



MINUTES
CITY OF MCDONOUGH
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL – 136 KEYS FERRY STREET
JUNE 15, 2020
6:00 PM

The Regular Scheduled Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, July 15, 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 Administrator, Mr. Preston Dorsey; City Clerk, Ms. Janis Price; City Attorney, Mr. Jim Elliott; Fire Chief, Mr. Steve Morgan; Acting Police Chief, Mr. Ken Noble; Community Development Director; Mr. Rodney Heard; Finance Director, Mr. Mike Clark; Public Works Director, Mr. Ronnie Thompson; Technology Services Director, Mr. Steve Sikes; Executive Assistant, Ms. Euretha L. Olokodana; and Network Administrator, Mr. Brian Linton.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Agenda as published. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Mayor Pro Tem Elrod seconded.

Prior to the vote, Councilmember Vincent stated that she had sent an email requesting that the items be removed from the Consent Agenda because the items had not been previously discussed; and Mayor Copeland stated that he would consider a substitute motion.

Councilmember Vincent motioned to remove Items A, B, D, E, F, G and H from the Consent Agenda; and Councilmember Varner seconded. The vote was three in favor and four opposed. The motion did not pass. Those voting in favor were Councilmember Stewart, Councilmember Varner and Councilmember Vincent. Those voting in opposition were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruett and Councilmember Pruitt.

Councilmember Vincent discussed her reasons for requesting that the items be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion, and further discussion ensued.

Mayor Copeland called for the vote on the motion to approve the Agenda as published. The vote was five in favor and two opposed. The motion passed. Those voting in favor were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Pruitt and Councilmember Stewart. Councilmember Varner and Councilmember Vincent voted in opposition.

Councilmember Varner led the Pledge to the Flag; and the Rev. Dr. Bert Neal, Pastor of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church gave the Invocation.

6. Approval of the Consent Agenda

- A. Approval to employ James L. Whitaker, P.C., Certified Public Accountant to provide financial services to the City of McDonough for the year ending on June 30, 2020, in the form of the year end audit and internal control related report, and other necessary reports to be in compliance; authorization for the Mayor and City Administrator to sign the engagement letter.
- B. Approval of the Mayor to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Main Street and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. This MOU will keep the McDonough Main Street Program in compliance.
- C. Authorization for the Mayor and other designated signers to sign revised documents/ Resolutions for Ga Fund 1 accounts and bank accounts for the City.
- D. Approval to award the contract to Piedmont Paving for the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG). Total cost of the project is \$568,840.04 of which \$270,712.10 is the LMIG Grant funds, and the City will pay \$298,127.94 from SPLOST IV funds; authorization for the Mayor to sign document(s).
- E. Adoption of a Budget Amendment Resolution to amend FY 2019-2020 budget for approved transactions in various funds.
- F. Ratify the CDBG Documents in which the City will continue participating with Henry County in this program for 2021-2023.
- G. Approval /Adoption of a Resolution to extend moratorium on approval of new development that will connect to the City's water system; moratorium extended to August 1, 2020.
- H. Adoption of a Resolution to approve commencement of statutory process to amend the zoning ordinance to set a maximum of 8 units/acre of developed property for multifamily development

Mayor Copeland stated that the motion to approve the Agenda as published sanctioned the approval of the Consent Agenda as well.

Finance Director Mr. Mike Clark discussed the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget:

- The budget reflects the millage rate of 3.086 which is expected to remain the same this year.
- There are no employee compensation increases included in the budget.
- The City has a freeze on hiring other than essential positions, with essential hiring being deferred until at least January 2021.
- The General Fund balance of \$18,662,000, includes a 3 percent increase over the previous year.
- The Hotel/Motel Tax Fund has seen the greatest impact as a result of COVID-19, with a reduction in revenues of 28.97%.
- The Tax Assessor predicts that property values could increase to as much as eight percent.
- It is approximated that there will be a 20 to 25 percent decrease in Local Option Sales Tax.

After Mr. Clark's review, several reductions and changes were suggested and will be changed in the revised budget.

Mayor Copeland opened the Public Hearing. Ms. Loletha Hale spoke only to suggest that a hand-out should be offered to the public when the budget is being discussed. The City Clerk, Ms. Janis Price read an email from Ms. Annette O'Banion-Westcott into the record, expressing her concerns regarding the proposed budget. The comments expressed in the email are listed below:

- The information provided to the public lacks coherent transparency.
- The creation of a "published" strategy (approach) decided by the leadership – all of the leadership – shared with the public and provided to the staff prior to starting the process
- The creation of a set of assumptions – as an example "We assume an approved SDS will not provide relief; we assume a COVID 19 factor of; we assume the impact of the new SPLOST is???"
- The creation of Thresholds – must funds or a list of bill payers in the total explanation or notes
- All decrements or increases should have notes and they should either be included by department or as part of the up-front overall presentation provided to the public prior to meetings.
- The creation of a Prioritized Funding List - IF you would do at the beginning of the budget process and resolve any colleague concerns
- Do not build your budget to your millage rate.
- The budget published shows no cell phone costs as an example. Where did it go?
- You say in your overview the budget represents a 10.3% decrease overall for the upcoming year and yet your general fund is increasing by 3.1%. The general fund is the fund you have most of the control over and any increases in a budget year with this kind of unknown (the COVID 19 impact and the civil unrest which is affecting LOST by affecting business operations on the square and potentially other areas in the city) seems not to be prudent. If anything, given you plan no staff increases or raises seems not to make sense. An example, the training/travel

budgets for the council is increased in a year where we already know attending GMA in Savannah is off the table and all or most engagements will not include travel.

- The projections for revenues appears to be inconsistent with other data.
- Most of the departments show an increase in salaries – since your overview shows there are none and we know from conversation there is a hiring freeze are we to assume that is raises employees who were entitled to if they reached their goals this budget year?
- Overall percent of change, when the public sees decreases of 43.6%, 28.97% 57.9% and 48.23 in accounts for Stormwater, Hotel/Motel, SPLOST, and IMPACT we should expect to see “why” so that we can discern if there is an impact on us.
- The bottom line – the budget as presented online is not ready for prime time.

Councilmember Vincent expressed her concerns about having a staff member removed from Mayor and Council’s ability to call on to become the Director of Main Street. She said there is continued controversy over the utilization of Ms. Colpetzer, who is the Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council; and she asked that there be some clarification regarding who is available to provide assistance to Councilmembers.

Mayor Copeland stated that Ms. Colpetzer is the only appointment that he has, and that she is always available to assist Councilmembers. Councilmember Vincent shared that she feels that Ms. Colpetzer serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, and that she may not be authorized to help Councilmembers if the Mayor disagrees with the Councilmembers’ plans.

Mayor Copeland closed the Public Hearing. The budget adoption is scheduled for June 22, 2020.

8. **Administrative Variance Request**

Applicant: Tim McKinley on behalf of Heatherland Homes, LLC.

CC District: 3 - Mayor Pro Tem/Councilmember Craig Elrod

Development/Project: Arnold Estates (McGarity Road Corridor)

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

- **#200601 Rear Yard Setback: Reduction from 40’ to 36’ = 4’, within the 10% reduction threshold allowed by Chapter 17.96, to Lot #39 (252 Lotus Circle) per as-built conditions.**
- **#200602 Rear Yard Setback: Reduction from 30’ to 27’ = 3’, within the 10% reduction threshold allowed by Chapter 17.96, to Lot #37 (244 Lotus Circle) per as-built conditions.**

CDD Recommendation: Approval (Refer to 06/04/20 stamped documents)

City Code Section(s): 17.96.020

Community Development Director Mr. Rodney Heard reviewed the Administrative Variance Request pertaining to as-built conditions and rear-yard setback reductions for

Lot 39 and Lot 37 in the Arnold Estates (McGarity Road Corridor) Development. Some discussion ensued. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said he fully supports Mr. Heard's decision on the variance request. Mr. Heard stated that no vote from Mayor and Council was needed for approval; and that absent a veto from Mayor and Council, the approval will be formalized and the applicant will be notified tomorrow.

