

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 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., Deidra White, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Brian Jarvis, Central Avenue Church of Christ, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for Awards and Presentations.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) for the August Awards and Presentations.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON SAVE OUR STUDENTS TRAIL PROJECT**

Special Presentation on Save Our Students Trail Project.

Mayor Fretti stated that the Save Our Students (SOS) group will be making a presentation on their Trail Project. Kontari Wright, 747 East Brookwood Place, member of Save Our Students, stated that there have been many complaints about students going to West Gordon Street and crossing East Park Avenue in an unsafe and disorderly manner. Because of this, SOS has created the Valdosta Community Trail of Tranquility. A few months ago, the SOS Program met to discuss what the trail would look like, how long it would take to be completed, and how it would be constructed. Many businesses from Valdosta and Lowndes County have made various donations such as gravel and mulch for the path outline, wood for the benches, and railway ties for the trail. Jamelia Wright, 747 East Brookwood Place, member of Save Our Students, stated that everyone wants to ensure the safety of their children whether they are taken to school by their parents, whether they take a bus, or whether they walk. To her, tranquility means peace, calm, and serenity but to others it may mean more than one thing. The children going to W. G. Nunn Elementary School would benefit the most because it would give them a safe way to get from Point A to Point B. Also, the children coming from Ponderosa Drive would have a quicker and safer route than before. On many occasions there have been many complaints not only from parents but from the surrounding community. Ms. Wright stated that the trail would benefit the children and the community and asked Council's consideration in helping them with the development of the Community Trail of Tranquility. Calvonta Williams, 2315 Glynn Circle, member of Save Our Students, stated they are dedicated to this project and one way the community can become involved is to keep an eye on the children from West Gordon Street who enter and exit the Trail of Tranquility. They do not want the children unsupervised when on the Trail. Once the community and businesses become involved this will be an awesome project. Daushon Goins, 2315 Glynn Circle, member of Save Our Students, stated that they are planning to have flowers, bridges, sidewalks, benches, and trash cans on the Trail of Tranquility. When he first walked through the Trail he saw litter, fallen limbs, trees that needed to be removed, and paths that needed to be cleared. He would like to help pick up the litter and limbs to help beautify the Trail. He would also like for people to use the trash cans instead of the ground. When tourists and others visit the Trail of Tranquility, they will hear birds chirping, feel the cool wind, and watch the squirrels running. The most beautiful thing about the Trail of Tranquility is the beauty of nature. Ashley Rose and Quentin Rose, Jr., 717 East Brookwood Drive, members of Save Our Students, stated that the key features of the Trail of Tranquility include trees that provide a natural feeling, a calm place, shade, and somewhere to just relax. The trees are special because you can find out a natural history about them. Kontari Wright, member of Save Our Students, stated that everyone could appreciate the Trail because it is very eco-friendly. All of the living plant life has remained in the Trail and most of the dead trees, limbs, logs, and weeds have been removed. Many of the materials in the Trail will be eco-friendly. The Trail will be very educational to the children and community. It teaches how to appreciate nature and nature will put your mind at a state of peace. E. J. Smith, 2205 Bemiss Road, member of Save Our Students, stated the Trail would be maintained and they will install mulch and a rock border as well as trash cans. Any paper or trash should be thrown in the cans and not on the ground. Remember, don't litter and make the Trail glitter. Draco Williams,

909 Brookhaven Drive, member of Save Our Students, stated that the project has affected him personally. He realized that this was not about him but about the community as a whole. There is a key word in "community" that most people overlook and that is "unity." Unity is one of the most powerful things that we have today and if we are decent people in indecent times and help one another we can get through anything and become great citizens. He heard a great quote by a very wise man who once said, "Our races are united by a history long forgotten and a future we shall face together. Our paths shall be remembered for in those memories we live on." Mr. Williams stated that he would like to be remembered as a good person and asked Council to help them utilize the Trail so that students will have a safe place to cross the street. He also believed that since we are a community we truly need to have each other's backs because if not then no one in this world will. People on this earth do not realize that if you are in a bind or struggle that you look to people to help. We look to each other for guidance so if we all help each other and give each other a pat on the back then we can do many things that we never thought possible. He used to play football for Valdosta High School and there was a quote that he really liked which was, "Players win games but teams win championships." We should be a team and win our championship. Calvonta Williams, member of Save Our Students, stated that there are very many wonderful aspects about the Community Trail of Tranquility and they are very serious and dedicated to the project. It takes more than one person to do this and before joining the SOS project he was unaware of the negativity connected to the area. Not only will this Trail touch the lives of this generation but generations to come. Mr. Williams asked for Council's consideration in helping with the Trail and winning this championship.

Mayor Fretti stated that the presentation was very impressive and the project has a lot of merit and if there was no objection from Council he would ask the City Manager to see if there could be a cooperative partnership. There was no objection from Council.

Councilman Wright stated that he was very proud of the children and what they have accomplished. For them to not only speak about a trail but what they could accomplish in the City really touched him. Councilman Wright thanked Von Shipman, former City Engineer, because without his help this would not have been possible. He also thanked the City of Valdosta's Fire Department, Police Department, Engineering Department, Public Relations, Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, Lowndes County Commissioner Joyce Evans, Lowndes County Engineer Mike Fletcher, Crossing Jordan Baptist Church, Beulah Temple Apostolic Church, Grace Tabernacle Church, and Greenwood Baptist Church. Others assisting were Pastor Bass and Pastor Bryant, Farah Reed, Fannie Wright, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Rose, Pastor Ulysses and his wife Beverly Williams, John Robinson with Tribe, Inc., Langdale Forestry, Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority, Amvets, and Gary Minchew Construction.

**PRESENTATION OF THE SEPTEMBER, 2010 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the September, 2010 Employee of the Month Award (Sherman Hall, Engineering Department).

Mayor Fretti stated that Sherman Hall, September, 2010 Employee of the Month, was called to duty and was unable to attend the Council Meeting. Mayor Fretti stated that the Employee of the Month would be postponed until the second Council meeting in September.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the August 19, 2010 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Beverly Madison, 1503 East Park Avenue, stated that the NAACP will be having their annual Freedom Fund Banquet on October 23, 2010. The keynote speaker is Supreme Court Justice Robert Benham. Ms. Madison invited the Mayor and Council to attend.

Tom Gooding, 3336 Bellemeade Drive, stated that he was speaking on behalf of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce and he was Chairman-Elect of the Chamber's Board of Directors. The mission of

the Chamber is to be the voice for the business community and a champion for business and economic development in our community. Mr. Gooding stated that he wanted to present a position statement from the Chamber concerning the proposed Gateway plans and initiatives. Other communities have demonstrated that positive and attractive gateways into communities play an important role in economic development. There was one comment reported in the Douglas County Sentinel concerning a similar gateway initiative in Douglas County. A local hotel owner reported that a business man who was staying in his hotel and exploring the area for possible business relocation left the area in a day or two due to the unsightly gateways and streetscapes in that city. The Chamber believes that an initial step for any gateway plan should be to clean up and maintain the existing gateways. In terms of developing future gateways, there should be coordinated planning among all the local governments in our community. The development of those plans should include input from the citizens and the businesses in the corridors that will be affected by any proposed gateway development. Mr. Gooding stated that the Chamber also believes that any Gateway Plan should be reasonable in scope and have reasonable funding made available to it as that funding becomes available from initiatives such as SPLOST.

Roy Taylor, 2209 Bridlewood Drive, stated that President Obama would never make it because he has too many regulations and ordinances coming down the track. The President put up approximately \$4 billion to help people save their homes and it was supposed to help 4 million people; however, when they finished going through the regulations and ordinances through the Savings & Loans, only 200,000 people were helped. Mr. Taylor stated that he hoped it would start here and go up in getting rid of some of the red tape that citizens have to deal with in the City and County. There were six automobile dealers in downtown Valdosta a few years ago and now they have two. When they left town they took 478 employees with them. The City lost those jobs through a lot of regulations and ordinances. Cass Burch is the most successful automobile dealer today with Chrysler and he took his dealership out of the City of Valdosta. You can now ride by his business and there are nice balloons that are not offensive. He does not have those regulations on him and he can display his signs. Ashley Street has lost 215 jobs because of a lot of regulations. There is a young woman that Mr. Taylor helped to set up a day care center and it has taken her eleven months. She was planning to hire five employees but she is almost barely making it now because she spent all her money. She does not even have money to put up a sign in front of her building and she has already been regulated on what she can do as far as the sign is concerned. Mr. Taylor stated that it is time the City got its mind on jobs and the economy. In the Credit Bureau Report today there are 800 people who are being evicted again this week. Last month there were 700 people who lost their homes. He went and spoke with a mother who is out of work and is losing her Habitat for Humanity home. She had to move her four children into one bedroom. There were approximately 300 people who lost their homes this past Tuesday through repossessions at the Court House. Mr. Taylor asked Council's consideration in helping to create jobs rather than spend his tax dollars on creating a beautiful City because we need to create something that causes jobs and brings our people back downtown.

Midge Martin, 1303 West Park Avenue, stated that she just found out Tuesday afternoon that the City Marshal can come into her yard and give her a ticket for where she parks in her yard. As an American citizen and a citizen of Valdosta, it is her duty to let Council know that is very sad. It makes her wonder if the City needs that revenue from going into your yard and telling you where you can park. Ms. Martin stated that ignorance is not an excuse for the law and requested copies of the Minutes from the City Council Meetings where this Ordinance was discussed and adopted. It appears the Ordinance is targeting the college students and that is sad also. We should welcome the college students because they are paying sales tax and purchasing lots of items from our stores. They are also renting our properties. Ms. Martin stated that she would like to speak to her Councilman to get additional information and to see if there is any way she can help citizens to change the Ordinance. Mayor Fretti stated that she could complete an Open Records Request to obtain information. The City had previously received numerous complaints from citizens about eight to ten people who were living in a three bedroom home and parking all over the street and front yard. It was a safety hazard and issue and Council came up with an idea after studying a lot of other cities. The citizens in these neighborhoods wanted front yards to be front yards and not parking lots so it was basically a simple Ordinance that stated that when you parked in a front yard it had to be on an improved surface. This could be pine straw or an organic material and landscape timbers. This was an issue in an Overlay District and if you ask the residents who asked for a change they will tell you it is making a difference. Ms. Martin stated that she could understand receiving a certified letter stating that this is the new law but to come in her yard and give her a ticket is a little extreme. It was a warning ticket and she did not have to pay anything. Mayor Fretti stated that every time they make a law in the City or the State of Georgia, while giving rights to one set of people they take away rights of another set of people. There is no perfect law. Ms. Martin stated that she felt like if her neighbor

does something she does not like then she should go next door and talk about it. If the house next door to her is a rental then she should call the homeowner and ask that they only allow a certain number of people to live in the house. Mayor Fretti stated that the realtors cannot put that in their lease due to Fair Housing Standards. Mayor Fretti asked Ms. Martin to stop by his office tomorrow to discuss this further.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that if the white woman whose teeth were knocked out and who had gauges on her legs had not contacted him he would not be here today. He told the Council about this incident three times as well as the Valdosta Daily Times and the television station but no one seems to care about people in the jail. In 1989 some courageous citizen filed a lawsuit in Federal Court and Judge Hugh Lawson found 103 violations in our jail. He gave two years for the County to come into compliance. On September 2, 1998, 2,000 people came together and wanted changes in the jail. They wanted people, both black and white, to stop having their teeth knocked out and going to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) without the family ever knowing about it. They marched and protested and they were criticized for it. The white lady in the picture was in jail last year and was pronounced dead for 20 minutes at South Georgia Medical Center. She was arrested again and her mother called Mr. Rhynes and asked if he or the NAACP would bail her daughter out of jail. Mr. Rhynes told her mother no. The mother told Mr. Rhynes that she did not know where her daughter was because they released her from the jail. The mother called the hospital and found out that she was at South Georgia Medical Center and had been in ICU for three days. They moved her from ICU to Room 447 and the mother asked Mr. Rhynes to go with her to the hospital. They never called to tell the mother that her daughter was in ICU. Mr. Rhynes stated that he spoke to another young man on Labor Day who said that the same thing happened to him. They took him from the jail to ICU and he spent seven days in ICU. None of his family members were called and they knew nothing about it. After 20 years we still have the same problems. Mr. Rhynes stated that he went to the County Commission as well. He has received letters from people and if he had not received these letters over the years he would not be here today. When Judge Lawson ruled in the 1997 case, at that time there were only three people who had died in the jail and they were Willie McFarland, Willie Lee Gay, and Ian Starling. Willie James Williams died in 1998. The Federal Judge asked them to make corrections. If someone had followed up on that Court Order then maybe the last 26 people, some or all, might not have died. He wrote the District Attorney in 2003 and asked who complied with the Court Order and got no response. He has still not received a response so he has nothing to do but wonder how it could be that in 2010 we are still facing this and everybody has forgotten these people except George Boston Rhynes. It hurts him because it is not a black or white thing but a right thing. A white friend of his gave him the information in 1999 and he knew nothing about it. He is glad that a lot of white people feel some pain for their neighbors like he does. After 20 years, citizens have been ignored much by the media which includes television stations, newspapers, and radio stations. He has spoken about this lady on three different occasions but no citizen outside of this meeting knows anything about it because nothing was said about it. Somebody is trying to keep the citizens of Valdosta and Lowndes County deaf, dumb, and blind to the times and unable to make intelligent decisions based on facts because they are not giving them to us. People do not know about this lady and her mother. Mr. Rhynes stated that he went to see her and she does not have money, is unemployed, and lives in an old beat up trailer but no one seems to care. We can dress and look professional but we are not who we claim to be. We are who we prove ourselves to be over a given period of time.

Nolan Cox, 1009 Cherry Creek Drive, inquired as to whether The LPA Group did the consulting on the Gateway Plan and what the City paid them. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that The LPA Group was the consultant for the Gateway Plan but he was not certain as to the amount they were paid. Mr. Cox stated that he had heard the amount was \$200,000 and was hoping that it was not that much. Larry Hanson stated that there was \$200,000 budgeted in the SPLOST for gateway improvements and not for engineering work. Some of that would have been to do the engineering work in order to have a project to build and all of that is eligible for use of SPLOST funds. Mr. Cox inquired as to what a gateway would cost. Larry Hanson stated that he was not certain because Council has not even adopted a concept yet. Mr. Cox stated that one of his concerns was that the City is biting off and committing to projects in an economic recession that recently was declared a double dip which means that it could easily go back down. That means home values, property taxes, and revenues would go down. SPLOST is not a guarantee and there is about a 50-50 chance that it will pass again. Mr. Cox asked that Council not over commit. He was also concerned that the City would have to maintain the Gateway Project and would be doing what the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) used to do in mowing and maintenance. It would be nice if the Chamber would agree to maintain it. Gateway money was put up from taxes that the DOT got from allowing people to cut trees. Now we are going to plant trees that block businesses with the revenue that the businesses paid to cut the trees in the beginning. It looks a little like a reverse cycle that is unnecessary. The City

does not know where the curb cuts will be and this could have an effect on the businesses because you live or die off of curb cuts. The City needs to be cautious with the Transportation Plan coming up, building a new library and a convention center, and all the other things that they are committing to. Mr. Cox stated that if the City goes for the grant money they should remember that if the cheese is free it's because it is a trap.

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, stated that he wanted to speak against the intergovernmental indignation promoting integrated segregation and implementing policies that not only discriminate against race but by class as well. There is no money and crime rates are high, but it is important to not only get a job but to have ownership in our community. Mr. Robinson stated that he represents the Black Business Association and the City Manager had asked that they have patience and to give them trust. They are doing that and trying to work together. Mr. Robinson stated that he was not going to encourage them to be someone's servant but to be owners. They need to be able to trust Council members and each Council member needs to be responsible for their District. They do not need double agendas and can make something happen if they work for it honestly. They need some money on the poor side of the railroad track and help to find some mechanism. They will campaign diligently to redirect their funds because they represent 55% of this City and spend over \$1 billion a year. They can organize it so they do not have to spend their money downtown but can spend it somewhere else. They need ownership and participation from everyone, including the County and City, and they need to work together to have one agenda and not have exclusion but have inclusion.

Ronald Jackson, Sr., 910 Williamsburg Drive, stated that there is a solar power company in Valdosta that can generate green energy jobs. He is a member of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce and mentioned to them about the Gateway Program and from this day forward, instead of thinking of toward new designs, new concepts, new budgets, new projects, they should include the green energy side to these projects which will reduce costs. He has heard about the maintenance concerns about the Gateway Project and there are probably maintenance concerns with the Community Trail of Tranquility; however, if we have a green energy side (solar) included in it then that reduces the electricity which is a benefit. Mr. Jackson stated that South Georgia Solar Power is here to be a service to our great City.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**REQUEST TO CLOSE AN ALLEY BETWEEN CHERRY STREET AND GOOLSBY STREET**

Consideration of a request to close an alley between Cherry Street and Goolsby Street.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that the City has received a request from property owners on Cherry Street to close an alley which runs approximately 210 feet in a northeastern direction between Cherry Street and Goolsby Street. The City has properly advertised for a Public Hearing on September 9, 2010. Kevin Tolliver recommended that Council approve the request to close an alley between Cherry Street and Goolsby Street.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a request to close an alley between Cherry Street and Goolsby Street.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2010-29, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE VALDOSTA LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS ORDINANCE**

Consideration of an Ordinance for Text Amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) for Chapter 210 - Overlay Districts, Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Chapter 230 - Sign Regulations, Chapter 302 - Subdivision & Site Development Standards, and Chapter 310 - Stormwater Management as requested by the City of Valdosta (File No. VA-2010-12). The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their August regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Matt Martin, Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the City of Valdosta is requesting to amend portions of the following Chapters of the Land Development Regulations (LDR): (1) Chapter 210 - Overlay Districts, (2) Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, (3) Chapter 230 - Sign Regulations, (4) Chapter 302- Subdivision and Site Development Standards, and (5) Chapter 310 - Stormwater Management. There were nine proposed Text Amendments that went before the Planning Commission and now there was an addendum that included some additional ideas discussed at the Work Session. Matt Martin stated that he prepared a merged version and there are now ten proposed Text Amendments. There are also two revised maps to go along with some of these Text Amendments. A brief summary of the proposed Text Amendments is as follows:

(1) Amendment No. 1, Table of Permitted Uses - Amend the LDR Use Table by allowing all professional offices as permitted uses in the Commercial Zoning Districts. Currently the LDR excludes many of these uses from the Commercial Districts. This is based on an apparent philosophy of requiring such uses to locate in office park environments (zoned R-P or O-P) rather than truly commercial areas thus further separating these kinds of development patterns. The proposal is to restore the allowance of professional offices to the Commercial Districts as was allowed under the former Zoning Ordinance. Staff has plans to re-visit the Commercial District regulations at a later date and re-examine all of the permitted uses and development standards again at that time.

(2) Amendment No. 2, Supplemental Regulations for Drive-Thru Facilities – Reduce the number of minimum required stacking spaces in the drive-thru lane, as well as differentiate the language for facilities with multiple drive-thru lanes. It is also proposed to delete the menu board sign provisions from this section since these are already addressed in the Sign Regulations chapter, as well to correct some minor wordings to add better clarity. The original language was to relax the standard requiring eight vehicles in a stacking lane to six vehicles in front of the order board and to eliminate the requirement of having additional vehicles stacked between the order board and pickup windows. One of the proposals under Alternative A was to distinguish between new drive-thru and existing drive-thru facilities. This would require six vehicles for the new facilities and four vehicles for an existing facility that is being renovated or redeveloped. Alternative B is similar in that it is still has six vehicles for drive-thru facilities but adds a sentence that says, “For redevelopment of existing drive-thru facilities, fewer stacking spaces may be allowed upon approval of an Administrative Variance.” This would open it up for discretion by Staff through the Administrative Variance process on a case-by-case basis. Alternative C was to change the proposal of six to five stacking spaces which would be the minimum required across the board for both existing and new facilities. Mayor Fretti stated that the motion must include in this Section either Alternatives A, B, or C or the original. Councilman Yost stated that he liked Alternative B because it gives six vehicles and an Administrative Variance for Staff’s discretion. Councilman Vickers was in agreement with Councilman Yost. Matt Martin inquired as to whether they would like to insert Alternative B in Amendment No. 2 as far as formulating the actual Amendment to be voted on or wait until the motion is made. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether Council objected to inserting Alternative B in Amendment No. 2. Councilman Carroll stated that if they went with Alternative B it still does not prevent a business from applying for a Variance. The business would not be granted an Administrative Variance but could still go for a Variance. Matt Martin stated that was correct. Mayor Fretti stated that they could appeal the Administrative Variance and it does not affect pre-existing buildings that were used for drive-thrus and then purchased by another owner for a drive-thru. Matt Martin stated that it would be subject to review for compliance and if they ask it could be reviewed administratively. Councilman Vickers stated that he liked this because it would be done administratively.

(3) Amendment No. 3, Supplemental Regulations for Multi-Family Dwellings - Delete the “additional frontage” requirement for large apartment complexes, reduce the minimum required roof pitch for buildings, increase the allowable distance between parking spaces and the dwelling units they are intended to serve, and require parking lots with more than 25 spaces to have at least two points of access.

(4) Amendment No. 4, Supplemental Regulations for Churches in Residential Districts - Delete this section entirely. These regulations were crafted for typically large churches and they prohibit the possibility of smaller churches in residential areas. All churches in residential areas are already allowed only by Conditional Use; therefore, churches in residential zones are already reviewed on a case-by-case basis and appropriate extra requirements are applied to each one that is approved.

(5) Amendment No. 5, Sign Regulations - Modify the provisions for temporary signs to relax certain restrictions. Clarify language regarding signage setback distances and require a minimum spacing between

freestanding signs. Modify language to allow more than one canopy/wall/mansard sign per facade as long as the cumulative sign area does not exceed prescribed limits. Add provisions to allow signs for institutional uses in residential zoning districts. Add provisions to allow freestanding directional signs. Modify allowances for Administrative Variances. Matt Martin stated that the Addendum has been merged into the Planning Commission version and changes are as follows: (A) Section 230-8, Paragraph G, Temporary Signs – Insertion of language from the Addendum that was discussed at the Work Session which includes the definition of outside public right-of-way rather than the five foot setback, (B) Item (6), Signs in the C-N Zoning District – Insertion of language from the Addendum, (C) Item (E), Special Signage Types – Insertion of language from the Addendum which includes the two-year window date and separation of banners being regulated completely differently than before, (D) Section 230-13, Administrative Variances – Insertion of language from the Addendum which increased the percentages that are possible for an Administrative Variance in terms of height of a freestanding sign and the sign area. Mayor Fretti inquired as to where it was discussed about inflatable devices. Matt Martin stated that inflatable devices were covered under Item (E), Special Signage Types, Item (2), Banners, Air, and Gas-Filled Devices and Balloons. Mayor Fretti stated that there was some discussion about putting the two 30-day periods together if someone had a fall sale and it lasted 45 days and they might want to keep the device up. Also, there was some discussion about allowing it four times a year for 30 days. Mayor Fretti stated that he had discussed the ridiculous minutia about small birthday balloons on rocking chairs and they can only put one balloon. Also, there is no size on the air-filled devices and gas-filled devices and balloons. There is one used around town called the Dancing Man and it is approximately 12 feet tall and it is an attention-getting device. With no size requirement on cubic foot of air the City could get back the huge purple Gorilla that is 30 feet tall or the Big Lumber Jack whose head is bobbing because the air is not filling it up. The City got rid of those several years ago and we may not want to project the huge air-filled or gas-filled devices to our visitors. Mayor Fretti suggested that there be a size limit based on cubic feet or height. Matt Martin stated that to fall into this category it has to be regarded as a sign because otherwise it simply an item that is either a decoration or an attention-getting device. Councilman Carroll stated that he has done some research on this and determined that the Dancing Man, which is approximately 20 feet in height, holds approximately 200 cubic feet of air. He would be prepared, if Council so chooses, to put that size limitation into the Ordinance. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether some of this concern is addressed through the 30-day allowance. Matt Martin stated that there is currently no limitation on size and it is only limited by time frame which is twice per year on each calendar half year and there has to be a 30-day period in between. Councilman Wright inquired as to how these restrictions would be enforced if they approve 200 cubic feet. Matt Martin stated that if you look in the language these are items that are allowed with a permit and currently it is worded with a banner permit. If we take banners out then we would have to come up with something like a banner permit to go with these types of devices. As with any sign permit, the business would have to indicate the size of the balloon in cubic feet and then the City would conduct a side inspection to ensure compliance. There is a date attached and once the time allowed has expired the City would then make sure that the device is taken down. Councilman Carroll stated that using the cubic feet capacity specifically addresses air-filled and gas-filled devices. Mayor Fretti stated that this could be measured in a specific volume but it could have different shapes. Councilman Yost inquired as to where Councilman Carroll found the 200 cubic feet. Councilman Carroll stated that it was a scientific guess and measured the Dancing Man by depth, width, and height. Councilman Yost stated that he did not have a problem with what Mayor Fretti has suggested but would like to put this off until they receive better information. Councilman Carroll stated that they could do that but if they do not put a size limitation on this then the purple Gorilla could show up as soon as the Ordinance is approved. Councilman Yost stated that they spent a lot of time on this at the Work Session and that is why he did not bring up his changes regarding trees until they had done some research and reviewed it instead of just guessing. Mayor Fretti stated that Council has more Amendments and tweaking of sections and instead of waiting on those changes they could remove section and then it will be as it is right now. They could bring it back up for more study in one month. Councilman Yost stated that Council decided that they could only bring up things quarterly. Larry Hanson stated that, for the sake of efficiency, they had decided that Amendments to the LDR would be done on a quarterly basis and not at every meeting. There is a distinction though in that this is trying to define something that is already in the LDR. Councilman Yost stated that he was not sure whether that was the correct way to figure the size on the air-filled or gas-filled devices. Mayor Fretti stated that because this has already been advertized they do not have to wait until the next quarter because this is one section they are revamping. Larry Hanson stated that 200 cubic feet is probably about right for that device. Councilman Wright stated that he was concerned that if you have a device that is 200 cubic feet and it is long then it could be over the entire building. They should look at the shape and size of the device as opposed to the 200 cubic feet. Mayor Fretti stated that Council could insert the 200 cubic feet, pull out the entire air-filled and gas-filled device section until they come back with a number, or leave it as is. Larry Hanson stated that if you leave

it as is it would be unlimited so 200 cubic feet would be better. Councilman Carroll stated that limiting the size would be a way to control what can be done with this section of the Ordinance and the reason he did that was to compromise to allow for a higher frequency of use. Currently they are looking at two times per year and recently it was once every other month or six times a year. He would like to propose once per quarter with a 30-day separation between each use. If they do it by calendar year it would be easy for Staff to manage and it would give local businesses a reasonable opportunity to take advantage of this type of advertising to generate business. Larry Hanson stated that the attention-getting devices have not been allowed for years. Mayor Fretti stated that they have not been allowed since the early 1990's. Councilman Carroll stated that he knew a business in town that was being granted a permit for as often as they were using the device. Mayor Fretti stated that it appears to be a mistake and a mistake is not a basis for legislation. Councilman Carroll stated that he would be happy to wait and he was only one vote. Councilwoman White stated that she would like to have time to ensure that she fully understood where this is before voting.

Matt Martin stated that there were no changes to the following sections since the Work Session: (6) Amendment No. 6, As-Built Drawings for Infrastructure Improvements - Add language to clarify the details of items required in the as-built drawings for sanitary sewer and water system improvements. (7) Amendment No. 7, Illicit Discharge Requirements in the Stormwater Regulations - Modify language to relax the City's requirements for swimming pool discharges to be consistent with State requirements. (8) Amendment No. 8, Inner Perimeter Road Corridor Overlay District - Completely delete provisions for separate Pedestrian Zones within the Corridor. Delete the segment of the Corridor from North Valdosta Road to North Oak Street Extension. Relax some restrictions on prohibited and conditional uses. Relax restrictions and modify language for various development standards applicable to properties in the corridor. Amend Appendix B to reflect a new map of the Corridor as well as resulting changes to the figure drawings as described by these text changes. (9) Amendment No. 9, Urban Commercial Corridor Overlay District - Delete some Corridor segments along certain streets that overlap other Corridor Districts, and also add the segment area of Inner Perimeter Road from North Valdosta Road to North Oak Street. Relax some restrictions on prohibited and conditional uses. Relax restrictions and modify language for various development standards applicable to properties in the corridor. Amend Appendix C to reflect a new map of the Corridor as well as resulting changes to the figure drawings as described by these text changes. Matt Martin stated that there was an addition of Amendment No. (10), Stream Buffer Requirements. It is currently at 50 feet for an undisturbed buffer which is twice the State minimum. The proposal is to change it to 25 feet in order to be in compliance with the State minimum. Staff found the changes consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended approval of the proposed LDR Text Amendments. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their August 30, 2010 meeting, found the proposed Text Amendments consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Councilman Vickers stated that was concerned about the problem they had in the past with churches in residential neighborhoods and would like to have a one acre minimum requirement. Matt Martin stated that in Amendment No. 4 - Supplemental Regulations for Churches in Residential Districts, they are proposing to strike the entire section and let the Conditional Use Process dictate the review of each church. The standards that are currently in place are very restrictive and require a three acre minimum among other things. Councilman Vickers stated that he was not concerned about the expansion of the churches or the ones that were already established; however, he was concerned about the problem they had in the past which prompted Council to adopt a three acre minimum requirement in order to eliminate churches from going in little store fronts in neighborhoods where there was not adequate parking and noise all night. He has been faced with this several times and it is hard to vote against a church when they bring half of their members to a meeting. Councilman Wright inquired as to whether the limited parking for churches in a residential neighborhood would be addressed through a Conditional Use Permit. Matt Martin stated that in the review process the church would have to have a site plan which needs to meet all of the City's development standards. Larry Hanson stated that if a church is allowed by a Special Use then it can be appealed to Council to set aside the parking requirements. Matt Martin stated that if the church does not meet the parking requirements and they do not wish to meet the requirements then they have to go through a separate Variance process. Mayor Fretti stated that years ago there were no regulations and a church would be created with very limited parking. They were parking all over the streets and neighborhoods and they were going at all times of the night. The City then made some regulations and now the rules will be stricken but the basic planning principles will be used to take these requests on a case-by-case basis for plan review. Councilman Vickers stated that he would accept that.



Roger Budd, III, 5 Cherokee Circle, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Budd stated that he has been in touch with the Zoning Office and the City Manager's Office regarding some of the changes that are being made to the Land Development Regulations (LDR). The section that he was most concerned with as a small business operator and property owner was the Sign Ordinance and the restricted and conditional uses on Ashley Street and other Overlay Districts. Mr. Budd stated that he supported these changes as they were good for business and Valdosta and asked members of Council for their support. These changes do not go far enough in addressing the red tape and excessive regulations of the free market included in the LDR. Because the LDR is over 1,200 pages in length, it is difficult for anyone to even know what they object to until something is enforced against them. Mr. Budd stated that on the attention-getting devices, the City could allow them for 60 days in any one year period instead of two stints of 30 days each. Also, since the City has a total ban on new billboards and upgrading existing billboards to digital, he would like to see that addressed in the LDR. The City needs to come up with some sensible regulations and reasonable policies that put our Valdosta in line with other metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Macon, or Savannah. Digital billboards would be a pro-growth move for Valdosta because they offer a low cost alternative form of advertising in comparison to radio, newspaper, and television. They allow businesses to advertise to customers in their immediate area and they allow a better value as they can be re-programmed from a computer without the tremendous artwork production and installation expense which could be \$1,000 or more per face. Digital billboards reduce this cost to zero and they allow the customers to divide the time on the billboard structure with other advertisers using the same space. This allows businesses to get their message in more valuable and profitable real estate location than they would otherwise be able to afford with a traditional sign. Mayor Fretti stated that three years ago the City limited the amount of digital billboards to six. That was new technology back then and this might give the City an opportunity to take down some of the other billboards that are falling down and not being used.

Jerry Russo, Jennifer Circle, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Russo thanked the Mayor and Council for the work they have done over the last few weeks in meeting with business leaders, listening to their concerns, and adopting a lot of the things that they had asked for. The business owners know they will not get 100% of the things they asked for but they are very grateful there was a listening ear and to know that Council cares. Mr. Russo asked Council's consideration in supporting the changes to the LDR.

Chris Sauters, resident of Coffee County, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Sauters stated that he has a business in Douglas and decided to move his family to Valdosta this year. He started searching for a new location to relocate his business and finally found a spot on North Ashley Street about a month ago. He found out that a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was required for his motor sports dealership and light automotive work. The building he was looking at was previously a car dealership and a building across the street was an automotive repair business and he thought that the zoning controlled what type of business could and could not be in the building. If it were not for the CUP then he might already be in business there. Instead he will have to pay a fee and wait another two months. In this tough economy small businesses need to take advantage and move swiftly. They are coming into a holiday season and this would help him get off to a good start. Mr. Sauters asked Council's consideration in eliminating a CUP for North Ashley Street area so that he can relocate his business. Mayor Fretti stated that light automotive is being removed from that section as part of the Text Amendment and heavy automotive is still under a Conditional Use Permit. Larry Hanson stated that all of the changes in the Text Amendment tonight are a relaxation of existing standards.

Sandra McDonald, 3155 Barwick Road, Quitman, spoke in favor of the request. Ms. McDonald stated that she is the owner of Sign-Arama located at 1835 Norman Drive and thanked the Mayor, Council members, and the City Manager for their efforts in making these changes which will definitely help some of the business owners. Mayor Fretti stated that when he opens a newspaper and looks at an advertisement that is his choice but when he drives he does not choose to look at the advertisements that are out there and that Council is increasing tonight. The signs are cluttering it up and that is a personal opinion of what clutter is. There are a lot of people who think Ashley Street needs to be cleaned up because there are too many signs that are too old, too tall, and too antiquated. We do not take them down but put more signs underneath them. Mayor Fretti stated that he believes the quality of a product and the value of a product will bring a person back and it does not take a flag sign to bring them back. If they like the product they will come back and buy it and they will know where you are. If you have something on sale then put it in a publication that someone may choose to pick up, watch, or listen. That is expensive so people want to put dozens of big signs out there that blink, move, scream, and are loud and do all kinds of gyrations to get a person's attention. They take your eyes from the road and when someone is driving you want their eyes on the

road. That is why there is a rule now about texting because you want your hands on the wheel and eyes on the road; however, the businesses want your eyes off the road. Ms. McDonald stated that she knew this was the Mayor's personal opinion but from a business standpoint the business owners will not go crazy and start putting up all these signs. This just gives them a little more leeway to use a less expensive sign such as the banners and banner flags. They do not have hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase things such as the giant Gorilla. People live in a visual world and there is advertising are cars, trucks, and billboards which is a fact of life. Ms. McDonald stated that she respected Mayor Fretti's opinion but asked that he trust the business owners because they are not going to go crazy in the City and put up all these wild signs.

Dan Davis, 1001 Cherry Creek Drive, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Davis thanked the Mayor and Council and Matt Martin, Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator, for their consideration in making changes to the LDR. Signs are a matter of personal taste and you have the right as a consumer if do not like the Dancing Man or sign then you do not have to shop with him. A lot of his customers do like it and he has the highest occupancy rate of any self storage facility in Valdosta. He averages 99.7% which is way above the State and National average. Mr. Davis stated that he was a little confused as to how the grandfather clause will work. He purchased an inflatable Dancing Man several years ago and at that time he understood him to be 100% legal. He ran the Dancing Man for a little while and was then told that he needed a permit which he purchased for \$15. There was some discrepancy as to whether he could have the Dancing Man up permanently or whether he could have him up every other month. Mayor Fretti facilitated a meeting between Mr. Davis and Anne-Marie Wolff, former Planning and Zoning Administrator, in her office. At that time it was agreed that the way the Ordinance was written that Mr. Davis could have the Dancing Man up every other month. He would have to purchase a permit, take the Dancing Man down for 30 days, and then go back and purchase another permit which he did quite a few times. Recently the City Marshal came and told him that the Dancing Man was illegal and that he could not put him up anymore. Mr. Davis stated that there are several proposals on this and he does not use the Dancing Man all the time because it says "Now Leasing" so when he has 100% occupancy there is no need to put him up. If he is limited to one 30-day permit twice a year and he may have ten units for rent and then he rents ten units in three days then he has burned his one time for a \$1,600 investment in this piece of advertising equipment. If he buys a 30-day permit for six months and then it rains for two weeks then the permit would only be for 14 days. Mr. Davis stated that he does not use the Dancing Man all the time and has been successful in his business for 36 years. Mr. Davis asked that Council reconsider having the inflatable Dancing Man up for 30 days and then down for 30 days. The permit has gone from \$15 to \$35 which would be \$210 per year in permits on top of the \$2,000 per year in stormwater fees the City is getting now. Newspaper, radio, television, and billboards are not right for everybody and it is important to let small businesses, big businesses, or national chains figure out what works for them. Mr. Davis thanked the Mayor and Council for listening for to the business community and their needs. Councilman Wright inquired as to how much cubic feet of air is used for Mr. Davis' Dancing Man. Mr. Davis stated that there is a base blower fan which is 24 inches and the actual body of the Dancing Man is 20 feet so that would be 80 cubic feet. The arms go out which will fill up some more air which would be approximately 100 cubic feet. This will be easy for the City Marshals to enforce because they could measure the base of the fan and multiply it times the length when it is not inflated and that gives you the square footage.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to approve the Text Amendments to the LDR with one change regarding Section 230-9, Banners, Air, and Gas Filled Devices and Balloons. Councilman Carroll asked that this be changed to the following: In non-residential districts, one air-filled device, gas-filled device, or balloon may be allowed on a temporary basis per parcel for a maximum of one 30-day period per quarter per calendar year with a minimum 30-day separation upon obtaining a special permit with the maximum size of said devices or balloons not to exceed 200 cubic feet of air. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. Councilman Carroll stated that he was not asking for Item (1) on the document that he handed to Council but was asking for Item (2). Councilman Yost inquired as to whether the motion reflects the change that Matt Martin made with Alternative B in Amendment No. 2. Councilman Carroll stated that was correct. The motion was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2010-29, an Ordinance for Text Amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) for Chapter 210 - Overlay Districts, Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Chapter 230 - Sign Regulations, Chapter 302 - Subdivision & Site Development Standards, and Chapter 310 - Stormwater Management as requested by the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII. Councilman Vickers was absent for the vote.

Consideration of a Request for Proposal for a Primary Care Clinic (RFP No. 29-09-10).

Charlie Felts, Human Resources Director, stated that the City of Valdosta has a self funded health plan which allows for flexibility in designing the administration of the plan and the benefit options that are made available to employees and their dependents. The current total annualized cost for the City's health plan, which includes all medical costs and those for prescription drugs, is approximately \$5.9 million. Prescription drug costs alone are slightly over \$1 million. Although the City's cost trend is lower than most employers in the southeast, costs continue to rise and expenses are projected to exceed \$6 million in the near future despite ongoing efforts to control and reduce costs. An existing option to control health plan costs is the establishment of a primary care clinic for employees and their dependents. Under the clinic concept, the City would be billed a fixed rate for doctor visits. A large number of prescription drugs would be made available to employees at the clinic and the cost to the City for the drugs would be included in a fixed bill rate. Maintenance drugs (typically a 90-day supply) would also be supplied by the clinic when appropriate or the employee would be prescribed the most cost effective drug or incentivized to use a provider such as the local network of independent pharmacists currently being evaluated. While employees would continue to have the choice of using their own doctor and pharmacy by paying existing deductibles and co-pays, there would be no cost to employees for doctor visits or prescriptions filled at the clinic. This encourages usage by employees and the highest return of savings for the City. A Request for Proposal for a Primary Care Clinic was advertised and closed on June 23, 2010. The City received three proposals which were from Airport Medical, CareHere, and Transform Health. Lowndes County Government also participated in the RFP. Participation by the County would increase the utilization of the clinic thereby allowing it to be open on full-time basis. Non-participation would not increase the cost to operate the clinic since services would be billed at a flat rate to each respectively. A committee from both the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County evaluated the proposals and selected CareHere based on established criteria. Operation of the clinic would require a dedicated building which would be renovated to house the necessary equipment and pharmaceuticals. Based on CareHere's existing clinics, the estimated clinic set-up would be approximately \$20,000 or less. CareHere also handles physician recruitment with City involvement. Each month CareHere will bill the City an administrative fee of \$23.00 per employee (approximate total \$173,000). A separate billing will contain an itemized list of all costs (labwork, disposables, medications, etc.) associated with running the clinic and are billed as "pass through" costs. This means that anything other than the management fee is billed at CareHere's cost and is not marked up. This allows the City to take advantage of volume discounts directly. CareHere estimates the first year savings to the City (medical only) to be approximately \$272,334 with a three-year projected savings of \$1,975,021. Additional cost savings could be realized by using the clinic for pre-employment physicals, acute care management, drug screens, and initial workers compensation injury treatment. Currently these services are outsourced. CareHere is a leader in the administration of sponsored clinics and currently operates over 80 clinics including one in Gainesville and Monroe, Georgia. Charlie Felts recommended that Council approve the Request for Proposal for a Primary Care Clinic with CareHere. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the City's fee was contingent upon the number of employees that participate. Charlie Felts stated that it is a flat fee per employee. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there is no minimum requirement and history has been shown in other communities that once it is rolled out employees see the benefit and it saves them money so they will participate. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether there was a minimum amount of time that the clinic would have to stay open to increase participation. Charlie Felts stated that it would be open 19 hours on a part time basis which would be monitored to see what the influx of employees and dependents would be. Larry Hanson stated that the contract will begin in January, 2011 for one year and they will have time to market it in advance. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether prescription drugs would be included in this. Charlie Felts stated that they would be included and they would come up with a City formulary which would be based on the most used drugs but narcotics would not be included. The drugs would be purchased on a volume basis at a very low cost and provided to employees at the time they use the clinic. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether some of the other smaller municipalities would be able to participate. Charlie Felts stated that would be something the City could consider once it is up and running. If the County participates that would put the number at 1,400 employees utilizing the services and the building that they are looking at will leave room for expansion.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a Request for Proposal for a Primary Care Clinic with CareHere.

Consideration of a request for contract services to design the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant pump station and force main routing.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant has continued to be significantly impacted by surface and ground water inflow and/or infiltration into the 54-inch gravity main feeding the influent pump station at this facility. This plant serves approximately 70% of the City and during significant rain events it cannot effectively pump and treat the combined sewer and storm water flows. This causes violations of the facility's operating permit and sewer surcharges within low lying areas of the Plant's service area. The proposed scope of work would replace the problematic 54-inch gravity main with a new pump station and force main going to a new influent receiving station which would utilize bar screens previously purchased by the Utilities Department. The location of these new facilities would also house a 4-5 million gallon equalization basin to manage and temporarily hold excess flows during large rain events. Flow from these new facilities would then be fed by gravity downhill to the Treatment Plant. This would eliminate both the surcharges within low lying areas served by the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant as well as inflows and/or infiltration along the old 54-inch gravity main which would be abandoned. In addition, it would eliminate the existing influent receiving pump station which is 30-years old and rapidly approaching failure as well as being prone to repetitive flooding at the current location. The proposed new receiving station location would also be the site of a new Treatment Plant in the near future. The proposed scope is to first develop 30% design documents at a cost of \$100,000 in order to determine optimum location of pump station and routing of new force main, easement needs with costs, as well as constructability. This will then be followed by full design using the lowest unit prices submitted through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Henry Hicks recommended that Council authorize the negotiations for contract services for 30% design at \$100,000 followed by full design utilizing unit prices submitted in the RFP by Parsons which was the highest ranked firm. The City has committed to Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to do this work.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve request for contract services for 30% design at \$100,000 followed by full design utilizing unit prices submitted in the RFP by Parsons to design the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant pump station and force main routing.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to approve the Gateway Concept as recommended by The LPA Group. The request was postponed at the August 5, 2010 regular Council Meeting until the September 9, 2010 regular Council Meeting.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that in the early 2000's, the concept of improving major entrances into the City was discussed and evaluated. During the extensive Transportation Master Plan planning process in 2007, the topic was again discussed in multiple public meetings and in surveys and steering committees. The consensus of those who participated was that gateways should be addressed and included in the final Master Plan. In 2009, the Mayor and Council adopted as one of their Retreat goals to move forward with the two Gateway Projects by hiring an Engineering firm to prepare a more detailed study that included input from the community and property owners along both corridors. The Chamber of Commerce also initiated a Gateways Committee that began meeting and then took a delegation to Columbus, Georgia to review and consider the public/private model that Columbus has successfully developed over the last 20 years. In Columbus, private businesses pay for the majority of the maintenance of the City's gateways through a Gateways Foundation created for that purpose. The City hired The LPA Group to develop concept plans. The LPA Group conducted several public workshops and had online surveys that interested residents could participate in by providing their opinions. A number of other cities and counties have announced or are pursuing similar gateway initiatives due to grant funding that is available with many grants requiring no local match. The Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) is now accepting applications and will award 15 gateway grants of up to \$50,000 this year to local groups and they are requiring no match. The DOT Program comes from installation of new billboards on the Interstate when they have to cut trees in order to put it up. They are required to pay a fee in order to do that as well as for future pruning of trees that obstruct billboards. The DOT then uses that money for beautification purposes throughout the State by awarding these grants. Also, last week the City of Columbus was awarded \$881,000 in gateway funding from Federal Stimulus Funds with no local match required. Douglas County and Douglasville are also improving their gateways as well as John's Creek,

Suwannee, Covington, and Newton County. There are many studies that show the benefit of landscaping gateways to the community and even private property. It is the highest return on investment of any improvements made to property. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce has provided a generally supportive position statement and they will be hosting a virtual Ribbon Cutting for a gateway at Exit 13 in Lowndes County that has recently been approved. Larry Hanson stated that the Concept Plan could be considered somewhat ambitious and there is limited current funding; however, there are grant opportunities and we should continue to work to create a system like Columbus where there is Foundation and private business support for the maintenance. Larry Hanson stated that we need to make sure this is affordable recommended that no action be taken on the proposed Gateway Concept Plan. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the City has all the available funds at the present time. Larry Hanson stated that the City does not have enough funds to do an entire two mile stretch of Hill Avenue or Madison Highway but could continue to pursue the DOT grant funding. Mayor Fretti stated that Council has several options. They could send this back to Staff for some value engineering and nothing would be done until a section of capital improvement came before Council to approve those expenditures, they could vote to approve, vote to deny it, or they could withdraw it. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they could apply for the DOT grant without adopting this. Larry Hanson stated that they could and it is rare that Council would be asked to approve a concept. This was a gesture of good faith in collaboration with other agencies. Councilman Vickers inquired as to the next step if Council does approve the request. Larry Hanson stated that they would then proceed with the engineering work which would be to determine where curb and medium cuts would go and also meet with various affected businesses. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether this would be done in-house. Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that the City's Engineering Department could do the traffic counts but the detailed surveying would have to be outsourced. Councilman Vickers stated that he had not received any negative feedback except for what he heard here and inquired as to what others have heard from the community. Larry Hanson stated that the Chamber represents 1,500 members who are in favor of it and he has had some small but vocal feedback. There were concerns about not knowing where the medium and curb cuts would be which are always intended to be answered in future engineering. There is nothing pressing and we do not need the passage of a Concept Plan to apply for these small grants so he was fine either way.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to refer the request to approve the Gateway Concept as recommended by The LPA Group back to Staff for additional research and value engineering and that Council take no other action on the item at this time.

Consideration of a request to authorize repairs at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that in late March and early April, 2009, the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant was severely flooded and encountered significant equipment damage to many of the treatment processes located at the bottom third of this facility. The majority of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allowed repairs have been made leaving only final repairs to the filters and conveyor systems to be completed. Over the past several months, Staff has investigated repair options and gathered quotations for repair of these two remaining systems. The proposed repairs have been approved by FEMA and funds allocated to the City of Valdosta to complete this work by the end of this year. If repairs are not made, these funds will need to be returned to FEMA. The cost to complete filter repairs is approximately \$45,778.00 and includes 594 replacement backwash nozzles from Eimco (only vendor at \$10,098.00), filter media replacement from Anthrafilter (anthracite at \$25,082.40), and Unimim (sand at \$10,597.50) lowest combined quote. The cost to replace the conveyor system from Applied Industrial Technologies is approximately \$51,712.00 and includes a new conveyor system, equipment rental, installation, and control wiring by Copeland Electric at lowest combined quote. Henry Hicks recommended that Council authorize the repairs at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to authorize repairs at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Consideration of a request for speed humps on Forrestwood Drive.

Kevin Tolliver, Interim City Engineer, stated that a resident who lives on Forrestwood Drive has requested that speed humps be placed on Forrestwood Drive. In June, 2010, the latest traffic speed/count indicated the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed was 10 mph over the posted speed limit of 25 mph. This is one requirement of the Speed

Hump Policy which was established by the City Council in the early 1990's. The neighborhood has a lot of young children and the residents are concerned for their safety. Approximately 70% of the property owners or residents on this street have agreed that speed humps are a great need in this area. The City sent notices to all property owners informing them of the fact that speed humps are being considered and no one has voiced opposition. Kevin Tolliver recommended that Council approve the request for speed humps on Forrestwood Drive.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the request for speed humps on Forrestwood Drive.

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

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there will be a 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony on Saturday, September 11, 2010 at 8:45 a.m. at Fire Station No. 1. Mayor Fretti will be speaking and the Police and Fire Departments will also be participating.

Nikki Forman, Media Coordinator, has been selected by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce's Metro One Emerging Leader Program as one of four emerging leaders in our community. A reception is being held tonight at the Turner Center for the Arts to honor Nikki and the other emerging leaders.

There are several upcoming Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies for Parks and Recreation facilities. The Freedom Park Ribbon Cutting will be on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m., McKey Park Tennis Complex will be held on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m., and the Forrest Street Community Center will be held on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Payton stated that the Airport Authority wanted to thank the Mayor and Council and the City Manager for their support in handling their payroll.

Councilman Wright thanked the Mayor and Council for their support of the Community Trail of Tranquility.

Councilman Yost stated that he would like to have a FEMA update from the City Manager at the next City Council Meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the September 9, 2010 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 8:17 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, September 23, 2010.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta