

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019
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, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Dr. Gerald Williams, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Consideration of the March, 2019 Employee of the Month Award (Larry Ogden, Engineering Department).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that Larry Ogden began his employment with the City of Valdosta's Engineering Department in November of 1997 and currently holds the position of Traffic and Streets Manager over both the Traffic and Street Management divisions of the Engineering Department. The Traffic and Streets Manager is responsible for managing the operations of both divisions. He oversees 15 positions, coordinates activities of the division staff; prepares and issues work assignments; coordinates wireless and fiber projects, ensures that all traffic systems are operational, oversees the daily operations of the wireless, fiber optic, and CCTV network systems, and investigates all matters and complaints related to traffic control systems, fiber optics, signage, street markings, potholes, street curbs and driveway aprons, street lighting, and sidewalk repairs. Larry started his career in the Sign Shop and over the years he has worked his way up to be promoted to the Traffic and Streets Manager. He sets high standards of competence and performance for himself. This past year, Larry's efforts have been outstanding, from carefully overseeing and managing the installation of new equipment for all 128 signaled intersections City-wide, to the installation of new-operation-system software and equipment within the Traffic Management Center (TMC). Through Larry's vision, direction, oversight, and drive, the City of Valdosta is the first in Georgia to employ a completely wireless SMART traffic signal monitoring system City-wide. At the beginning of the school year, Larry monitored and recommended system adjustments to ensure safe morning and afternoon peak-traffic flow at the new Valdosta High School. Since assuming his role as Traffic and Streets Manager, traffic and signal complaints have drastically been reduced. In addition, Larry has significantly improved internal operations by choosing and promoting outstanding individuals to fill vital positions, which has resulted in restored morale and outstanding work-efficiencies among the ranks. The City of Valdosta Engineering Department is elated by the example Larry sets for himself and others, his reliability, his quality of work, his innovative cost-saving ideas, and his can-do attitude over his 21 years with the City. It is for these reasons that the Employee Relations Committee nominated Traffic and Street Manager, Larry Ogden, as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 21, 2019 were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-4, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A SMALL MOTEL LODGING FACILITY IN A DOWNTOWN-COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for a small Motel lodging facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Daniel Bayman (File No. CU-2019-01). The property is located at 118 North Patterson Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their February Regular Meeting and recommended approval with three conditions (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Daniel Bayman and Bayman Investments LLC are requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a small Motel lodging facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District. The property consists of 0.05 acres located at 118 North Patterson Street. This is at the southwest corner of North Patterson and Bennie's Alley. The property contains a two-story building

(3,600 square feet total) that consists of The Firm Fitness Center on the first floor, as well as vacant office space on the second floor which formerly housed the WDDQ radio station (Scott James - Talk 92.1). The applicant has owned/operated The Firm as a tenant at this location for more than ten years. Last fall, the applicant purchased the entire building from the radio station owner it relocated to another site. The applicant is proposing to convert the rear portion (approximately 380 square feet) of the second floor for use as a small motel room which will be marketed separately for use through AirBnB. The rest of the second floor will continue to be used as the applicant's office as well as an auxiliary fitness room for The Firm. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the first floor nor outside of the building and is just planning to remodel the interior of the second floor. The property is located within a Downtown Activity Center (DAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within Valdosta's local Historic District as well as the Downtown Commercial National Register Historic District. This request is very similar to the Orenduff CUP request last year for the adjacent property at 120 North Patterson Street (across Bennie's Alley) which has three motel rooms instead of one. Hotels are a permitted use in C-D Zoning while motels and bed & breakfast inns require CUP approval. Because of its small size and commercial location, the applicant's proposed use is classified as a motel; however, in this case, it is unusual in that it is only one lodging room and is being marketed separately from an already existing commercial business (fitness center). If it were not being marketed as a rental motel room, and if it were at least 800 square feet in floor area with its own direct access to the outside, it would instead be considered a Loft Dwelling Unit which is a permitted use in C-D. The property is part of the well-established Downtown area that is dominated by a mixture of uses ranging from offices and retail/services, to multi-family residential uses (mainly in the upper floors), to many forms of institutional uses. There is a large public parking lot immediately west (Toombs Street lot) as well as public parking spaces along North Patterson Street. In terms of compatibility with a Downtown mixed-use environment, a small lodging facility should be considered acceptable as long as there are no negative impacts to surrounding properties. With only one lodging room, the parking and traffic demand of this facility would be negligible and would not likely be noticed. Last year's CUP for the Orenduffs was approved with the following three conditions, which were specific to their situation: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only for a motel facility in C-D Zoning for temporary lodging of transient guests for periods not to exceed seven days per stay. (2) The facility shall be limited to no more than three lodging rooms, with a maximum of no more than two adults per room (not including their children), and the use shall operate under its own Business License. Updated floor plans for the entire building shall be submitted and approved by the City Building Official and Fire Marshal. (3) Conditional Use approval shall expire after one year from the date of approval if no request for a separate Business License has been submitted by that date. Because the prior CUP is still fairly recent with no real track record established, and because this concept is still fairly new, some of the same conditions should still be applicable in this case. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only for a motel facility in C-D Zoning for temporary lodging of transient guests for periods not to exceed seven days per stay. (2) The facility shall be limited to no more than two lodging rooms with a maximum total of no more than two adults per room (not including their children), and the use shall operate under its own Business License. (3) Conditional Use approval shall expire after one year from the date of approval if no request for a separate Business License has been submitted by that date. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their February 25, 2019 Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same conditions as recommended by Staff (8-0 vote).

Daniel Bayman, owner of The Firm, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Bayman stated that he would be glad to answer any questions that Council may have. Councilman Howard stated that he was concerned about there not being an elevator for handicap access. Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator stated that he spoke with the Fire Marshal and he confirmed that an elevator is not required in the building given the size of the facility with only two floors and an existing building. If an elevator was required or if anything else was required as part of the Plan Review process, they would have to address it. Council is simply looking at the use as a motel. Any codes that are applicable to that use would have to be complied with. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to why this was not used as an Executive Suite or a Corporate Suite if it is just one room being used. Daniel Bayman stated that his intentions were to put it on AirBnB and he did not think they would allow him to put it on there as a Corporate Suite. When he approached Matt Martin about the use, he was told it had to be a motel. Most AirBnB stays are anywhere from one to three days.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by was made by Councilman Carroll to approve an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for a small Motel lodging facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Daniel Bayman with the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only for a motel facility in C-D Zoning for temporary lodging of transient guests for periods not to exceed seven days per stay. (2) The facility shall be limited to no more than two lodging rooms with a maximum total of no more than two adults per room (not including their children), and the use shall operate under its own Business License. (3) Conditional Use approval shall expire after one year from the date of approval if no request for a separate Business License has been submitted by that date. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2019-4, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-5, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR AN EVENT CENTER IN A DOWNTOWN-COMMERCIAL (C-D) ZONING DISTRICT

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for an event center in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Birdie's Events and Catering (File No. CU-2019-02). The property is located at 206 North Patterson Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their February Regular Meeting and recommended approval with two conditions (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Birdie's Events and Catering is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for an Event Center in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District. The property consists of 0.10 acres located in Downtown Valdosta at 206 North Patterson Street which is a two-story building along the west side of the street in the middle of the block directly across from the historic Lowndes County Courthouse. Until recently, the building has been used and occupied by Birdie's Market & Catering which featured an upscale coffee shop style restaurant with a retail store and an events/banquet room on the second floor which was part of the restaurant operation. The applicant has now completely closed the coffee shop and retail store, retained the existing commercial kitchen for catering purposes, and is proposing to utilize the entire facility as a special Event Center that will be serviced by the existing kitchen for events only. The property is located within a Downtown Activity Center (DAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within Valdosta's local Historic District as well as the Downtown Commercial National Register Historic District. The property is part of the well-established Historic Downtown area that is dominated by a mixture of uses ranging from offices and retail/services, to multi-family residential uses (mainly in the upper floors), to many forms of institutional uses. This request is somewhat similar to the CUP request for The Patterson (101 North Patterson Street) which was approved in November, 2015. The greatest difference, however, in these cases is that of scale. Total event space floor area at The Patterson is 23,000 square feet whereas Birdie's has a total event floor space of only about 7,000 square feet. Therefore, many of the concerns that were raised during the CUP review of The Patterson (in terms of large crowds and insufficient parking) are not a major issue here. Furthermore, the former use as Birdie's Market (same business owner) already utilized the entire second floor during the past several years as a type of event space and as an accessory to the market and café downstairs. Birdie's successfully demonstrated the use of the second floor as an event space without any noted negative impacts on surrounding properties or other issues, and Staff believes the same use of the first floor will be equally successful with only a few needed conditions of approval. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only for an Event Center in C-D Zoning. There shall be no "brown bagging" of alcoholic beverages, and any events with more than 150 patrons shall be concluded by no later than 1:00 a.m. (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after two years from the date of approval if no Business License for the Event Center has been requested and approved by that time. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their February 25, 2019 Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same conditions as recommended by Staff (8-0 vote).

Councilman Gibbs inquired as to why the Conditional Use would expire after two years. Matt Martin stated that it was set at two years because this was a larger space and they did not know exactly what the renovations would be; however, the applicant can share the timeline with Council. This was merely to accommodate them in case they had more renovations to do. Councilwoman Tooley stated that it was already noted that not much renovation would be needed. Matt Martin stated that they had some interior renovations and clearing away some of

the interior walls. The kitchen needs some changes and this is a little different in scale. This is more than twice the size of the previous building. Councilman Vickers stated that they look at each applicant and try to apply some reason as for the timeline. Matt Martin stated that each case is different and there is a required pre-application meeting as well as a timeline. In some cases, such as with churches, there are fundraising activities to be done. They try to tailor it to each individual case. Councilman Vickers stated that he agreed with that. Matt Martin stated that they maintain a tickler file with all of the expiration dates in chronological order and if there has been no activity they will contact the applicant.

Kiera Johnson, owner of Birdie's Events and Catering, spoke in favor of the request. Ms. Johnson stated that she would be glad to answer any questions that Council may have. Councilwoman Tooley inquired about the limited parking in the Downtown area. Ms. Johnson stated that she did not think they have a parking issue Downtown and she feels like people are lazy. There are quite a few public lots but they are not right at the front door of every single business.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by was made by Councilman Norton to approve an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for an event center in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Birdie's Events and Catering with the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only for an Event Center in C-D Zoning. There shall be no "brown bagging" of alcoholic beverages, and any events with more than 150 patrons shall be concluded by no later than 1:00 a.m. (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after two years from the date of approval if no Business License for the Event Center has been requested and approved by that time. The motion was seconded by Councilman Gibbs. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2019-5, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2019-6, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.73 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY (R-10) TO OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P)

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.73 acres from Single-Family (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P) as requested by Steve Jaramillo (File No. VA-2019-01). The property is located at 1609 North Patterson Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their February Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Steve Jaramillo, on behalf of United Way, is requesting to rezone 0.73 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P). The property contains a vacant historic single-family residence (2,405 square feet) and is located at 1609 North Patterson Street. This is along the east side of the street and is diagonally across from the Valdosta State University (VSU) main campus at the intersection of North Patterson Street and Georgia Avenue. The applicant is proposing to purchase the property, install a small parking lot, and convert the residence to an administrative office for United Way. The property is located within an Institutional Activity Center (IAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan, which allows the possibility of O-P Zoning. This Character Area designation is associated with the property's proximity to VSU. The property is also located within Valdosta's local Historic District as well as the Brookwood North National Register Historic District. The surrounding land use pattern is dominated by the VSU campus, as well as other institutional uses and offices along the North Patterson Street corridor. The property is one of very few residential uses remaining, and single-family residential usage is no longer very conducive for this corridor. The proposed O-P Zoning allows for all forms of offices and many forms of institutional uses which better fits this surrounding land use pattern. It also prohibits multi-family residential (such as would be allowed in R-P Zoning) which has often been a concern for the Brookwood North neighborhood. Because the property is within the local Historic District, the proposed parking lot will require its own public hearing approval from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), who will very likely require the existing historic character of the property to be maintained. 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 February 25, 2019 Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Steve Jaramillo, Executive Director of the Greater Valdosta United Way, spoke in favor of the request. He thanked Council for their consideration on behalf of the Staff and Board and stated that he would be glad to answer any questions that Council may have.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2019-6, an Ordinance to rezone 0.73 acres from Single-Family (R-10) to Office-Professional (O-P) as requested by Steve Jaramillo, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for street repairs for various locations around the City of Valdosta.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta maintains over 300 miles of streets. Roads wear and degrade due to factors such as the volume of vehicles, weights of vehicles, ages of the pavement, and environmental factors. The Engineering Department's Street Maintenance Division is tasked with street repairs; however, the Division is not equipped to make all reported repairs as it is not prudent to purchase and maintain large paving equipment required to do such work. In practice, road conditions and needed repairs are identified and reported by Staff, the public, elected officials, and others. Locations that get frequent pothole calls are called "hot spots" and, in many cases, are locations that need to be totally resurfaced because pothole repairs are no longer possible or sufficient. In December of 2018, Staff identified 13 of the most degraded roadway locations across the City. These repairs are badly needed and urgent to protect the traveling public's safety and welfare and to avoid damage to vehicles and future insurance claims. In January of 2019, Staff developed documents to bid out the work to repair the identified hot spots. These documents were publicly advertised on the City's website and in the local newspaper. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on February 6, 2019. Two contractors attended. Their bids were received and opened publicly on February 26, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. The low bid was submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$182,909. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$182,909 plus a 10% contingency of \$18,290.90 for a total of \$201,199.90.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$182,909 plus a 10% contingency of \$18,290.90 for a total of \$201,199.90 for street repairs for various locations around the City of Valdosta.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Doug Roberson, 921 Lausanne Drive, stated that they have had a lot of improvements in their neighborhood and they are all happy to see the results. Mr. Roberson thanked Councilwoman Miller-Cody, City Engineer Pat Collins, and Staff for all of their help.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Strategic Initiatives Summit will be held on March 15-16, 2019 at the Woman's Building and packets will be given to Council tomorrow.

Mark Barber, City Manager, congratulated our new Police Chief, Leslie Manahan and asked her to come forward to speak. There was some significant competition for this position and there were 86 applicants from all over the United States. We had a panel of five Police Chiefs from around Georgia who interviewed the remaining candidates along with the Department Heads. Chief Manahan came out on top in her peer group with Police Chiefs around the State of Georgia which speaks very highly of her.

Chief Manahan stated that she was truly honored to have been selected for this position. It was a hard task to go through but she is excited that she accomplished it and she is looking forward to the future of the Police Department. She looks forward to what is ahead for them and thanked the Mayor and Council and the citizens for all of their support.

Councilman Howard stated that they will be walking through the neighborhoods to introduce Chief Manahan to the citizens. They want to get the community involved. When Chief Manahan calls on the Council members, they need to be receptive to the call because it is going to take all of them to get the streets cleaned up.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that they are starting a Neighborhood Watch in District 1 and they have their first meeting on March 23, 2019 at the New Bible Church on North Forrest Street. Their goal is to help clean up their community.

Councilman Vickers inquired about cleaning up the drainage ditch on Hill Avenue near the Overpass. It has been approximately two months since he mentioned it. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that was a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) area but on Friday, Angela Bray, Stormwater Manager, went out and cleaned up the trash in the canal. GDOT is supposed to be here early next week and they are going to dredge it and clean it out with their equipment. Councilman Vickers stated that it was put in several years ago and he could only remember one time when GDOT came and cleaned it out. The City has been maintaining it and we need to do a little bit better job. We pay stormwater fees and if you go down Forrest Street from Northside Drive you will see all of the drainage ditches that are stopped up. We have seven people in that Department and we have a special funding for that so we need to do better in cleaning some of these drainage ditches.

Councilman Gibbs stated that the Miracle League Ribbon Cutting was held on March 2, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at Freedom Park and he thanked everyone who played a part in that. They start their games on March 12 at 6:00 p.m. and they have approximately 100 players. The youth play on Tuesday and the adults play on Thursday. They were able to utilize the fields today for Special Olympics and they had over 380 athletes playing and using the entire complex. This is what it was built for and they were proud to have Special Olympics use it for the first time. There were 15 different schools from four different school systems who participated. He encouraged Council to come out and visit the new fields.

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 March 7, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:10 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 21, 2019.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta