

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2007
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John J. Fretti called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Sonny Vickers, David Sumner, Alvin Payton, Jr., Willie Head, Jr., John Eunice, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Minister Brian Jarvis, Central Avenue Church of Christ, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for the November, 2007 Employee of the Month Award.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the November, 2007 Employee of the Month Award.

Mayor Fretti presented the November Employee of the Month Award to Luis Colon, Engineering Department.

Luis Colon began his employment with the City of Valdosta in October, 1996 as a Laborer. In August, 1999, Luis was promoted to Survey Aide, which is the position he currently holds. As a Survey Aide, he is responsible for maintaining and setting up the equipment used during a field survey and the collection of data. This requires attention to detail and knowledge of the basic principles of survey work. During the past three months, Luis has gone above and beyond the call of duty by volunteering to monitor the daily activity of the Millpond Excavation project. This has required him to report in early each morning to make sure traffic is detoured properly and to remain on-site until work is completed each day. He has frequently worked on Saturdays to ensure the excavation is proceeding on schedule and that the contractor is loading trucks properly to keep loose debris off the roadways. Coordinating daily activity at the site with the project inspector has allowed inspection activities on other City projects to proceed with a minimum of interruption. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it." It is the dedication of Luis Colon to this critical project and his willingness to take on additional responsibilities outside of his regular duties which serves as an example for others to follow. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Luis Colon as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 25, 2007 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE NO. 2007-50, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VALDOSTA ZONING ORDINANCE

Consideration of an ordinance to rezone .544 acres from Multi-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) as requested by Jimmy and B. J. Hiers (File No. VA-2007-50). The property is located at 209

North St. Augustine Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their October regular meeting and recommended approval (9-0 vote).

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the applicants are requesting to rezone .544 acres from Multi-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway Commercial (C-H). The property is currently undeveloped and the applicants would like to market the property for commercial development. The adjacent properties are commercial in nature with the exception of some residential uses to the east and a lone residential use to the west. The property is located within a Community Activity Center which spans from Hill Avenue up St. Augustine Road to the Mall area where it transitions into a denser Regional Activity Center Area. The property's location along this well-traveled commercial area and the proximity to other C-H zoning makes the proposed change appropriate. Also, the required buffer and the existence of an unused City right of way should serve to protect the residences to the east. The applicants will be required to receive permission from the Georgia Department of Transportation regarding their driveway since North St. Augustine Road is a State highway. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and had originally recommended that access be limited to St. Augustine Road; however, at the Planning Commission meeting, information was shared that the Georgia Department of Transportation would like to limit access to only occurring on Beck Street. The City Engineer, Staff, the Planning and Zoning Department, and the Georgia Department of Transportation met at the property and this issue, which will be based on the type of development that occurs on the property, will be addressed during the permitting process. Thus, Staff is not recommending that the condition be placed on the property and to allow it to be worked out during permitting. The applicants are agreeable to this. Planning Commission reviewed this request at their October regular meeting and recommended approval of Highway-Commercial (C-H) zoning without any conditions (9-0 vote).

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Administrator and enact Ordinance No. 2007-50 to rezone .544 acres from Multi-Family Residential (R-6) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) as requested by Jimmy and B. J. Hiers, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2007-51, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VALDOSTA ZONING ORDINANCE

Consideration of an ordinance to rezone .416 acres from Two-Family Residential (DR-10) to Multi-Family Residential (R-6) as requested by John Taylor Courson, D'Osta Properties (File No. VA-2007-51). The property is located at 1511 Boone Drive. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their October regular meeting and recommended approval (9-0 vote).

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the applicant is requesting to rezone .416 acres from Two-Family Residential (DR-10) to Multi-Family Residential (R-6). The property currently contains a site-built house which the applicant intends to remove in order to construct a two-story apartment building. The proposed multi-family use is consistent with the mixture of surrounding land uses. While there is one remaining single-family home in the immediate area, the area is located within an Institutional Activity Center on the Future Development Map which supports higher density residential uses. The proposed site plan will be changed due to some site limitations and variances that the applicant may be seeking. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended approval. Planning Commission reviewed this request at their October regular meeting and recommended approval of Multi-Family Residential (R-6) zoning (9-0 vote). Councilman Yost inquired as to whether the property across the street was up for rezoning also. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that the property was rezoned approximately three months ago.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Sumner, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Planning Commission and enact Ordinance No. 2007-51 to rezone .416 acres from Two-Family Residential (DR-10) to Multi-Family Residential (R-6) as requested by John Taylor Courson, D'Osta Properties, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for sports photography for the Parks and Recreation Department (Bid No. 12-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the contract for the Parks and Recreation Department sports photography, which provides sports photography to participants in the City and County sports programs, is due to expire. A rebate is offered back to the City depending on the amount of sales to participants. This is a one-year contract with two, one-year renewals. Due to the nature of this contract, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was mailed to interested providers. A committee was formed to evaluate all of the proposals submitted and the committee unanimously selected Kid Shots to perform the service. The offered rebate is 33 1/3 % on all sales while still providing prices that are affordable to participants. Councilman Yost was on the committee that reviewed the RFP as well as the responses. A maximum of 25 points each was given for the ability to provide the service and meet the minimum requirements (insurance, references, etc.), the quality of photos submitted, the proposed costs to participants, and the rebate to the City: Points were given as follows to those businesses that responded: (1) Kids Shots- 288, (2) Valdosta Photo – 238 points, (3) U. S. Photo – 210 points, and (4) Future Stars – 200 points. Also, the Committee looked at gross sales and not net sales. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the proposal submitted by Kids Shots and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to proceed with the contract.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the proposal for sports photography submitted by Kids Shots and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to proceed with the contract.

Consideration of bids for Cisco networking equipment to upgrade the telephone system for the City of Valdosta (Bid No. 17-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Information Technology Department is in need of new hardware to provide the backbone for the new software and phone system the City will be purchasing in the future. The current equipment is slow and has too small of a bandwidth to operate the new software and phone system. Sealed bids were received on October 30, 2007 with the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Digital Intelligence Systems in the amount of \$93,413. The two lowest bids did not meet the specification because they did not include service in the contract. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specification submitted by Digital Intelligence Systems in the amount of \$93,413 and allow the Information Technology Department to proceed with the purchase. Greg Brown also asked Council's consideration for an additional approval for a one-year extended warranty on the equipment in the amount of \$7,830.48. The equipment comes with a 90-day warranty from the factory and this one-year warranty was overlooked; however, it will be budgeted for in the future. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the equipment would enable the City to push a button and notify everyone in case of an emergency. Larry Hanson stated that the City has panic buttons on every floor and when activated it will place a direct call to 911 in case of an emergency. Steve Carter, Information Technology Manager, stated that the current system will not allow everyone to be notified by the push of a button in an emergency situation but this will be addressed in the future.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid meeting specification submitted by Digital Intelligence Systems in the amount of \$93,413, approve a one-year extended warranty on the equipment in the amount of \$7,830.48, and allow the Information Technology Department to proceed with the purchase of CISCO networking equipment to upgrade the telephone system for the City of Valdosta.

Consideration of bids for administrative vehicles for the Fire Department and the Police Department (Bid No. 19-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Fire and Police Departments are in need of new administrative vehicles to assist with their duties. The new vehicles will replace older models that have high mileage and rising maintenance costs. These vehicles are Council-approved budget items for this fiscal year. The bid allows for additional purchases at the same price for 150 days. Sealed bids were received on October 30, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$102,169.25. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$102,169.25 and allow the Fire and Police Departments to proceed with the purchase. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether these vehicles were for the Patrol Officers. Greg Brown stated that these vehicles were for the Detectives. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether a smaller vehicle could be used. Greg Brown stated that they have looked at different vehicles and the Crown Victoria vehicles could use alternative fuel if it was available. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Detectives need to have a place to put people if needed and this year, every vehicle request was examined by Mark Barber, Greg Brown, and the City Manager to determine if that was the absolute vehicle needed to do the job or if it could be done with a different one. After consulting with the Police Department, they felt they needed a larger vehicle due to the situations they have to deal with.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$102,169.25 and allow the Fire Department and Police Department to proceed with the purchase.

Consideration of bids for pursuit vehicles for the Police Department (Bid No. 22-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Police Department is in need of new pursuit vehicles to replace older units currently in the fleet due to rising mileage and maintenance cost. These vehicles are Council-approved budget items for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on November 6, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$120,617.70. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specification of Langdale Ford in the amount of \$120,617.70 and allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$120,617.70 allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase of pursuit vehicles.

Consideration of bids for SUV vehicles for the Police Department (Bid No. 23-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Police Department is in need of SUV vehicles to replace older units currently in the fleet due to high mileage and maintenance costs. These vehicles are Council-approved budget items for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on November 6, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$256,527.84. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid of Langdale Ford in the amount of \$256,527.84 and allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they looked at going to a smaller size SUV for the Police Department but when reviewing their need, the fact that there was only one mile per gallon difference in gas mileage, and the smaller SUV did not have a Police package available, it was determined that it was not worth the benefit of what they would be giving up.

A MOTION by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$256,527.84 and allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase of SUV vehicles.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for extra-territorial water and sewer services for the new Abundant Life Church of God on Knight’s Academy Road.

Leon Weeks, Director of Utilities stated that the City of Valdosta has constructed a sanitary sewer lift station on Bemiss Road at Cherry Creek near Skipper Bridge Road to serve properties in the Upper Cherry Creek

Drainage Basin that have sewer lines flowing to the station. The City's water transmission mains also run along Bemiss Road and North Forrest Street from the Guest Road Water Treatment Plant to the City. The City is providing water and sewer service to customers in the Cherry Creek Drainage Basin that have connected to the described water and sewer infrastructure. These properties include Branch Point Subdivision that was recently annexed into the City. The Abundant Life Church of God, formerly known as the Forrest Street Church of God, has purchased land on Knights Academy Road a short distance east of North Forrest Street and has requested that the City agree to provide water and sewer to a new church to be constructed on the property. The property of the church is located so that a sewer could be designed and constructed to flow to and connect to existing sewers recently constructed in the Branch Point Subdivision. Also, a water main could be constructed to run from the main on North Forrest Street and could provide domestic water service and fire protection to the proposed church building. The property could be annexed into the City provided the vacant land between the church lot and Branch Point subdivision is annexed. Leon Weeks recommended that Council approve the request for service with the provision that annexation of the property be completed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the church has an interested buyer and the buyer would like to occupy their building as soon as possible so they wanted to be sure that they could proceed with submitting plans and initiate construction of a new church in order to accommodate the new buyer. Leon Weeks stated that this area is in the City's Master Plan for water and sewer services.

A MOTION by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Director of Utilities and approve the request for extra-territorial water and sewer services for the new Abundant Life Church of God on Knight's Academy Road.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Consideration of a request to change the term expiration dates for the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission. Mayor and Council tabled the request at the October 25, regular meeting until the November 8, 2007 regular meeting.

Mayor Fretti stated that this request has been withdrawn. Larry Hanson, City Manger, stated that the Planning Commission recommended at their last meeting to withdraw the request. Councilman Yost stated that he would like for both the County and the City to be given time to review the changes prior to approval because he did not want another body approving something that benefits them and then the Planning Commission brings it to the City. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he would have Anne-Marie Wolff, Zoning and Planning Administrator, write a letter to the Planning Commission asking for a 60-day period between the recommendation of the Planning Commission and action of any governing body on that recommendation so that everyone would have a chance to review it.

Consideration of an appointment to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the term for Gary Moser, Chairman of the Planning Commission, will expire on November 21, 2007. The Planning Commission has submitted the following names for consideration: Gary Moser, Attorney with Moser and Rose, Craig Cardella, self-employed, and John Mitchell, Chief of Environmental Engineering Flight at Moody Air Force Base. Larry Hanson stated that Mr. Cardella has requested that his name be withdrawn from consideration. Councilman Head stated that he wanted to add another name for consideration for that position.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations. Councilman Eunice placed in consideration the name of Gary Moser. Councilman Head placed in consideration the name of Gerald L. McClendon. There being no other nominations, Mayor Fretti closed nominations. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether Mr. McClendon had signed a Code of Ethics Form and completed a Board Application which indicated that he would like to serve on the Planning Commission. Councilman Head stated that the forms were on file. Larry Hanson stated that he was not aware that Mr. McClendon would be nominated and he had not reviewed the Board Application; however, Mr. McClendon's name was one of six names to be submitted as a recommendation for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee. Mayor Fretti asked Mr. McClendon if he desired to serve on the Planning Commission. Mr. McClendon stated that he would accept the nomination and if appointed to the Planning Commission he would

withdraw his name from the CDBG Advisory Committee recommendation. Gary Moser received two votes and Gerald McClendon received five votes. Gerald McClendon was appointed to serve a term of five years on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals hears appeals on sub-standard housing cases. If a contractor is working on a house and has a difference of opinion with the Inspections Department concerning a code, then he can meet with the Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals to appeal the requirement that is being imposed. The Board will then interpret the code and make a determination whether the Inspections Department is correct in making that requirement or if the contractor is correct. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether there would need to be a level of expertise in serving on this Board. Larry Hanson stated that it would be important to have knowledge of building codes and construction and be able to interpret an International Code. The Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals only meets on an as needed basis when they have a case. Larry Hanson stated that the terms for two positions on this Board that were held by Steve Freelove and Mary Corrales expired on August 7, 2007. The Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals submitted the following names in order of preference: Position #1 – Steve Freelove, Construction Consultant, Deloris Brown, Retired Teacher and Medical Social Worker, and Greg Johnson, Micro Systems Support Specialist with the State of Georgia Department of Public Health; Position #2 – Joseph Brown, Retired Educator, James Garland, Switchboard Wireman for Georgia Power Company, and Loyd Johnson, Retired Builder and Developer.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations for Position #1 that was held by Steve Freelove. Councilman Head placed in consideration the name of Steve Freelove. There being no other nominations, Steve Freelove was appointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations for Position #2 that was held by Mary Corrales. Councilman Head placed in consideration the name of James Garland. Councilman Yost placed in consideration the name of Joseph Brown. There being no other nominations, Mayor Fretti closed nominations. James Garland received two votes and Joseph Brown received five votes. Joseph Brown was appointed to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals

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

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there is one position on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board currently open that was held by Jeanette Coody whose term expired on June 30, 2006. The Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board submitted the following three names for consideration: Angela Wall, Environmental Planner with the South Georgia Regional Development Center, Mike Paine, Owner of M. J. Paine Insurance Company, and Glen Maul, Associate Professor at South Georgia College. The Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board has recommended that Angela Wall be appointed to the position.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations. Councilman Eunice placed in consideration the name of Mike Paine. Councilman Yost placed in consideration the name of Angela Wall. There being no other nominations, Mayor Fretti closed nominations. Mike Paine received four votes and Angela Wall received three votes. Mike Paine was appointed to serve a term of three years on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there was a bank robbery at Park Avenue Bank located on Baytree Road this afternoon. The Police Department is actively working the investigation and they have a description and some leads on the suspect.

There are several events taking place tonight in Valdosta. The Heart Walk is being held at Valdosta Middle School, the Valdosta Sports Hall of Fame Banquet will be held at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center, and Valdosta State University has a home football game.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the second Council meeting for this month will be held on Monday, November 19, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. Also, the City of Valdosta's Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at 12:00 p.m. at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta has also been selected by a company called Restaurant Business Magazine, which is a national consulting firm, and they have named Valdosta as the eighth best place in the United States to locate a restaurant. There are 363 metropolitan areas in the United States and for Valdosta to be ranked eighth is very strong. Those cities coming in ahead of Valdosta were Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Fort Walton Beach, Florida, Flagstaff, Arizona, Ocean City, New Jersey, Honolulu, Hawaii, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Owensboro, Kentucky. One of the things that they compared this to is sales per capita in a restaurant and Valdosta's sales per capita was \$2,268 whereas Atlanta's sales per capita was only \$1,851 and Albany was \$1,126. When looking at sales as a percentage of income, Valdosta was the only metropolitan area in Georgia where sales as a percentage of income for eating at restaurants was greater than 10%. Valdosta's sales as a percentage of income was 11.82%. Also, according to this national publication, the average restaurant in Valdosta has annual sales of approximately \$1 million dollars while Atlanta was \$913,000, Augusta was \$674,000, Gainesville was \$783,000, and Macon was \$658,000. Larry Hanson stated that this type of support information is very useful in enticing other restaurants who are still looking at the market and that Valdosta is where they need to be.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers stated that he would like the City Attorney and the City Manager to provide Council with a resolution at the next Council meeting stating that Valdosta is opposed to the House Bill 900 tax proposal. It would also be a good if we could get other municipalities to join the City of Valdosta in supporting the resolution. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether there was anything on the tax proposal from the Speaker of the House that Council could review. Larry Hanson stated that the Speaker of the House did release a major portion of the proposal on Tuesday after a meeting with the Republican Caucus. A Mayor of another city has also asked the Georgia Municipal Association to draft a resolution but nothing has been proposed by the Georgia Municipal Association. Councilman Vickers stated that the Georgia Municipal Association needs to get all the municipalities to support the resolution as well as the school boards. Larry Hanson stated that he would work on getting a resolution. Councilman Vickers asked that Council be provided something at one of the December Council meetings.

Councilman Payton thanked Von Shipman, City Engineer, and Larry Hanson, City Manager, for their assistance in resolving the holding pond problems on Justin Drive that Ben Pringle had brought to the attention of Council at the last meeting.

Councilman Head stated that there has been recent gang activity in the school system and the community and asked that the Police Department provide an update on what is going on and what is being done about it.

Councilman Vickers stated that he would like for all the candidates who ran in the recent election to pick up their campaign signs and those of others so that the districts can be cleaned up. Councilman Head stated that the candidates should be sent a note reminding them of the seven-day requirement to have the signs picked up. Larry Hanson stated that he would have Anne-Marie Wolff contact the candidates about the signs.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the November 8, 2007 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:24 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Monday, November 19, 2007.