9. Proclamations

Caribbean Heritage Month, presented to Mr. Frederick Gardiner
National Skilled Nursing Care Week
Celebrate Class of 2020 Senior Day
Flag Day

The Proclamation for Caribbean Heritage Month was not presented.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to make the Proclamations for National Skilled Nursing Care Week; Celebrate Class of 2020 Senior Day; and Flag Day a part of the minutes of the meeting. Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruitt seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Vincent discussed a recent training trip to the National League of Cities, where training was provided in Race Equity and Leadership. She said that the training was not central to race, but it also dealt with unconscious or implicit bias, allocating resources and other challenges that communities face today.

She said that as women, she feels that she and Councilmember Varner are treated as lesser citizens of the Governing Body. She offered examples of instances where she and Councilmember Varner have been left out of important communications; and she said that when they share their own concerns, there is no response. As a result of those issues, she believes it is necessary to enlist the help of a facilitator/trainer who can identify the things that the Council needs to do to ensure that these concerns are addressed appropriately. However, she said that after discussing training options in March, her efforts to gather materials and move forward have recently been met with resistance by her fellow councilmembers.

Subsequently, she said that Mayor Pro Tem Elrod offered to meet with her one-on-one to discuss some of the concerns; however, due to the fact that there was a great deal of tension, Councilmember Vincent felt that it was best to meet in addition with someone else. She said that she offered Mayor Copeland the opportunity to join that meeting via email, but she has never received a response.

She said that after continued conversations, the idea to have Implicit Bias training was discussed. She offered that people think and respond based on their upbringing and personal perspectives, which is the reason diversity is so important in understanding one another's views and moving forward. She said that the Governing Body has work to do, and she hopes that all of Council can suspend their emotions and dig down to understand how we can do things better moving forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod publically thanked Councilmember Varner for a recent one-on-one conversation. He said that he fully supports training so that open conversations will continue going forward with an end goal in mind to be better today than we were yesterday. Councilmember Varner commented that the training will have to include dedication and some frank and open dialogue, which she is hopeful will feed into staff and extend into the community. Discussion continued.

Councilmember Varner motioned to move forward with the training for Race Equity and Leadership for Council and for the community, with three options to be brought back at the July 20 meeting; and Councilmember Vincent seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Vincent first shared her appreciation and utmost respect for police officers everywhere. She said that she believes that the issues the country is now facing are a result of policies and procedures that are often systemic and biased in nature. She shared that she believes establishing a Citizen Review Panel to get the community involved to review the challenges and problems that emerge in law enforcement is the first step to making a change in McDonough, gaining the public's trust and providing the Police Department with the support they need from a policy standpoint.

Councilmember Vincent recommended that the process should begin with the City Attorney researching different models to establish a Civil Review Body and ensure to that the recommendations by the Federal Government be are being implemented. Councilmember Vincent noted that currently the McDonough Municipal Court judges are recommended by the Police Chief, who also oversees the Police Department. She said that areas need to be compartmentalized so that too much power is not given to one authority. She said that racism has many components that allow opportunities for unintended consequences, which is why the laws and practices of the cities and courts need to be analyzed thoroughly.

Further, Councilmember Vincent said that it was suggested that the police need to be more personable at a recent neighborhood meeting; and she agreed that community policing is something that the City has worked towards but has never fully implemented. Acting Police Chief, Mr. Ken Noble said that there are efforts being made to try to get ahead of things by reaching out to similarly-sized police departments. He said that there will continue to be transparency moving forward, and that the Police Department will continue to do the great job that they do.

Councilmember Vincent said that she believes the Council should hold a public Workshop with members of the Police Department present to discuss the action steps that will be taken. Additionally, she suggested that there needs to be a staff person who is recording all of the steps that the City is taking and will take to measure that those things have been done successfully.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod commented that during the neighborhood meeting, several recommendations were made by residents regarding the Police Department. He said that he was impressed to learn that the McDonough Police Department is already practicing most of what was recommended by those citizens. He said those stories need to be shared with citizens regularly so they understand the efforts of our police officers in serving the community. Councilmember Vincent agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, but she added that what is most important is to find the stories of what we could do better because the purpose is to be better every day.

Councilmember Vincent motioned to start the process of identifying best practices for the Police System; and Councilmember Stewart seconded.

Councilmember Pruett asked that there be no vote taken until the recommendations are made due to the complexity of the issue. Councilmember Vincent said that she is trying to get is a sense of commitment from the Governing Body that this is what we are going to do in order to move forward in this direction. Councilmember Pruett shared that he wanted to be careful not to make any decision without having all of the information, and he believes it would be wise to take a pause before voting in order to flesh the concept out completely.

After further discussion, Councilmember Vincent clarified her motion to move forward with the identification of opportunities for improvement for the McDonough Police Department to involve the Police Chief, his designee, Mayor and Council, and other stakeholders as identified; and Councilmember Stewart seconded.

Prior to the vote, further discussion continued. Mayor Copeland commented that he understood there would be a discussion tonight, but he was unaware that there would be any proposed action on this issue. Councilmember Pruitt commented that he is comfortable with having a review, but he said that needs to happen before any changes are implemented. Councilmember Varner said that the purpose is not to put together a review board tonight nor to restructure the police department, but to establish a mechanism to move forward with community input. Mayor Copeland called for the vote. The vote was five in favor, one in opposition and one abstention. The motion passed. Those voting in favor were Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Stewart, Councilmember Varner and Councilmember Vincent. Councilmember Pruett voted in opposition; and Mayor Copeland did not vote.

City Administrator Mr. Preston Dorsey referenced the information in councilmember's notebook regarding COVID-19 Pandemic. He said the packet includes information about masks, gloves and other protective measures that the City has taken to protect staff and citizens against the virus.

Mr. Dorsey invited Acting Police Chief Ken Noble and Major Kyle Helgersen to come forward and accept two Safest Cities Awards for the City of McDonough. According to Alarms.org, McDonough is the 24th safest city in the State of Georgia; and Safewise ranked McDonough as the 35th safest City in Georgia.

Mr. Dorsey asked for approval to ratify the payment to Butler Snow for \$10,538.05, which included additional legal services required due to Covid-19, to be paid from the General Fund. Councilmember Pruitt motioned to ratify the payment to Butler Snow for \$10,538.05; and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mr. Dorsey asked for approval to ratify the agreement between the City of McDonough and Keck and Wood, Inc. for professional services in Community Development, which was paid from the Department's budget at the cost established in the January 22, 2020 agreement. Councilmember Stewart motioned to ratify the agreement made with Keck and Wood, Inc. for the professional services agreement from January 22, 2020, and authorization for the additional agreement for continuing professional services; and authorize the Mayor to sign. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from March 5, 2020; March 30th, 2020; April 13, 2020; and April 27, 2020. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Mayor Pro Tem Elrod seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from March 20, 2020. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod motioned and Councilmember Pruitt seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Varner and Councilmember Vincent. Councilmember Stewart was not present for the March 20, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from March 14, 2020. Mayor Pro Tem Elrod motioned and Councilmember Pruitt seconded. The vote was five in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Pruitt and Councilmember Vincent. Councilmembers Varner and Stewart were not present at the March 14, 2020 meeting.

17. **Unscheduled Public Comments**

(1) Ms. Kelly Rose

- Ms. Rose is a resident of Henry County and a local business owner, who is also running for Senate.
- She said she is proud of the conversations that are now taking place.
- The original agenda listed a Proclamation for Confederate Heritage Month, which was since removed.
- The Proclamation was inappropriate in light of the current temperature in the country.
- It is time to have a formal meeting to discuss the monument on the square.
- The monument is a source of divisiveness and oppression, and it effects the businesses on the square.
- Please let me know how we bring a formal discussion which will lead to a formal action regarding the statue.

(2) Mr. Jaden Williams

- Thank you Councilmember Vincent for bringing this discussion to the community.
- I am disgusted at the treatment of Ms. Varner and Ms. Vincent.
- The statue is disrespectful to my generation to have a constant reminder of the Confederacy.
- We want to make sure future generations do not have to deal with that.
- With the current state of the community, where lives have been lost and there is constant rioting; we do not want to bring to McDonough.
- It is the time for change.
- The Proclamation for Confederate History and Heritage Month is not supported by the community.
- If you all don't make a change in the community, we will vote you out.

Mayor Copeland stated for the record that he used his authority as the CEO of the City of McDonough to remove the item from the agenda.

(3) Ms. Loletha Hale

- Ms. Hale recalled a time from her childhood where at a family reunion in McDonough, four white deputies showed up to question what was going on. She said that the feeling that experience left her with propelled her to choose a career as an attorney.
- She employed the Council to consider removing the statue from the square, as it is a painful reminder of our history.
- She said the statue symbolizes hate, oppression and white supremacy.
- Ms. Hale said that open discussions about race relations are necessary in the City and in the County, as it is time to be proactive and enlist checks and balances.
- I have to walk past that Confederate statue to go to the courthouse to work, and it is a painful reminder.

(4) Mr. Thomas White

- Thank you to your commitment to the First Amendment and upholding the rights of your citizens to be able to voice their thoughts and protest peacefully.
- Thank you to the McDonough Police Department who exemplify what it is to be servants of the people.
- There is a political division in Henry County that is caused by extreme partisanship.
- You can rise above the resistance to change and make something great.
- You've heard the voices and know there is a problem. To ignore those voices of those who feel disenfranchised is nothing short of cowardly.
- We can choose to remain defenders of a crumbling system; or we can become beacons of hope and a promise of progress to influence the future.

(5) Mr. Jonathan Bergen

- Thank you for removing the Confederate Proclamation from the Agenda; that should never be celebrated in the south or anywhere within the United States.
- The statue is based on the ideology that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery and subordination to the superior race is his normal and natural condition.
- The statue was erected and built by the Daughters of the Confederacy for the Confederate soldiers who fought for the very keeping of slavery in our country.
- The Daughters of the Confederacy also endorsed the book, “The Ku Klux Klan or Invisible Empire”, to secure its adoption as a supplementary reader in the schools and to place it in the libraries of our land.
- The statue celebrates something that no person should celebrate and it’s a painful reminder of the past.

(6) Mr. Jamon Cooper

- Thank you for your service.
- When you chose not to vote earlier in the meeting, to me that said that you don’t care about your people and I consider that a slap in the face as a citizen.
- Black Lives Matter is tasked with bringing forth a lot of reforms and changes; and those changes are for all people.
- The Confederate Heritage Month Proclamation that was on the original agenda should never be pushed upon the citizens.
- I would like to see the statue removed as it is something that stands for something that the people of this City do not.
- We do not have to erase history, but the Confederacy should not be celebrated in the town square.
- Please let the public know what the official measures are to remove the statute.

Mayor Copeland took exception with some of Mr. Cooper’s comments.

(7) Ms. Tosin Okee

- My generation and local citizens need change.
- DeKalb County had the same issue, and in resolution they removed a statue and added a plaque in its place.
- I think we need to follow suit with Dekalb County and erect a monument that represents the histories of the diverse people of Henry County.

(8) Ms. Annette O’Banion-Westcott (comments read by Ms. Janis Price)

- First let me say, when I saw the published agenda, I couldn’t have been more surprised about the apparent lack of rigor. Whomever was responsible for reviewing the agenda is either tone deaf or lacks the

necessary skill set to understand the community and the timing, emotion and grieving of our society at large. Timing is everything folks – and this mistake is one easily avoided. To publish it this way during a time of national outpouring for what we at large feel is a huge injustice is just plain tone deaf. I realize we have done it every year at the request of the Daughters of the Confederacy as you do any proclamation – when the public requests it, you honor it BUT in the wake of current events, it is not the consideration required by the next item on the agenda titled “Race and Leadership”. It’s like having dry weather training in the middle of a hurricane. Hello???

- I’m not sure I understand the content of Race and Leadership and am intrigued to listen to tonight’s meeting. You may mean diversity training and how it affects leadership and inclusion is about much more than race? Not sure but I would ask that leadership focus on outcomes. Our community can tell us where we lack – citizens, business owners, staff all have insight as to where issues exist and what they feel will solve them – ask them please – do not just jump into some kind of training that at the end of the day goes in one ear and out the other because they had to “sit” through a class and it changes nothing significantly. If we are to address any issues, we need to ask their point of view and to invite a discussion on what outcomes we are searching. Do not pick a solution without a well socialized problem and potential solution vetting – that is leadership – that is where the real work is. Do the work.

Thank you for your time. Annette O’banion-Westcott

(9) Mr. Jordan Cooper

- I organized a protest on June 3, 2020, and I would like to thank the Police Chief and the officers because it went better than expected.
- The statue was right in the middle of our protest and it depicts a traitor to the American Flag as well as a traitor to God, who said that all of His people are created equally.
- I am giving you a deadline of June 15, 2021, to remove the statue; otherwise, I will do everything in my power to make sure that no black athlete in Henry County will play in a single sporting event for this County.
- I got 500 people to come out for a protest in two days; so please trust that I will not fail.

**18. 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 and Personnel O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(2). Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

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

There was one action item to report from Executive Session.

Councilmember Kamali Varner motioned to appoint Ken Noble as Acting Police Chief for the City of McDonough until further notice; and Councilmember Vincent seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Although not present at the meeting, Mr. Dorsey recognized Public Works employees Mr. Marshall Battle, Mr. Steven Graves, Mr. Corey Young, and Mr. Greg Wise who unloaded the fruits and vegetables for the Food to Farmers Event.

Ms. Price noted that there will be a Special-Called Meeting of Mayor and Council on Monday, June 22, 2020, for the Public Hearing and adoption of the Budget. The meeting will also include a T-SPLOST discussion.

Councilmember Vincent thanked all of the members of the public who attended the meeting. She shared that it is important to remember the lessons learned during the first COVID-19 outbreak, to continue to engage the community. She said that she believes Zoom or another technology platform should be utilized to encourage more citizen engagement.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod thanked everyone who was in attendance at the meeting, and he said the process works better when the citizens are involved. He thanked the staff who were in attendance at the meeting, and he went on to thank all of the City employees for working diligently to ensure citizen services have remained available throughout the COVID Pandemic.

Secondly, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said that the neighborhood meeting over the weekend was a great event where important information was shared, and he hopes there will be more community meetings moving forward. In closing, he thanked the citizens who have planned the events in the last couple of weeks in conjunction with police officers and business owners. He said to see the protests and walks remain civil and positive is not surprising to him because that is who the citizens of McDonough are, and he only wishes there had been more recognition of those peaceful events.

Councilmember Stewart thanked Mr. Jordan Cooper and his team for their help at a recent event. He also thanked the staff, the Police Chief and the City Administrator for their hard work.

Councilmember Varner commended the City's response to the COVID-10 Pandemic and throughout quarantine to ensure that services remained available to citizens and to keep the City moving forward. She encouraged everyone to continue to do better and keep up the fight.

Secondly, Councilmember Varner said that the movement and fight that is ongoing is not new, but it has new energy and momentum with an organized voice. She said that public servants are often closest to the problem, which also means that public servants are closest to the solution. She said McDonough has to be a City that listens to truly understand the issues of civil rights, racial injustice and systemic inequality; and that while it may be uncomfortable, it is time for candid and frank conversations. She said that it is imperative to use our voices and positions to advocate for reform and change in the City of McDonough. She said that words, actions and deeds must support equity, inclusion and change; and that the voices of the citizens will dictate that issues with the Confederate statute must be dealt with and not met with silence. Further she said that to remain silent on the issue speaks volumes that sends the message of "I don't care enough to risk our vulnerabilities, so I'm choosing not to engage".

In closing, Councilmember Varner challenged her fellow councilmembers to engage and be a participating force in ensuring that McDonough becomes a more inclusive and diverse community.

Councilmember Pruitt thanked Mr. Dorsey and his staff for the great job they are already doing. He welcomed the visitors at the meeting and he thanked them for their attendance.

Mayor Copeland commented that he was happy to see new faces at the meeting, and that the more people come to the meetings, the better. He said that the peaceful nature of recent gatherings speaks volumes about the citizens of McDonough.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruett seconded. All stood in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 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.