



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
City Council Chambers
Tuesday, October 31, 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 Christmas in the City festival, the Trunk or Treat event, and Stinger Park. The 2023 Christmas in the City festival and parade will be held on Sunday, November 19th. The Trunk or Treat event went well. Stinger Park continues to see multiple tournaments a month. The walking trail will be maintained. Discussion about possibly having a sponsor help with paving the trail was held. The split rail fence is currently being installed and will be completed soon.

Tom Ellis, Police Chief – Mr. Ellis addressed Council regarding new Police Officers, current recruitment, the Fire Department Barbecue and new births to employees of the department.

Nathan Hester, Development Services Director – Mr. Hester addressed Council regarding the status of numerous economic development projects. There will be a new coffee and waffle shop coming to downtown. On Wednesday, December 6th City Staff will hold a holiday celebration for Downtown Development Board members and business owners to mingle. The Designs solutions group has now partnered with Brookline to complete the preliminary drawings for the town homes designs.

Diane Jenkins, Finance Director – Ms. Jenkins addressed Council regarding the upcoming audit and the Powell Bill funding. Additionally, discussion was held regarding several past due sewer accounts. City Council adopted new availability rates regarding several citizens who were connected to the sewer system. However, there are a few individuals who have not paid their accounts since August 2022.

Jamie Ramsey, Director of Operations- Mr. Ramsey informed Council that the Water Treatment Plant upgrades are 90% complete. The City's water system is in good standing, even though we have not had a lot of rain. The City has not had to purchase water.

Hydeia Hayes, City Clerk & Human Capital Director- Ms. Hayes addressed Council regarding the upcoming Staff Christmas Party and Thanksgiving Luncheon. Additionally, Ms. Hayes mentioned that the Planning & Zoning Board as well as the Downtown Development Boards will all be going through an dissolution and re-establishment process.

Discussion of Right-of-Way Closure (Hillcrest Dr)

Council member, Joe Will initially inquired about the City's future use of the property adjacent to the right-of-way. City Staff informed him that as this is a marsh, swamp area that no plans have been established as of date. Mr. Will stated that his reservations had been answered. This item will be placed on the Regular Meeting of November 2023.

Downtown Property Discussion

City Staff and Sam Kline of MECA Real Estate addressed Council regarding the two downtown properties recently purchased with City BAP grant monies. Mr. Kline has been working with City staff to ensure that said properties are marketed to the right business to further enhance the downtown area. Currently discussion has been had with several interested parties. However, no concrete offers have been made at this time. The City wants to ensure that the right prospect is brought in to yield a profitable and sustainable business in the historic buildings.

City Manager's Report

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

General: The Fire Department will host its annual barbecue sale on Friday, November 10th and Saturday, November 11th. Nathan Hester has recently graduated from RC2. The Rural Community Capacity (RC2) program, is a pilot initiative from the North Carolina Department of Commerce and part of Commerce's broader Rural Transformation Grant program. The purpose of the program is to increase various City's capacity to plan, implement and manage economic development programs and opportunities. Additionally, the City will be able to apply for a \$49,999 grant to further economic development initiatives. The City recently received \$2,150,000 from the State of North Carolina, as part of the 2023-2025 State Budget, for public safety improvements. The City is currently conducting a feasibility study that will identify current and future public safety needs in the community, i.e. fire, police, etc. This study is focused on facility needs as the City continues to invest in a full-service fire department and as the police department grows. City Staff will be coming back to Council at a later date with the results of this study. Council Member Guffey recently informed City Staff about a dust issue as a result of the Lennar Homes project site. City staff has reached out to the County to see if we could receive information about environmental regulations.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Joe Will made a motion to appoint Nellie Floyd as the Ward 2 City Council representative to replace Mrs. Kay McCathen. Ms. Floyd has attended many City Council meetings and is an advocate for the City. The vote was unanimously approved. Per Mayor and City Council, Nellie Floyd will be sworn in on Monday, November 13th at 7:00 PM.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:26 PM by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote.