

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Robert Yost, and Sandra Tooley. Councilman Ben Norton and Councilman James Wright were absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Stephen Johnson, Freedom Outpost, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE MARCH, 2014 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Consideration of the March, 2014 Employee of the Month Award (Patrol Officer Jimmy Griffin, Police Department).

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that Jimmy Griffin began his employment with the City of Valdosta Police Department in June, 2007 as a Patrol Officer which is the position he currently holds. Officer Griffin is responsible for maintaining a working knowledge of the most commonly enforced Federal, State, and local laws, presenting oral testimony in court, responding to calls for service, and completing necessary paperwork in accordance with Department policy. While on routine patrol the night of January 24, 2014, Officer Griffin was alerted to the extra patrol in his beat and had been by the Briarwood Motel several times. Moments after he left the area of the motel, an armed robbery call was dispatched to that location. Officer Griffin quickly responded and observed a suspicious automobile leaving the motel area at a high rate of speed. Using his knowledge, training, and experience, he had the foresight to believe the vehicle could possibly be the get-away car. Adhering to the correct tactics and professionalism expected of a Patrol Officer and also knowing guns were involved in the robbery, Officer Griffin conducted a traffic stop of the vehicle. After his investigation, Officer Griffin was able to determine that the four subjects in the car committed the armed robbery. Officer Griffin played a key role in apprehending the suspects and brought honor and recognition to the Police Department. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Officer Jimmy Griffin as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 20, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (5-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE NO. 2014-4, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.72 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Community-Commercial (C-C) as requested by Lee Watson (File No. VA-2014-02). The property is located at 806 Baytree Road. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their February Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that Lee Watson is requesting to rezone 0.72 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Community-Commercial (C-C). The property is located at 806 Baytree Road at the northwest corner of Baytree Road and Miramar Street. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to construct a small commercial center (multi-tenant) of about 8,000 square feet. The property is currently located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-C zoning when the property is located along an Arterial or a Collector roadway such as Baytree Road. The property is also located within the University Zone of the Baytree-University Corridor Overlay District. For many years, this portion of Baytree Road

toward Jerry Jones Drive has undergone a continual transition from a residential development pattern to one that is offices and light commercial. Until this past year, the property contained an existing residence, but it is now one of the last remaining residentially-zoned properties along Baytree. Given the development trends and the current nature of the Baytree Road corridor, single-family residential use is no longer appropriate for this property. The proposed C-C zoning is consistent with the NAC character area designation and is the same as the current zoning for most of the other nearby properties fronting Baytree. The C-C zoning allows both offices and light commercial uses which is certainly consistent with the established land use pattern along this portion of Baytree Road. It should be pointed out that the applicant has recently cleared several existing trees from the property. This activity is exempt from the City's tree permitting requirements under the current R-10 zoning, but it would have required tree removal permits and Staff review under C-C zoning. Although no laws have been broken, the timing of this activity simply leaves an unfortunate and negative impression. Should this property be re-developed in the future under the proposed C-C zoning, it will be subject to full compliance with the City's tree and landscaping requirements as part of the permitting process. This will include submittal of a detailed Landscape Plan that will be reviewed and approved by City Staff. The site design and architectural standards of the Baytree-University Corridor Overlay District will also be applied to the proposed development. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power, and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their February 24, 2014 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Bill Kent, Innovate Engineering, 2214 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Kent stated that he was representing Lee Watson who was unable to attend the Council Meeting. The site plan is an example of what can be built on the property that fits within the Land Development Regulations. Mr. Kent asked Council's consideration in approving the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Payton, , was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2014-4, an Ordinance to rezone 0.72 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Community-Commercial (C-C) as requested by Lee Watson, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGEEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for the demolition of the big box building on the Five Points property.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta purchased the Five Points Property from the seller, Five Points, LLC, on May 7, 2010. As per the Purchase Agreement, the Purchaser is granted a non-exclusive temporary demolition/construction easement for the demolition of all portions of buildings which fall within the identified temporary demolition/construction easement. This temporary easement expires within 48 months of the purchase date or by May 7, 2014. Three sealed bids were received on February 20, 2014 for the demolition of the big box building of which a corner portion falls within the temporary easement. The low bid was submitted by Cross Environmental Services in the amount of \$97,800. The other two bids received were higher and were disqualified for being non-responsive or incomplete. The Engineering Department's estimate was \$163,150 and SPLOST funds are budgeted for the project. If the low bid is approved, the contractor will be given notice to proceed with demolition work on March 17, 2014 and will have through April 25, 2014 to complete all work and demobilize from the property. The temporary easement will be graded and graveled with crushed stone as per the purchase agreement and the remainder of the demolished big box footprint will be graded and hydro-seeded. All other existing buildings on the property which house Big Lots, the Haunted House, the State Farm Agency, and the Speedy Lube shall remain. Also, as a result of an environmental audit, no asbestos was detected in the finishes or internal surfaces of the big box building to be demolished; however, in the event asbestos is discovered during the demolition (internally within the structure of building), TTL has prepared the necessary abatement plan and a permit can be acquired from the State within ten days to properly dispose of the material. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Cross Environmental Services in the amount of \$97,800 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances which may arise during the demolition for

a total approval amount of \$107,580. Pat Collins also asked the Mayor and Council to pre-authorize an expenditure not to exceed \$200,000 total for both demolition and asbestos removal should emergency asbestos removal work be needed.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the bid submitted by Cross Environmental Services in the amount of in the amount of \$97,800 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances and authorize expenditures not to exceed \$200,000 for any remediation of asbestos or other environmental issues that may arise during demolition of the big box building on the Five Points property.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Bird Supper was held on March 5, 2014 at The Depot in Atlanta. The event was very successful with over 200 people in attendance. The attendance was lower this year due to the cancellation of the event in February due to weather and the Legislature has had a very busy week with crossover day on Monday and a late session yesterday. The Lt. Governor was in attendance along with Valdosta's local Legislative delegation and members of the House and General Assembly. The City and County also honored Senator Tim Golden at the event for his many years of service. Senator Golden has decided not to seek re-election and to retire. He has been a great friend of the City and the community and he has done many good things that will have a lasting impact for years to come.

The Azalea Festival will be held March 8-9, 2014 and the City will have a booth at this event. We will be informing citizens of the City Government 101 class and the deadline to apply which is March 14, 2014. The class is half full so Council is encouraged to reach out to their constituents. The classes will begin on April 7, 2014.

This weekend will be Daylight Savings Time and everyone will need to set their clocks forward one hour and replace batteries in their smoke detectors.

Chief Freddie Broome will start on Monday, March 10, 2014 as the new Valdosta Fire Chief and Council is encouraged to reach out and welcome him to Valdosta.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he, Mayor Gayle, and Pat Collins, City Engineer, met with the Georgia Department of Transportation officials while in Atlanta to discuss nine City projects and activities that are on-going. The meeting was very productive; however, there are some concerns due to the Federal Transportation Bill not being approved by the government. This means that the Federal Highway Trust Fund will be depleted in August and it will cause a delay in projects if it is not reconciled over the coming months.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked the Valdosta City School system for donating five portable classrooms to the City. They had two at Valdosta Middle School and three at J. L. Newbern Middle School and they contacted several entities including the City to see if anyone had a need or potential use for those and the City did. Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, was getting ready to rent some of the portable type trailers for work space and office space for the major projects that will be getting underway. The Valdosta City School system told us that the City could have the trailers if we would pay the cost for relocating them. Henry Hicks has contracted with a company to move the trailers this Saturday a with four going to the existing Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant to be used during the construction projects and one to Remerton for the Force Main Project. Once we complete the projects we will have uses within the City for several of those trailers whether it is at the Fire Training Division or the Police Department shooting range.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the Federal Transportation Bill would have an effect on the West Hill Avenue Overpass Project. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it would not since that project is fully funded and scheduled to be completed by year end. The Federal Transportation Bill would have an effect on any projects that have not yet begun construction after August. Councilman Payton also inquired about a fence being erected at the Valdosta Middle School track. Larry Hanson stated that he was aware of the fence and the Valdosta

City School system sent out a press release yesterday. The fence is being erected for safety considerations of the students at Valdosta Middle School. The track will be open to the public before 8:00 a.m. and after school. The general public will continue to have access to the track but not during the school day.

Councilman Payton thanked Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, and Staff for the great job they did on the Bird Supper.

Mayor Gayle stated that today is City Attorney George Talley’s birthday and asked Council members to wish him a happy birthday.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Bill Branham, 3607 Meadowdale Drive, thanked Mayor Gayle for allowing him to be a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Branham stated that he would also like to discuss a building in the Downtown area with Councilman Vickers at a later time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the March 6, 2014 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:56 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 20, 2014.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta