

**MINUTES**  
**RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2012**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Gayle called the rescheduled regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Robert Yost, and James Wright. Councilman Joseph "Sonny" Vickers and Councilwoman Deidra White were absent. Councilman Ben Norton arrived at 6:24 p.m. The invocation was given by Pastor Ricardo Vielmas, Area Team Leader for Chaplains USA, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEMBER, 2012 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the November, 2012 Employee of the Month Award (Tomas Chavarria and Gerald Watts, Police Department).

Tomas Chavarria began his employment with the City of Valdosta Police Department in July, 1992 as a Patrol Officer. He was promoted to Sergeant in September, 2004 which is the position he currently holds. Gerald Watts began his employment with the City of Valdosta Police Department in June, 2008 as a Patrol Officer which is the position he currently holds. Sergeant Chavarria and Officer Watts are members of the Valdosta Police Department Power Squad. This unit works street level crimes and takes a proactive approach to law enforcement working long and rough hours while responding to a vast array of violent crimes. In October of this year, a citizen reported his bicycle stolen while he was in a local restaurant. The citizen lives at Azalea Towers and is on a limited income and has a multitude of health problems. His bicycle is his only means of transportation and according to his doctor, he is probably alive today because of the amount of exercise he receives riding his bike. Officer Watts informed Sergeant Chavarria that he had spotted a bike which resembled the one that was stolen. The person riding the bike tried to elude the Officers as they attempted to make contact with him. The person saw the Officers, dropped the bike, and ran away. The offender got away but the bike was recovered and was in good shape. Sergeant Chavarria and Officer Watts made it their mission that night to find the missing bicycle and return it to the elderly citizen. Although the offender was not apprehended, there is a happy ending for the citizen and our Officers who took the time to make a difference. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Sergeant Tomas Chavarria and Patrol Officer Gerald Watts as Employees of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the October 25, 2012 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (4-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A PROPOSED CAR WASH IN A COMMUNITY-COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT DENIED**

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a proposed car wash in a Community-Commercial (C-C) zoning district as requested by Stafford Properties (File No. CU-2012-07). The property is located at 1609 Norman Drive. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their October Regular Meeting and recommended approval with four conditions (9-0 vote).

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that Stafford Properties is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a proposed car wash in a Community-Commercial (C-C) zoning district. The property consists of 0.90 acres and is located at 1609 Norman Drive. This is along the east side of the road approximately 450 feet south of North St. Augustine Road. This is also the western portion of a much larger shopping center parcel which consists of more than 23 acres and is split-zoned between C-C and C-H. The property is currently a

vacant unused parking lot associated with the west side of the shopping center facing Norman Drive. The applicant is proposing to develop the property with an automated staffed car wash business that consists of two drive-thru lanes. The property is located within a Regional Activity Center (RAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The existing land use pattern along this portion of Norman Drive is dominated by retail shopping centers with out-parcels such as the one being proposed. The existing zoning matches this pattern with both C-C and C-H. The less-intensive C-C zoning is located along the Norman Drive portion of the area from the property southward toward the entrance of Lowndes High School and Spring Chase Apartments (zoned R-M). Car washes require a Conditional Use (CUP) approval in C-C zoning because they can sometimes seem more intensive than a typical C-C use in terms of their noise or even their appearance. Also, some car washes are staffed and fully automated while others are self-serve without staff supervision. In addition, some C-C zoned areas are in close proximity to neighborhoods and some have small parcel sizes which make it hard to mitigate impacts of the more intensive commercial uses; therefore, the Conditional Use process allows the City to review these on a case-by-case basis for properties with C-C zoning. In this case, the property is part of a large shopping center development and the only surrounding area of concern is that of Spring Chase Apartments whose property line is about 150 feet away from the proposed car wash building. This is a substantial distance which should help mitigate most of the noise impacts, although it may be prudent to place some limitation on the car wash hours of operation. Visually, the applicant is proposing a modern car wash design that is oriented sideways to Norman Drive that will have only one entrance and one exit openings facing parallel to the roadway. Due to the topography of the site, the proposed building will be several feet lower than Norman Drive itself and there will be no additional curb cut. It will also be buffered with a landscaped street yard. In terms of commercial land use intensity, the proposed car wash will be in many ways less intensive than most of the restaurants and other commercial uses in the area. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following conditions: (1) Daily hours of operation shall be limited to within 6:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after five years from the date of approval if no building permit for the development is requested by that time. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 29, 2012 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following conditions (9-0 vote): (1) Daily hours of operation and any noise associated with the car wash shall be limited to within 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after five years from the date of approval if no building permit for the development is requested by that time. (3) Exterior lighting shall be directed inward and downward away from the adjacent residential area (Spring Chase Apts.). (4) The existing fence between the car wash and Spring Chase Apartments shall be repaired to good order and maintained in accordance with any applicable City codes. Matt Martin stated that he supplied some additional thoughts to the Mayor and Council about the conditions and the applicant has submitted some new photographs of their new prototype car wash which is what they are proposing for this location.

Phil Wise, 5153 Durban Court, Columbus, Georgia, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Wise stated that he is the COO of Goo Goo Car Wash Systems and they are excited about the opportunity. They have spent a long time looking for a proper place in Valdosta and they feel this proposed location would be economically viable. Mr. Wise stated that they mesh well with the local residents and neighborhood and he asked Council's consideration in approving the Conditional Use Permit.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Councilman Carroll stated that this request was discussed at length at the Work Session and he took notice of some comments made by Councilman Vickers who was not able to be at the Council Meeting tonight. When reviewing the criteria that Staff utilizes in making these types of decisions, he could see where both Staff and the Planning Commission could come up with their support of this request. Their doing so is really isolated to the one parcel and they are not looking at it from a higher level. Councilman Carroll stated that he was very active during the Land Development Regulations process when at one time they had an urban commercial corridor overlay along Norman Drive. Its sole purpose was to try and guide development along this corridor that would be compatible with the pedestrian-friendly and lower intensity C-C type uses. They had a few that got in under the umbrella such as the Murphy Oil Station; however, for the most part, they are starting to see that type of development go out. Cheddar's is the most recent development along there a nearby bank but the meet the use and compatibility that they have been looking for. In this instance, car washes are a permitted use by right in C-H zoning but they do

require a CUP in C-C zoning; therefore, they are considered a higher intensity use. Given that the predominate zoning and development pattern along this portion of Norman Drive is more of the lower intensity C-C type uses, Council should consider the need to protect this area from uses that are too intensive and incompatible. It should also be noted that there are numerous C-H properties available in the area within the Stafford property itself along St. Augustine Road. Traffic exposure is an important component to the location of this business and there is actually more traffic on St. Augustine Road than there is on Norman Drive. Within the same Stafford Development site, this business could locate on the other side by right in C-H zoning and still achieve a greater traffic exposure role. This is all important in the decision-making process; however, Council needs to consider the long-term trend that could be started. They have had other requests of similar nature along this corridor and approval of this is going to set a precedent that would open the door to future development that could be incompatible to the overall goal of how that development should occur. With that rationale, Councilman Carroll stated that he would make a motion to deny the request.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to deny the request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a proposed car wash in a Community-Commercial (C-C) zoning district as requested by Stafford Properties. Councilman Yost seconded the request. The motion was adopted (3-1) with Councilman Wright voting in opposition.

### **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPRENDITURES**

Consideration of bids for the design of Phase 1 of the Downtown Streetscape Extension Project.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City's adopted Master Plan is to extend the existing Downtown streetscape improvement ten City blocks and provide a critical pedestrian linkage between Valdosta's historic Downtown and Valdosta State University (VSU). This will enable VSU's large student population easy pedestrian access into Valdosta's Downtown and provide interaction and exposure to the community while furthering economic development opportunities for Downtown businesses and encouraging redevelopment along the corridor. To do this, the Project will consist of the two phases with Phase 1 extending the existing Downtown streetscape five blocks north along North Patterson Street from Magnolia Street to Gordon Street, connecting Downtown to VSU's main campus. Project-specific streetscape improvements will include the following: (1) improved sidewalks connecting to recently-installed wheelchair accessible sidewalk aprons, (2) street trees and associated landscaping, (3) pedestrian benches, (4) trash receptacles and pet waste stations, and (5) decorative street lamps. The design of street furniture and lighting will be consistent or compatible with the existing streetscape elements in Valdosta's Downtown core. Street trees will be chosen from the Georgia Department of Transportation's approved species and sizes and will be complementary to those already existing in Downtown Valdosta's tree canopy. The City applied for and received a TEA Grant from the Georgia Department of Transportation in the amount of \$250,000 for the construction of the project. Design proposals for Phase 1 were received on September 25, 2012 and distributed to the Selection Committee. A total of five proposals were submitted and each proposal was reviewed and rated. The Selection Committee short listed three firms and those firms made presentations to the Selection Committee on November 2, 2012. The Selection Committee's highest rated firm was Innovate/Woods Partner, Inc. and the Committee recommended they be awarded the design contract in the amount of \$79,445.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the bid submitted by Innovate/Woods Partner, Inc. in the amount of \$79,445 for the design of Phase 1 of the Downtown Streetscape Extension Project.

Consideration of bids for Phase 1 of the Sidewalk Installation Project.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that it was determined that sidewalks were needed in various locations within the City Limits of Valdosta. The locations of the sidewalks for Phase 1 were determined and advertised for bid. Sealed bids were received on November 15, 2012 for the construction of sidewalks along the following locations: (1) Eastwind Road - Forrest Street to Tyndall Drive, (2) East Brookwood Place - North Troup Street to N. Forrest Street, (3) Woodlawn Drive - Forrest Street to Multi-Purpose Trail, and (4) Madison Highway - South Patterson Street to Oak Street. The only bid submitted was by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$949,078.85. The Engineering Department estimate was \$1,170,131.83. The Engineering Department is

recommending that Council approve the bid submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$949,078.85 plus a 10% contingency (\$94,907.89) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total of \$1,043,986.74. Pat Collins stated that he spoke with several contractors who were present for the initial pre-bid and some of those on the list were participants in the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program, some were only interested in learning about the Project, and others on the list had decided that because of the way the Project was laid out they would actually be subcontractors on the Project. Also, Rountree Construction did meet the 10% goal for VSEB for this Project. Councilman Wright stated that he was glad to see that some of the contractors participating in this Project were VSEB. Pat Collins stated that the VSEB contractors who will be working on the project with Rountree Construction include Wilburn Construction, Bates Pre-Cast, and Stokes Masonry. Councilman Carroll inquired about the total length of the sidewalks. Pat Collins stated that sidewalk length for East Brookwood Place is 2,866 linear feet, Woodlawn Drive is 2,743 linear feet, Eastwind Road is linear feet 1,949, and Madison Highway is 1,328 linear feet. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether some would have curb and cutter and some not. Pat Collins stated that some have existing curb already down and then others would have curb added.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the bid submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$949,078.85 plus a 10% contingency (\$94,907.89) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for Phase 1 of the Sidewalk Installation Project.

Consideration of an Agreement with Great-West Retirement Services to provide retirement plan and recordkeeping for the City of Valdosta's 457 Retirement Plan as sponsored by the U. S. Conference of Mayors.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the U. S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Retirement Program was established in 1977 and offers deferred compensation and retirement solutions to cities and other local government agencies and to their employees. The Program assists cities and their employees in establishing an increased measure of financial security for the future and provides cities with a way to help their employees help themselves by taking advantage of financial and tax incentives to build a secure foundation for retirement. USCM recently announced its decision to partner with Great-West Retirement Services (Great-West). Great-West is the provider of administrative, recordkeeping, and education services for USCM Deferred Compensation Program. The Program offers a voluntary retirement plan (a 457(b) with or without Roth contributions). This is a public version of a 401K and employees will be able to contribute out of their own salary pre-tax dollars into a retirement fund to supplement their retirement in addition to whatever retirement program the City might provide. The employees will have a wide variety of investment options and when they are ready to retire, they may choose from several different distribution options. The Program does not charge an administrative fee for Plans over \$500,000 in total plan assets and a small administrative fee of 0.25% is charged annually on plans with less than \$500,000 in total plan assets. Administrative fees can have a profound impact on employees' long-term investment performance and it is the Program's goal to ensure that the employees' money goes toward their retirement savings and not fees. Great-West is the fourth largest retirement plan keeper in the U. S. for 457 Plans with over 25,000 plans and over 4.5 million participants. They manage \$106 billion in assets. The City of Valdosta's current Deferred Compensation Plan is currently with Nationwide and in order to transfer the current Plan from Nationwide to USCM Retirement Program with Great-West, the City Administrative Agreement must be approved by Council. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve an Agreement with Great-West Retirement Services as recommended to move the City's Deferred Compensation Program from Nationwide to Great-West based on the decision of the U. S. Conference of Mayors.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to approve streets for resurfacing under the 2013 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program (LMIG).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program (LMIG) has allocated \$408,000 to use toward transportation related projects. Local governments must provide a 30% match in order to receive these funds and the City's match is \$158,081.94 for the 2013 LMIG Program. The improvements not only include resurfacing but also minor base repair, curb and

gutter replacement, utility adjustments, and striping. There are 13 streets that the Engineering Department is recommending for resurfacing and those are broken down into Council Districts. The City is responsible for choosing streets to be resurfaced; however, previous streets not chosen last year remain on this year's list with new streets added by the Engineering Department and some that have been requested by citizens of the community. This list must be submitted to the DOT no later than December 31, 2012. The Engineering Department will bid the work out in February, 2013. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the streets for resurfacing under the 2013 LMIG. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that previously LMIG was 100% funding and now it is 70% funding program with a 30% local match.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve streets for resurfacing under the 2013 Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program (LMIG).

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

Consideration of appointments to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority has the following three members whose terms will expire December 31, 2012: (1) Dr. Amanda Brown, (2) Howard Dasher, III, and (3) Wes Sewell. Dr. Amanda Brown and Howard Dasher, III have both expressed an interest in being reappointed; however, Wes Sewell has not expressed an interest in serving again. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration are as follows: (1) Joseph E. (Joe) Belson - Financial Advisor with Metis Planning, (2) Dr. Amanda Brown - Retired Educator, (3) Michael Cooper - Land Surveyor/Engineer with ASA Engineering & Surveying, Inc., and (4) Howard Dasher, III - Attorney with David Wolfson, P. C.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations for Position No. 1. Councilman Carroll placed in consideration the name of Joseph E. Belson. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Joseph E. Belson was appointed by acclamation to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations for Position No. 2. Councilman Wright placed in consideration the name of Dr. Amanda Brown. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Dr. Amanda Brown was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations for Position No. 3. Councilman Yost placed in consideration the name of Howard Dasher, III. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Howard Dasher, III was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission has a member, Gerald L. McClendon, whose term will expire November 21, 2012. Mr. McClendon has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration are as follows: (1) Michael Kufrovich - DOD Contractor-Moody AFB Contract Lead with Advanced Concepts Enterprises, Inc. and Fire Prevention Officer with the Hahira Fire Department, (2) Gerald L. McClendon - Retired, and (3) Althea P. Spriggs - Energy Engineer Consultant with Proactive Global Energy.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations. Councilman Payton placed in consideration the name of Gerald L. McClendon. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Gerald L. McClendon was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of five years on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority has a member, Rick Williams, whose term will expire December 31, 2012. This appointment must be someone from the Lodging & Tourism industry. Mr. Williams has expressed an interest in being reappointed. The appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration are as follows: (1) Richard (Rick) G. Oelkers, Jr. - General Manager with La Quinta Inn & Suites, and (2) Rick Williams - Hotel Owner & Operator with Williams Investment Company.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations. Councilman Carroll placed in consideration the name of Rick Williams. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Rick Williams was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta Housing Authority.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Valdosta Housing Authority has a member, Barry Broome, whose term will expire December 31, 2012 and this appointment will be made solely by him. Mr. Broome has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration are as follows: (1) Reverend Sharleece E. Bellagosi - Owner of SE Bellagosi Enterprise, and (2) Barry Broome - Owner of Allstate Broome Agency. Mayor Gayle stated that Mr. Broome is energetic and has attended the Valdosta Housing Authority meetings on a regular basis. Mayor Gayle reappointed Barry Broome to serve a term of five year on the Valdosta Housing Authority.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked Mayor Gayle and Councilman Payton for attending the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the new fire station at the Valdosta Regional Airport. It was exciting to see the progress being made and over the next 18 months, there will be improvements made on the Madison Highway side of the Airport.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there will be several upcoming events around the holidays this year. The Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on November 28, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in front of City Hall. The Downtown Holiday Open House will be held on December 1, 2012 and has been a long standing tradition that brings over 5,000 people to the Downtown area. The Georgia Municipal Association's Mayors Christmas Motorcade will be held on December 13, 2012 and the Valdosta Fire Department is helping to collect gifts and monetary donations that will go to the Southwestern State Hospital in Thomasville. Shop with a Cop and Shop with a Fire Fighter Programs will be held on December 17, 2012 and December 18, 2012 and the Valdosta Police Department and the Valdosta Fire Department will be accepting contributions for those events. The Salvation Army Bell Ringing event will be held on Friday, December 7, 2012 at Winn Dixie. The Mayor and Council are encouraged to volunteer one hour of their time to ring the bell and collect donations for those who need assistance during the holiday season.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the West Hill Avenue Overpass Project is proceeding and will begin very soon. A detailed traffic detour map has been forwarded to the Mayor and Council.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether there would only be one Council Meeting in December. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they would have one Council Meeting in December if everyone was in agreement. The Council Meetings for December 6<sup>th</sup> and December 20<sup>th</sup> would be canceled and the new Council Meeting date would be December 13, 2012. Also, Councilman Carroll stated that up until recently there was at one

time an Overlay District along the Norman Drive corridor and if that had still been in place it would have been a good tool in addressing the car wash request. He understood what some of the issues were that the City ran into with the Overlay District but he would like to see Staff come back with some type of plan that would continue to encourage and promote the kind of growth along that corridor that is compatible and leads to the overall goal.

Council Payton thanked Pat Collins, City Engineer, for the striping on Lake Park Road. He has received several positive comments on how well it looks and how it helps people driving at night. Also, the Airport Authority Meeting which was held yesterday was very informative and they have a lot of great things going on.

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Idelle Dear, 2425 Giddens Drive, stated that she was concerned about the South Georgia Regional Library system and an issue that is going on now. A few years ago the Library started having six furlough days a year because the State cut back funding. Even though their operating expenses are mostly funded by the County and this is a City Council Meeting, she felt that the City needed to know about it. At the time Valdosta State University was implementing furlough days, they exempted any employee who made less than \$25,000 per year so that people who were on lower incomes were not affected. A few months ago, the Library was informed that they would have an additional 6 days of furlough a year so now there are 12 furlough days at the public Library. None of the Library employees are exempt and most make minimum wage except for the Director. They are going to be affected by having one day of month of their income cut out. Ms. Dear stated that she thought about this and looked across the street and saw all the millions of dollars that the State and possibly the County are paying to build the hospital and the millions that are coming from the State and Valdosta State University (VSU) to build the new facilities and here the Library employees are losing out for a total savings of approximately \$30,000. It seems like something is wrong with the picture. Ms. Dear stated that she asked the management at the Library branch where she goes almost every day and he said they have cut back every way that they can. They have cut back utilities, they hardly buy books, and they have cut all that they can. There are maintenance needs for the building and they are cut to the bare bones. The only thing they can do to keep going with the operating money that is provided from Lowndes County and cut salaries. Ms. Dear stated that this does not seem right and she wanted to make Council aware of the situation. She has heard some people say that almost everyone has the Internet at home so they do not need the Library any more but that is not true. She goes almost every day because she cannot afford Internet at home and the computers are almost always full. The books and DVDs are always being checked out and the meeting rooms are used constantly. There is a lot of need for a public library. Ms. Dear asked that something be done in order to keep the Library open. Mayor Gayle encourage Ms. Dear to address the Library Board on this issue since the City has no control over the Library.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that he agreed with Ms. Dear and the Library is definitely being used a lot. The people who work there refuse to speak for themselves but had mentioned to him that they would love to be working those days as well. Mr. Rhynes commended the Council for following Roberts Rules of Order and for their professionalism. Last week he was almost arrested at a local Council Meeting and realized that sometimes you do not appreciate where you are until you go outside the family. He thanked the Mayor and Council for conducting business as they do. Mr. Rhynes stated that the news media failed to report that he was against SPLOST and the majority of people agreed with him so it looks like he was on the right side of this issue. He does believe that we need the money and he hoped that they would document where the money was being spent. Mr. Rhynes stated that he had addressed Council about the person who was hit by a car on Oak Street Extension near Open Bible School and knocked into the ditch. He was not sure if this was the City or the County but he went by there the other night and if someone is walking along that road they have nowhere to walk and would possibly be hit and killed. Mr. Rhynes stated that Valdosta is a great City and we are doing great things but there are two Valdosta's – one good and one not so good. If you listen to the citizens and they feel that government is open to them then we can accomplish great things and the people will feel good about their government. Mr. Rhynes stated at Moody Air Force Base on the first floor of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters Rescue Wing there is no picture of the President of the United States. It has been like this for nearly four years and it has been brought to the attention of the NAACP. The previous Wing Commander gave him a tour of the Base and there are pictures of the President in various squadrons but not at the Headquarters building. This is wrong and even the Commissioned Officers tell him that they do not understand why the President's picture is not there. Mr. Rhynes stated that the other night following the elections, many foreign nations had the President's picture on the front page of their newspaper but

not Valdosta. For all times, Valdosta will go down in history as not having a picture of the President of our Armed Forces and Commander in Chief at Moody Air Force Base. Mr. Rhynes stated that he wished this could be changed. Mr. Rhynes also stated that he liked what he heard tonight about the bidding process and VSEB. He thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him an opportunity to express himself in a way that was not expressed in a local town the other night.

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, stated that they need some economic development on the South side. He does appreciate the efforts of the VSEB Program but they need some equilibrium in the City. The nation is divided based upon the Presidential election and our City has always been divided and has not come to equal terms even to this date. We can only make something happen by working together. The VSEB Program is very unique and he is not so enthused about the outcome of it because some of the contractors were telling him that they did not get notifications in time to come and bid on the Project. Mr. Robinson stated that he understood that the City puts things in the newspaper to make it legal; however, they need some emphasis put on the VSEB Program because these guys who are low income do not have the capacity of the general contractor. It is difficult sometimes when you are the contractor and work all day and you only have the evenings to put together your package. If they do not have the Internet then they may miss out on opportunities and there needs to be some emphasis put on the VSEB Program as far as the notification. Mr. Robinson stated that they need some economic development and this will work out if they all work together.

Hannah Waller, 5715 Dana Circle, stated that her mother works at Staten Crossing Apartments and she got a call one night about a man who was out jogging one night in front of the complex and had been hit by a car. The man was still alive but then another car came around the corner and hit him and killed him. Something should be done about this area because there have been a lot of people who have had a near miss there.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to adjourn the November 15, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:24 p.m. and enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate.

Councilman Norton arrived at 6:24 p.m.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the November 15, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:36 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate but no action was taken.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the November 15, 2012 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:37 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, December 13, 2012.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta