

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2013
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, Ben Norton, Alvin Payton, Jr., Deidra White, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Pastor Martin Collins, Southland Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE 2013 VALDOSTA PRESERVATION AWARDS

Emily Foster, Special Projects & Historic Preservation Planner, stated that as part of our City's observance of National Historic Preservation Month, we are presenting the 5th Annual Valdosta Preservation Awards. In 2009, the Historic Preservation Commission initiated this annual award program to recognize property owners who go above and beyond the regulations set forth by the City to protect and preserve buildings within our local Historic District. At the beginning of each year, the City asks for nominations for this award program from the community, and from these nominations, organizations and individuals demonstrating excellence in the rehabilitation or stewardship of a historic building, excellence in the design of compatible new construction, or lifetime achievement in historic preservation, are chosen to receive a Valdosta Preservation Award. The winners are presented with an official award certificate and a Preservation Awards Banner, which can be displayed proudly on the winner's historic building. These awards provide positive reinforcement of the Historic District Design Review process, promote goodwill within our community, and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our citizens in the preservation and restoration of our historic buildings. Emily Foster recognized the Preservation Awards Judging Committee which consisted of Celine Gladwin, Jud Douglas, and Dr. Dick Saeger of the Historic Preservation Commission, Donald Davis of the Lowndes County Historical Society Museum, and Tom Haller, President of the Valdosta Heritage Foundation.

Harry Hamm, Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission, stated that the only Preservation Award being given this year honors an organization that is most deserving of this recognition and exemplifies its purpose. The Stewardship Award recognizes the long term care, maintenance, and commitment to the preservation of a historic building. Since 1979, the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce has maintained one of Valdosta's landmark buildings, the E. R. Barber House. Built in 1915 by Eugene Barber, a respected entrepreneur, inventor, and the proprietor of the second Coca-Cola bottling company in the world, this house is a fine example of the Neoclassical architectural style, as shown by its six Ionic columns, dentil molding, and symmetry. The Barber house was designed by locally prominent architect Lloyd Barton Greer and was constructed by John Nelson Deming of Valdosta. Upon the death of Mr. Barber in 1965, the house became the home of his daughter, Ola Barber Pittman. Mrs. Pittman entered a nursing home in 1975 and died in 1977, during which time the Barber House became seriously deteriorated. When her will was read, it was revealed that she had left the home to "the citizens of Valdosta." In 1979, it was determined the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce would be the resident of the property, and subsequently, the Southwest Georgia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects began restoring the Barber House. Rehabilitation work was completed by local architect Richard Hill, and the Barber House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Interestingly, the E. R. Barber House is not only a historic landmark building, but its restoration was also the impetus for local preservation efforts in Valdosta, which ultimately led to the adoption of a local historic district, preservation ordinance and establishment of the historic preservation commission. Great care has been taken to preserve the architectural integrity of the Barber House over the years. The original light fixtures are still used, as is much of the furniture originally belonging to the Barber-Pittman family. The bathroom tile was duplicated from the original, and wallpaper and paint colors selected for the house are period-appropriate. Today, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce is the Trustee for the Barber House. An independent oversight committee ensures that the Chamber provides proper maintenance for the house, while the Chamber staff is responsible for the care of Barber House, performing everyday tasks such as cleaning, to large endeavors such as securing funding for large-scale

improvements. As a result of the Chamber's exceptional stewardship, the Barber House continues to be a well-preserved treasure for our community. The Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce is commended for their dedication to the preservation of the E.R. Barber House and is hereby presented with a 2012 Stewardship Award.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 9, 2013 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-5, A RESOLUTION FOR THE SALE OF EXCESS PROPERTY LOCATED ON TWIN STREET

Consideration of a Resolution for the sale of excess property located on Twin Street.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta owns a remnant parcel of land which is 0.232 acre in size and is located on the north side of St. Augustine Road approximately 46.9 feet east of Twin Street. The property is part of the right-of-way on Twin Street and was left by the relocation of Twin Street. The property has no potential to be developed as an independent parcel. The adjacent property contains a Wendy's Restaurant and the owner of that property has submitted an offer to the City to purchase the remnant parcel. On May 2, 2013, Almand & Co., LLC, conducted an appraisal of the remnant property to determine the property value. The property owner of Wendy's is planning to redevelop their site with a new restaurant and this additional property would allow him greater flexibility in the way it is developed. There is a sewer easement crossing diagonally across the front southwest corner of the property with a leg of the easement paralleling the west property line at the front which will need to be addressed. State law provides that each abutting property owner will be notified of the availability of the property and shall be given an opportunity to purchase said property under terms and conditions set forth in an Ordinance. The City does not have an Ordinance but there is a provision in the Charter, Section 9.12, that states the following: "When the Mayor and Council propose to dispose of real property by private sale, it shall in its regular Council Meeting adopt a Resolution or order authorizing an appropriate City Official to dispose of the property by private sale at a negotiated price." The Resolution or order shall identify the real property to be sold but need not specify a minimum price. The Resolution or order shall also be published once after its adoption and no sale shall be consummated until ten days after its publication. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to dispose of or sell the property. If approved, the City Attorney will then advertise one time in the local newspaper. After a ten-day waiting period, the City Manager will then proceed with the sale of the property.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2013-5, a Resolution for the sale of excess property located on Twin Street, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a Change Order for the 2012 Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Program (LMIG).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) previously used the popular Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) and City/County contracts process to help local governments with some of their transportation projects. They have now moved to the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program which allocates transportation funding from the State based on a formula that includes population and street mileage (paved or unpaved). Most communities will use the funds to resurface streets. The City received a grant in the amount of \$347,000 and pledged this as part of a large bid combining the resurfacing of 13 streets, including Williams Street. This was an approved project in the FY 2013 SPLOST budget. The City advertised this entire project for bid and selected Reames and Son in the contract amount of \$1,784,642. The

contractor has completed 12 of the 13 streets to date, all of which have been resurfaced. The only street not resurfaced is Williams Street because it part of the Williams Street Corridor improvements and a much more comprehensive project. The improvements not only include resurfacing but also curb and gutter, storm pipe, handicap ramps, bicycle lanes, parking, and a ten foot wide sidewalk. The \$1,784,642 bid included the resurfacing of 13 streets, including Williams Street from Ashley Street to Woodrow Wilson. It did not include the remaining items listed above for Williams Street. The Engineering Department has revised the existing scope of work to include the Williams Street improvements above from Ashley Street to Park Avenue and negotiated a cost proposal with Reames and Son Construction. The neighborhood was given two options to put in bicycle lanes or to extend the Azalea Trail and they choose the Azalea Trail option. They would be resurfacing the road, extending the Azalea Trail from Drexel Park to Park Avenue, and putting in curb and drainage improvements. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the width of the Azalea Trail is ten feet and it will serve for biking, walking, hiking, jogging, roller blading, etc. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what side of the street it will be placed on. Pat Collins stated that it would start out on the west side of the road at Drexel Park and it will jump over to the east side at Alden Avenue and continue to Park Avenue. In the future, if SPLOST VII is passed, they will pipe the ditch between Park Avenue and Woodrow Wilson and run it on the east side of the roadway.

Councilman Payton inquired as to what would be done as it relates to Park Avenue from Woodrow Wilson. Pat Collins stated that currently there will be nothing done if the bid is approved; however, they will pick up the remainder of the plans because he has it fully designed. They will extend the Azalea Trail from Park Avenue north to Woodrow Wilson and it will connect into Woodrow Wilson. Councilman Payton stated that from Woodrow Wilson to Park Avenue is a narrow street and from Park Avenue to Ashley Street is much wider. The citizen that he spoke with was concerned about bike lanes and sidewalks. Pat Collins stated that everything will be within the existing right-of-way. They will pipe the ditches and put the sidewalk over the top of the swale. Councilman Payton stated that there is currently curb and gutter from Park Avenue to Ashley Street. Pat Collins stated that there is no curb and gutter from Park Avenue to Woodrow Wilson and that is the narrowest section of the road. From Park Avenue to Ashley Street there is curb and gutter; however, the road is much wider. From Drexel Park to Alden Avenue, the ten foot sidewalk will be put on the west side of the roadway and the existing curb on the east side will be moved over several feet. When that is done, they will have to work with the drainage pipe that is existing there. In addition, there will be some areas on the back of the curb where they might have to place some pipe or drainage to collect what is going to be behind the curb. Councilman Payton inquired about the bicycle lanes. Pat Collins stated that they are not putting in bicycle lanes but will put in a mixed used pedestrian trail. There will not be anything done from Woodrow Wilson to Park Avenue at this time. Councilman Payton inquired about the remaining street that not has been paved and the approximately \$1 million that has already been spent. Pat Collins stated that the negotiated cost is \$862,119 and includes the previously mentioned improvements with the exception of thermoplastic striping and traffic signs which will be handled separately through our annual contract with Peek Pavement Marking. The total remaining funds within the existing 2012 bid contract is \$778,119.69. The difference in the negotiated change order and remaining contract is \$83,999.31. Additionally, the City has sent a request to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to remove Williams Street from the 2012 LMIG list in order to release the remaining funds in the amount of \$87,739.98. They were previously supposed to mill down four inches of asphalt on Williams Street, but now they will mill it down an inch and one-half. The other portion of the roadway will be completely removed. They are using less asphalt than what was in the original bid and they are using the asphalt money to build this project. Larry Hanson stated that the reason Williams Street was more on the original bid is that it is a much longer street. Pat Collins stated that the Engineering Department is requesting to increase the available funds to the existing contract with Reames and Son in the amount of \$84,000 plus \$25,000 in contingency for a total of \$109,000. Once the funds are received from GDOT, the net impact on SPLOST VI will be \$21,260.02. Councilman Payton inquired about the \$25,000 contingency and the rationale behind that. Pat Collins stated that they are low on SPLOST funds and they took a hard look at this with the contractor and they value-engineered the project. They think there will not be to many problems with this project; however, they did not want to go in there with the \$84,000 difference so they left a lump sum in there as opposed to a percentage. Larry Hanson stated that the contingency is on the entire amount and not just the \$84,000. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve a Change Order with Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$84,000 plus a \$25,000 contingency for the 2012 Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Program (LMIG).

Councilman Yost inquired about the estimated cost to finish the road out to Woodrow Wilson Drive. Pat Collins stated that if they were to rebid this project it would probably cost \$1.7 to \$1.9 million; however, the last section of that road would cost approximately \$200,000.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they would lose any parking spaces on Williams Street. Pat Collins stated that north of East Brookwood Place there will be no parking; however, there will still be parking around the stadium and commercial area.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a Change Order with Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$84,000 plus a \$25,000 contingency for the 2012 Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Program (LMIG).

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the new Savannah Avenue and Fry Street elevated water storage tank was completed today and they have started putting water into the tank. They will then begin adding the chemicals and doing the testing. It will take an additional three to four days to complete the filling of the tank so that it does not have an effect on water pressure. They will then take several bacteria samples and submit those to the Environmental Protection Division to confirm that the water quality is where it should be. The tank will then be put on line sometime early next week. The old tank will then be taken off line and removed shortly thereafter. Also, simultaneous with that, renovations on the elevated water storage tank at Valdosta High School will now begin. We wanted to get more capacity in the air before we have to drain that tank to clean it and make repairs.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the new fire trucks are now in service and they have been well received by the public and the Fire Department.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we will need to have an Executive Session on real estate, litigation, and personnel.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman White inquired as to whether there was any way we could capture the drained water from the tanks and store it or sell it. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it would not be in the City's best interest to introduce that water back into the system due to settling in the bottom of the tanks. Councilwoman White inquired as to whether there were any fire trucks or irrigation trucks that we could pour the water into. Larry Hanson stated that a fire truck would only hold 2,500 gallons.

Councilman Norton thanked Shemeeka Johnson of Metro 17 for her interview with Victoria Sanders of the Government 101 Class because it is outstanding. Also, if the City is ever thinking about Student Government 101 he would like to be a part of that. Councilman Norton stated that he went through Brookwood Place and the sidewalk looks very nice. Also, he was at Farm Days last Saturday and there was a huge turnout. People just kept coming and many vendors were completely sold out by 1:00 p.m. There were also several inquiries from citizens about participating in the event. Councilman Norton thanked Amanda Peacock and Ellen Hill of the Main Street Department for their efforts and dedication in making this event a success.

Mayor Gayle stated that he attended a meeting in Macon this past Sunday and Monday called the Hub Cities Initiative. This was an idea of the Mayor of Columbus and the Georgia Municipal Association liked the idea so much that they invited 12 Mayors to attend. The Hub cities included Valdosta, Albany, Columbus, Dalton, Gainesville, Savannah, Brunswick, Macon, Rome, and Warner Robbins. A Hub city caters to a regional base and we, of course, serve a region. The idea behind a Hub City Meeting is that we sometimes do not get recognized for all of the work that we do. There is an organization in Atlanta called "MAMA" and that is the Metropolitan Atlanta Mayors Association and they have approximately 60 members. They have quite an audience when they demand something so one of the things that we want to do is to work together to solve problems that we all have as well as ask the State for help. They will be meeting quarterly at various locations around the area so we will have an opportunity to show off Valdosta.

Also, Mayor Gayle stated that this is Mara Register's last City Council Meeting since Friday, May 31, 2013 will be her last day and as you know, since he has become Mayor, people have been resigning fast and furious. Mayor Gayle stated Ms. Register has a great opportunity and the fact that she got her education with the City of Valdosta has made it possible for her to progress with her career. Mayor Gayle wished Mara Register well.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Dr. Michael Noll, 2305 Glynndale Drive, stated that he is President of Wiregrass Activists for Clean Energy, and he wanted to distribute some information to the Mayor and Council. On June 20, 2013, there will be an Alternative Fueled Vehicle Road Show and Educational Tour in Valdosta from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Dr. Noll also distributed some information about fracking which is an issue that has popped up in northern Georgia. He also read an article in the Valdosta Daily Times about the Tea Party being in support of solar energy. There was a meeting with the Public Service Commission where testimonies were given and this is a clear indication that we are all realizing the potential and benefit of solar energy.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the May 23, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:15 p.m. and enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate, litigation, and personnel.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the May 23, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:50 p.m. and stated that no action was taken.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the May 23, 2013 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:51 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, June 6, 2013.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta