

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

Mayor Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:31 p.m. Council members presents were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Pastor John Page and immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Councilman Alvin Payton arrived at 5:33 pm.

**MINUTES APPROVAL**

The minutes of the April 23, 2015, Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Valdosta City Council.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2015-7 Consideration of an Ordinance for a conditional use permit to allow 0.84 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) as requested by Joe Hayes (File No. VA-2015-03). The property is located at 203 N. St Augustine Road. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their April Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 vote).**

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that Joe Hayes is requesting to have 0.84 acres rezoned from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway-Commercial (C-H). The property is located on St. Augustine Road along the east side of road about 650 feet north of West Hill Avenue. St. Augustine Road is primarily a commercial corridor. This is one of the few remaining residential zoned properties and they are requesting to rezone to commercial for future development. On the future land use map, this is a community activity area which calls for intensive development and more intense zonings such as commercial. The aerial map shows mostly vacant property. There is a power line easement that runs along the southern border area and the property contains one very old single family residence that will more than likely be removed for new development. This request was reviewed and approved (8-0) by the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission at their April Regular Meeting.

No one spoke in favor of or in opposition of this request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Joseph Vickers, seconded by Councilman Tim Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of staff and enact Ordinance No. 2015-7, an Ordinance to rezone 0.84 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway Commercial (C-H), the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2015-8 Consideration of an Ordinance for a Planned Development approval for a proposed residential "redevelopment" in Single Family Residential (R-10) zoning as requested by Rhodes Family Properties, LLC (File No. VA-2015-04). The property is located at 1501 Slater Street, 202 & 204 East Brookwood Place. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their April Regular Meeting and recommended approval with conditions (8-0 vote).**

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that this is a request for a planned development. There is no change to the zoning map and this is a fairly unusual request as it is not for new development but for redevelopment. The applicant would like to take an existing residential property and redevelop it to make it more consistent with the current code. The property consists of three parcels of land in the Brookwood North neighborhood and is located near the northeast corner of Slater and Brookwood Place and (R-10). Many years ago zoning allowed for multi-family development which is why there are a lot of scattered apartments complex in the city. The construction started back in 1937; there are nine dwellings on this parcel of land but most are in the rear yard and cannot be seen from the street. This request is being triggered because of a re-subdivision proposal. The greatest issue with this property is that many of the buildings constructed on one of the parcels spill over the property line into a neighboring property. In order to clean up the geography of this, we have to be somewhat creative which is typical of a planned unit. To sum it up, the applicant is going from nine dwelling units to eight units, renovating all interior units and making slight exterior renovations. This request has already been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission since this property is located in the local Historical District and the

National Register. This request was approved by the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (8-0) with conditions at their April Regular Meeting.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition of the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Ben Norton was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request with conditions as recommendation by staff and the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission and enact Ordinance No. 2015-8, an Ordinance for a Planned Development, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

#### **Consideration of a request to close an alley between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and York Street.**

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that this is a request to close an alley between 3rd Avenue and York Street. Ms. Lucille Smith and Mr. Kenneth Harris approached the City requesting the City to abandon the alley. The property owners submitted a petition with the required amount of signatures to vacate the alley. The public notice ran the appropriate length of time and the request was submitted to various departments in the City for review. Staff is recommending approval of the request to close the alley.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition of the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Joseph Vickers, seconded by Councilman Ben Norton was unanimously approved (7-0) to follow the recommendation of staff and close the alley.

#### **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

##### **Consideration of request to approve a change order for the expansion of the Electrical MCC Room at the New Withlacoochee Plant.**

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities stated that this request is asking Council to approve a change order for the expansion of the Electrical MCC Room at the new Withlacoochee Plant. During contract negotiations on this project, staff recommended using Square-D switchgears in place of the Eaton units because Square D is a higher quality product offered at the same price. More importantly staff has experienced poor service responses from Eaton over the past few years. The MCC Room had to be expanded by 318 feet to accommodate the Square-D switchgears. Because the room is located in close proximity to a process pump station, additional shoring and support work using a heavier grade of concrete was needed to ensure the structural integrity of the MCC Room and pump station. The total cost for the additional work came in at \$85,330.74.

Councilman Norton asked who the service provider for Square-D switchgear. Mr. Hicks stated that Square-D has a service department that is located fairly close. Councilman Norton asked if staff had any knowledge of Square-D's service record. Mr. Hicks replied that Square-D has a good history of maintenance on their equipment and Square-D is an excellent piece of equipment and actually requires very little maintenance.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request for the expansion of the Electrical MCC Room at the new Withlacoochee Plant.

##### **Consideration of a request for payment to Standard Contractors for emergency repairs on the Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP) Sewer Lining Project.**

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that during one of the smoke testing phases of the sanitary sewer system, several locations were found to have smoke emitting from the system. This was an indication of potential pipe failure. Miller Pipeline was contracted to lay CIPP. During cleaning and the closed circuit television inspection, several major defects were discovered. In an effort to save the city money Standard Contractors was contacted to make the repairs so that the CIPP project could continue to go forth. Attached is a spreadsheet from Standard Contractors listing the locations of the repairs. There were 12 point repairs. On the spreadsheet you will also see a breakdown of each repair cost as well as the cost of all repairs totaling \$95,781.90.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Carroll was unanimously adopted to follow the recommendation of staff.

**Consideration of a request for payment to Radney Plumbing for emergency repairs to a sewer force main located on the Valdosta Country Club Golf Course.**

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities, made Council aware that city crews responded to a broken sewer line in late March at the Valdosta Country Club. After an evaluation of the site, it was determined that a sewer line had been installed backwards and was leaking. Radney Plumbing was contacted and agreed to perform the work under emergency conditions. Directional drilling was utilized to minimize cost so that the golf course would not be taken out of play as there was a major tournament scheduled for the upcoming weekend. The total cost associated with this repair came in at \$37, 147.50.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll and seconded by Councilman Norton was adopted (6-1) to approve the request to pay Radney for emergency repairs with Councilwoman Tooley voting in opposition of the request.

**Consideration of a request to approve payment to Radney Plumbing for emergency repairs to collapsed sewer main on Summerlin Street.**

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities, stated that staff was made aware of a large hole that had developed in front of a home on the west side of Summerlin Street across from a site that had recently had emergency repairs. After evaluating the situation, it was determined that an older 8-in line originally thought to have been abandoned had collapsed and had a line that was still active and was causing the area around it to sink. Because of the depth of the work and a nearby gas main, Radney Plumbing was contacted to repair the sewer main so as to stabilize the area and prevent further erosion. The cost for the emergency repair came in at \$343,856.74.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll was adopted (7-0) to approve the request to pay Radney Plumbing for emergency repairs on Summerlin Street.

**Consideration of a request for payment to Radney Plumbing for emergency repairs to a sewer main in the Meadowbrook Drive area.**

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities, informed Council of an emergency repair that had to be made in the Meadowbrook Drive area. This was an 18-sewer main that collapsed during heavy rains in the month of February of this year. Due to the location and size of the sewer main Radney Plumbing was contacted to make emergency repairs. During the emergency repair process, the contractor discovered an additional 300 linear feet of sewer main that had deteriorated and needed to be replaced. Radney Plumbing made the emergency repair and repaired the additional 300 feet of deteriorated sewer main at a cost of \$127,123.87.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Wright was unanimously adopted (7-0) to pay Radney Plumbing for emergency repairs to the sewer main located in the Meadowbrook Drive area.

**BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

**Consideration of an appointment to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there were a number of positions to be filled. The first position to be filled was on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission. There is one position open currently held by Mr. Chip Wildes. Mr. Wildes has served for a number of years, is past Chairman, and has represented the City well. Three names have been submitted for your consideration; the names of James Parker, John Hogan, and Chip Wildes. Mayor Gayle asked for nomination. Councilwoman Tooley nominated James Parker for consideration. Councilman Carroll nominated Chip Wildes, the incumbent, for consideration. There were no other nominations. James Parker received two votes and Chip Wildes received five votes. Chip Wildes was appointed to serve another term on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

**Consideration of an appointment to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.**

Mr. Hanson, City Manager, stated that two names have been submitted for consideration of an open position on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board. This slot was currently held by John Dean. Mr. Dean did not request reappointment so you have the names of Franchesca Griffin and Miranda Moore for consideration. Earlier today we received an email from KLV B today asking for favorable consideration of Miranda Moore for the appointment. Also, I want to make you aware that Franchesca Griffin is the sole applicant for one of the other positions. This is by no means a suggestion; I just want to ensure that you are all properly informed. Mayor Gayle opened the floor up for nominations. Councilman Norton nominated the name of Miranda Moore for consideration. There were no other nominations. Miranda Moore was appointed by acclamation to serve a term on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Board.

**Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Housing Boards of Adjustments and Appeals.**

Mr. Hanson, City Manager, informed Council that three names were originally submitted for consideration on the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals; however, the name of Bubba Highsmith has been withdrawn. There are two open slots on this board, one previously held by Joseph Brown who did not apply for reappointment and one that was vacant. There are two open positions and two names for consideration Franchesca Griffin and Thaddeus Blue. Mayor Gayle opened the floor for nominations. Councilman Payton nominated Thaddeus Blue and Franchesca Griffin for consideration of the open positions. Councilman Carroll stated that Franchesca Griffin was the only applicant for CDBG Advisory Committee and if appointed she would be eliminated from serving on the CDBG Advisory Committee. Mr. Hanson stated that this was not necessarily true; the current policy allows citizens to serve on more than one board. Mayor Gayle stated that although there are two positions open, one does not expire until August. Councilman Carroll stated that Mr. James Parker, an applicant for the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission, was in the audience and he wondered if Mr. Parker might consider allowing his name to be considered for one of the slots on the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals. Councilman Wright asked if this was a suggestion to go against the policy. Councilman Carroll stated no and reiterated that there was already an application on file. Councilman Wright stated that all applicants have applications on file. On Tuesday it was stated that applicants have to complete an application and apply for each position. Mr. Hanson stated that at this time Mayor and Council could technically make one appointment and wait for the next appointment. Staff will be re-advertising soon if Council agrees to postpone the Art Advisory Committee appointments and staff could easily include this slot for advertisement. There are two vacancies, one is from a resignation and one is just a vacancy. Councilman Wright stated that there needs to be some clarification. In Tuesday's Work Session, discussion centered around not appointing if there was no application. There should be some consistency during this process. Councilman Vickers asked if the nomination was still on the floor. Councilman Yost asked for clarification on the number of slots open. Mr. Hanson stated that there are two open slots and two applicants. Mayor Gayle made Council aware that there was still a motion on the floor to fill the slots with the current applicants and asked if there was a second. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. Franchesca Griffin and Thaddeus Blue were both appointed to serve terms on the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

**Considerations of appointments to the Public Art Advisory Committee.**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, asked Mayor and Council for favorable consideration to postpone appointments to the Public Art Advisory Board until such time that there could be an advertisement that communicated to applicants that slots would be filled as outlined in the bylaws of the Public Art Advisory Committee.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Vickers voted unanimously (7-0) to postpone all appointments on the Public Art Advisory Board and re-advertise for applicants as it relates to the bylaws of the organization.

**Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta Housing Authority.**

Mayor Gayle stated that he had the authority to make an appointment to the Valdosta Housing Authority. Ms. Deshonda Jenkins has asked to be re-appointed. At this time I would like to reappoint Ms. Deshonda Jenkins to the Valdosta Housing Authority to serve another term.

**Consideration of an appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals.**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated the Zoning Board of Appeals has one open position currently held by Laverne Gaskins. Ms. Gaskins did not submit an application for reappointment. You have one name, John Hogan, for consideration of this position. Councilman Carroll nominated John Hogan for consideration of the position. There were no other nominees and Mr. Hogan was appointed by acclamation.

**Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta Airport Authority.**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta Airport Authority has one position open for appointment. This position is currently held by Ms. Jane Shelton; Ms. Shelton did not seek reappointment. You have three names before you, Aubrey Fowler, Claire Lee, and John Sineath. The Airport Authority submitted a recommendation letter to you; the names are listed in order of preference. Councilwoman Tooley submitted the name of Aubrey Fowler for consideration. There were no other nominations and Mr. Fowler was appointed by acclamation.

**Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.**

Mr. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the next appointment for consideration was for the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority. There is one position open for appointment at this time. This position is currently held by Mr. Charles White. Mr. White is the current Vice-Chairman of the Authority. There are seven names up for consideration of this appointment; the names of Brittny Hammock, Charles White, Jeani Synyard, Mark Coppage, Matt Hart, Susan Wehling, and Terry Turner. Councilman Yost submitted the name of Charles White for consideration. There were no other nominations and Mr. White was reappointed by acclamation.

**Consideration of an appointment to the CDBG Advisory Committee.**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there is one position open on the CDBG Advisory Committee. There are two applicants for consideration; Francesca Griffin and William "Bill" Shultz. On Tuesday, we discussed Mr. Schultz's residency. Staff checked on this earlier today and determined that while his address on his application says Ray City, Mr. Shultz's legal residence is in Lowndes County which makes him eligible to serve. This is fairly common occurrence and I wanted to clarify that for you and make you ware that Mr. Schultz is a resident of Lowndes County. Mayor Gayle opened the floor for nominations for the CDBG Advisory Committee. Councilman Carroll submitted the name Franchesca Griffin for consideration. There were no other nominations and Ms. Griffin was appointed by acclamation.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this week had been another successful week of City Government 101. Next week is graduation and we encourage all of you to come out and participate on Monday at 5:30 p.m. if you're available. There will be a meal and a fairly brief graduation before the class visits the crime lab for a tour. This has been a very good class; they've listened well, asked a lot of great questions, and been very engaged in the conversation. I think you'll get some very positive feedback from them and about the program.

Mr. Hanson made Council aware that the Annual Brown Bag Concerts downtown is scheduled for next week. Please try and make yourselves available one day for lunch next week and bring a friend. Downtown vendors will be on hand selling food or you can bring your own. There is entertainment each day, Monday

through Friday, and this will be the perfect time to come out and enjoy some great music and have lunch with friends.

Mr. Hanson stated that he is happy to report that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Board which he was appointed to last fall will be meeting in Valdosta next week. This is something that I am extremely proud of because this Board has never met in Valdosta before or South Georgia for that matter. I'm happy to welcome these officials here to see our city, our community, and our area of the state. You all should have received an invitation to join them next Wednesday for a reception in Bennie's Alley; I hope those of you that available will come out and welcome them.

Mr. Hanson stated that he and the Mayor had an opportunity to attend a ceremony at the police department on yesterday. It is always rewarding to see employees get recognition for being with the City, serving for 25 or 30 years, and some getting recognition for saving lives while others retire after very distinguished careers. It's uplifting to be there and hear their stories and realize we have a lot to be proud of with the police department we have. Thanks to Chief Childress for his leadership and thanks to the men and women of the Valdosta Police Department who continue to make us proud.

Mr. Hanson stated that the City of Valdosta will be recognized at the Georgia Municipal Association Annual Convention for a city that has advanced the arts. Valdosta is being recognized for partnering with the Turner Center for the Arts, working with the Art Advisory Committee, displaying public art in our community such as in our downtown area as well as other initiatives what we've undertaken to support and advance art in the City of Valdosta. Additional information will be forthcoming on the event.

Mr. Hanson made Council aware that staff has worked hard to try and balance the budget. It is a challenge in these economic times, we started out with every fund out of balance but over the course of the last several weeks we've been able to balance everything except the general fund. We are currently working on that and should have that completed next week. You should be receiving information soon regarding budget hearings that we'll need to have in June. It's a difficult year and just when you think things are getting better, sales tax goes down which is something that affects our budget. Sales tax went down 6% last month from this time last year and so far 2% this month compared to this time last year. We're seeing a decline in revenue and that is tough going right into the budget and definitely creates a bit of a challenge. We look at next year and budgeted revenues are projected to be virtually the same but requests for expenditures are up five million which definitely creates a challenge when trying to balance the budget but we are getting close.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers thanked Council for their participation in tonight's meeting and complimented all on the professional way the meeting was conducted. It pays to have a work session where questions can be asked and answered.

## CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

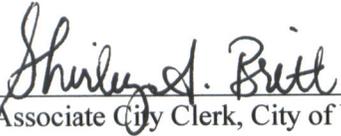
James Parker, residing at 1714 North Lee Street, Valdosta, GA thanked council for their dedication to the City. He also thanked Mayor Gayle for his participation at Monday night's Democratic Party meeting regarding transportation. I became interested in local government several years ago and actually attended a City Government 101 Class two years ago and was very impressed at how well the city is run and the quality of people that are involved in city administration. I've even told others that when the city is doing a good job, it's not noticeable, but when bad things happen, everyone notices. Although the City has several good methods for keeping citizens informed, I'd like to offer a few other suggestions. One such suggestion is a request for the City to video council meetings and post them on the City's website and possibly go e further and televise live on Metro 17. Meetings could be rebroadcast for several weeks. This way council meeting can make it into pretty much every home in the City. It would be a way for the Council to come to the people. This would be helpful for people in the city because many of them are unable to attend the meetings. Even you as elected officials find it hard sometimes to be on time because of work. Another suggestion would be for Council to have town hall style meetings, ideally in each district throughout the year that would allow citizens to attend and have a dialogue with representatives regarding their

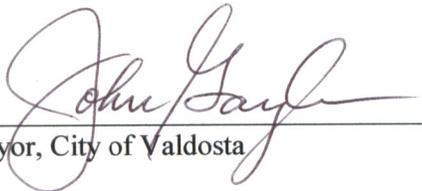
issues and concerns. I believe these suggestions might help connect city representatives, elected officials, and citizens of the City. This would help make Valdosta a better city than it already is.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers and seconded by Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the May 7, 2015 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:09 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, May 21, 2015.

  
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Associate City Clerk, City of Valdosta

  
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Mayor, City of Valdosta