that this text amendment comes via Council discussion at the last work session. In an effort to improve the intersection of Arc Street and Costner Drive staff recommend that this 2-way stop be changed to a 4-way stop. As traffic counts are projected to increase, due to the Creekside Cottages subdivision. Altering the traffic pattern before the development is completed will aid in a steady flow of traffic.

Ordinance for Text Amendment

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the ordinance regarding the text amendment to Chapter 75 traffic schedule 1 was adopted to reflect the following:

- Arc Street/Costner Drive: 4 – Way Stop

City Manager's Report

City Manager, Josh Ross, addressed Council regarding the following:

- General: Mr. Ross informed Council about several upcoming events: "We Will Remember" 9/11 service will take place Wednesday, September 11th at 8:30 AM in front of City Hall. The Vantine Collective reunion will be Saturday, September 14th at 12 PM. We will have our 3rd annual Brew & Que on Saturday, September 21st at 12 Noon in downtown Bessemer City. The City recently completed a grant to receive funding to work with BC Central students to implement an art expression tunnel. We have over 130 children registered for youth soccer this year. City staff will be completing updates to the City website with grant funding from the community branding project. Osage Mill is hosting a community social on Thursday, September 12th from 5 – 7 PM. All are encouraged to attend; Osage Mill has over 17 certificates of occupancy.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council Member, Nellie Floyd invited all present to attend the Vantine Collective reunion on Saturday, September 14th. Council Member, Brent Guffey expressed concern about trash and debris being left in the roadway from Lennar Homes contractors. Chief Ellis commended Captain Vaughn on his promotion to deputy chief. Mr. Vaughn was in charge of operations while the Chief was out of the office on medical leave earlier this year. He did a fantastic job.

Adjournment

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk