

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2008
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, Tim Carroll, Willie Head, Jr., John Eunice, and James Wright. Councilman Alvin Payton arrived at 5:41 p.m. and Councilman Robert Yost was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Darren Waters, Bridge Builder Community Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE JULY, 2008 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for the July, 2008 Employee of the Month Award.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the June, 2008 Employee of the Month Award.

Mayor Fretti presented the July, 2008 Employee of the Month Award to Deanna Rowan and Edward Coppage (Fire Department).

Deanna Rowan began her employment with the City of Valdosta Fire Department in May of 2000 as a Firefighter. In January, 2006, she was promoted to the rank of Sergeant which is the position she currently holds. Edward Coppage began his career with the City of Valdosta Fire Department as a Firefighter in June, 2005 which is the position he currently holds. Their routine duties include protecting the lives and property of the citizens of Valdosta by responding to fires and performing rescues at accident scenes; however, May 21, 2008 was anything but routine. At 12:10 p.m., Engine 4 manned by Sergeant Rowan and Firefighter Coppage was called to Radiology Associates on Oak Street. Arriving just two minutes later, they were rushed to a treatment room where a patient had collapsed. A quick assessment revealed the individual had stopped breathing and had no pulse. Sergeant Rowan immediately began CPR while Firefighter Coppage set up an Automated External Defibrillator machine. After a shock was administered, the patient regained a pulse and Sergeant Rowan continued CPR until the EMS unit arrived shortly thereafter. It was later learned that thanks to their efforts, the lady survived and made a full recovery. The renowned German philosopher Oswald Spengler once wrote, "we should live in such a way that we may be proud of ourselves and we should act in such a way that some part of us lives on." The courageous acts of Sergeant Rowan and Firefighter Coppage exemplify this creed and remind us of how critical our service is to the citizens we serve. They are to be commended for their efforts. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Deanna Rowan and Edward Coppage as Employees of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 19, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council were approved by unanimous consent (5-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A REQUEST TO CHANGE THE NAME OF RIVER LANE

Consideration of a request to change the name of River Lane.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that in 2006, there was an attempt to change the name of River Lane but it died due to a lack of interest. Several months ago, the issue was brought up again after the City received a letter from a resident who lives on River Street. One property owner responded in 2006 with a suggestion the name be changed to Battle Street due to the fact the first family who lived on this street was named Battle. In May, 2008, a letter was sent to the property owners asking if they supported the change to Battle Street. No one responded in opposition. Advertisement for a public hearing on this matter has been run in the local newspaper and property owners have been notified by letter and the placement of door-hangers. If approved, the name change will not go into effect for 90 days per City Code. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the request to change the name of River Lane.

Robert Hatton, 402 River Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Hatton stated that he had originally requested the name change because he had several instances where a tenant living at 402 River Street Lane had their power or water discontinued and he would get the notice on River Street. Mr. Hatton spoke with Councilman Vickers about the problem and also met with four of the six residents who have corresponding addresses to River Lane and they were in agreement that this would alleviate the problem.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Mayor Fretti stated that no action was necessary because the original name was River Lane and it has unofficially been called River Street Lane.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-27, AN ORDINANCE FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO ESTABLISH A BEAUTY SALON IN AN OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an ordinance for a Special Exception for the establishment of a beauty salon in an Office-Professional (O-P) zoning district as requested by David Willis (File No. VA-2008-25). The property is located at 1811 Green Circle. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their June regular meeting and recommended approval (6-0).

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the applicant is requesting a Special Exception for a beauty salon in an Office-Professional (O-P) zoning district. The property is currently developed with an office-professional center and the applicant is proposing to use an existing tenant space as a beauty salon. The surrounding properties are zoned Residential and Office-Professional and the proposed use of a beauty salon in this location should not have any negative impact on the surrounding properties. There are no proposed changes to the exterior of the building but there will be changes to the inside to accommodate the beauty salon. There is sufficient parking already available since the property is part of an office-professional center. The establishment of a beauty salon in a Neighborhood Activity Center is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Staff recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their June regular meeting and recommended approval (6-0 vote).

David Willis, 3263 Old Clyattville Road, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Willis stated that he and his wife, Barbara Barker, own the complex and there would be no changes to the exterior of the building. The beauty salon located down the street has outgrown their current location and they would like to move into the complex. They would be committed to a 5-year lease which would be good for the neighborhood. Mr. Willis asked Council's consideration in approving the Special Exception.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-27, for a Special Exception for the establishment of a beauty salon in an Office-Professional (O-P) zoning district as requested by David Willis, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-28, AN ORDINANCE FOR A SPECIAL EXCEPTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MONTESSORI SCHOOL IN A RESIDENTIAL-PROFESSIONAL (R-P) ZONING DISTRICT

07/10/08 (CONTINUED)

Consideration of an ordinance for a Special Exception for the establishment of a Montessori School in a Residential-Professional (R-P) zoning district as requested by Michelle Gardner (File No. VA-2008-26). The property is located at 1701 North Patterson Street. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their June regular meeting and recommended approval (6-0).

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the applicant is requesting a Special Exception for the establishment of a Montessori School in a Residential-Professional (R-P) zoning district. The property is currently developed with a two-story brick building and the applicant intends to use a portion of it for a Montessori School for approximately 24 children. The applicant is licensed through the Department of Education and Regulatory Services and does not have licenses for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. The applicant will not be providing lunch but will provide snacks. The property is surrounded by Multi-Family Residential and some office uses. The proposed use of a Montessori School in this location should not have any negative impact on the surrounding properties. There is sufficient parking already available and the majority of pick-up/drop-off can occur from West Moore Street. The property is in a Transitional Neighborhood Activity Center, which anticipates a gradual transition from residential uses to slightly more intense uses. The establishment of a Montessori School so close to Valdosta State University is ideal for future partnerships between the two institutions. The proposed use is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and the surrounding land use. Staff recommended approval of the Special Exception. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their June regular meeting and recommended approval (6-0 vote). Councilman Payton inquired about the playground equipment located in the back. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that there is also a Speech Therapy School located in the building and those children use the playground equipment; however, the children attending the Montessori School will also use the equipment.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-28, for a Special Exception to establish a Montessori School in a Residential-Professional (R-P) zoning district as requested by Michelle Gardner, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-29, AN ORDINANCE FOR A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF VALDOSTA ZONING ORDINANCE FOR ANIMAL FOSTER CARE PROVIDER PROVISIONS

Consideration of an ordinance for a Text Amendment to the City of Valdosta Zoning Ordinance for animal foster care provider provisions as requested by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Humane Society and the City of Valdosta. The Text Amendment would permit animal foster care providers to house six animals following permitting by the City.

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Humane Society has requested the City to amend the Zoning Ordinance in regards to the number of animals permitted within a residence. The Ordinance currently limits the number of animals to two animals and the revision would be for those providers who are registered with the Humane Society as legitimate foster care providers to have up to six animals. This would be limited to dogs and/or cats and does not include horses. In order to participate, individuals must be members of the Humane Society, must meet the Society's participation requirements including local inspections, and must also meet the State Department of Agriculture requirements, which includes an annual inspection. They would also complete a permit form in the Planning and Zoning Office. This process would allow the City to clearly identify those individuals providing foster care and to ensure no over-population of such foster care providers occurs in any one area. The foster care providers would be inspected twice a year by the Humane Society and once a year by the State Department of Agriculture. They would still be held to the existing standards regarding outdoor animal enclosures and those within the Animal Control Ordinance. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the wording "and/or" could be interpreted to mean six dogs and six cats. George Talley, City

Attorney, stated that “and/or” means a total between the two but he would change the wording to read a total of six cats or six dogs or any combination thereof. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what guidelines would be used to determine whether there were too many animal foster care providers in an area. Mayor Fretti asked whether the Text Amendment would take into consideration the proximity of fostering and whether the Zoning Office could keep track of that. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that the Text Amendment does not include proximity but a provision could be added to the Text Amendment. With the permitting process, it would be very easy to keep track of the animal foster care providers. Councilman Vickers stated that there should be some type of guideline added to the Text Amendment so that it is not left open to interpretation. Mayor Fretti stated that this may take some legal and planner interpretation and Council could either pass the Text Amendment tonight and then come back with an Amendment or postpone the request. George Talley, City Attorney, inquired as to whether Councilman Vickers wanted the providers separated in a certain area or within one-half square mile. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that they could use any type of a distance range which is easier to enforce than a block range. They have not had any prior issues with this and if it became an issue then the ordinance could be amended. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there are approximately 10-11 animal foster care families within the City and suggested that Council approve the Text Amendment and then have Staff review this. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that this could be incorporated into the new Land Development Regulations that will be brought before Council in September. Councilman Carroll stated that he would like for Staff to meet with the Humane Society on this as well.

Mechelle Sullivan, Foster Adoption Coordinator for the Humane Society, spoke in favor of the request. Ms. Sullivan stated that she wished they did have a problem of having so many animal foster care providers in a certain area but that is not the case. They beg for foster homes and cannot get them. The Humane Society feels that the rights of pet owners should never infringe on the rights of non-pet owners or other pet owners. They do not want to promote over crowded conditions, nuisance problems, or any pet-related problems that could come up. The Humane Society takes the Foster Adoption Program very seriously and not only do they have to live up to the requirements of the Department of Agriculture, they also put high standards on the foster homes. The Humane Society requires that all of their cats and dogs be primarily kept as inside pets and strictly indoors at night. They do not allow for any outdoor kenneling or chaining. All of their pets are required to be spayed or neutered and in foster homes, their current pets have to be spayed or neutered, up to date on shots, and micro-chipped. The Humane Society believes that euthanasia rates would be much higher if not for their efforts and those of the Lake Park Animal Rescue. Without this special permit, they could not continue to do what they do. Ms. Sullivan asked Council’s consideration in approving the request. Councilman Head inquired as to how many animals the Humane Society currently has in foster care. Ms. Sullivan stated that they have approximately 20 cats and 5 dogs and they do not have 10 foster homes at the present time.

No one spoke against the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-29, for a Text Amendment to the City of Valdosta Zoning Ordinance for animal foster care provider provisions with the density details to be worked out at a later date as requested by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Humane Society and the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

PANHANDLING/SOLICITATION ORDINANCE (FIRST READING)

Consideration of Panhandling/Solicitation Ordinance. (First Reading)

Mayor Fretti stated that this is the first reading of the Panhandling/Solicitation Ordinance which will amend Section 11-1001, Solicitations without Permit. This Ordinance includes legislative intent, definitions, prohibited conduct, and penalties. The second reading will take place at the next Council meeting.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008- 30, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ALCOHOL ORDINANCE

Consideration of an amendment to the Alcohol Ordinance.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that language in the Alcohol Ordinance was vague regarding open containers and the 500 foot rule so changes needed to be made to ensure that citizens who have special events, including the City or downtown business community, were in compliance. The current ordinance prohibits anyone having an open container within 500 feet of an establishment with an alcohol license. This amendment grants an exception which is based upon a special event privilege permit that would be issued by the City of Valdosta. The City would also have the right to put conditions on the permit such as whether there was adequate security, notification of adjacent property owners, adequate sanitation and clean up, and beginning and ending times. The permit could be issued on a one-time basis, monthly basis, or an annual basis but for no longer than 12 months. This would guarantee a review of the event on an annual basis and also gives the City the right to revoke the permit at any time for any cause including past history. The second change is to clarify outdoor areas. The ordinance currently allows an establishment with an alcohol license to have an improved outdoor area but it does not specify whether that was a private or public improved area. To avoid any question as to whether it included areas like downtown where the City has made public improvements, we wanted to amend that particular section to state a public or private improved outdoor area is eligible.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-30, an Ordinance amending the Alcohol Ordinance, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-31, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE INTERFERING WITH OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES ORDINANCE

Consideration of an amendment to the Interfering with Officers and Employees Ordinance.

George Talley, City Attorney, stated that the current Section 11-1007 Interfering with Officers and Employees does not include any intent provisions and based on some recent decisions it may not hold up in Court. The Ordinance has been modified to include that and the Valdosta Fire Marshal was added under Item (c).

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-31, an Ordinance amending the Interfering with Officers and Employees Ordinance, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

RESOLUTION NO. 2008-11, A RESOLUTION FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND (DDRLF) FOR 101-103 SOUTH PATTERSON STREET

Consideration of a request to approve a resolution for Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) for 101-103 South Patterson Street (Randall Crews, Crews Engineering, Inc.).

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the DDRLF Application is for property located at 101-103 South Patterson Street. Randall Crews, Crews Engineering, will be moving his Engineering firm to the second floor and utilize approximately 2,000 square feet with the remaining space to be used for residential and office units. The first floor will be rehabilitated based on what has been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. There will be two bays to attract restaurants and other businesses to the downtown area. The total project cost is approximately \$630,000 and the source of funding will be \$250,000 from Park Avenue Bank, \$130,000 in owner equity, and the DDRLF of \$250,000. Mr. Crews anticipates expanding his work force to six employees when he moves his office to the downtown area. The DDRLF program requires eligible applicants to have an approved Resolution in support of the proposed project, and Mara Register asked Council’s consideration in approving a Resolution of support. Councilman Eunice inquired as to whether there were any prospects for the lower floor. Mara Register stated that there have been discussions with Mr. Crews about some potential opportunities but nothing definitive.

A MOTION by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2008-11, a Resolution approving the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) for 101-103 South Patterson Street (Randall Crews, Crews Engineering, Inc.), the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book IV.

Consideration of bids for plumbing services for the City of Valdosta (Bid No. 36-07-08).

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this bid is for plumbing services for the City of Valdosta. Utilizing one vendor assures the City of a better price and more reliable service. This is a one-year contract with an option to renew. The City advertised this twice and received one bid on June 3, 2008 which was submitted by the current vendor, Barnard Plumbing, in the amount of \$60.00 per hour and \$75.00 per overtime hour. The only increase is in the regular per hour price which was increased by \$5.00. Other local vendors choose not to respond.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the bid submitted by Barnard Plumbing in the amount of \$60.00 per hour and \$75.00 per overtime hour and allow the City to contract with them for the specified period of time.

Consideration of bids for upgrading the North Lee Street detention facility.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that in 1999, the City hired a contractor to construct a stormwater detention facility on North Lee Street across from what is now Mr. B's Grocery store. Approximately 20,000 cubic yards of material was removed; however, due to high groundwater levels in the area, the bottom of the pond has been difficult to maintain and represents an eyesore and potential threat to the community. An upgrade is needed to convert this detention facility into a retention facility that will have a four-foot pool of water. This requires the removal of an additional 10,000 cubic yards of material. A stormwater manhole and stub-out pipe will be constructed to allow the facility to be pumped down in the event of an approaching storm or in the future when major maintenance is required. A separate fencing and landscape contract will ensure this facility is secured and screened from the public yet accessible to maintenance personnel. The low bid was submitted by Cowart & Cowart on June 24, 2008 in the amount of \$109,430. The Engineering estimate was \$123,000. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Cowart & Cowart in the amount of \$109,430 plus a 10% contingency. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the facility would be wet or dry. Von Shipman stated that it would be wet and contain 4 feet of water which could fluctuate. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether there would need to be any aeration of the water. Von Shipman stated that there would be groundwater constantly seeping into this retention facility and there would be no stagnant or standing water.

A MOTION by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Cowart & Cowart in the amount of \$109,430 to upgrade the North Lee Street detention facility plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

Consideration of a contract with Metcalf and Eddy for rehabilitation/replacement of a sewer line.

Afsaneh Jabbar, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated that a segment of a collection system that collects wastewater from commercial properties east of Norman Drive, south of Baytree, and ties into an 18-inch line by the creek is in serious need of rehabilitation or replacement. This segment of the collection system is constructed of steel pipe and runs aerially on concrete support structure. Both the support columns and the sewer line show sign of deterioration. Metcalf and Eddy provided the City with an engineering report for rehabilitation of this segment which encompassed evaluation of the system (preliminary design, field survey, geotechnical investigation, evaluation of existing concrete support structure). After reviewing the report, it was determined that the 10-inch line is sufficient for future build out. Afsaneh Jabbar recommended that Council authorize Staff to negotiate a contract with Metcalf and Eddy for engineering, construction management, and project management services of the system in accordance with Option # 3 which includes the rehabilitation of the existing line with cured in place piping, patching the existing holes, sandblasting and epoxy coating the outside surface, regrouting the manhole inverts and cracks, and five feet of vertical repair per support column and manholes. The terms of the contract will be based on procuring the project in a design build process. Upon completion of the negotiation, Staff will present the final proposal to the Council for approval.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to follow the recommendation of Staff and negotiate a contract for engineering, construction management, and project management services of the system in accordance with Option #3 with Metcalf and Eddy for rehabilitation/replacement of a sewer line.

Consideration of a contract with Camp, Dresser, and McKee, Inc. for construction of a potable water transmission line.

Afsaneh Jabbar, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated that the Water and Sewer Master Plan for the City of Valdosta recommended that the water plant be expanded and two additional water transmission mains be constructed as future growth occurs in order to deliver an adequate and reliable supply of water into the City from the water plant. The expansion of the plant has been completed. Mayor and Council had approved Camp, Dresser and McKee, Inc. (CDM) to prepare the design task order for the first phase of the transmission line project. The main will run east on Guest Road, south on Bemiss-Knights Academy Road from the water plant, and cross Perimeter Road, and connect Northside Drive. CDM was awarded a contract for services and price proposal for the work required for surveying the route for the new main and designing and preparing plans, specifications, easement drawings, permit drawings and other materials required for construction of the main. Approximately 90% of the design for phase one of the transmission line is complete. Afsaneh Jabbar recommended that Council authorize the Staff to negotiate a contract with CDM for the engineering, construction, construction management, and project management services of the transmission line under a design build process. Upon completion of the negotiation, Staff will present the final proposal to the Council for approval.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to follow the recommendation of the Assistant Director of Utilities and negotiate a contract with CDM for the engineering, construction, construction management, and project management services of the transmission line under a design build process.

Consideration of a contract with Metcalf and Eddy for engineering and management services to replace equipment at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Afsaneh Jabbar, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated that the City of Valdosta Utility Department treats its wastewater through two wastewater treatment plants. The wastewater generated on the east of Forrest Street and south of Savannah Avenue is treated at the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The wastewater generated in the area west of Forrest Street and north of Savannah Avenue, which is the majority of domestic wastewater, is treated at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. There are 49 pumps at this plant and the bar screen protects the pumps from debris which could cause damage. Some of the equipment at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant has deteriorated beyond its useful life and an equipment upgrade is necessary in order to continue treatment of wastewater. The following options are available to the City: (1) install a new pump station parallel to the existing one, (2) replacement of the existing pump station, and (3) rehabilitate the existing pump station with two new bar screens, electrical ventilation, and a sump pump. Afsaneh Jabbar recommended that Council approve the third option and authorize Staff to negotiate a contract with Metcalf and Eddy for engineering, construction, construction management, and project management services for replacement of bar screens and associated electrical equipment and controls, sump pump station equipment and installation, associated electrical equipment and controls, ventilation and air handling system, accessibility improvements to pump station structure, site lighting and miscellaneous electrical improvements, handrails, grating, and repairs to the concrete surface. The Terms of the said contract will be based on procuring the project in a design build process. Upon completion of the negotiation, Staff will present the final proposal to the Council for approval.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to follow the recommendation of the Assistant Director of Utilities and negotiate a contract with Metcalf and Eddy for the design build improvements for the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and bring back before Council for final approval.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-32, AN ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Consideration of a request to revise the City of Valdosta's Personnel Policies & Procedures. (Second Reading)

Mayor Fretti stated that this was the second reading of the City of Valdosta's Personnel Policies & Procedures which was presented at the Work Session by Charlie Felts, Director of Human Resources. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the rank and file employees had input in revising the Policy or whether it was just the Department Heads. Charlie Felts stated that it was both in the beginning. There was an Employee Committee with representatives from each Department who reviewed the entire manual and made recommendations. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that after that review it went to the Department Heads for input, the three Deputy City Managers, and then to him so every Department has had an opportunity to comment. Charlie Felts stated that the City Attorney also reviewed the Policy. Councilman Head stated that he would like to see verbiage included that deals with inappropriate relationships between City employees and elected or appointed officials. There has been a problem with this in the past and Councilman Head felt this should be included in the Policy. Larry Hanson stated that they would review other Policies and Code of Ethics to find some model language.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-32, an Ordinance approving the revisions to the City of Valdosta's Personnel Policies & Procedures, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-33, AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE A HOSPITALITY DISTRICT WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Consideration of a request to approve a Hospitality District within the corporate limits of the City of Valdosta.

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that several months ago, the Valdosta-Lowndes Conference Center and Tourism Authority began pursuing the establishment of a Hospitality District within our community. The purpose of this district would be to promote a concentration of hospitality, tourism, and entertainment related land uses. Additionally, a goal of the district would be to ensure each activity center is linked via safe and aesthetically pleasing transportation facilities. These facilities would include those for bikes, pedestrians, transit, and automobiles. Over the past few months, a Master Plan Task Force has worked with various City Staff members to further investigate the concept of a Hospitality District including possible land uses, design regulations, and funding mechanisms. The Task Force also created proposed district boundaries. The boundaries would include North Valdosta Road, Ashley Street, Patterson Street, and Oak Street corridors, and the Five Points and Valdosta State University areas to the downtown area. Adoption of these boundaries is the first step in creating a vibrant Hospitality District within our community, which encompasses several of the key corridors and gateways into the City. Should the Council choose to adopt the Hospitality District boundaries as presented, the next steps will include the establishment of an overall vision for the District, the delineation of sub-areas, the identification of possible funding sources, and the preparation of land development regulations to ensure consistent growth and development. These steps will be completed in part by the Master Plan Task Force and City Staff. The proposed Land Development Regulations (LDR) already include provisions for a Baytree-University Corridor Overlay District as well as an Urban Commercial Corridor Overlay District and should Council adopt the proposed Hospitality District, these overlays could be incorporated into the new district. George Talley, City Attorney, stated that this boundary will also be included in the Panhandling/Solicitation Ordinance. Anne-Marie Wolff stated that a verbiage description will be drafted based on the revised map and it does include those properties fronting on those corridors that are highlighted. Councilman Carroll stated that it was a pleasure working with Anne-Marie Wolff, Don Poor, Executive Director of the James H. Rainwater Conference Center, and members of the Task Force on this project. This is a great first step for our community and those areas that attract tourism and economic growth in our City.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2008-33, an Ordinance for a Hospitality District within the corporate limits of the City of Valdosta as depicted on the map, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

Consideration of naming the Community Center located on Gornto Road.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City purchased a church on Gornto Road and it is being used as a Parks and Recreation Community Center. The facility has not been named prior to formalizing contracts with

the Parks and Recreation Authority. Councilman Yost has met with many residents of the neighborhood and they are very supportive of naming it the Wood Valley Community Center. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request to rename the Community Center located on Gornto Road the Wood Valley Community Center.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to name the Community Center located on Gornto Road the Wood Valley Community Center.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND AUTHORITIES

Consideration of a recommended policy for appointments to Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees.

Mayor Fretti stated that there were recent revisions to the policy prior to the Council meeting and one comment by a senior Councilman to consider postponing the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to postpone the request for a recommended policy for appointments to Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees until the first Council meeting in August.

Councilman Head inquired as to whether the applications would be retained for three years by the Clerk of Council or if they would be discarded after each appointment. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that if someone accepts an appointment and then six months later gets transferred and moves out of town, then if the applications are discarded we would have to run another ad in the newspaper and do a lot of promotion. Since some of these terms are for two years and a lot of the applications are handwritten, it would be very frustrating to those people applying for the same seat every other year when nothing has changed on the applications.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that at the recent Georgia Municipal Association Convention held in Savannah, the City of Valdosta’s Main Street Program was nationally accredited again for the 11th consecutive year. Also, Councilman Eunice was elected at the Convention as the third Vice President for District 11.

There will be a presentation to Mayor and Council in the very near future on the Group Workcamp. This was one of the most heartwarming and touching programs that the City of Valdosta has been involved in. The interaction between the young people who do the work and the elderly citizens is very special. The City of Valdosta has also been approved to be a host for the Group Workcamp next year.

The Parks and Recreation Authority had their first meeting today at 8:00 a.m. and elected officers. The new Chairman is Russ Mast of Valdosta State University and the Vice Chairman is Robert Jefferson. They also appointed multiple committees to adopt by-laws and to look at facilities to house the department. They also want to enter into a contract with the City to keep services that the City is currently providing for six months in order to give the Authority time to do their due diligence. The County is going to contract with them for six months until the tax proceeds come in later this year to fund the Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he met with Mayor Fretti, Councilman Vickers, Von Shipman, City Engineer, and officials from Valdosta State University to discuss resolution of the problems recently encountered. The City was prepared to show its case as to the effect on the neighborhood and the University and Valdosta State University Foundation committed to address the problems. Von Shipman did a very good job of identifying solutions to the problem and the University has agreed to reshape the retention facility and there was one small improvement that the City would make to support them to help get some water downstream and add capacity. The meeting was very productive and professional and everyone committed themselves to a very fast time line and to inform the neighbors of the progress. Councilman Vickers stated that he was very pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he spoke with Gerald Ross, State Engineer with the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the permit has been approved to allow us to proceed with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor Project.

At the next Council meeting, the millage rate will be set for next year so the Tax Digest has been finalized and it will be positive news that the digest of the City grew from \$1.45 million to \$1.56 million. Approximately \$22 million of that is re-evaluation of existing property so we will be rolling back the millage rate to account for that. Advertisements from other entities indicate that not everyone is doing what the City of Valdosta is doing. New growth is approximately \$36 million in real property and personal property growth was substantial. Councilman Carroll stated that the property tax bill that a citizen receives will show no increase in regards to the City's portion. Larry Hanson stated that was correct and that was the purpose of lowering the millage rate. If your property is reassessed and the millage rate stays the same then you have received a back door tax increase. By adjusting the millage rate down to roll back the \$22 million in reassessed growth this insures that a tax payer does not receive a back door tax increase. The Valdosta City School System is not rolling back the reassessment growth and their millage rate is much higher than the City's. They are not raising the millage but have already advertised the required tax increase in an advertisement so they are not going to roll back the millage for reassessment growth. The County's advertisement indicates that they are not going to roll back the 1.25 mills from the shift of the Parks and Recreation Authority so that would mean that all tax payers in the County would be getting a 1.25 mill increase. Councilman Eunice inquired as to whether this would happen even after it was stated they would not increase it. Larry Hanson stated that it would be hard to tell without actually looking at their PT form that has to be submitted to the State. It appears that they are going to reduce the millage for the reassessment growth in the digest and it would be a very small millage rate reduction so they will say they are rolling back the millage rate; however, what they are not saying is that 1.25 mills was shifted over to Parks and Recreation to get directly from the Tax Commissioner. They are not rolling back the millage rate to account for that so that is like a \$3 million tax increase. Councilman Eunice noted that it was publicly stated in the press conference that the County would be rolling that back and it would be a transfer of the millage. Mayor Fretti stated that as it is reads now it is not a transfer but a new 1.25 mills for the Parks and Recreation Authority because it is not being rolled back on the County millage. Councilman Vickers stated that we need to put an article in the City Beat which notes where our tax dollars go. Larry Hanson stated that has been done in the past and this would be a great time to run it again because the City is becoming less and less a part of a resident's tax bill. The Valdosta City School System is now at 51%, the County is at 28%, the Parks and Recreation Authority will get 4%, the Industrial Authority will get 3%, and the City is at 13%.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Eunice commended Mayor Fretti for his participation in the ESPN Titletown U.S.A. event. Mayor Fretti thanked Councilman Eunice and the fans and stated that he was very proud of everyone.

Councilman Head stated that he attended a Housing Education and Long Term Planning Workshop presented by representatives from Ft. Valley State University and several local people. Items that were discussed included managing your estate, transferring property and trust, insurance and long-term resources, surveying property lines and titles, Medicaid recovery, reverse mortgages, and home ownership and foreclosure prevention. Councilman Head commended Kelley Thomas, Neighborhood Development Coordinator, for her efforts in assisting with the Workshop.

Councilman Carroll stated that he attended the Valdosta Block Club Meeting recently at Rusty Griffin's home and commended the City Staff for their efforts in helping with that project. Councilman Carroll also attended a presentation entitled, "The Art of City Making, Smart Ideas for Smart Cities", by Charles Landry which really opened your eyes as to what we can make this City become.

Councilman Wright stated that he had sent an E-mail to Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, about adding porches to homes. It appears that a citizen would have to go through the Planning Commission and pay a fee of \$150. Councilman Wright asked for consideration in streamlining the process. Larry Hanson stated that he spoke with Anne-Marie Wolff and they are working on the issue. It would be a Special

Exception Request for a variance to the front yard setback requirements; however, the problem is that without knowing what each citizen wants to do makes it difficult to group them together for approval. They will look at ways to consolidate this in terms of the fees but each one will have to have a separate review.

Mayor Fretti stated that there will be Internet voting July 24-26, 2008 for the ESPN Tioletown USA designation and Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, will be working with others to get the Internet voting site on their web page. Mayor Fretti thanked Sementha Mathews for her support and asked that Council and the citizens of Valdosta go to the site and vote for Valdosta as the ESPN Tioletown. Larry Hanson stated that the Public Information Officer, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Public Works Department, and the Parks and Recreation worked very hard to ensure that the City was well represented. Larry Hanson noted that Wendi Nix, ESPN Representative, stated that she had been to Boston, Knoxville, and several other cities in the running and Valdosta was by far the best in showing the most spirit and energy.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 10, 2008 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:04 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, July 24, 2008.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta