

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John Fretti called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Sonny Vickers, Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., John Eunice, Deidra White, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Councilman John Eunice, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS – MAYOR JOHN FRETTI

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for the State of the City Address.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the State of the City Address.

Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council Members, City Manager, City Attorney, City Department Heads, employees, distinguished guests, and my fellow Valdostans, it is my honor to present to you this evening the annual State of the City Address. The year 2009 continued to test our community as we all worked to balance our lives and trim our budgets while faced with devastating revenue decreases from one of the worst recessions to impact our City in history. Our community continues to feel the effects of this crisis and I hear that other communities are in much worse shape. This was once again a year for the City of Valdosta to hold steady on the expenditures of the basic services and programs that our citizens expect of their local government. We had to provide the same level of service to you, our customer, yet with continued decreasing revenues and we did just that mostly due to the fact that we began predicting lower revenues and trimming budgets almost 24 months ago. This year, we continue to hear of disturbing deficits and consequential cuts at the State and Federal level. Here at home, the City began putting cuts in place a year prior to the State and Federal government and this year we only needed to make additional adjustments in order to manage our budget, not draconian cuts as others have had to do.

As I mentioned, the City of Valdosta stepped forward at the very beginning of the economic crisis with prudent efforts to reduce spending and to run the City in the most efficient and effective manner. We continued stringent fuel conservation efforts, reduced energy consumption, and implemented early retirement and reduction of the workforce by attrition where appropriate. We took hard hits from the media for making early adjustments and now others are being forced to do the same, but with far less notice and consideration for their employees. Many of our citizens continue to struggle with reductions of income, increasing household expenditures, job loss, and in some cases, the loss of their homes. Without these courageous efforts on the part of the leadership and staff, the result certainly would have been higher taxes and reduced services. These cuts were not easy on the employees and in some cases one employee is now doing the work of two or even three.

We saw indicators locally that confirmed the negative impact of the current economic climate. Just several years ago, our community had an unemployment rate of 3%, whereas now, we are experiencing an unemployment rate of just below 9% while the State is at 10%. The number of business licenses issued in 2009 was down nearly 15% from 2008. This was the first loss in the amount of licenses issued since Valdosta was named a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Also, the amount of new residential building permits issued in the City, which was only \$10.8 million, declined by 40.6% from the previous year. Homes are still being built in Valdosta but at a slower rate. We are grateful that Valdosta has a comparatively low foreclosure rate because it could certainly be worse. A colleague Mayor of mine stated four years ago that his city was building a new house every ten minutes. Now, they have a foreclosure every 30 minutes. Houses that were purchased for \$250,000 in his town are now valued at \$80,000 inciting owners to just stop paying their mortgage. It is frightening in so many towns across America. Valdosta should be grateful for the gifts that God has given us.

It probably should not surprise you to hear that commercial permit activity decreased by 26.5% over 2008 figures, but we did have \$32.3 million in construction added to the community and for that we are also grateful. I took a couple of days last week to ride around construction sites to thank the contractors, owners, and workers for the activity. I think they appreciated it, but I was more grateful than I probably could convey to them. I enjoyed getting mud on my shoes, sawdust in my lungs, and the sound of heavy machinery in my ears. It was a welcomed trip to all of my senses.

All of our homeowners were disappointed when their 2009 property tax bills reflected an increase caused by decisions at the State Capital to discontinue the Homestead Tax Relief Grant (HTRG). Due to the elimination of the HTRG, Valdosta homestead property owners saw an increase of \$239 in their tax bill, and of this amount the City of Valdosta only received \$32.90, and this time that amount came from the taxpayers and not a supplement from the State. So you see, the City did not get additional tax money and the burden was moved from the State to the local homeowner. Also, just over 10% of that tax goes to Valdosta and the remainder (90%) goes to the other governments and school systems. Since there may be no end in sight for the declining State revenues, homeowners should prepare to continue to see the loss of the HTRG for the foreseeable future.

As you remember, we experienced the second worst flood event in the history of our City in April, 2009. Our neighborhoods and businesses along Sugar Creek and the Withlacoochee River were devastated by flood waters. It was a horrific event and those citizens affected are some of the most courageous people I have met. I am proud and grateful to the City staff, my fellow elected officials, and the many volunteers that gave their all during this time of crisis in our community. Every Department responded on a 24 hour basis and our Public Works Department made available over 3,000 sand bags and removed over 295,000 pounds of debris from City streets, and rights-of-way. We worked together, stayed strong, and rose above the flood waters to rebuild. Also during the flood, and contrary to local editorials, all City Departments worked around the clock securing our neighborhoods, assisting our citizens in need, and worked shoulder to shoulder to save a critical portion of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant facility. These efforts at this critical facility need not be minimized by opining critics. It serves the majority of our community and experienced flooding of more than 70% of the total plant operations. It was only due to the untiring efforts of employees and volunteers alike that we fought and won against the potential devastation that would have occurred had the entire plant been flooded. This devastation would have been that over 12,000 homes and our entire commercial district would have had wastewater backflow into their homes and businesses, and it would have continued for days. The City continues the necessary steps to prepare against future potential flooding to the best of our abilities. A community should always be ready for any natural disaster in response, rescue, and recovery; however, there is only so much a community can do to prevent an act of God from creating harm. Now, we are currently awaiting approval of a flood mitigation plan from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before taking the next step to upgrade this facility and to do whatever we need to with the small amount of waterways that are actually in the City. Our Treatment Plant has been limping since the flood and FEMA has us waiting to repair. You will see and hear more about the 2010 Stormwater Master Plan, where we will take a close look at our capacities in addition to engaging our upstream neighbors as the majority of the stormwater that affects our City comes from north Lowndes, Adel, Tifton, and Ashburn where they have no controls in place to hold their water.

It was a difficult and frustrating year in 2009 regarding crime and violence. While the Valdosta Police Department continued to protect and serve our citizens through 72,000 calls for service, the Department also had to deal with an alarming 10 homicides within the city limits in 2009. Departmental personnel worked diligently to solve nine of the ten homicides which represents a clearance rate of 90%. If we knew where and when the next crime is going to occur, we would be there to stop it. But real life isn't an episode of 24, CSI, or some guy that gets tomorrows paper a day ahead. It is real life violence and it has become appallingly apparent that there is a need for more effort on the front side of violence. This need led to the creation of the Community Task Force on Violence and I have faith that under the chairmanship of H. Arthur "Mac" McLane, recommendations will be seriously considered by our community. Yes, 2009 was a disturbing and frustrating year in crime for our community but you should know that the men and women of our Police Department have what seems to be a thankless job. I thank the Chief, Commanders, and the brave men and women of our Police Department for what they do every day and night. We sleep better knowing they are out there to protect and serve.

Despite the difficult economic downturn, Valdosta did continue to experience some positive change, future expansion, and economic growth in 2009. The change came in the newest addition to Council this year. We welcome Councilwoman Deidra White, representing District 2, and celebrate her being the first woman on Council in over 24 years. She is a welcome addition and has come out of the gates strong. We can already feel the positive effects of what she has occasionally called "girl power" on Council.

The future expansion came to Valdosta in the form of the Five Points purchase. Short of the Transportation Master Plan, this was probably one of the most courageous yet controversial initiatives Council has addressed. We had the funds already encumbered to buy land for a new Municipal Arts Center and compared eight to ten different sites all over the City. We even called in a third party consultant to help us narrow the search to the best possible site. We then negotiated in good faith and when negotiations stalled, condemnation was considered and we began the lengthy process of notification. At the end of the day, negotiations resumed and a unified and friendly purchase was agreed upon without the use of condemnation. Some may ask whether the threat of condemnation pushed the seller back to the table. I cannot answer that question. You would have to ask the seller; however, I can tell you that the consideration of condemnation was indeed an incentive for Council to insist that Mr. Hanson and I get back in there and make a deal. It can be argued, but one of the hardest votes an elected official would have to make is to raise their hand in support of an adverse condemnation and now that the real story is getting to the citizens, we see broad support for the project. We all know that our current Mathis Auditorium, at over 50 years old, has too many challenges for the venues and use that the community so richly deserves. Valdosta deserves a magnificent City Arts Center and I truly believe that five or ten years from now, when the new midtown is thriving, people will look back and see that it was the right move.

The economic growth came on several levels. Valdosta's Overall Retail Pull Factor rose to 2.17 for 2008 up from 2.02 and the Valdosta Metro Area exceeded \$2.76 billion in annual retail sales in 2008. The prior year was \$2.2 billion and we saw a 26% increase over 2007. This may be one of the components that continue to sustain us. In the last four years, the pull factor has risen from 1.72 to 1.73 to 2.02 and now it is at 2.17. This means for every \$1 Valdostans spend on goods and services, a visitor to our City spends \$1.17, which more than doubles our local buying power. At the same time, our annual retail sales, respectively, have risen from \$1.7 billion to \$1.8 billion to \$2.2 billion and now at \$2.8 billion. The last four years represent a 63% increase in retail sales. This begs the question, "Why are sales tax distributions from the State down?" Unfortunately, they do not have an accurate way of measuring, collecting, and distributing. For five years now, the Georgia Municipal Association has sponsored bills in the assembly to get the State Revenue Department to move from crayons to computers, allow point of sale software and even local collections. They have yet to agree. We are by all measures a donor city to the State and our monthly SPLOST checks feel like some form of prestidigitation and we wonder at times if we would have had more accurate distributions with a Ouija Board. I trust that the Assembly and the new administration will address this serious issue sooner rather than later.

Speaking of that which sustains us, we had even more local indicators that show how Valdosta has continued to fare better than other communities, our State, and certainly our nation. Valdosta State University (VSU) continued to grow with a record breaking fall enrollment at 12,391 students. VSU has had a 40% increase in enrollment over the last five years and they continue to build. Capital projects constructed on campus totaled \$71.8 million and over the last two years they have had \$135 million in construction projects. South Georgia Medical Center contributed \$420 million in economic impact of this year. Valdosta Technical College christened the new Building 700, pumping over \$14 million into new classrooms and the Student Center Building, and a total annual enrollment of 5,083 students. This year we welcomed Dr. Ray Perrin to our community as their new President and I can tell you that he is qualified and very capable. Moody Air Force Base had more than \$100 million in construction projects during 2009 and they had an annual impact of more than \$350 million this year. I can tell you that as long as Robin and I are around, the home to more than 6,100 military personnel and their families will always be honored and respected. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority helped to secure 142 new jobs this year and they secured commitments of more than \$350 million of capital investment during 2009. The Authority also acquired more than 580 acres of new land for future industrial development, and all within the city limits of Valdosta. While it was a slow year for job creation under the current Chairmanship, there was a lot of land purchased and we hear of some exciting projects in the hopper, many of which are renewable energy projects. Business at the Valdosta Regional Airport is up. They had 40,926 enplanements, an improvement of 7.6% over 2008. They injected \$2.1 million into a new hangar project and another \$1.9 million into the runway and a utility extension project to bring City water and sewer to the General Aviation portion of the Airport.

In 2008, our average weekly wages for Valdosta rose from \$541 to \$570. I always report on this a year behind because we don't get this information until late in the year for the previous year, but if the 2009 numbers just increase by a cost of living percentage, we should consider that positive in this economy. I hope it is obvious to see that we have had several sectors of our economy that have held strong and too much degree outpaced previous years. Much of the sustainability goes toward the fact that we are a regional hub for 17 to 18 counties that surround us. And it is our responsibility to host them properly with a clean community, friendly smile, good roads, great utilities, a visible Police force, a Fire Department always at the ready, good stores, and great restaurants with the promise of more, excellent hospitals, wonderful learning institutions, and most anything that our region would want to work, shop, play, and live in the Valdosta Metro Area.

We had some very important projects that certainly deserve to go into the win column in 2009 and the following are just some of the highlights:

In an arrangement with Kinderlou properties, Veolia Waste Services, the Deep South Solid Waste Management Authority, and the City of Valdosta, South Georgia will have one less old and unlined landfill dotting the globe. Kinderlou was able to buffer their housing development, Veolia was able to secure another 50 years of landfill space, the Authority was able to secure a fixed franchise fee on tipping, and the City of Valdosta will be able to have our largest, unlined landfill completely remediated down to the natural bottom. No one likes landfills but they are a part of civilization. They always have been and probably always will be in the foreseeable future. A closed, unlined landfill can be a huge liability both on the books of a city and to the environment of a community because it requires monitoring and containment for the rest of its life. To be able to completely clean up an old landfill through professional remediation is something that very few communities have the opportunity to do. This began over three years ago with a meeting between Wesley Langdale, Veolia, myself, and Larry Hanson and to see this come to fruition is something that very few leaders ever see in their lifetime. If for nothing else, South Georgia should be proud of this project.

Council should approve tonight and our Public Works Department will begin the implementation of a new recycling program for apartments and multi-family properties this year by all service providers. We are currently designing recycle bags for convenience and space utilization that apartment dwellers can use to collect and then walk out to a single stream container on site in their apartment complex. The service provider will then remove the bag and take to the nearest recycling hub. Recycling has yet to be maximized and we do not come close to collecting the majority of recyclable material. While this is a big step, we must do more in the future.

Council approved the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion in November, 2009. This expansion will double the capacity of our Plant and will service the residential and industrial growth in our City. At the same time we are expanding the Plant, the City is considering a long term contract with Wiregrass Power to utilize the biosolids (the precipitate produced from any treatment plant) as a part of the fuel supply in their biomass electric facility. We are also considering an agreement for the power plant to use our grey water for their cooling towers. In addition to that, this site has also been selected to be one of the largest solar field arrays in the State of Georgia. Wiregrass will convert regional Biowaste (wood, sawdust and clippings), biosolids, and captured solar energy into electric power to help supply the local grid. I know there is some concern about this project and the concern should also be with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). It is my understanding that the approved permit has the lowest threshold for emissions allowed, but as always, I am willing to listen to all arguments. Wiregrass is also requesting our potable water for their boilers. They are just one of several other industries that have requested our water and sewer due to its superior quality and I see no reason why another government should try to deny an industrial customer the right to select the water and sewer supplier of their choice. We have a solution for these industries, while other neighboring governments are busily searching for a problem to create.

Business is up in our downtown. Downtown Valdosta had more than \$3.3 million in private dollars reinvested in the district. We gained 6 new businesses that created 41 new jobs. We know that gathering together continues to be important for our community and our downtown hosted 30 unique events this year attracting more than 85,000 additional visitors to the Central Valdosta Business District. Ellen Hill was an Interim Director for several months and now we welcome Rebecca Shirley to the team as our new Main Street Director. Downtown Valdosta is at a point where they are in need of a comprehensive community plan to strengthen the Downtown's

existing assets while diversifying its economic and residential base. You will be seeing and hearing a lot more about a new cooperative Downtown Master Plan in 2010 bringing together the City, the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA), the Downtown Business Association (DBA), property owners, business owners, and all other advocates to fashion a vision for the heart of our community.

I am not sure that I can adequately express the pride I had in seeing our Georgia Search and Rescue Team #2, which is housed at the Valdosta Fire Department, on the front page of our paper successfully performing a high angle rescue in one of our sister cities. Team members successfully climbed a 150 foot high water tank, lowered themselves inside the structure where they rendered emergency aid to the victims, and then lowered them to waiting emergency medical workers below. Fire fighters fight what we fear and rush in when others are rushing out. It is no wonder why the Governor entrusts Search and Rescue of the entire southwest part of Georgia to the capable hands of the Valdosta Fire Department.

Council approved the new Enterprise and Opportunity Zones in our City and formed the Economic Development Commission. The Commission, along with the Office of Economic Development, will now serve to allow critical economic incentive programs for business start ups and expansions for years to come. Job tax credit incentives and property tax abatements used to be reserved only for Industrial Authorities and industry. Now the City can offer incentives for redevelopment and even new projects in designated retail and service businesses areas to promote economic development.

Five years ago, I told Mara Register and Larry Hanson that I noticed that our City will be 150 years old and City Hall will be 100 years old in 2010. I said, no matter what, we should celebrate those events. I had no idea that we would be celebrating our Sesquicentennial in such a fine fashion as we have been this year. We will be celebrating our history and heritage this entire year and will be featuring a unique facet of our history each month and rightly so. Much of that credit goes to Sementha Mathews and her Sesquicentennial Committee. I am proud of our City and proud that we are making history in a glorious manner. A heartfelt thank you goes to Sementha for these efforts!

Finally and fiscally, I am proud to once again report that the City of Valdosta had an excellent annual financial audit for the year and received outstanding remarks. The City has no general fund debt and less than \$10 million in total enterprise debt. The City was able to hold steady on the property tax millage with a rate of 4.11 mills for 2009, despite having over \$6 million dollars of negative re-assessment. For eight of the past fifteen tax years, the City of Valdosta has rolled back the reassessment value for its property owners, resulting in either a reduction or no increase in the taxes paid to the City of Valdosta. We happen to believe that low taxes are important around here and as long as we can shoulder the budget in other ways, we will.

As you can see, your City government worked very hard during 2009 to provide important services, programs and projects to our citizens even in the face of some of the most trying economic times any of us have ever witnessed. Now is the time for governments all over this country to be the most practical in their budgeting as we continue to be good stewards of our taxpayer's dollars, and at the same time, prepare for the future and ultimately, economic recovery.

Normally in the address, I recognize numerous awards and honors garnered by our Departments and employees. I also like to list the quantities and measurements of each individual Department. This year needed a different focus and a different vision but I want you to know that I know how you stack up and that I would put you up against any in the country. You guys are the best. I thank our City Manager, the Deputy City Managers, and all the employees for their hard work, diligence, and dedication in providing quality service to our City. It is not easy serving over 50,000 people every day, particularly when we have had to ask you to do more with less, but each of you serve with pride and professionalism. Thank you to the City Council members for your commitment to our community and our citizens. You hung in there during difficult votes and some trying times of turmoil and tragedy and you continued to focus on the future. I must also thank my wife Robin, my daughters, and all of my family for their patience and understanding for my time that they share with the entire community. Robin is my rock and my family is what rejuvenates me. Finally, I must thank the citizens of this great City. I commit to you that I will continue to honor and take great care of the trust you have placed in me. Thus, it is my privilege to declare to you that the City of Valdosta remained strong and steady during these difficult times and together, we will welcome the bright future that lies ahead.

I leave you tonight with a Latin phrase I believe accurately describes our City and greater community in 2009. My dad enjoys Latin and this is in his honor: "Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito" which means "Yield not to misfortunes, but advance all the more boldly against them." God bless our City, our State, and God bless America.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Fretti asked for any additions or deletions to the minutes of the February 11, 2010 Council Meeting. Councilman Carroll stated that it was a huge task in preparing the minutes for that meeting and he thanked Teresa Bolden, City Clerk, for all the work she did on the minutes. The minutes of the February 11, 2010 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Ronnie Pierce, 823 Vallotton Drive, stated that he was extremely frustrated with an ordeal that started two months ago. He went to take care of his City sanitation and water bill and was told that it was approximately \$85. He told the cashier that it normally averages about \$35-\$40 per month and he must have forgotten to pay the bill the past month. The cashier told him that he had been charged a special assessment fee of \$35. Mr. Pierce inquired as to why he was charged the fee and the cashier told him that was between him and the City Sanitation Department. Mr. Pierce stated that he spoke with Erica Johnson at the City Sanitation Department and she showed him pictures of some trash that was supposedly picked up at his house. When he looked at the pictures he immediately said that it was not his trash and that it belonged to his neighbor. He has an excellent relationship with his neighborhood and they share the spot where they place trash. Mr. Pierce was told that the only way they could take it off his account or issue credit was for him to go to his neighbor and ask the neighbor to call Ms. Johnson so that they could take the \$35 off his account. He immediately said yes but after he got home and gave it further consideration and he decided that it was not his responsibility but someone in the City's responsibility. He went back to Ms. Johnson the next morning and explained to her that on second thought he did not think he should be required to confront his neighbor about the special pickup. She told him that the only way they could take it off was if he confronted them and the only other option was to speak to a supervisor. At that point he spoke to a supervisor who assured Mr. Pierce that he would go to his neighbor to see if they could resolve the issue. After a couple of weeks went by, he called Ms. Johnson back and she told him that they had decided not to take it off of his bill and issue credit. Mr. Pierce asked if he could speak to John Whitehead, Deputy City Manager of Operations, or someone else in charge and she said that he would tell Mr. Pierce the same thing that she just told him. Mr. Pierce stated that truly upset him for an employee, who was supposed to transfer him to someone in charge upon his request, to tell him that the person in charge was going to tell him the same thing. It turned out that Mr. Whitehead was on vacation or out of town so he was transferred to Gene Phillips. He left a message that day and Mr. Phillips never called him back. He called him three additional times and Mr. Phillips finally returned his call and told Mr. Pierce he would investigate it. Two weeks passed by and he never heard anything else from Mr. Phillips. Mr. Pierce then called John Whitehead on four different occasions and he never returned the calls. He then went to Larry Hanson's office and spoke with the Administrative Assistant who said that he was on a conference call and that she could handle the problem. Mr. Pierce gave her all of the information and details on what had transpired and she told him that they would get this taken care of within a week. That has been three weeks. Mr. Pierce then got in contact with Councilman James Wright and he made some phone calls and spoke with Gene Phillips and John Whitehead. They were supposed to call him and still no one has called him. He actually feels like he is being taxed without representation. If he had not gone to pay the sanitation bill he would not have known. There needs to be something in place so that when a citizen is assessed an extra fee they are sent a notification. Mr. Pierce stated that he did not receive a tag on his door or a letter in the mail. He felt like it was inappropriate the way it was handled. It was not so much the fee of \$35 but he has been fighting this for two months and it still has not been resolved. He had a conversation with his neighbor and explained the situation and asked if anyone had contact her. She told him that no one had contacted her about it. Mr. Pierce stated that this has not been handled properly and he did not know where else to go because he has gone through the change of command. He felt like this has been a disservice and he would like for it to be corrected. Mr. Pierce stated that he could pay the \$35 but there are people in this City who cannot. Mayor Fretti asked Mr. Pierce what was his idea for resolving the situation. Mr. Pierce stated that the first thing the City should do is to contact his neighbor if they are going to charge anyone and it needs to be taken off his bill. In the future, when citizens are charged fees there needs to be some way to notify them either by letter

or hanging a tag on their door. Mayor Fretti stated that the City would send Mr. Pierce a letter explaining the process because of his issue with the process as well as the fee. Mayor Fretti stated that Council would leave the fee up to the Administration but they certainly want to help get some controls in place for the process. It seems as though Mr. Pierce may not have been contacted quickly enough and Administration will be contacted to find out if there were attempts made to contact him. Larry Hanson, City Manager, asked if Mr. Pierce could meet with Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, and provide him with contact information and discuss the details of the case.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that he is a critic of Mayor and Council but after listening to the Mayor's State of the City Address he wanted to commend them for the work that they have done even though everything is not roses. As Council addresses the citizens it is only right for the citizens to address Council.

John Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, Hahira, Georgia, stated that he wanted to share a thought about flood control. He lives north of the City and has water running toward Valdosta. For his flood control he uses beavers and plants trees. He has heard that urban trees are actually better for helping with runoff as well as permeable surfaces. Mayor Fretti stated that the Planning and Zoning Department tries to incorporate permeable parking lots and the City has been doing that for approximately ten years. Also, the City of Valdosta recently received the Tree City U.S.A. Award for the 24th year and the City will never stop planting trees.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2010-9, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH A PUBLIC ART PROGRAM (SECOND READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance to establish a Public Art Program. (Second Reading)

Mayor Fretti stated that this is the Second Reading for an Ordinance to establish a Public Art Program. The Ordinance will promote and further the appreciation of works of art, establish a Public Art Advisory Committee, provide for the appointment of the Public Art Advisory Committee, provide for funding the purchase of works of art for the City of Valdosta, and for other purposes. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there were a few changes based on suggestions at the Work Session and recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to establish a Public Art Program.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to an enact Ordinance No. 2010-9, an Ordinance to establish a Public Art Program, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2010-10, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE SANITATION ORDINANCE REGARDING RECYCLING FOR MULTI-FAMILY PROPERTIES (SECOND READING)

Consideration of an Amendment to the Sanitation Ordinance regarding recycling for multi-family properties. (Second Reading)

Mayor Fretti stated that this is the Second Reading for an amendment to the Sanitation Ordinance regarding recycling for multi-family properties. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there are a lot of apartment complexes within the City that are interested in recycling. Many are served by commercial vendors other than the City of Valdosta and by adopting this Ordinance the City is requiring that recycling be offered by providers in multi-family housing which is defined in the Ordinance as complexes with eight or more customers. It can be as simple as putting the recycling container out by the dumpster or the garbage container within the complex or do it on a unit by unit basis. This will broaden the recycling program and reach out to a segment of the population who want to participate if they are given the opportunity to do so.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to an enact Ordinance No. 2010-10, an Ordinance to amend the Sanitation Ordinance regarding recycling for multi-family properties, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the new litter signs that are being placed around the City. There are 80 signs currently in place that say “Please don’t litter, make Valdosta glitter” with approximately 20 more signs to be added. These signs have been paid for through a grant.

There will be a meeting on March 2, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the Annex Building regarding a striping issue on Williams Street and Alden Avenue.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, commended Mayor Fretti on his State of the City speech. It was a great message delivered in a challenging economic time and we appreciate the Mayor’s leadership and that of the entire Council.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Eunice inquired about the status of the Crime Lab. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they are down to the final punch list but there was an electrical issue that they have had a difficult time resolving. They found the source of the problem this week and have ordered a part that should be here in two weeks. Once the furniture is installed for the offices there will be a grand opening celebration. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether the Crime Lab will be the site of one of the first public art displays. Mayor Fretti stated that they are hopeful and they have been through contemplating several pieces. There may be one affixed to a wall as well as a double helix in the small park area in the front of the building.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 25, 2010 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:29 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, March 11, 2010.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta