

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 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: Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Deidra White, and James Wright. Councilman Robert Yost arrived at 5:55 p.m. and Councilman Sonny Vickers was absent. The invocation was given by Mayor John Fretti, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE SEPTEMBER, 2010 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for the September, 2010 Employee of the Month Award.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) for the September, 2010 Employee of the Month Award.

Mayor Fretti presented the September, 2010 Employee of the Month Award to Gary Turner, Public Works Department.

Gary Turner began his employment with the City of Valdosta in June, 2004 as a Groundskeeper II in the Public Works Department. In this position, Mr. Turner is responsible for grounds maintenance in assigned areas of Downtown Valdosta. Besides mowing and trimming, he also supervises liter control, cares for plants and flowers, and maintains the Downtown irrigation system. He is the person who keeps Downtown looking good. Many people who do not work with Mr. Turner appreciate the results of his work every day. One such person stated, "Gary is such a hard worker. He goes out of his way to keep our buildings and Downtown looking great. I only knew him from talking with him when he is working around our building, but from what I see when others are taking a break, he keeps on working. He takes pride in what he does and it shows!" Another person wrote, "Gary is energetic, cooperative, and friendly. He assists the Downtown business and property owners whenever asked and goes out of his way to do things correctly and on time. We always know that for events such as First Friday, Art After Dark, and others that Downtown will be looking great!" It has been said that dedication is not what others expect of you, it is what you can give to others. Gary Turner's dedication to his job and the City of Valdosta has given its citizens and Downtown business owners something to be proud of and he is to be commended for his efforts. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Gary Turner as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 9, 2010 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (5-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Roy E. Taylor, Sr., 2209 Bridlewood Drive, stated that the last time he was at a Council Meeting there were some changes to the Sign Ordinance. He stayed for most of the meeting but missed some of it; however, the next day on the Scott James Radio Talk Show, Mayor Fretti made a comment that Council had weakened the Sign Ordinance and the City would be trashed with sign clutter. There would also be a giant, 40 foot purple gorilla on every street corner. Mr. Taylor stated that was not true because Councilman Tim Carroll proposed an Amendment limiting that to 200 cubic feet or less which would prevent someone from having a larger size inflatable device. That is how they make a living and to hire someone at a cost of \$60,000 a year for part time work to draw up Sign Ordinances to put them out of business does not make common sense. Mr. Taylor stated that he had called that person several times at his office and he only works certain days. He has still not gotten the Sign Ordinance that was approved three weeks ago so that they can be legal in putting up banners and signs. Mr. Taylor stated that the

City is spending his tax dollars and paying \$60,000 a year to a man who works part time to put him and others in the community out of business and signs are not that bad. If the Mayor and Council disagree with signs that is their prerogative; however, businesses need signs to get people's attention. He has seen one person go out of business because of one small sign that he could not keep in front of his business. This has been corrected now with the Text Amendment. Mr. Taylor asked that Mayor Fretti remember, when he is on a media show, that all of the citizens do not feel the same way that he does about signs.

Roger Budd, III, 5 Cherokee Circle, stated that he received a subpoena to go to Court because he has a sign on Ashley Street that did not have a face and this is considered an abandoned sign. If something is not done within 15 days then you will receive a Summons to appear in Court. Mr. Budd tried to resolve the issue as fast as possible once he was alerted to it and went to look at the sign. After several telephone calls he was able to get in touch with someone who could tell him how to resolve the problem without having to go to Court. While he was there, he saw some other interesting things at 1406 Ashley Street where the Honda Dealership is located. Mr. Budd stated that he receives approximately six certified letters from the City of Valdosta every month asking him to cut his grass. They go cut the grass, which they were going to do anyway, and they try to keep it cut so they can stay in business and rent property. On Ashley Street underneath the sign he took a picture of the right-of-way which shows grass on City property a foot tall. Then right next to the Coca Cola Bottling Plant there is grass eight feet tall. Mr. Budd had inquired as to how long it would take grass to grow that tall and someone told him approximately one year. If you look at the picture you can clearly see that Coca Cola is mowing their grass.

Nolan Cox, 1009 Cherry Creek Drive, thanked Council for delaying the Gateway Project. The economy is not going to get any better and Council will be glad that they saved the money. Some of the Councilmen, the City Manager, and the Mayor may wonder where all these wonderful ideas like the Gateway Project, Agenda 21, and Sustainable Development come from and how it just so happens that all the cities are working on them at the same time and manner. Mr. Cox distributed a brochure to the Mayor and Council for their review.

Gail Green Edmondson, 2824 Fawnwood Circle, stated that she represented a number of citizens who had asked her to thank the Mayor and Council for the incredible job that was done on the road work on Patterson Street. Ms. Edmondson stated that she has lived in a number of cities and does not ever remember going to bed at night and getting up in the morning with a new road and virtually no inconvenience. On behalf of many citizens, Ms. Edmondson thanked the Mayor and Council for the new road and for little to no inconvenience.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, thanked the Council members and people in other segments of the community for telling him that he needed to go to the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners rather than coming to the Valdosta City Council. Mr. Rhynes stated that he went to the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners long before he came to the City Council and got no results. He has gone to the Justice Department, television three times in Atlanta, and Federal Judge Hugh Lawson so it is not about him going to the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners. He would like to see some citizen, whether it is local state, national, or international, to find out that we have a problem in our jail. The reason he comes to the City is because he has heard the Mayor state that they will do follow up on what you say. Mr. Rhynes stated that he has not received follow up on the four or five presentations that he brought up before Council where the white Registered Nurse, who had her teeth knocked out and had two deep gauges on her body, was taken from the jail. He finds it very difficult in our form of government to come before elected officials and no one seems to be concerned enough to say "boo." This bothers him that we are a metro city and the newspaper does not even pick up to say "boo." That means that no one in this community knows anything about what is going on. It seems like there is an asserted effort to keep us all ignorant. Mr. Rhynes stated that in the future Council would not see too much of him standing here speaking about the jail if they would only answer the question that he put before them previously. He would like someone to respond that the lives of human beings in this City and in the County jail mean something. Mr. Rhynes distributed a document with eight questions that he would like for the Mayor and Council to answer. Once the questions are answered then he will put them on file to let the voters know during the next election how much they care about people who are in these conditions or may be killed. The City Council tells him that it is the County Commissioners problem in the jail and the County Commissioners tell him that it is the Governor's responsibility. He has gone to Atlanta and talked to people there and it seems like to him that Valdosta and Lowndes County has a set of laws all of their own. For some reason somebody does not want to address the issues. There is something going on but eventually somebody and something will change in Valdosta for the good of all citizens. Mayor Fretti asked Mr. Rhynes to send the questions to him via E-mail and inquired as to whether Mr.

Rhynes wanted the Mayor to collect responses from Council members and then send to him as was done in the past. Mr. Rhynes stated that would work for him.

Karen Noll, 2305 Glyndale Drive, stated that the proposed Biomass Plant in our community will burn wood waste and sewage sludge from the Waste Treatment Plant. Ms. Noll stated that she was very concerned because it is not a safe solution for our community since we do not know what is really in there. There are a number of organizations that show opposition as well. The American Lung Association is opposed to Biomass incineration because of health risks to young children, the elderly, and anyone with a respiratory illness. The American Cancer Society is opposed because of the health risks of the air emissions and water contamination as well. They will be using gray water but this still has to be released into the environment and there are contaminants in it. The proposed Plant will be located within a mile of two elementary schools and that is the fallout area as per the Environmental Protection Agency. Another school is located within one and one-half miles and two miles is the utmost limit. The proposed Plant does not have a filtration system for the worst kinds of particulate matter. Particulate matter, which is 10 microns, and 2.5 microns are not going to be filtered by the filter system. The smaller particulate matter is the most dangerous especially to the children in the area because the matter stays in the air longer and is easily inhaled deep into the lung. At the same site there is a proposed Solar Plant which Ms. Noll supports whole-heartedly. There will not be the dangers to our community involved in the Solar Plant. The fuel will not be burnt and there is no combustion or incineration.

Wes Krivanek, 303 Hartsfield Lane, thanked the Mayor and Council for looking into their concern about speeding on Hartsfield Lane. It is a one block street and has become a cut through street. The City did a study and there were 695 vehicles in a two-day timeframe that traveled that street. The residents would like to have speed humps installed for safety. There are approximately five or six houses on that block and most of the residents are elderly. When you go outside to get the mail or your newspaper you take your life into your own hands. The vehicles take the corners on the other side of the street and he has actually had to step out of the way several feet to keep cars from getting close to hitting him. They are concerned about the families with children on bicycles that live on that street and there is also a gentleman on a three-wheel tricycle that travels the street. If everyone is not careful someone is going to get hurt or even killed.

Kelley Kegel, 315 Betty Jo Drive, stated that she purchased a house in that community two years ago because of the location. It was a quiet community except for the cut through traffic. The residents would like to have two speed bumps instead of one if this is approved. Residents on her street are in favor of the speed bumps also. They are aware that the situation on Hartsfield Lane is being addressed first. Ms. Kegel asked Council's consideration in approving the request.

Genie Krivanek, 303 Hartsfield Lane, stated that Council is aware that Five Points will be undergoing some major renovations in the future and once that takes place they will see a major increase in traffic coming through their neighborhood. The vast majority of people who cut through do not live in the area and they are not concerned about the neighborhood. Ms. Krivanek asked Council's consideration in approving the speed bumps.

Nolan Cox, 1009 Cherry Creek Drive, stated that he lives near Sallas Mahone Elementary School and uses that road a lot which is a two lane street. Today there were approximately 20 cars lined up on the street with parents trying to get in and pick up their children from school. The banks on both sides of the road are very steep and there is no way to get through there and no one is directing traffic. You will have to sit there until all the parents move or turn around. The traffic problem on this road has been like this for several years and there is a need for a turn lane where the cars that are picking up their children can get off to the side. There is no way to go around all the cars because you are in a curve and the school entrance is right in the center of the curve. If you are at the back of all those cars you cannot see if anyone is coming or not. Mr. Cox asked that the City send someone out there during the school pick up time to see what can be done to resolve the problem.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2010-30, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE WEED AND GRASS ORDINANCE

Consideration of an Amendment to the Weed and Grass Ordinance.

Mike Martin, Community Development Director, stated that the current Weed and Grass Ordinance requires 15 days to correct a problem after a citation has been written to someone who has not kept up their yard. The Ordinance does not state whether this would be business days or calendar days and they are requesting that the Ordinance be amended to reduce the number of days from 15 to 10 and designate that as 10 business days. George Talley, City Attorney, inquired as to what is meant by business days which would need to be included in the Ordinance. Mike Martin stated that would be Monday through Friday and the Ordinance would be changed to reflect that. George Talley stated that it would be 10 business days excluding Saturday and Sunday.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the Amendment to the Weed and Grass Ordinance and reduce the number of days from 15 to 10 and follow the recommendation of the City Attorney that the 10 business days would exclude Saturday and Sunday.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for solar powered recycling bins for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 7-10-11).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Public Works Department is responsible for trash collection Downtown and provides this service for the Main Street Program. This purchase is for ten new recycling bins that are automatically compacted through the use of solar power. The new units are more attractive than the current bins and will allow for single and universal stream recycling. The Public Works Department received a grant through the Deep South Solid Waste Management Authority for a purchase such as this. Bids were received on September 14, 2010 and the only bid received was from Big Belly Solar in the amount of \$48,380 which was consistent with preliminary pricing received before doing the actual bid. Suppliers for this type of product are very limited although the bid was advertised in the newspaper and posted on the City's website. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Big Belly Solar in the amount of \$48,380 and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase. Larry Hanson, City Manager, inquired as to whether some of these bins were dual and not just recycling. Greg Brown stated that was correct. They have slots for cans and paper and a swinging door on one side for regular trash. At pre-programmed times the compactor will push the trash down so you do not have to empty it as often as a typical trash can. Mayor Fretti stated that these bins will hold four to five times the amount of a normal trash can so that will be less operational time for Public Works. Councilman Payton inquired as to how it was determined that ten cans would be enough. Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that they will be removing 21 of the existing trash cans that were initially installed during Streetscape and have been damaged. She walked the Downtown area with Gary Turner, Public Works employee, and Rebecca Shirley, Main Street Manager, and Mr. Turner was able to tell them, based on quantities, where his regular pickups were in the existing units. From that they were able to determine where the single units needed to be located and, based on foot traffic, where the dual units would need to be located. This will allow them to hit the highest impact areas where the trash is being collected and also the foot traffic to encourage the recycling component. There will be seven double units and three individual units.

A MOTION by Councilwoman White, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the bid submitted by Big Belly Solar in the amount of \$48,380 for the purchase of solar powered recycling bins for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of bids for Phase 1A of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor and Streetscape Project.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that between 2004 and 2006, the City of Valdosta entered into agreement with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) for partial funding of the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Drive Corridor and Streetscape Project. The City succeeded in securing \$500,000 in State Transportation Enhancement funds, \$159,373 in CDBG funds, and \$245,000 in HUD Funds. The project consists of beautification and revitalization of public right-of-way and infrastructure for an area that once thrived with several successful commercial businesses. It is anticipated the public investment will result in private investment and revitalization similar to Downtown. Phase 1 of the project extends from South Oak Street to South Lee Street and Phase 1A extends from South Ashley to South Lee Street. This phase was broken out for bid to secure funding from HUD. The design of other portions of Phase 1 will occur concurrently with the construction of this phase. The other portions require property purchases which is a time consuming process. Bids were received on this phase

on September 21, 2010 and the low bid was submitted by Woodard Construction in the amount of \$287,016.65. The Engineering estimate was \$385,919.50. Kevin Tolliver recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Woodard Construction in the amount of \$287,016.65 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this particular phase is 100% grant funded.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Woodard Construction in the amount of \$287,016.65 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for Phase 1A of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor and Streetscape Project.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to amend the Speed Hump Policy.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that the 1994 Speed Hump Policy outlined the required steps for installation of speed humps to slow traffic on residential streets. The Speed Hump Policy was revised in 2007 and the two changes were as follows: (1) A speed study should be conducted at the request of a property owner or resident prior to the submittal of a valid petition. This is due to the fact the vast majority of speed studies do not meet the Policy requirement for speed humps to be installed. (2) Allow property owners or legal occupants to sign the petition. A vast majority of speed studies do not meet the Policy requirements for the installation of speed humps. Very short streets often do not meet the 85th percentile though everyone agrees there is a problem regarding the safety of the residents. The Engineering Department would like to add a statement to the Policy that if 100% of the residents on a street sign the petition, then the City Engineer has the discretion to reduce the 85th percentile by 10%, if it is felt that the need is warranted. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that on a short street the vehicles would have to be 10 mph over the posted speed limit which is very difficult so if 100% of the residents want the speed humps then there is some latitude. Mayor Fretti inquired as to what the 85th percentile meant and whether that meant that 85% of the cars that go down the street were going over the speed limit. Kevin Tolliver stated that it means that 15% are going over at that level. Councilman Wright stated that he knew of a street where there was one resident and inquired as to whether that would qualify as 100%. Larry Hanson stated that would be 100% if the resident signed it. Councilman Wright stated that there was an area on Continental Drive near Southeast Elementary School which they felt needed speed humps or some type of calming device but there were no residents to sign the petition. Larry Hanson stated that in this particular case the school owns one entire side of Continental Drive and the City owns the other side so if both parties were in agreement then they could proceed. The City should have conducted a speed study if one was requested to determine the level of speeding and if there were any other options. Councilwoman White inquired as to whether the wording should be changed from residents to property owners in the Policy. George Talley, City Attorney, stated that was correct. Larry Hanson stated that it should be changed to property owner or legal resident because in some cases the owner may live in another city but the person being affected every day is the legal resident and it would be appropriate for that person to sign a petition. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether the City Engineer would have any discretion if 100% of the residents did not sign the petition or would they have to have 100% on the petition and a speed over the 85th percentile to move forward. Larry Hanson stated that the current Policy states that if 70% request it and it meets the 85th percentile then it meets the Policy and they can proceed with the speed humps. In those cases they resolve themselves and they do not have to come before the Council; however, when the property owners or legal residents are requesting something then that should carry a little weight.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the request to amend the Speed Hump Policy as detailed in the presentation.

Consideration of a request for speed humps on Hartsfield Lane.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that the Engineering Department was contacted in February, 2010 by a resident regarding the speeding and safety concerns on Hartsfield Lane. A petition was circulated to the property owners to see if they were interested in having speed humps placed at both ends of the road and there was 100% support from the residents for installation of speed humps. A speed study was conducted and data was collected in front of 304 Hartsfield Lane on Tuesday, February 9, 2010. A total of 695 motorists traveled this street

at an average (mean) speed of 27 mph on this 30 mph posted street. The barometer used to determine if speed humps are truly warranted using the Speed Hump Policy is for the 85th percentile speed to be 10 mph over the posted speed limit. In this case, the 85th percentile speed was only 32 mph. Motorists are using this street to cut through the neighborhood which presents a danger to those who live on this street. Kevin Tolliver recommended that Council approve the request for speed humps on Hartsfield Lane. Mayor Fretti inquired as to how the Interim City Engineer would determine the type of speed hump that would be placed on Hartsfield Lane. Kevin Tolliver stated that there are guidelines for speed humps and the width and spacing is determined by the speed limit on the street. Mayor Fretti inquired as to the cost of an average speed hump. Kevin Tolliver stated that the speed hump would cost approximately \$2,000 to \$2,500 installed. Councilman Payton inquired about using a temporary speed hump. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the temporary speed humps are generally more abrupt and they are used more where people are rolling through stop signs. Councilman Carroll stated that for an eight-house stretch of street to have 695 vehicles travel on it that was quite a bit and the City may want to look at lowering the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. Larry Hanson stated that area was previously one of the unincorporated islands and those signs were most likely installed many years ago and they have never been evaluated by the City. The Interim City Engineer would need to evaluate the area and then post the speed limit accordingly.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the request for speed humps on Hartsfield Lane.

Consideration of a request to approve right-of-way acquisitions and related costs for the Tucker Road Bridge Project.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) had the removal and repair of the Tucker Road bridge at Dukes Bay Canal on their project list for FY 2011. Following a DOT inspection of the bridge in 2009, the bridge was closed to vehicular traffic due to the disrepair of the bridge. As a result, the DOT agreed to pay 100% of the costs to replace the bridge. In January, 2010, the City entered into an agreement with the DOT and their policy states that the local partner in bridge construction performs all tasks for property acquisition. In addition, the local partner funds that aspect of the process. The right-of-way purchase process was problematic because the property, which is owned by GM Salvage Yard, contained a stormwater management pond and has an inventory of junk cars at the location. The City was required by the DOT guidelines to retain an appraiser, an engineer, and a negotiator to analyze the situation. The property cost is \$15,093, the cost for relocating the stormwater pond is \$75,032, and the cost to relocate the owner's inventory is \$13,320. The total project outlay is \$103,445. The project will be awarded in January or February, 2011 by the DOT and construction is expected to be completed within six months. The estimated bridge replacement cost according to the DOT is \$735,000 and they will pay 100% of the bridge replacement costs. Kevin Tolliver recommended that Council approve the right-of-way acquisitions and related costs for the Tucker Road Bridge Project. Councilman Yost stated that he wanted to be sure that the stormwater pond is being moved to the best possible location and that it will last there for many years because that is a lot of money to spend on moving a pond. Kevin Tolliver stated that in order to treat the first flush of grease and oil from the parking lot, the stormwater pond had to be on the lower end of the property. It is presently at the lower end of the road and will be moved slightly to the north. Larry Hanson stated that the DOT follows Federal uniform requirements which is mandatory and is called Cost for Cure. The right-of-way needed was encroaching into their existing retention pond so there is absolutely no choice but to relocate it. It has been engineered by the DOT, we have followed all of their requirements, and we hired the personnel that the DOT dictated. With this bridge being out, it has been a real inconvenience to the community. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether the pond will be moved somewhere else on the owner's property. Larry Hanson stated that it will be moved somewhere else on the owner's property and it will be maintained by the property owner. Councilman Payton inquired about whether moving the owner's inventory was optional. Kevin Tolliver stated that they would need to include that in the total project cost. Councilwoman White inquired as to why the retention pond was so expensive and if that was because of the nature of the business with oil and grease. Kevin Tolliver stated that was correct. That area would be considered a hot spot and the standards are a little different. Larry Hanson stated that since it is discharging into Duke's Bay Canal it would be a complicated structure to control. It will have to meet water quality and quantity standards. Councilman Carroll inquired as to where the owner's inventory would be moved. Kevin Tolliver stated that it would be located somewhere on the owner's property and the cost to relocate the inventory was derived by the DOT appraiser.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the request of \$103,445 for right-of-way acquisition, relocation of the stormwater pond, and relocation of the owner's inventory for the Tucker Road Bridge Project.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Sgt. Marcus Haynes, Firefighter with the Valdosta Fire Department, was named National Firefighter of the Year by the American Legion. He had previously won the City's Firefighter of the Year and the Southeast United States Region Firefighter of the Year. This is a very prestigious honor and the City would like to recognize him at the first Council Meeting in October.

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission will be holding their Elected Officials Appreciation Dinner on October 14, 2010 at the Dinnerman Farm in Adel. Mayor and Council are invited to attend.

The Downtown Master Plan Public Meeting will be held on October 14, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at the Dosta Play House to discuss the draft plan.

The Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association will be holding their meeting in Valdosta on September 29th through October 1st and they are expecting over 200 attendees. One of the activities they are doing for the first time will be a design Charrette and they have selected Five Points. On Friday, October 1st at 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Center the various groups will be presenting their design concepts. They have been given some general ground rules and we will get some free planning services on what their dreams and visions could be for the Five Points property. Mayor and Council are invited to attend.

A Press Release was sent out regarding the City's web site being named as one of the nine top government web sites in Georgia.

Larry Hanson reminded Council that there will be two upcoming Ribbon Cuttings in the near future. The Freedom Park Ribbon Cutting will be held on October 1st at 10:00 a.m. and the McKey Park Ribbon Cutting will be held on October 8th at 10:00 a.m.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Wright stated that they had previously discussed putting sod in the field at Scott Park and inquired about the status of that project. Larry Hanson stated that he thought that project had been completed but he would check the status with Parks and Recreation Authority. Also, Councilman Wright stated that he had received a certified letter from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) tonight and the letter is dated September 15th. HUD had given him ten days to respond to their letter which was about the complaint of outside contractors coming in and not providing job opportunities for citizens in or around the communities that they serve. Councilman Wright stated that through some Open Records Requests and other things that happened he was privy to some E-mails and it surprised him that the Housing Authority was taking it as an attack on them by Councilman Wright and not looking at it in the light of creating and developing some opportunities for the residents that not only the Authority represents but all of us represent. It seems this was pushed under the rug and he thought that not only the Council but the Housing Authority would look at and create better opportunities and use of the monies that we already have in terms of working with the residents. Councilman Wright stated that we need to encourage the contractors to try and work with residents in these areas to create jobs which everyone is talking about. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is a Housing Authority issue but an example of what the City is doing is with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Project which Council approved tonight. They have established goals and the project has a 31% minority participation goal and a 7% female business goal. That is being written in the contract and we are requesting that the low bidder give consideration to the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program for meeting those requirements. Councilman Wright stated that all they are really asking for is a fair opportunity.

Councilman Yost inquired as to where Councilman Wright's certified letter was sent and if it was sent to the City Hall address then Council members should be notified immediately. Also, this week he met with Emily Davenport, Stormwater Superintendent, and Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, to discuss Sugar Creek and to get an

update on what is going on with the restoration. He would like to host a meeting at the Wood Valley Community Center once it is presented to the Mayor and Council so that the residents in that area will know what is going on. Also, Council played an integral part the in McKey Tennis, Freedom Park, and Forrest Street facility projects and he encouraged Council to attend the Ribbon Cuttings. Councilman Yost stated that he would also like an update on FEMA funding. Larry Hanson stated that Staff just received the Stormwater Master Plan which will be presented to the Mayor and Council to determine the final ranking and priority of projects. Also, they are very close to the point where the FEMA Regional Staff will be submitting the project worksheet for consideration and approval. We anticipate receiving the information in the very near future for an update to Mayor and Council at the first Council Meeting in October.

Councilman Payton stated that he would be at the Freedom Park Ribbon Cutting but would not be able to attend the McKey Park Ribbon Cutting ceremony. Also, he will be meeting with some constituents, City Marshals, and Mike Martin, Community Development Director, on Tuesday, September 28th at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room on the second floor to discuss parking issues. Council members are invited to attend.

Councilman Carroll stated that the water and sewer extension in the Cherry Creek area is nearing completion and he thanked Marty Carter, Engineering Construction Inspector, for all his efforts in responding to the needs of the residents in that area. Councilman Carroll also thanked Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, for her work on the new E-Newsletter. Larry Hanson stated we now have 1,650 people on the distribution list to receive the E-Newsletter and that was one of the things mentioned in the web site award as being innovative. Mayor Fretti stated that the E-Newsletter allows citizens the opportunity to review the three to five top stories in headline fashion and then they can go to the link and read more which is very convenient, efficient, and effective.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the September 23, 2010 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:09 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, October 7, 2010.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta