

MINUTES
CITY OF MCDONOUGH
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – FEBRUARY 17, 2020
6:00 PM

The Regular Scheduled Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, February 17, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Copeland called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The City Clerk Ms. Janis Price called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Billy Copeland	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Craig Elrod	Present
Councilmember Benjamin Pruett	Present
Councilmember Roger Pruitt	Present
Councilmember Rufus Stewart	Present
Councilmember Kamali Varner	Present
Councilmember Sandra Vincent	Present

Others in attendance were: City Clerk, Ms. Janis Price; City Attorney, Mr. Jim Elliott; Police Chief, Mr. Preston Dorsey; Fire Chief, Mr. Steve Morgan; Community Development Director, Mr. Rodney Heard; Finance Director, Mr. Mike Clark; Human Resources Director, Ms. Carla Tuck; Public Works Director, Mr. Ronnie Thompson; Technology Services Director, Mr. Steve Sikes; Tourism, Ms. Christy Collier; Executive Assistant, Ms. Euretha L. Olokodana; and Executive Assistant, Ms. Trisha Colpetzer.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Councilmember Pruitt motioned. Councilmember Vincent requested that the Tarpley Parking lot be added as a discussion item. Councilmember Varner requested that Lighting in Avalon Park also be added as a discussion item. Councilmember Pruitt agreed to the changes in the motion.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Agenda with the addition of Item 14A, Tarpley Parking Lot discussion; and Item 14B, Lighting in Avalon Park discussion. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Pruett led the Pledge to the Flag.

The Reverend, Doctor Bert Neal, Pastor of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church gave the Invocation.

6. Consent Agenda

- A. Adoption of a Budget Resolution to amend the FY 2019-2020 Budget for approved transactions in various funds.
- B. Approval of a proposal between The City of McDonough and Vaughn & Melton to allow Vaughn & Melton to provide professional services for the design and survey, GDOT drawings, entrance permit for Jonesboro Road Park. The cost of \$46,000.00 plus reimbursables plus any services not covered in the agreement shall not exceed \$140.00 on hourly basis, which will be paid from SPLOST IV funds; authorization for the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items A and B. Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Benjamin Pruett seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mr. Jimmy Whitaker reviewed the audit for the year ending June 30, 2019. He discussed the City's assets and liabilities, and he reviewed various fund balances. Some of the topics he reviewed are listed below:

- Assets and deferred outflows totaled \$61,346,128, as of June 30, 2019.
- Total liabilities and deferred inflows were \$11,270,721.
- The net position for governmental activities totaled \$51,123,327.
- The net position for business activities totaled \$23,869,971.
- The total net position for the City amounted to \$74,993,298.
- Total assets in the General Fund amounted to \$10,603,623.
- The City has a 65.7% reserve.
- The General Fund total revenues were \$15,366,474.
- The General Fund total expenses were \$15,088,513.
- Excess revenue over expenditures in the General Fund totaled \$277,961.
- The net positive change in fund balance for the General Fund was \$1,325,020.
- Government-type activities had \$3,835,000, in revenue bonds payable.
- Business-type activities had revenue bonds payable of \$1,543,000.
- GEFA Notes payable totaled \$2,465,215.

Councilmember Pruitt asked about SPLOST funds, and Mr. Mike Clark stated that SPLOST V will start in May.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod thanked Mr. Whitaker and the City staff for their hard work, and he expressed his excitement about the City having more than 65 percent in reserves. He said that in November of 2013, when he started on Council the City had 10 percent in reserves and the goal was set to get that to 25 percent.

Mayor Copeland also thanked Mr. Whitaker, and he said the City has never been in such great shape financially.

Councilmember Vincent said that we need to make sure that the public understands that in 2013, the Municipal Court was a part of that deficit; and that the City utilized a different form of financial services.

Finance Director Mr. Mike Clark introduced Mr. Bill Ross with Ross & Associates, who was present for the meeting. Mr. Ross discussed the state requirement to submit an annual report of finances as well as an update related to impact fee projects to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) for regional and state review.

Mayor Copeland opened the Public Hearing. No one spoke in favor; and no one spoke in opposition. Mayor Copeland closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to adopt a Resolution authorizing transmittal of the Draft Annual Update Report for the year 2019 to the City's adopted Capital improvements Element, relating to the City's impact fee program, to the Atlanta Regional Commission for regional and State review. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Pruett seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Henry County Environmental Health Manager, Ms. Glinda Scott offered an update to Mayor and Council regarding the services provided by the Henry County Environmental Health Department. Some of the items she discussed are listed below:

- The Health Department offers clinical services and environmental health services.
- The main mission of the Department of Health is to prevent disease and injury, and to promote the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Georgia.
- We have programs that eliminate, address and evaluate environmental issues that may affect the health of the citizens.
- The Henry County Health Department is nationally accredited, as of November 2019.
- Some of the programs offered include on-site sewage management; food service; public swimming pools; tourist accommodations; and private water systems.
- We have received complaints from the McDonough Housing Authority regarding indoor air quality; however, we have no authority to require a landlord to fix any air quality issues.
- Emergency preparedness is another aspect of the Health Department's programs.
- March 24 through March 26, the State of Georgia will be conducting a major Point of Dispensing (POD) Exercise at the Henry County Health Department.

Councilmember Vincent asked about the County's preparedness to deal with the Coronavirus. Ms. Scott said that universal precautions should be practiced in the workplace, as are with the flu. The Coronavirus is not currently a threat in Georgia, but the State is preparing for it nonetheless.

Councilmember Vincent also shared that there are many concerns about air quality within District 2, concerning mold in particular; and she asked for guidance in contacting the appropriate department to address those issues. Ms. Scott said that her office does handle

heathy home evaluations; however, budget cuts by the State have affected their ability to provide more than a few mold test kits, which are only utilized in the most serious instances. Councilmember Vincent said that she would like to meet with Ms. Scott to discuss how to create the infrastructure to support the work that the Health Department does from a legislative standpoint in order to continue to protect the seniors within the community.

10. Administrative Variance Request

Mr. Rodney Heard

Applicant: Brian Brakefield

CC District: 2 - Councilmember Sandra Vincent

Development/Project: 64 Atlanta Street

Request(s): Said application is for the following item pertaining to "As-built Conditions" -

#200203 Front Yard Setback: Reduction from 40' to 36', within the 10% reduction threshold allowed by Chapter 17.96, per as-built conditions that alleviate adverse impacts to existing shared parking areas affiliates with subject property.

CDD Recommendation: Approval (Refer to 02/10/20 stamped documents)

City Code Section(s): 17.96.020

Community Development Director Mr. Rodney Heard reviewed the request for an administrative variance at 64 Atlanta Street, to reduce the front yard setback from 40' to 36', which he recommended for approval.

Councilmember Vincent motioned to approve the administrative variance request by Applicant Mr. Brian Brakefield, for 64 Atlanta Street, as presented and recommended by the Community Development Director; and Mayor Pro Tem Elrod seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Ms. Euretha Olokodana discussed the Adopt-A-Spot Program Adoption Day, which was held at City Hall on Monday, February 17, 2020. She said that although the program was started in 2017, this project was a relaunch of the initiative; and eleven different entities have now adopted spots throughout the City of McDonough. She discussed the packet that was given to those interested in adopting a spot in the City, which includes a four-year requirement to commit to cleaning their spot at least twice a year; a registered clean-up form; and a list of volunteers.

She said that after the cleanup, a report must be provided to show what was collected during the cleanup, as well as any other observations made by the volunteers. Councilmember Vincent suggested that the packets should include a waiver; and Ms. Olokodana noted that there is also a release and waiver form included within the information.

Ms. Olokodana identified the groups who have adopted spots thus far, as follows:

- The Victory Over Victim Outreach
- The Brown-Jones Family

- Ms. Patricia Boston
- Ms. Amis
- The Caribbean Association of Georgia
- The Blacksville Project
- Mr. Xavier Johnson
- Brian and Lindsay Strickland
- McDonough Woman's Club
- Wesley Lakes Elementary Junior Beta Club
- The Dean Howell Family

Councilmember Benjamin Pruett discussed the possible adoption of a Park Use Regulations Ordinance for the City of McDonough. He said this item has been previously discussed among Council and with the former City Administrator, but that it needs to be brought back in consideration of adoption. Councilmember Pruett said while this is not an issue that he's championing, he believes it needs to be done.

Councilmember Pruitt asked what department would be responsible for enforcing the proposed Ordinance. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said he believed that the City had a similar Ordinance already, and that this would actually be an amendment to that Ordinance. Mr. Elliott said the responsibility could be shared among law enforcement and/or Code Enforcement, depending on the situation.

Councilmember Pruitt also asked about the wording in the Ordinance that, "a permit may be required"; and he questioned whether or not a permit would be a requirement for park use. Mayor Pro Tem said he would be comfortable changing that wording so that it offers a clear understanding regarding permitting events.

Councilmember Vincent reminded her fellow Councilmembers that all questions are to be addressed to the Mayor for responses. She then asked the Mayor if the City Attorney has had an opportunity to review the Ordinance to ensure that nothing is written in conflict with the Service Delivery Strategy or any other Ordinances. She said that her understanding of why the Ordinance had not been adopted previously was due to ambiguities within the document.

Mr. Elliott said that he has reviewed the Ordinance and that it contains standard language; however, he will go back and review the specific topics that are of concern. Councilmember Vincent said she would like to have a better understanding about SDS and what parks will it apply to. She said these proposed changes are a result of an incident where an organization used the ballfield area for an event and there was damage to the field.

Councilmember Pruett said that in addition to the firearms ordinance, special provisions for the dog park was another issue that needed to be addressed. Mayor Copeland asked Mr. Elliott to research the matter further and bring it back to Council.

City Attorney Mr. Jim Elliott discussed proposed revisions to the Travel Policy for the City of McDonough with regard to per diems related to meals. He explained that many cities are adopting the IRS Code for per diems, which has been amended and no longer requires receipts for meal expense reimbursements. He then reviewed examples some of the daily per diems that are given by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). He also explained that the law is different as it relates to elected officials, as it provides that reasonable and necessary travel expenses are reimbursed; therefore, elected officials could choose to receive a per diem for meals or they could submit receipts for reimbursement.

Councilmember Pruett said he believes the changes would make things easier from an administrative standpoint, and he said he would support the change to the policy. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said while it makes sense from an administrative standpoint, he believes it does not support transparency. He said that this is dealing with the tax payers' money, and the taxpayers deserve to know exactly how those dollars are being spent. He asked that more time be given and more input be gathered before making a decision regarding the policy change.

Mr. Elliott pointed out that the Council could implement the policy change and still require receipts. Mayor Copeland said that he has gathered receipts for 65 years, and he plans to continue doing so either way. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said he would like to see a policy come back that would require receipts for reimbursement by elected officials as well as City employees.

This item will come back before Mayor and Council for further consideration.

Mr. Elliott discussed the State's proposal to preempt design standards for residential properties, which has caused a lot of concern among cities. He said that the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is requesting that its members adopt a resolution in support of locally-established design standards for residential dwellings, in opposition to the State's bill.

Councilmember Vincent said that she asked for this issue to be discussed because the State's proposed initiative would restrict the ability of municipalities to dictate design standards within their own communities. She said the proposed bill would allow for a cheaper method of creating affordable housing, and that it would have a tremendous impact on local neighborhoods and downtown districts.

Mr. Rodney Heard commented that the Mayor and Council have worked very hard throughout the years to establish a platform for the City of McDonough as a leader in the Metropolitan area, and he encouraged their support of the Resolution.

Councilmember Vincent motioned to adopt a Resolution supporting locally-established building design standards for residential dwellings, and Councilmember Varner seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Vincent discussed the new Tarpley Parking Lot and she asked for clarification on whether or not parking meters will be installed. She asked that the City Attorney research legislation that would allow for paid parking permits for the Merchants and employees who work downtown; and further, she said that the Merchants should be encouraged to offer feedback on the issue. She suggested that the permits should be renewable on either a monthly or quarterly basis for employees of businesses on the square.

Mayor Copeland commented that there were efforts to resolve parking on the square for Merchants about eight years ago; however, those efforts were not successful. Councilmember Vincent expressed the need to create a safe environment for the merchants and employees; and she again expressed the importance of gathering feedback from the Merchants in helping to address the ongoing parking problems. She said that while the issue has been discussed, nothing has happened; and now the City has the opportunity to utilize space to help resolve the issue.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod commended the McDonough Police Department for providing escorts for merchant owners and employees to and from their businesses. He said that the parking issues downtown have always been challenging, and he said that obtaining input from Merchants and citizens alike would be most helpful.

After the discussion concluded, Mayor Copeland stated that this item will come back for further discussion at the March 5, 2020, City Council Workshop Meeting.

Councilmember Varner asked that a decision be finalized about lighting for Avalon Park. She said while that solar lighting has been discussed since August of 2019, there has still been no decision about lighting for the park that now includes walking trails, a splash pad, a football field and an amphitheater. She said that events are scheduled at the park in the spring, and lighting will be needed to ensure the safety of those attending.

She said that the former City Administrator, Mr. Keith Dickerson has provided more than enough information to Mayor and Council regarding lighting options for the park, and she noted that Mr. Dickerson is still available to answer questions related to the project via email. She said that Avalon is one of the newest parks with great amenities; however, there are still no lights. She said that this discussion will come up again at the March 5 Workshop, and she encouraged her colleagues to reach out to Mr. Dickerson through Ms. Price if they have any remaining questions prior to that meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod asked about the original design of the park and any plan for lighting the park that may have been included in that design. Councilmember Varner said while she does not recall the original park design, she will submit the question to Mr. Dickerson through Ms. Price relative to any plans for lighting for the park. Councilmember Vincent shared her frustrations over the question about the original plan for lighting the park because she said the Members of Council have expressed their desire to become a “Smart City” since the idea was presented.

Councilmember Varner called on Public Works Director Mr. Ronnie Thompson relative to lighting in Avalon Park. Mr. Thomson said that his understanding is that the park was designed as a day park which would not require any lighting because it would only be open for use during daylight hours. Mayor Copeland commented that Mr. Dickerson will be present for the March 5, 2020 Workshop Meeting, where he can address the plan for lighting further.

Councilmember Stewart expressed the need to move forward with the project in relation to safety issues. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod clarified that his understanding about the solar lighting was that it is specifically for the parking lot at Avalon, and he expressed the need to consider lighting around the amphitheater and other areas in the park to address any safety concerns.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the February 6, 2020, City Council Workshop Minutes. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Stewart, Councilmember Varner and Councilmember Vincent. Councilmember Pruett did not vote because he was not present for the February 6, 2020, Workshop Meeting.

16. **Unscheduled Public Comments**

(1) Ms. Christy Collier, McDonough Tourism Director

- The City has a new restaurant guide, and Ms. Collier provided copies of it to Mayor and Council.
- The booklet highlights “A Taste of McDonough” where local citizens have voted for their favorite spots around town.
- Recipes from three of the top restaurants in town are also included.
- The Culinary Guide provides options throughout the City to enjoy international cuisine as well.
- The guides can be found at local hotels and throughout the McDonough community.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod congratulated Ms. Collier for a job well done and said he was impressed by the collaboration with Atlanta Magazine. Mayor Copeland also complimented Ms. Collier for a job well done.

Councilmember Vincent asked how often the guide will be printed, and Ms. Collier said they plan for an annual update at this time. Councilmember Vincent said that the Camp Creek Train Wreck Anniversary is on June 23; and she suggested that restaurants could come up with a signature dish to commemorate the sense of community that emerged from that event.

(2) Ms. Annette O’Banion

- Congratulations on passing the Resolution for Service Delivery Strategy.
- There are events scheduled at Avalon Park in April 2020, and the City may not have time to get any lights installed realistically.

- She said the public needs to be made aware of the plans for lighting with events scheduled at the park in approximately six weeks.
- Thank you Councilmember Vincent for discussing the parking lot issues; however, please consider the wage of those working downtown before you charge for parking.
- She said that in relation to the proposed changes in the travel policy, following federal schedules for per diems will not create a lack of transparency and it would simplify the administrative tasks associated with receipts.

Mayor Copeland thanked Ms. O'Banion for her comments.

**17. Executive Session (if needed) for: Litigation O.C.G.A. 50-14-2
Real Estate O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(1)
Personnel O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(2)**

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to go into Executive Session for Litigation, O.C.G.A. 50-14-2. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Vincent seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to go back into Regular Session. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

There were no action items to report.

Ms. Price discussed two invoices that need to be approved by Mayor and Council to authorize payment. She explained that one invoice is related to a firetruck repair and the other is for materials that were required to refurbish the north well.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the payment of

- \$11,772.46, to ETR Truck Center, Inc. for a firetruck repair to be paid from the General Fund;
- \$16,167.50, to Davidson Well Drilling, Inc. for materials needed to refurbish the north well, and will be paid from the Water Treatment Plant Budget.

Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Vincent said she appreciated Ms. O'Banion's comments relative to adding costs to employees on the square, and she asked Mr. Elliott to take that issue into consideration when moving forward with the parking lot discussion. Secondly, she said that she will be hosting a Town Hall Meeting for District 2, on February 29, at Wesley Lakes Elementary School from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.; and she invited Mayor and Council to attend.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod thanked everyone who was in attendance for the meeting. He also thanked Ms. Euretha Olokodana and Ms. Lauren Carter for their work on the McDonough Beautiful initiative. He thanked the City Attorney Mr. Jim Elliott for his time and attention since coming to the City of McDonough.

Councilmember Pruitt thanked the City employees for the wonderful job they continue to do. He also thanked everyone who was in attendance for the meeting.

Mayor Copeland also thanked everyone who has worked so hard in the last few weeks with so much going on in the City of McDonough.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruitt seconded. All stood in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Janis E. Price
City Clerk

OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE NOTICE: This is a regularly scheduled meeting of Mayor and Council of the City of McDonough duly noticed pursuant to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq). Notice of the meeting schedule was published in the *Henry Herald* on January 1, 2020; and a copy the meeting schedule was posted at City Hall and on the City's website, as required by law.