

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2017**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Alvin Payton, Jr., Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by retired Pastor David Tart, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE FIRST AZALEA CITY YARD SHOWCASE WINNERS**

Vanassa Flucas, Neighborhood Development Manager, stated that the Neighborhood Development Division started an additional neighborhood clean-up initiative in November, 2016 to aid the community in eliminating conditions of slum and blight in the City. This free mobile landscape equipment resource has been created to aid residents in the City with yard and neighborhood beautification projects. On November 19, 2016, the Neighborhood Development Division, along with Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, conducted the first Azalea City Yard Showcase. The neighborhood between Jane and Force Streets and Troup and Forrest Streets were selected as the first area to start this program. Ms. Lavern Snikes of 718 East Ann Street and Mr. Demetrius Patterson of 704 East Ann Street were selected as the first winners of Most Improved and Best in Show Yards from the Judging Committee. This service will be provided to neighborhoods quarterly in concentration areas of the City and by citizen request (as time and resources allow). The next clean-up will be scheduled for some time in March and will be held in the City's Lincoln Park area, surrounding Bethune and Bunche Streets.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the February, 2017 Employee of the Month Award (Thomas Hess, Utilities Department).

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that Thomas Hess began his employment with the City of Valdosta Utilities Department in November, 2009 and presently holds the position of Central Maintenance Superintendent. Thomas is responsible for supervising all maintenance Staff, inspecting electrical and mechanical equipment for lift stations, water and wastewater facilities to ensure efficient operations, and developing and implementing the annual budget. Thomas is always available for the employees he supervises and listens to their ideas and supports their decisions. If he sees a better way to correct a problem, Thomas instructs the employees without unnecessary criticism. On several occasions, Thomas has treated his employees to lunch as reward for their continuous hard work. As stated on the nomination form, "Having a great Superintendent makes our job much more enjoyable and boosts the morale of all the employees." John C. Maxwell once said, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." The great work ethic of Thomas shows he is a true leader and deserves this recognition. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominates Thomas Hess as Employee of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 19, 2017 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**ORDINANCE TO REZONE THREE PARCELS TOTALING 4.43 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-15) TO BOTH MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-M) AND SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-10) DENIED**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone three parcels totaling 4.43 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to both Multi-Family Residential (R-M) and Single-Family Residential (R-10) as requested by Georgia Park, LLC (File No. VA-2017-03). The property is located at 601-603 Georgia Avenue. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended denial (6-1-1 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Georgia Park, LLC is requesting to rezone three parcels totaling 4.43 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to a combination of both Multi-Family Residential (R-M)[2.84 acres] and Single-Family Residential (R-10)[1.59 acres]. The properties are located at 601 - 603 Georgia Avenue, which is along the west side of the road directly across the street and north of the West Park Avenue intersection. Collectively, the property currently contains two single-family residences. The applicant is proposing to combine the parcels together and redevelop the entire property as a mixed-residential development consisting of multi-family (36 units) and single-family residences (6 houses). The applicant is also seeking Planned Development approval for this proposed development, and this is being processed and reviewed under Case File No. VA-2017-04. The property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of both R-M and R-10 Zoning. The property is also within the Residential Parking Overlay District. The City's local Historic District is at the southern end of Georgia Avenue, 1,000 feet south of the subject property beginning at the intersection with West Alden Avenue. In terms of zoning patterns, the entire surrounding area is zoned R-15 in all directions. The nearest point of either R-M or even R-P zoning is "The Timbers" housing development located approximately 1,500 feet to the east along West Cranford Avenue and east of North Oak Street. The nearest point of R-10 Zoning is a separate Single-Family Residential neighborhood approximately 1,400 feet to the south along Cherokee Avenue and west of Azalea Drive. There is also some DR-10 Zoning approximately 1,300 feet to the south along portions of West Alden Avenue. The proposed R-10 Zoning is very similar to R-15 and is only one step more dense on the housing density scale; however, the proposed R-M Zoning for this property is certainly inconsistent with the zoning of the surrounding area. In terms of land use patterns, the property is part of a very well-established and stable single-family neighborhood that has existed unchanged for several decades. Almost every parcel within this area is developed. The only non-single-family development in the area is a few very small neighborhood parks along Newbern Street and West Cranford Avenue. Multi-family development, particularly at the magnitude and scale being proposed by the applicant, is definitely out of character with the surrounding land use pattern. Even though the applicant is only proposing their 36 dwelling units on 2.84 acres (about 12.7 units per acre), the proposed R-M Zoning has a maximum allowable density of 18 dwelling units per acre. This is in sharp contrast to the maximum allowable density in R-15 Zoning which equates to 2.9 units per acre. R-10 Zoning has a maximum density equal to about 4.3 units per acre; however, it should still be noted that the property is largely undeveloped and has existed in a mostly vacant state for many years. It has a somewhat unusual situation and hardship in that it is particularly deep and expansive in terms of total acreage as compared to its 512 feet of existing street frontage. To be developed/re-developed conventionally under R-15 Zoning, it can only be subdivided into a maximum of five lots (based on Georgia Avenue street frontage); however, each of these lots would then be an average of about 38,600 square feet in area which is more than twice the minimum requirement for R-15. The only conventional recourse is to construct a new roadway into the interior of the property to gain more street frontage for proposed lots. This would likely include a cul-de-sac or other form of turnaround. Staff believes that such a scenario would then net a maximum total of ten lots, but that the cost of constructing the roadway would be prohibitive in making the development project viable. Therefore, this property is an excellent candidate for the City's Planned Development approval process which affords an applicant some flexibility in design standards and development costs, and is based on an overall approved master plan; hence, the applicant's simultaneous submittal of a Planned Development approval request, but one that is based on a rezoning to higher dwelling unit density. For this rezoning request, the focus is on the allowable differences in the current/proposed zoning classifications, their relationship to the surrounding zoning and land use patterns, and consistency of the proposal with both the Comprehensive Plan and the City's adopted Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP). Based on all these factors, Staff believes the proposed R-M Zoning is inappropriate for the subject property; however, Staff concedes that R-10 Zoning for the entire tract also has the potential for making a proposed Planned Development for the property a little more viable for development, with perhaps an acceptable increase in overall allowable density. Staff would like to first

review some conceptual scenarios on such a proposed development before rendering a final opinion on such a proposed rezoning. Staff found the request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended denial to the City Council. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their January 30, 2017 meeting, found it inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended denial (6-1-1 vote).

Joseph Johnson, 2408 Briarwood Drive, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Johnson stated that he was here tonight with John Courson and Al Howell to talk about Georgia Park, an innovative infill community. They are all from Valdosta, have lived here all their lives, and are committed to raising their children in the City of Valdosta. He would like to discuss what motivated them to choose this property for redevelopment, what the infill guidelines say about the size and scale of housing in residential infill developments, the potential impact that these townhomes may have on the adjacent neighboring properties, and why density is important to this Project. He would also like to discuss how the Comprehensive Plan supports developments like Georgia Park. Mr. Johnson stated that they are sick and tired of seeing their friends and neighbors move from the City to the County in the new residential developments. These people live in the County and work in the City. They use our roads and services at great expense to the taxpayers of Valdosta. There was an article in Business Insider that was written this past year. It shows that Valdosta had the fastest declining population of any city nationwide. These people are not moving from Valdosta to Thomasville, Tallahassee, or Savannah but they are moving from the City to the County. This mass migration of people is being caused in part by the low quality housing stock in Valdosta. The entire neighborhood around this Project is R-15 Zoning; however, if you look closer at these individual lots, there is a mixture of land uses. There are a substantial number of R-10 and R-6 lots sprinkled throughout the neighborhood. There is Multi-Family (R-M) Zoning within two blocks of their Project. This neighborhood is desirable due to its proximity to some of the best amenities in Valdosta. There is Drexel Park, McKey Park, tennis courts at McKey Park, Valdosta Middle School, the track at Valdosta Middle School, Valdosta State University softball and baseball fields, and Mathis City Auditorium. That is what makes Valdosta a great place to live and they want to give more people walkable access to these amenities. The City design guidelines for residential infills, which supports both single-family and townhome style developments, are porches, transom windows, dormers, and gables. They want homes off the ground and parking behind each home so that the house remains the focal point and not the car. They have done everything they can to adhere to these design standards. All of their single-family homes have these elements in them. The City Staff is proposing an alternative which is 19 single-family homes with R-6 standards; however, it is difficult to build single-family homes in this neighborhood. There is a high concentration of rentals and there is a low cost per square foot. If you looked in the newspaper on Sunday, you would have seen that out of the 50,000 people, only 18,000 (1/3) are homeowners. If you take three people and line them up, two of them are renters and one is a homeowner. Based on those statistics, it would be very difficult to come in and build 19 single-family homes. In order to build this type of development, they would have to clear cut the entire site. All those trees that have grown there for many years and are so big that two people cannot reach around them together would have to be bulldozed. They would then come in and have roof tops and parking because there would be no yard for anybody that would live in these homes to hang out in and socialize with residents. There would be only one house with a carport due to the setbacks and everyone else would have to park their car in front of the house. This plan is a rotten apple. It may look good when they first build it, but in five years this would be the next Blue Pool. It will be rotten to the core and it will continue to spread throughout this neighborhood. Building these single-family homes would be suicide for the builder. They are projecting \$106 per square foot for each house. That is 50% more than the current sales price of existing homes in that neighborhood. That \$72 does not include foreclosures. Those are arms-length transactions. If we included the foreclosures like the one that sold across from his property at 605 Georgia Avenue last month for \$29,000, that number would be substantially lower. They have been told by the City of Valdosta that they will have to meet the City's Design Guidelines for Residential Infill to have an acceptable size and scale. The City wants to see a building no longer than 200 feet and no taller than 35 feet. Right now under the existing R-15 Zoning, there could be a home that is 35 feet tall. Some people may have heard that they are building three story townhomes, but those townhomes are no taller than 35 feet. They feel that the townhomes are an acceptable size and scale. They understand that building townhomes in an established residential neighborhood would be difficult; however, they are not the first pioneer to implement this plan. Rolling Hills Condominiums was built in New Wood Valley Subdivision and there are many single-family homes surrounding it with R-15 Zoning. That development exits on Sherwood Drive and gets a lot less traffic than Georgia Avenue. If that development would have caused a major impact on those single-family homes, you would have never seen Baytree Condominiums built several years later. Also, Westover Subdivision was built by Jim Sineath and he built

Westover Condominiums in his own back yard. The Timbers Condominiums was built on Cranford Avenue and that was the best thing that could have ever happened to Cranford Avenue. Not only did that developer build a high quality product, he went next door and renovated one of the biggest eyesores on that street. If you ride down that street today it looks great. The Gardens Apartments were built by Investors Management Company along Country Club Drive. They also built The Links more than 20 years ago which looks great to this day. They have thought a lot about the impact that their development may have on surrounding neighbors so they have pulled all these townhomes into the center of the property and used them to surround a central greenspace where people can actually come outside and socialize with their neighbors. They are also going to preserve all of the existing trees around the perimeter of the property and add new plantings in to fill any gaps so that they can maintain the privacy that these neighbors currently enjoy. They have six single-family homes along Georgia Avenue that are between 28 feet and 30 feet tall. If a person is standing on the other side of Georgia Avenue looking at the townhomes, they cannot see them because they are set back so far from the road. One thing they thought was very important was preserving the existing streetscape and enhancing it along Georgia Avenue. In order to build the six single-family homes, they need density to support the debt service because it is so difficult to sell single-family homes right now in this area. There is a low cost per square foot, a high percentage of rentals, and a low number of people in the City who are actually buying homes. Unit count is not a fair representation of density. Bedroom count is a better way to understand how dense a project is. They are proposing 107 bedrooms so even under the R-6 single-family standard, you could have a higher density than what they are currently proposing. The current property averages approximately \$3,000 in tax revenue. This Project would increase that \$75,000 and it would inject approximately \$5 million into the pockets of contractors and suppliers in this area not to mention the business people who would rely on these single-family homes to support some of the Downtown development projects. They feel that Georgia Park is the most logical and orderly development pattern they could achieve and the way to do that is to combine all three of the lots together. If these lots were sold to individuals almost anything could be built. The Greater Lowndes County 2030 Comprehensive Plan supports developments like Georgia Park. First it promotes innovative design to encourage a mixture of housing types in varying income levels. Second, it promotes density by encouraging more compact urban development. Third, the available land in the City should be utilized in the most efficient manner possible by promoting infill development. They need Council's help to continue investing in older communities like Georgia Avenue by providing a mixture of housing styles and prices so that neighborhoods remain healthy and accessible to the next generation of residents. If Council decides to support the Project tonight, it will send a powerful signal to local home builders that Valdosta supports innovative infill development in established residential neighborhoods.

Pam Rickman, 501 Georgia Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Rickman stated that she and her husband have resided in Valdosta for 26 years and all of it in this neighborhood and 18 years in their current home. Ms. Rickman thanked the developer for putting a great deal of effort into his plan and wanting it to be attractive. Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and his Staff worked very hard to research and consider all aspects of this proposal. The Staff recommended denial of rezoning and the Planning Commission agreed. They also agreed with the Staff's recommendation for the following three main reasons: (1) character of the neighborhood, (2) infrastructure concerns, and (3) safety. This is a single-family, majority owner-occupied neighborhood. In fact, 70% of the immediate neighborhood is owner-occupied. Many of these residents are long term including several original families as shown by the variety of lot sizes. In recent years, new families have moved in and have built or renovated high value homes within this Single-Family R-15 neighborhood. Even those present single-family, tenant-occupied properties are still residential-oriented and not commercially-oriented rentals. The result is a beautiful residential neighborhood and street. They feel the applicant's proposal is spot zoning which undermines planning. It grants a special privilege that contrasts sharply with the adjacent nearby properties which are single-family homes. The R-M Zoning would encourage a transient population including many college students and rentals and therefore becomes the default. That in turn discourages owner-occupancy of the remaining single-family homes. There is an Air Force family here tonight who recently returned from deployment in Korea. They had previously lived in Valdosta and knowing they were coming back chose to purchase a home on Georgia Avenue. Ms. Rickman stated that she will let them share how they felt when she arrived at their door two weeks later and they discovered that 36 apartments were proposed to be built down the street from the home that they had purchased. Furthermore, they feel there is no need for additional rental property and not even for nearby VSU students. They also have concerns about the infrastructure such as sidewalks, roof lines, and paved parking for 102 vehicles. They already have stormwater challenges in the neighborhood and residents have to drive through puddles after rain. They are also concerned about roads. Though originally the

roads in this neighborhood were built to accommodate greater traffic than what they presently have, nevertheless, driving is different than it was back then. The speeds are different and there are more young drivers. The canopy has changed and regulations have changed. For example, there is a school zone at the base of this neighborhood which has seen 9 accidents in the past two years and the stop sign at the other end of Georgia Avenue from this parcel has seen 12 accidents. They are concerned about the safety and security of these back-of-the-lot apartments. They are not easily seen from the road which is an advantage in preserving the trees; however, it does cause a security problem. It would require extra patrolling and Police time. Ordinance compliance would be more difficult to monitor and there is the issue of guest parking which could interfere with emergency vehicle access. Council has been elected to uphold the long range Comprehensive Plan which the applicant referred to. Council has standards that they have to follow in exercising zoning power. They believe that the applicant's proposal fails to meet the majority of those standards and it goes against the Comprehensive Plan. It does not increase homeownership and attract and retain young professionals. It does not protect the existing housing. Ms. Rickman asked for Council's consideration in voting no on this proposal of rezoning and development in order to avoid unnecessary costs and burden on infrastructure and to promote and preserve the character and value of this stable single-family, primarily owner-occupied neighborhood. Ms. Rickman thanked everyone who contributed information and hit the streets with them and asked for a show of hands from those in the audience who were in opposition to the request.

Said Fares, 707 Georgia Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Fares stated that he has lived on Georgia Avenue for 27 years. In 1994, there was another proposal submitted for rezoning at 421 Georgia Avenue which was 23 years ago. The request was to change it from R-15 to PRD-15 and it was denied by the Commission. He is afraid that if this proposal is approved there are potential lots in the area that would be very hard for Council to deny similar requests. If Council approves this one then they will be forced to approve other rezonings in the surrounding area which will damage the entire neighborhood.

Amy Lansburg, 719 Georgia Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Lansburg stated that she has lived in her house for approximately 12 years and moved there from the County. She has done the exact opposite of what they are saying about the new development drawing people in. The reason she moved was because they started building more homes in Foxborough Subdivision. When she moved to Foxborough there was an empty lot next to her house and she was surrounded by woods; however, when they started building more homes she knew the property values would drop. She got lucky and sold her house within two months and after that when houses went on the market they sat there for over a year. Ms. Lansburg stated that her home on Georgia Avenue was built in 1949 by the Girardin's. It is 3,300 square feet with hardwood floors and solid wood doors. It has cement walls and running water and two bathrooms. One of the bathrooms has the original yellow tile and you cannot find that anymore. More importantly, you cannot replace this neighborhood like they have today. She is an artist and works from home. Her studio window looks out to Georgia Avenue and she knows every single person who walks up and down the street. There are runners, dog walkers, and people with babies and there is a lot of activity in the neighborhood. Her neighbors, the McClures, built their home in approximately 1950. They raised all of their children and grandchildren there and they are now in their 80's. There are some really good people in their neighborhood and there are some rentals but they are mostly occupied by families. Georgia Avenue used to be the end of the City and it was a dirt road and prior to that it was the Newbern family farm. The Newbern's still live in the area and there are a lot of original residents which you do not find that in very many places. Ms. Lansburg stated that she has lived many other places and was born as far north as you can go. She has lived in big cities and small cities and there are not very many places like this. If this development is brought in it will be transient housing and not long term housing. You will not find the hardwood floors and solid doors and you will not find the same people there 30 years from now. The majority of the residents on Georgia Avenue have long term connections to that street which is so important.

John Miller McIntyre, 600 Georgia Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. McIntyre stated that he cares for his Uncle, Fred W. McIntyre, who has lived there for 60 years. They are on a one-acre tract as are a few of his neighbors to the north. Putting 36 apartments parallel to his front door is horrible. It will devastate the neighborhood. Mr. McIntyre asked Council's consideration in denying the request.

Jennifer and Craig Moreash, 711 Georgia Avenue, spoke in opposition to the request. Jennifer Moreash stated that they were the couple from Moody Air Force Base who just moved into the neighborhood. They lived in Valdosta several years ago and they knew exactly where they wanted to live if they ever came back. They started

looking at homes around Valdosta State University and got very lucky in the one they found. Their neighborhood has everything that they wanted. It is beautiful, has character, and is in walking distance to many amenities. There will be lots of people like them who would want to buy in that neighborhood when houses become available. Craig Moreash stated that the other thing they noticed when they moved in was a sense of community. On the first day they were met by three or four different neighbors who invited them into their homes. You do not get that sense of community from transient populations. You get that from established neighborhoods where you have a long period of time to build trust over many meetings. They do not want to live anywhere else.

Sandra Dapetrie, 2209 Azalea Drive, stated that she has ownership in three houses in that area. One of those houses is where her father lives at 2211 Azalea Drive and she has the house right next to it at 2209 Azalea Drive. She was raised there from high school and loves the neighborhood. Her children are currently in school at Kennesaw State University but they are coming back but they won't if they put apartments in there.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to deny the request to rezone three parcels totaling 4.43 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to both Multi-Family Residential (R-M) and Single-Family Residential (R-10) as requested by Georgia Park, LLC.

### **AN ORDINANCE FOR A PLANNED DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL FOR A MIXED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INELIGIBLE**

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Planned Development approval for a "mixed residential" development in both a Multi-Family Residential (R-M) and a Single-Family Residential (R-10) Zoning District as requested by Georgia Park, LLC (File No. VA-2017-04). The property is located at 601-603 Georgia Avenue. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended denial (6-1-1 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that this request is for a Planned Development and since the zoning has not been changed the request for Planned Development is not eligible for this property. It was contingent upon on a zoning change so we can note this in the record as ineligible. Mayor Gayle stated that the rezoning was denied and they cannot build the proposed development in R-15 Zoning so Council will not need to take any action on this request.

### **ORDINANCE NO. 2017-2, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone one parcel totaling 0.42 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P) as requested by Noel and Roberta George (File No. VA-2017-01). The property is located at 2920 North Oak Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Noel and Roberta George are requesting to rezone one parcel totaling 0.42 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P). The property is located at 2920 North Oak Street, which is along the west side of the road about 300 feet south of the intersection with Smithbriar Drive. The property is currently vacant and the applicant is proposing to sell the property for development as a small medical office building (approximately 2,500 square feet). The property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-P Zoning. The property is across the street from the City's Urban Commercial Corridor Overlay District which runs along the North Patterson and North Ashley Street corridors. The property is the last remaining parcel of residential development along this segment of the west side of North Oak Street. All of these properties were originally zoned and developed as single-family homes from more than 40 years ago. Over the years as more of the Five Points area developed with commercial uses and traffic on North Oak Street increased, each of these properties were rezoned to R-P and redeveloped as non-residential uses (primarily as professional offices). The existing R-15 Zoning is non-compliant with the CAC Character Area because it is not intensive enough, and this corridor along North Oak Street has long ceased to be logical or appropriate for development as Single-Family Residential. The applicant's proposed R-P Zoning matches the

existing zoning on the adjacent properties to the north and south. The proposed use as a medical office matches the existing use of the property to the north, and it is consistent with the other office and non-residential development pattern of the area. Because this applicant is proposing complete redevelopment of the property, it will have to comply with all applicable standards for development as appropriate. This includes a vegetative buffer yard along the property's western boundary which abuts R-15 Zoning of the adjacent neighborhood. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their January 30, 2017 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Robert George spoke in favor of the request. Mr. George stated that he was the son of Roberta and Noel George and they would like the house rezoned because everything around them is Residential-Professional. His parents thought it had already been rezoned years ago but it had not.

Graham Fiveash, 15619 Valdosta Highway, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Fiveash stated that he represented the George family and asked Council's consideration in approving the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2017-2, an Ordinance to rezone one parcel totaling 0.42 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Residential-Professional (R-P) as requested by Noel and Roberta George, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

## **ORDINANCE NO. 2017-3, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone one parcel consisting of 0.52 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6) as requested by Martha Shea (File No. VA-2017-02). The property is located at 1304 Iola Drive. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Martha Shea is requesting to rezone one parcel consisting of 0.52 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6). The property is located at 1304 Iola Drive, which is along the west side of the road about 200 feet north of East Jane Street. The property currently contains a single-family residence (1,915 square feet) and the applicant is proposing to renovate and convert the building into a duplex. The property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-6 Zoning. The property is also within the Residential Parking Overlay District, and it is immediately adjacent to the City's local Historic District (properties immediately to the west facing Williams Street). The property is also within the North Patterson Neighborhood Revitalization Area (NRA). In terms of zoning patterns, this southern portion of Iola Drive and nearby portion of East Jane Street has a mixture of R-10, R-6 and R-P Zoning Districts. There is R-10 Zoning to the north and west of the subject property, R-6 to the northeast across Iola Drive, and R-P Zoning to the south and east. In terms of surrounding land use patterns, there is the American Legion facility to the west. All of the remaining properties are residential but these are a mixture of single-family, duplexes, and even some multi-family apartments. Some of the duplexes and apartment properties are considered non-conforming uses in their R-10 or R-6 Zoning classifications. Duplexes are not currently allowed R-10 Zoning but are allowed in R-6 (with a lot at least 9,000 square feet), and hence the applicant's rezoning request. Given the size of the property, the surrounding zoning pattern, and the mixed residential land use pattern of this area, the proposed rezoning to R-6 and conversion of this single-family home to a duplex should be considered compatible and logical. The existing dwelling is relatively large and had some large rooms added to the building about 30 years ago (for a home occupation ceramics studio). It is primarily this addition area that the applicant would like to convert into its own dwelling unit. If the rezoning is approved, the only caveat is that each dwelling unit will need to be at least 800 square feet of indoor heated space. It should also be noted that (as a point of background information only) the applicant had already started converting this dwelling to a duplex without any permits until she was discovered by

City Staff and issued a "Stop Work Order" by the City Marshals. The applicant has been cited and summoned to Municipal Court with a hearing date now postponed until February 20, 2017 pending the outcome of this rezoning request. If the property is successfully rezoned, the applicant will need to pay any applicable court fines and then proceed through the proper permitting processes (with double permit fees) for conversion of the dwelling unit. Otherwise, the building will need to be restored back to a single-family dwelling unit. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval to the City Council. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their January 30, 2017 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Martha Shea, 3109 Blandwood Road, spoke in favor of the request. Ms. Shea stated that there is a duplex on the right and left of her property on the same side of the street and asked for Council's consideration in approving the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2017-3, an Ordinance to rezone one parcel consisting of 0.52 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6) as requested by Martha Shea, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2017-4, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A MINOR AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR FACILITY IN A COMMUNITY-COMMERCIAL (C-C) ZONING DISTRICT**

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a Minor Automotive Repair facility in a Community-Commercial (C-C) Zoning District as requested by Pete's Otto (File No. CU-2017-01). The property is located at 1113 Marion Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended approval with three conditions (7-1 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Richard Berard, on behalf of Pete's Otto Shop Inc., is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to establish a Minor Automotive Repair facility in a Community-Commercial (C-C) Zoning District. The property consists of 0.17 acres located at 1113 Marion Street. This is at the southeast corner of East Ann and Marion Streets, and is directly across the street from the applicant's current automotive repair facility. The property is currently vacant, and the applicant is proposing to expand their business with construction of a new building (1,800square feet, 30 x 60) and small parking area on the property. The building will consist of one service bay with one roll-up door facing Marion Street. The initial use of the building will be indoor storage of vehicles only (five cars), but the applicant may elect to later change this to minor auto repair/servicing activities such as oil changes, brakes, and tires. The property is located within a Neighborhood Activity Center (NAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the City's "Tom Town" Neighborhood Revitalization Area (NRA). The City's land development regulations (LDR) distinguish between minor and major automotive repair facilities. Minor Automotive Repair typically includes the more routine items such as oil changes, tune-ups, tires, and brakes. Major facilities include the more intensive activities such as auto body shops and transmissions shops, where major vehicle components are often disassembled. Both of these uses have supplemental regulations in the LDR. The applicant's original facility is located directly across Marion Street from the property where it is zoned C-H. This facility has been operating for several decades and it offers both minor and major automotive repair services (both are allowed in C-H). The applicant has owned this vacant lot for several years and is now proposing to expand their business with construction of the new building. Initially the applicant is proposing to only use this building for secure parking storage of vehicles and with no automotive service activities taking place; however, in the future, the applicant may want to expand part of the service operation to this building with some of the more routine minor service activities such as oil changes and tune-ups that can be easily separated from the main facility. Because this is completely new development, it must meet all applicable development standards. This includes a vegetative buffer yard along the south property line (next to R-6 Zoning), paved parking, and landscaping. For more than 25 years, this segment of East Ann Street between North Ashley Street and North Lee Street has been zoned



commercial and has been dominated by non-residential uses. Marion Street is the apparent dividing line between the more intensive commercial uses closer to North Ashley Street and the lighter uses closer to North Lee Street. The property is a relatively narrow corner lot, and the applicant's proposed layout is the expected maximum of how this property could be developed. Because the proposed building is relatively small and it is associated with a well-established business across the street, it fits in with the surrounding development pattern; however, because this site is so limiting and Marion Street is a local narrow residential street, any minor automotive repair facility on this property should be associated with an already existing facility across the street rather than be allowed to function as its own freestanding facility which has the potential to generate more traffic and create adverse negative impacts. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommend approval with the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted for a Minor Automotive Repair facility that is part of an existing automotive repair facility directly across the street to the west. (2) There shall be no outdoor storage of any kind, no signage along Marion Street, no metal siding, and the facility shall maintain compliance with all other applicable regulations. (3) Conditional Use approval shall expire after three years from the date of approval if no plans for a building permit have been submitted by that time. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their January 30, 2017 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same three conditions as recommended by Staff (7-1 vote). Matt Martin stated that he spoke with the applicant and for condition (3) they are requesting additional time and would like to change that from three years to five years. Staff has no concerns with the change and that is in the range of what they have granted for other Conditional Uses in the past.

Richard Tiger Berard spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Berard stated that he is the owner of Pete's Otto and they have been in this location for 35 years. They have outgrown the location but would like to stay there. They just need a little more room to take the pressure off of the existing building. Mr. Berard asked for Council's consideration in approving the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2017-4, an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a Minor Automotive Repair facility in a Community-Commercial (C-C) Zoning District as requested by Pete's Otto with the conditions from Staff, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2017-3, A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE TO FUND IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE VALDOSTA POLICE DEPARTMENT BODY-WORN CAMERA (BWC) PROGRAM**

Consideration of a Resolution supporting the filing of an Application with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund improvements for the existing Infrastructure for the Valdosta Police Department Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Program.

Commander Bobbi McGraw stated that law enforcement agencies across the country and worldwide are using body-worn cameras (BWCs) as a promising tool to improve law enforcement interactions with the public. BWCs can provide a visual and audio record of interactions. Some preliminary evidence indicates that the presence of BWCs helps strengthen accountability and transparency, and can assist in de-escalating conflicts which results in more constructive encounters between the Police and members of the community. The Valdosta Police Department purchased a new in-car camera system in 2014. As part of the purchase, they received 100 BWCs at no additional cost. Since then, the Police Department has seen a reduction in citizen complaints and improved community trust based on the use of BWCs. Furthermore, the BWC Program has cleared several Police Officers of wrongdoing since the implementation of the program in June, 2014. This competitive solicitation is for law enforcement agencies seeking to establish or enhance BWC Policy and Implementation Programs (PIP). Successful applicants will be responsible for a mandatory 50% in-kind or cash match. Since the Valdosta Police Department already has implemented BWCs for all sworn personnel and has an established Policy which complies with International and

State Accreditation Standards, the Police Department would qualify for Category 4 (BWC Program Enhancement) of the grant solicitation. This funding Category seeks to assist agencies with existing BWC Programs and established BWC Policies and practices that want to expand their Program to more Officers. Funds under Category 4 should be used for cameras and the associated hardware, software licenses, and contractual agreements directly related to program expansion. These funds should not be used to extend maintenance and support services for existing resources. Applicants may request no more than \$250,000 under this Category. The Bureau of Justice Assistance estimates 18 awards will be made in this category for a total amount of \$3,000,000. The purpose of the grant is to enhance our existing Body-Camera Program with the purchase of body-camera upgrades which allows for Officers to classify each video in the field and allows for wireless download of video from a cellular hot spot. The current system does not allow for classification of video in the field and it does not allow for wireless downloads. As a result, management and downloading of video is done at the Police Station, thus preventing Officers to spend more time in the field to address crime prevention and community policing. They have outgrown the models that they are currently using and they are having problems with technical support when they break. They also have some new technology for the LEO5 which will allow them to have a better way to download and classify information. This will help keep Police Officers in the field and they can classify and download video in the field without having to come to the Police Department to do that. If they receive the grant, they would also be able to replace all of the Body Worn Cameras at this time and explore additional download storage options because the LEO5 BWCs are much more versatile. This request would be to pay 50% of the overall cost for upgraded body cameras over the next five years. The total Project cost is \$50,000 which requires a 50% match (Federal request is \$25,000 and local match would be \$25,000). Commander McGraw recommended that Council approve the Resolution. Councilman Payton inquired as to what they would do with the older model BWCs and if they would be able to donate them to another Agency. Commander McGraw stated that they would trade those cameras in.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2017-3, a Resolution supporting the filing of an Application with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to fund improvements for the existing Infrastructure for the Valdosta Police Department Body-Worn Camera (BWC) Program, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

## **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of a request to approve the final Change Orders for the Force Main Project, EQ Basin, and Headwork's Project.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that in order to finalize and eventually close out the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan for the Force Main, EQ Basin, and Headwork's Project, numerous punch list and Change Order items from Garney Companies, Inc. had to be agreed upon and completed. To date the overwhelming majority of the items are complete and covered in normal work completion as well as Change Orders No. 6 and No. 7. The goal was to only bring one final action on Change Orders to Council for consideration versus multiple Change Orders and associated Agenda Items. Change Orders No. 6 and No. 7 include necessary work to complete this Project and includes both additional costs as well as some deductions in cost. Change Order No. 6 reflects an overall increase in cost in the amount of \$178,910.48 while Change Order No. 7 identifies a decrease in cost in the amount of \$23,000.00. When combined, the overall change in cost for the Project increases by the amount of \$155,910.48. While some items still remain to be completed on this Project, there will be no additional Change Orders accepted after this and those items will be covered by funds remaining in retainage. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the final Change Orders from Garney Companies, Inc. in the amount of \$155,910.48 for the Force Main Project, EQ Basin, and Headwork's Project.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the final Change Orders from Garney Companies, Inc. in the amount of \$155,910.48 for the Force Main Project, EQ Basin, and Headwork's Project.

Consideration of a request to approve the 2017 Municipal Elections Contract with the Lowndes County Board of Elections.

Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager, stated that it has been the practice of the City of Valdosta to contract with the Lowndes County Board of Elections to conduct non-partisan municipal elections. The Board of Elections

conducts the election in accordance to O.C.G.A 21. The Board of Elections will serve as the Superintendent of Elections for the City of Valdosta, and in this capacity, will qualify candidates accordingly. The Board of Elections will hire and conduct training for poll workers, and act on all matters pertaining to the election. The Secretary of State Office of Elections has set the date of qualifying for non-partisan elections for the week of August 21-25, 2017, with the municipal election being conducted on November 7, 2017. Advanced voting begins October 7, 2017 and the Board of Elections is willing to work on weekends depending on our preference. That is also the first day that absentee ballots can be mailed and distributed. If a run-off election is necessary, it will be conducted December 5, 2017, and will also be conducted by the Board of Elections. The Municipal Elections Contract also includes any expenses that may be incurred if there is a run-off. Mark Barber stated that they discussed precincts at the Work Session and he understands the concern but he does not foresee those precincts changing before the November election. Councilman Yost stated that he could not support the Contract unless every person in the City of Valdosta can vote in their District. There should be no excuse for that. He is not interested in what they want to do in the County elections but his interest is in representing the people of his District and they should be able to vote in the District in which they live which currently does not happen. He has to go to the James H. Rainwater Conference Center to vote when he has a polling place in his District but he is not assigned there. If they need one or two more polling places opened in each District then so be it. They need to plan ahead. He would rather table this and go back to Deb Cox at the Board of Elections, who does an excellent job. This is no criticism of her or her Staff but citizens should be able to vote in their Districts no matter what. Councilman Yost stated that they are paying for this election. Mark Barber stated that at this time there is no plan to change unless something happens and they have to. Approximately 50% of the votes cast are done during early voting at the Board of Elections office. That has been part of the problem because at some polls they may only have six people show up to vote. This is just not economically feasible so the Board of Elections is faced with a difficult job of working the precincts. In the past they had it where if you voted in the City election you went to one polling place and if it was a County-wide election then you vote at a different place. This was chaos and they are trying to avoid that. When you look at the District maps, each District has at least two polling places that are strategically placed. No one has to drive too far or be too inconvenienced to get to the polling place. The polling places in Councilman Yost's District are Northside Baptist Church and Rainwater Conference Center. Councilman Yost stated that more people are voting early but he inquired as to why citizens in his District could not vote at Northside Baptist Church. A lot of the people in his District are elderly and they cannot or will not get out and go to the polling place so this is limiting people who want to get out and go vote. It may be that they cannot drive but it should be the right of everyone in the City to vote in their District. We are paying for the Board of Elections to do this. Mark Barber stated that it is not as simple as going out and picking a polling place. There are all kinds of State ratios that they have to meet. For example, you can only have 2,500 registered voters at one precinct and that would be exceeded if everyone in Councilman Yost's District voted at Northside Baptist Church. A portion of everyone's District votes at Northside Baptist Church. Councilman Vickers stated that he understood what Councilman Yost was saying but this is the best system that we have because at least people know where they are supposed to go.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-2) to approve the 2017 Municipal Elections Contract with the Lowndes County Board of Elections, with Councilman Yost and Councilman Payton voting in opposition.

Consideration of the approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Valdosta and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority for the sale of the Waterworks Building and property, and a related parking easement.

Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that the Waterworks Building, located at 109 South Briggs Street, has been vacant since 1992 and the condition of the building has greatly deteriorated. The Waterworks Building, which is approximately 6,500 square feet, has no floor in some areas and it does not have a lot of value to the market. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority has been working on a proposal with The Georgia Beer Company, LLC to establish a micro-brewery in the Waterworks Building. On November 10, 2016, the Council voted unanimously to sell the old Waterworks Building, which consists of .32 acres, to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority for an amount to be determined and to grant an exclusive easement for nine spaces

immediately adjacent to the Waterworks Building. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority will then be able to lease the Waterworks Building to The Georgia Beer Company, LLC over a ten-year period. On December 8, 2016, The Georgia Beer Company, LLC requested a Conditional Use Permit from the City of Valdosta to establish a micro-brewery and an event center in the Waterworks Building which is in a Community-Commercial (C-C) Zoning District. They also requested the use of some additional parking spaces from the City. Council unanimously approved the request with two conditions. An Intergovernmental Agreement which outlines the conditions of sale of the Waterworks Building to the Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Development Authority was discussed at the Work Session. There were two minor changes to the Agreement which were in Section 1.1 where a non-exclusive easement to use the remainder of the City's parking lot is for \$2,500 per year and in Section 1.5, the property will be listed on the tax roll beginning in the eleventh year (2028) or at such time the property is sold to the tenant, whichever occurs earlier. Councilman Vickers inquired as to the reason for not paying property tax until 2028. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that the Development Authority is a tax exempt organization and they would not pay any taxes; however, this is better because it is a 15-year deal at the end of year 10 it would be placed back on the tax roll.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a revised/corrected version of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Valdosta and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority for the sale of the Waterworks Building and property, and a related parking easement.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to declare four 1998 Pierce Quantum Pumpers and the remaining outdated tools and equipment used to fully equip the Pumpers for fire ground operations and one 1970 American LaFrance Straight Ladder Fire Truck as surplus property.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that the City of Valdosta purchased the four Pierce Quantum Pumper Fire Trucks in 1998 as a part of its front-line fire apparatus fleet. These vehicles are 19 years old and have been used as front-line fire apparatuses for almost the entire 19 years. The ISO requires the Fire Department to meet or exceed the NFPA 1901 recommendation by maintaining front-line apparatuses in a state of readiness and meet national safety standards. Also, the ISO rating is based on a points system that includes age of fire trucks. No credit is given for fire trucks that exceed 20 years of age. The majority of the parts needed to maintain these fire trucks are becoming obsolete and harder to find. The Valdosta Fire Department purchased four new custom built Supthen Fire Trucks in 2016 to replace the 1998 trucks. The American LaFrance Straight Ladder Truck was purchased in 1970 as part of the front-line firefighting fleet. This vehicle is 47 years old and does not meet NFPA 1901 Standard or any National Safety Standards. With the exception of the age of the Pierce Quantum Pumper Fire Trucks, extremely high miles, and normal wear and tear, Units 3022, 3023 and 3025 are in fair condition. These vehicles can still be beneficial to Volunteer Fire Departments or non-profit organizations who are interested in purchasing well-maintained trucks to be used for minimum performance and expectations. Units 3022, 3023, and 3025 still have potential monetary value (over \$50,000). Several used fire apparatus vendors highly recommend selling two trucks as "sisters" in addition to the required tools and equipment for the highest potential monetary value. Chief Broome stated that he has met with both the Lake Park and Lanier County/Lakeland Fire Departments and both have expressed an interest in purchasing a truck and if we do not sell it to one of them we can sell it on Gov.deals. Unit 3026 is in poor condition and needs a new transmission; however, it could still be beneficial to a non-profit organization that would not use it for emergency purposes. The gears will not change and it will have to be towed when moved from the maintenance facility. Unit 3026 currently has no monetary value. Chief Broom stated that he is recommending that this fire truck be sold to the Pink Hills of South Georgia Chapter for \$10. The American LaFrance Straight Ladder Truck was eventually used as a reserve fire truck until it was placed out of service approximately five years ago. The potential monetary value of this vehicle is \$1,500. The Fire Department would like to have American LaFrance Straight Ladder Truck declared as surplus property and placed on the GovDeals website for sale.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request as stated and declare four 1998 Pierce Quantum Pumpers and the remaining outdated tools and equipment used to fully equip the Pumpers for fire ground operations and one 1970 American LaFrance Straight Ladder Fire Truck as surplus property.

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

Mayor John Gayle stated that the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board had a member, Audrey King, who resigned due to personal reasons. Her term expires June 30, 2017. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The only applicant to apply for this slot is Ike Harbuck.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Ike Harbuck to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board to fill the unexpired term of Audrey King.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the appointment of Ike Harbuck to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board to fill the unexpired term of Audrey King whose term expires June 30, 2017.

Consideration of appointments to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee has four members, Barthaniel Werts, Anthony Bellamy, Jessica Young, and Rebecca Taylor, whose terms will expire on February 24, 2017. Mr. Werts, Mr. Bellamy, and Ms. Young have not expressed an interest in being reappointed and Ms. Taylor has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows in no order of preference: (1) Vivian Miller-Cody - Councilwoman (City of Valdosta), (2) Thomas Simpson - Employment Consultant (Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency), and (3) Rebecca Taylor - Director of Testing (Valdosta State University).

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, Thomas Simpson, and Rebecca Taylor to serve a term of four years on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the appointments of Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, Thomas Simpson, and Rebecca Taylor to serve a term of four years on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission has two members, Dr. Harry Hamm and Mr. King Smith, whose terms will expire on February 13, 2017. Dr. Hamm and Mr. Smith have both expressed an interest in being reappointed. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows in no order of preference: (1) Tommy Crane - Assistant Professor (Valdosta State University), (2) Dr. Harry Hamm - Administrator (Lowndes Advocacy Resource Center), and (3) Arthur King Smith - Architect (Altman & Barrett Architects).

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations for Slot #1.

Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether Tommy Crane had been contacted about his application and whether he meant to answer "no" to the question about abiding by the attendance policy. Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that he did contact Mr. Crane and that was an error on his part.

Councilman Carroll placed in consideration Dr. Harry Hamm. Councilman Payton placed in consideration Tommy Crane. There were no other nominations. Mayor Gayle stated that there were two candidates for two slots. Councilman Carroll objected and stated that there were two names for the first slot. Mayor Gayle stated that there were two slots to fill and there were two nominations. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the two names

placed in consideration were for Slot #1 and then there would be a nomination for Slot #2. Councilman Payton stated that he would withdraw his nomination for Slot #1.

Mayor Gayle stated that there was one nomination for Slot #1. Dr. Harry Hamm was unanimously approved to serve on the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission for a term of three years.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations for Slot #2.

Councilman Payton placed in consideration Tommy Crane. Councilman Carroll placed in consideration Arthur King Smith. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Tommy Crane received six votes. Arthur King Smith received one vote. Tommy Crane was appointed to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission.

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens to be heard.

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

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Bird Supper was held on Wednesday, February 1, 2017 at The Depot in Atlanta and it was a big success. The Governor, the Lt. Governor, the Speaker of the House, and many members of the General Assembly were in attendance along with the Mayor and members of Council. It was a good opportunity to have interaction with our State officials.

An announcement has been made that Uber is coming to Valdosta. Anyone who is interested in being a driver can go to the City's website for more information on applying. They will go through a screening and evaluation process. Uber has indicated that once they get the 40 qualified and approved drivers they will start service on March 1, 2017. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they would go through the same licensing procedures as taxicabs. Larry Hanson stated that they do not. They do screening and background checks themselves, but they are not treated by State law in the same way that taxicab drivers are. The Legislature is getting ready to adopt a Bill that will further limit local government discretion over those types of transportation services.

Arbor Week will be held February 13-17, 2017 and there will be multiple events. On Monday, February 13, 2017 there will be an event at McKey Park as well as an event to honor first responders. There will also be a tree planting in collaboration with Moody Air Force Base. Council is encouraged to attend these events as their schedule permits.

We are advertising for City Government 101 and we already have 17 of the 25 slots filled. Council is encouraged to reach out to citizens in their Districts to encourage them to apply up.

A Press Release was sent out this week regarding Farm Days which will begin on April 8, 2017 and continue through November. They are making some enhancements to Farm Days this year which has been a very popular event.

Moody Air Force Base was honored this week with a House Resolution on the floor at the Capitol and the event was attended by Mayor Gayle, City Manager Hanson, Lowndes County Chairman Bill Slaughter, Col. Kunkel, and three of his Airmen. It was a great experience to be able to share Moody's story with the members of the General Assembly and a packed Gallery.

The City has a partnership with Cash Prosperity and every year they help citizens with free tax preparation. On Wednesday, February 21, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the City Hall Annex, any resident who makes less than \$54,000 annually will have the opportunity to have assistance with preparing their income tax forms.

We have a number of good employees and we recognize them through the Employee of the Month Award. Councilwoman Miller-Cody was also recognized this month for achieving 42 hours with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in one year of service. That is a testimony to her interest in local government. Also, our Purchasing Agent Greg Brown received a State award for his service and professionalism as a nationally accredited Purchasing Agent. Today, the Valdosta City Schools sent something to our Public Information Officer to let her know how proud they were of the utility workers in our City who recently raised money among themselves to buy a national championship ring for one of the Valdosta High School Wildcat football players. That tells you a lot about the type of employees we have at the City.

The Police Department had an Awards Ceremony today at the 3:00 p.m. at the City Hall Annex. It is very heartwarming to hear the stories and recognize those who have had 5, 10, 15, and 20 year service as well as to honor them for their heroism in performing their job. There were two Police Officers who were involved in shooting incidents in the past year and we are blessed to have a great Police Department and great public safety.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that they need to be concerned about Senate Bill 16 regarding stormwater fees that is being tossed around which would potentially harm us as a City when it comes to our stormwater utility fee. Council is encouraged to read about it and contact the State delegation to let them know your position on these issues.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 9, 2017 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:04 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, February 23, 2017.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta