

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 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 Pastor Wayne Robertson, Morningside Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

OATHS OF OFFICE FOR THE 2019-2020 VALDOSTA YOUTH COUNCIL

Mayor John Gayle stated that the Valdosta Youth Council (VYC) was created in September of 2015 by a Resolution approved by the Mayor and City Council to inspire local 7th and 8th grade students to build leadership skills, learn about civic responsibility, gain a better understanding of municipal government, and to prepare these youth for a lifetime of public and community service. The inaugural VYC program year consisted of 14 youth who were successful in accomplishing several goals, which resulted in dozens of community service hours, an anti-bullying awareness campaign, and the adoption of a .6 mile portion N. Lee Street, among others. Now, in its fifth year, the VYC has 34 students in grades 7th, 8th, and 9th representing both City and County Schools (public and private). Those schools include the following: (1) J. L. Newbern Middle School, (2) Valdosta Middle School, (3) Valdosta High School, (4) Valdosta Early College Academy, (5) Lowndes Middle School, (6) Hahira Middle School, (7) Lowndes High School, (8) Highland Christian Academy, (9) Open Bible School, (10) St. John Catholic School, and (11) Valwood. The VYC members were selected by the VYC Advisory Board to participate in the 2019-2020 class. The first meeting of the VYC was held today from 4:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers and the Honorable Municipal Court Judge Vernita Bender inducted the 2019-2020 VYC Officers. The scheduled VYC Monthly Meetings will run through May, 2020, and the VYC members must also each complete a minimum of eight hours of community service during that time period. This group of exceptional youth will operate much like the Valdosta City Council (guided by the Advisory Board) and will have an opportunity to grow as leaders and continue their positive impact among their peers and within our community. The VYC Advisory Board members appointed by Mayor John Gayle (who serves as the head of the Board) to serve for 2019-2020 are as follows: Valdosta Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, Valdosta Councilwoman Sandra Tooley, and City Staff members Teresa Bolden, Taylor Marzell, Ashlyn Becton, and Marcus McConico. The 2019-2020 VYC Members are as follows: (1) Jeffrey (Dean) Barnett - Valdosta Middle School, 8th Grade, (2) Myriah Bennett - Valdosta Middle School, 7th Grade, (3) Najah Blankumsee - Valdosta High School, 9th Grade, (4) Avery Childers - Lowndes Middle School, 8th Grade, (5) John Laurent Dean – Valwood, 8th Grade, (6) Jalen Denton - Valdosta Middle School, 8th Grade, (7) Emily Dinkins - Lowndes High School, 9th Grade, (8) Brooke Felkel - Open Bible Christian School, 9th Grade, (9) Kapreal Griffin - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade, (10) Thomas Griner – Valwood, 8th Grade, (11) Henry Hamilton - St. John Catholic School, 7th Grade, (12) Yunique Hazzard - Open Bible Christian School, 9th Grade, (13) Brizeida Hernandez - Lowndes Middle School, 8th Grade, (14) Jackson Hill - Valdosta Middle School, 8th Grade, (15) Nah’Torrie Hill - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade, (16) Erin Howard - Valdosta Middle School, 7th Grade, (17) Aida Miller - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade, (18) Raymond Moody - St. John Catholic School, 7th Grade, (19) Bryce Moore - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade, (20) Morgan Parnell - Open Bible Christian School, 9th Grade, (21) Caleb Perez - Hahira Middle School, 8th Grade, (22) Cerigan Phillips - Valdosta Early College Academy, 8th Grade, (23) Serenity Pitts - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade, (24) Aaron Robertson - Lowndes Middle School, 7th Grade, (25) Tiffany Rutland - Lowndes Middle School, 8th Grade, (26) Elizabeth Scruggs – Valwood, 8th Grade, (27) Channing Smith - Lowndes Middle School, 8th Grade, (28) Tristen Steward - Valdosta Middle School, 7th Grade, (29) Erick Thomas, Jr. - Valdosta High School, 9th Grade, (30) Malcolm Thomas - Valdosta Middle School, 7th Grade, (31) Jayci Thompson - Highland Christian, 8th Grade, (32) Patrick Wallace - St. John Catholic School, 7th Grade, (33) Davis Wardwell - Highland Christian, 8th Grade, and (34) Zacharie Watts-Thomas - J.L. Newbern Middle School, 7th Grade. Mayor Gayle congratulated the 2019-2020 Valdosta Youth Council, wished them another successful year, and administered the Oath of Office.

The minutes of the September 5, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARING

REQUEST BY THE CITY OF VALDOSTA TO INITIATE THE REZONING REVIEW AND PUBLIC HEARING PROCESS FOR TWO PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 405 AND 407 PINE TREE ROAD

Consideration of a request by the City of Valdosta to initiate the Rezoning Review and Public Hearing Process for two properties located at 405 and 407 Pine Tree Road. This request will be properly advertised and considered at the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission Regular Meeting on October 28, 2019 and at the Valdosta City Council Regular Meeting on November 7, 2019.

Tracy Tolley, Zoning Coordinator, stated that two properties located at 405 and 407 Pine Tree Road total 0.58 acres and were originally zoned Single-Family Residential (R-10) as part of the adjacent Alden Park neighborhood which was developed during the 1950's. They were also part of a rezoning approval in 2014 whereby eight parcels of land were rezoned from Single-Family Residential (R-10) and Office-Professional (O-P), to conditional Multi-Family Residential (R-M)(c) to be collectively redeveloped as one large apartment complex. The four conditions of approval for the R-M Zoning were based on the original proposed apartment layout and stipulated as follows: (1) For multi-family development, combine all parcels of land into one lot. (2) From Pine Tree Road, minimum setbacks shall be at least 30' for buildings greater than one story, and 100' for buildings greater than 2-story. (3) Buffer Yard landscaping shall include a minimum of 3 canopy trees, 4 understory trees, and 30 shrubs per 100 linear feet. Buffer yards shall maintain a minimum width of 20'. There shall be an unbroken 6' tall opaque solid fence or wall along the entire western boundary as well as the entire frontage area of Pine Tree Road. There shall be no vehicular or pedestrian access to Pine Tree Road. (4) Structures abutting the Pine Tree side (4 existing parcels area, about 1.34 acres) shall be no more than two stories tall. Since 2014, each of the other six properties have been rezoned again to allow individual apartment complexes to be developed, each of them with different conditions of approval or with no conditions at all. The most recent of these occurred in July with the rezoning of the three parcels to the east and southeast (Joe Nijem, File No. VA-2019-02). As a result, these two properties along Pine Tree Road will now be physically isolated in terms of site design from the now smaller apartment complexes to the east and south. These two parcels were originally rezoned and planned to be part of a much larger apartment complex that never came to fruition, and they are all that remain of that previous decision. The conditions of approval that were placed on them in 2014 still remain in full force and effect today. Because of these zoning conditions, particularly Condition (3) which prohibits pedestrian or vehicular access to Pine Tree Road and requires solid fencing along the street frontage, the existing Single-Family Residential design of these properties is non-conforming. Therefore, the current zoning of these last properties is both illogical and misleading as depicted on the current Zoning Map. Any redevelopment of these properties will now require their own separate rezoning approval. Because they were once planned to be part of a larger apartment complex that never materialized and they are still developed as Single-Family under the same original pattern as the adjacent neighborhood, their proposed future usage as apartments may no longer be considered compatible or appropriate. Section 242-4(A)(1) of the Land Development Regulations (LDR) states that proposed amendments to the Official Zoning Map (a rezoning request) "....may be initiated by the owner(s) of the subject property or the authorized agent(s) of the owner(s) of the property, by majority vote of the members of the City Council, by the Planning and Zoning Administrator, or by recommendation of the Planning Commission." This is the same kind of language that has existed in all prior Zoning Ordinances of the City, as well as Ordinances in other communities in that it grants authority to the City Council to initiate the Public Hearing process for possible rezoning of any properties in the City. The actual decision of whether or not to change the existing Zoning, would then be made at a future advertised Public Hearing just like any rezoning request submitted by a private property owner. Although this procedure is not common, it has been used numerous times in the past--particularly in the case of a neighborhood-scale rezoning or simply cleaning up an irregular or misleading pattern on the Zoning Map.

Mayor Gayle stated that this request would go through the same process as any rezoning would. It will go before the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission and then back to the City Council. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether any of the property owners were contacted. Councilman Gibbs stated that he sent out two letters and he received an E-mail from one of the property owners. The property owner stated that they no longer reside in Valdosta and were currently living in Florida. They had more questions about the rezoning going back to

R-10. He provided the property owner with Matt Martin's telephone number so that Matt could answer her questions. They have corresponded through E-mail, but he did not know what has transpired as far as the conversation between Matt Martin and the property owner. He is simply initiating the process of rezoning the two properties.

Walter Hobbs, 8 Cherokee Avenue, spoke in favor of the request. These two pieces of property have a long history and originally the Lehman Corporation tried to get them to do this and the property owners did not want it to be Multi-Family Residential Zoning. The Lehman Corporation came back three months later and put rezoning signs in their yards which was illegal. The Zoning Application was thrown out because they tried to get the property rezoned without letting these people know it. They offered to buy the property if it got rezoned; however, it never got rezoned. The property owners never told them to rezone it. Later, the Sineath Group did the same thing that the Lehman Corporation did. They told the property owners that they would purchase the property if it got rezoned. That is what they did with the Fraternity House owned by George Saliba, they did it with the other Fraternity House on Baytree Road, and the Church. George Saliba sold it to them straight out and then it got rezoned. Mr. Hobbs stated that he met one of the property owners before and she did not really want to sell the house. She has renters in it right now. The other house has people living in it as well. It concerns him when there was a full-page article in the newspaper recently about problems with affordable housing in Valdosta. These are affordable homes. Mayor Gayle stated that this will stop the encroachment on Pine Tree Road. Mr. Hobbs stated that if they say they are not going to agree with the rezoning, then anybody can do what they want to with those two parcels. Mayor Gayle stated that if the property owners do not want to rezone it back to R-10, they can go to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission and let them know. Councilman Gibbs stated that is why he is trying to get it changed back to R-10. Mr. Hobbs stated that all four parcels were rezoned without the stipulations for the solid fencing, trees, and setbacks. Mayor Gayle stated that those parcels were in the 2014 rezoning request but now they are no longer included so we are trying to protect them. Mr. Hobbs stated that the last time he appeared before Council he asked for the zoning to be put back on all of them because Council approved it only with the stipulation that they comply with the restrictions Council put on it. They stopped their contract because they did not agree to do it. All of this was done for one Project. Councilman Gibbs stated that they have not stopped their Project. Mr. Hobbs stated this was done by Jim Sineath. Councilman Gibbs stated that they are talking about what is happening now. Mr. Hobbs stated that all of these were rezoned for Jim Sineath and he turned it down which means he voided the contract with the City Council. They should all really go back to R-10. Mayor Gayle stated that Mr. Hobbs should attend the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission Meeting to express his opinion there and then Council will be voting on this in November. Mr. Hobbs stated that they need this part stopped.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to initiate the Rezoning Review and Public Hearing Process for a proposal to rezone the two properties located at 405 and 407 Pine Tree Road back to the original Single-Family Residential (R-10) Zoning.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-11, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTRACT FROM THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GDOT) TO PROCEED WITH VALDOSTA REGIONAL AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Contract from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with a partial rehabilitation of Taxiway M, widen taxi lanes (North Ramp), design airport drainage improvements, proceed with acquisition of property located within the Runway 17/35 Protection Zone, and conduct an Air Traffic Control Tower Phase II Siting Study.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority desires to proceed with the following Projects at the Valdosta Regional Airport: (1) a partial rehabilitation of Taxiway M, (2) widen taxi lanes (North Ramp), (3) design Airport drainage improvements, (4) proceed with acquisition of property located within the Runway 17/35 Protection Zone, and (5) conduct an Air Traffic Control Tower Phase II Siting Study. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has prepared a Contract to cover approximately 5% of

the costs except for the Control Tower Study which GDOT is covering 75%. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grants, which were previously approved for acceptance, will fund 90% of the cost at the Valdosta Regional Airport. The remainder of the funds is expected to come from a combination of Passenger Facility Charges collected from passengers that fly out of the Airport and local Airport funds. There will be no City of Valdosta funds required for these Projects. GDOT has prepared a Contract in the amount of \$92,115.70 for the Projects. The Contract will be delivered to City Hall electronically. The Contract must be executed and returned to GDOT. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to accept the Contract in order to process the document and proceed with the Projects at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2019-11, a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Contract from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with a partial rehabilitation of Taxiway M, widen taxi lanes (North Ramp), design airport drainage improvements, proceed with acquisition of property located within the Runway 17/35 Protection Zone, and conduct an Air Traffic Control Tower Phase II Siting Study, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-12, A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR RE-ROUTING HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC FROM THE DOWNTOWN AREA IN THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Consideration of a Resolution of Support for re-routing heavy truck traffic from the Downtown Area in the City of Valdosta.

Mayor Gayle stated that the City of Valdosta has been concerned about the heavy trucks traveling through the Downtown area for many years. The City supports a proposal to build a truck bypass around the southern portion of Valdosta that would focus on improving economic development in the Valdosta/Lowndes County area by specifically moving east-west U. S. 84 truck “through” trips from the Downtown core and onto a new southern bypass route. This could also provide improved access to the truck-dependent industries and businesses south of Downtown. Safety is also of utmost concern for our Downtown businesses and customers and this truck bypass will certainly ease that concern. As noted in the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) analysis, the Hill Avenue and Central Avenue portions of U. S. 84 through Downtown Valdosta would need to be removed from the State Highway System and relocated onto the bypass when complete so that the City could restrict truck movements on these sections. In addition, as a proposed bypass, the engineering scoping phase and development of its concept may include a combination of a two-lane and four-lane footprint, as necessary, to accommodate for potential impacts and traffic needs. The City understands that scoping will take into account the planned St. Augustine Road rail overpass funded with Transportation Investment Act (TIA) funds, which is not contingent on a truck bypass proposal and will be constructed regardless. The City also understands that when the bypass is completed and U. S. 84 is moved to the bypass, the section of U. S. 84 in and through the City will be maintained by the City. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has issued an Executive Summary outlining a Feasibility Study for re-routing heavy truck traffic out of the City of Valdosta’s Downtown area. This is essentially a re-routing of U.S. 84 as was done as in Thomasville. The City of Valdosta supports the idea of a south Valdosta truck bypass and proposes that an engineering scoping phase be initiated soon to provide more detailed design, right-of-way, and cost assumptions, such that it can investigate potential funding partnerships with GDOT and Lowndes County to develop the Project. It should be noted that the advantages of re-routing heavy truck traffic will bring monumental changes to our community. To help solidify not only the City’s commitment to this Project, but also GDOT’s willingness to “scope” this Project, GDOT Board Chairman, Tim Golden, has asked the Transportation Policy Committee of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce to gather as many endorsements from the community as possible. A Resolution of Support has been prepared for review. If approved by the Council, a Chamber Representative will be provided with a copy so that it can be sent to Chairman Golden for presenting to the GDOT Commissioner, Russell McMurry, as evidence of our community’s cohesiveness in seeing this Project initiated and completed.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2019-12, a Resolution of Support for re-routing heavy truck traffic from the Downtown Area in the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

Consideration of a request for emergency funds for street repairs on Pebblewood Drive and West Street.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in December of 2018, Staff identified 13 of the most degraded roadway locations across the City. These repairs were urgent and needed to protect the travelling public's safety and to avoid potential damage to vehicles and subsequent insurance claims. Consequently, on March 7, 2019, City Council approved a Contract with Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$201,199.90 (including a 10% contingency) to address the repairs at the 13 locations. Subsequent to the March 7, 2019 Contract approval, two additional locations were discovered also needing immediate emergency repair. These two locations included portions of Pebblewood Drive and West Street. While the exact materials required to perform the work were not precisely known, Staff estimated the probable cost would likely be close to the authorized contractual amount; therefore, Staff opted at the time to proceed with the emergency repairs using the 10% contingency, and as is the practice in case of emergencies, if it became necessary, Staff would then seek after-the-fact City Council approval to cover the final cost of the work. Based on the quantities used and the unit prices in the Contract, the emergency repairs did ultimately exceed the previously authorized Contract amount by \$6,943.07. Consequently, Staff is seeking City Council authorization to increase the final Contract amount with Reames and Son from \$201,199.90 to \$208,142.97 (or \$6,943.07 above the previous authorization).

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve an increase in the final Contract amount with Reames and Son from \$201,199.90 to \$208,142.97 for emergency street repairs on Pebblewood Drive and West Street.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that it was still on his mind about the City of Valdosta Police Department conducting an investigation into an incident at Bathcraft regarding a noose. The FBI Agent, Tom Clark, a Council person, and the Chief of Police did the investigation. He has a copy of the Valdosta Police Report and he will have to request a copy of the FBI Report under the Freedom of Information Act. There is no where in the Police Report that it mentions a noose of any kind. They talk about an electrical cord. He has information that states it was a noose. The Valdosta Daily Times made a statement, but they did not put anything about what he said at the Council Meeting because they want to keep the people ignorant. The Valdosta Daily Times only shares truth worthy news stories as if social media is of no value. If there had not been social media that published information about the noose on Facebook, and if Bobby Worthy in Waycross, Georgia had not called him, this would not be his third time standing before the Council. We should thank God for social media. The Chief of Police quoted Mr. Chris, a Manager at Bathcraft, who said that all of the people were happy, and no one saw a problem with the noose or extension cord that was hanging from the ceiling. That is what the Police Report says and a lot more. Mr. Rhynes stated that he wants the citizens of Valdosta to read this. He was given an E-mail with 26 black people who said they were offended by that. People are being shot across this nation. The Mayor and Council has said that they are taking this very seriously. This is his last address before the Council concerning this matter. The black people at Bathcraft are not happy about the noose because it was not an extension cord and it did not fall from the ceiling. He has more information and if they had done a good investigation, they would have the same information that he has.

Eddie Tooley, Cummings Street, stated he had a complaint about the traffic light on Forrest Street and East Hill Avenue. There are a couple of houses (blue and yellow houses) near the traffic light that have privacy fences that have been put up and once you stop at the traffic light you are unable to see the on-coming cars. He has almost been hit there and he has seen other people who have almost been hit. Something needs to be done about it because the privacy fences are blocking the view of the drivers who are pulling off of Forrest Street onto Hill Avenue.

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, stated that he had a meeting with Mark Barber, City Manager, and Vanassa Flucas, Neighborhood Development and Community Protection Manager, regarding economic development on the south side of Valdosta. If the City Council can get behind the ideas that were discussed, then it is something that can be done in a positive manner. They need development on that side of the City. There was an issue with cleaning up that area and that can be addressed; however, as long as you have an area with no economic development because there is no money, then it will always produce a poverty-stricken area. Economic development will bring jobs and opportunities and they need Council to support the ideas that were discussed. They also discussed some renovations on the right-hand side of the overpass heading south and other

areas along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor. Once they see that something is being done in a positive manner that means they can look forward to progress in the City. It is only fair that they have some development on the south side.

Phil Hubbard, 2011 Woody Circle, stated that he manages a fleet of trucks and wanted to make some comments about the proposed truck route. He is very much in favor of a truck route but hopes that they will make a sound choice in doing that. Some of the proposals involving Industrial Boulevard and doing a fly-over the railroad track on St. Augustine may create a traffic problem there. Another proposal is to somehow connect Tucker Road and come through Lloyd Jackson Road and then do a fly-over the Interstate and connect to Highway 84 West. There is some validity to that; however, in his opinion, a more logical approach would be to incorporate the existing Inner Perimeter Road and go on the west end of the Airport and perhaps parallel the Interstate. It could then cross over the Interstate somewhere north of Exit 13 and then connect to Rocky Ford Road. It would probably not be as much of a problem in acquiring the right-of-way because some of this land is already for sale. They need to create a route with a 55 mile per hour speed limit and a road that trucks and automobiles would voluntarily use. With the twisting and turning involved in using Clay Road, it might be prohibitive and you would have to force people to use it. They would be more likely to lean toward a smooth flowing limited access highway such as Inner Perimeter Road. The problem is the Airport and how it ties in with Exit 11. Mr. Hubbard stated that he hoped they would make a logical choice.

Kevin Bussey, 3473 Knights Mill Drive, stated that he wanted to talk about an issue while it was still fresh in people's minds. During the early morning hours of June 22, 2019, Desiyunna Hill was fatally shot outside a teen party being held at a Multi-Purpose Building in Valdosta. There was no adult chaperone at this party, no security inside, and no on-site Police Officers outside. There were no security measures in place to ensure the safety of the children inside or outside of this establishment. The proposed initiative will show the community that the local government and the City of Valdosta is serious about protecting the citizens by ensuring accountability across the board in the same manner that we will hold the criminal who commits the act responsible. We must also hold private commercial properties and management entities to the same standard. He calls this the Desi Act and it is a proactive approach to preventing tragedies like this from reoccurring in the future. If you rent a Club venue, whether it is The Patterson located Downtown or the Deja Vu Nightclub, you are mandated to have a Police Officer or security if there is a potential for a large crowd. If you rent a facility from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority, you must have Police security as well as a multi-million dollar liability insurance policy. These mandated policies are in place to ensure the security and safety of anyone who may attend. With the support of the family of Desiyunna Hill, we the people are advocating for a policy in her honor. This is an initiative that will mandate that all property owners, property management, and contractor agreements ensure that adequate security and/or Police Officers are present at the property if there will be a large amount of people in attendance. Property managers and property owners should be knowledgeable of the type of event taking place at the building. In the event of a large crowd, Police and security must be mandated in all contractor agreements. It is the property manager's responsibility to make sure these requirements are met. In case someone is injured because of the lack of security and safety measures, it is the property manager and property owner who should also be held accountable. This policy will help to prevent and deter the same type of tragedy from occurring again in our community. Mandated requirements in the rental agreement will not only protect the citizens but also the property owners as well. This is nothing more than just a way to be proactive as opposed to being reactive.

Alma Williams, 2609 Rolling Road, stated that she wanted to applaud Mr. Bussey and the vision that he has; however, as a mother, a business owner, and a widow, she understands loss and the love of a parent. She also understands the stresses that are put on the City and business owners. There is someone in Valdosta who knows what happened on that night with Ms. Hill and she would like to see the City and the community come together as a whole and put a reward together that would entice some of those individuals who were either a part of it or know of it to come forth. We have to become more proactive. Our Police force is limited in its resources and manpower and it is stretched to its limit. She is not giving that as an excuse, but she is here today to ask as a community and as the City of Valdosta to put some money where our mouths are and find out what happened. Let us be the City that comes together as one because if we do that then we make a difference as one. We say to those people who reside in our City and are not civil that we have something for you. We are going to catch you and put you away so that this does not happen again. To the family of Ms. Hill, she has lost a loved one and it seems as it was only yesterday that it happened. She cannot tell how they feel but she knows how she feels. As a City, this is not just the Hill's problem, it is everyone's problem and we all need to come together to assist this family and others who

have lost loved ones in similar situations. Ms. Williams stated that she wanted to encourage the City to put a reward together and if it takes citizens to get involved then they need to do that and call out those people who do not want to be in our wonderful City in a civilized manner.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that tonight is Food Truck Thursday in Downtown Valdosta and it will run through 8:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to participate and purchase some food during the event.

The Valdosta Police Department and the Valdosta Fire Department will be hosting two "Coffee with the Chiefs" events with the first one being held on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at Jessie's Restaurant and the next one will be held on Wednesday, October 2, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at McDonald's located on Ashley Street.

The Georgia Theater Company has chosen to graciously support the Valdosta Police Department and its Shop with a Cop event. They will be holding the 16th Annual Cinema for a Cause event on September 29, 2019 and 100% of all proceeds from ticket and concession sales will go toward charities.

On Monday, September 23, 2019, Southland Contractors will begin construction of the sidewalk, curbs, and drainage pipes on the east side of Ulmer Avenue to Old Statenville Road.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Howard stated that on Monday, September 30, 2019, there will be a joint Town Hall Meeting for Council Districts 4 and 6 at the Senior Citizens Center located on Park Avenue from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. They will be glad to answer any questions that citizens may have.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she wanted to thank the Departments for some of the wonderful work that they have been doing. They are also trying to get information out to the citizens about housing and parks. They are asking the citizens to get involved. As a member of the City Council, they do have compassion and for people to think that the Council is not caring or compassionate about what goes on in our community and what happens to the citizens is simply not true. They are concerned and they do care. Regarding putting up a reward for information on the Hill tragedy, they would love to do that, but the money would have to come from the citizens because everyone who goes through that same thing would have to have that same support. If the City supports one person then they have to support them all. The funds will need to come from the citizens of Valdosta.

Councilman Vickers stated that they may not say anything in public, but they do talk among themselves and to the City Manager. They do care and they try to speak through one voice.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that in 1993 a young man killed her only girl. One side of her face she knew and one side of her face she did not know so every time a child gets hurt in our community, she feels it. She may not say anything, but she continues to serve and to reach each child so that we can stop the violence. She hurts when they hurt, she bleeds when they bleed, and when they cry, she cries. She has to be a daughter, a mother, and a sister but she still serves the City of Valdosta. If you have not walked in those shoes, then do not talk about it.

Mayor Gayle stated that he was at the U. S. Air Force Association Cyber and Space Convention in Washington, D.C. this week where the Parker Greene Memorial Award was presented to Dr. Lucy Greene. Out of all the awards that were given, this was the only one where there was a 15-minute video that highlighted what all has gone on in Valdosta. He would like to have the video posted it to the City's website and maybe the Valdosta Daily Times can run an article about the event. It was a very meaningful service.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 19, 2019 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:38 p.m. and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the Regular City Council Meeting at 7:01 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of litigation in the Executive Session and no action was taken.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 19, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:02 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, October 10, 2019.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta