

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor Scott James Matheson called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph “Sonny” Vickers, Sandra Tooley, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Eric Howard, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Andy Gibbs was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Lee Henderson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Consideration of the July, 2021 Employee of the Month Award (Firefighter Jarvese Gilliard, Valdosta Fire Department).

Fire Chief Brian Boutwell stated that Jarvese Gilliard began his employment with the City of Valdosta in June of 2018 and is currently a Firefighter in our Fire Department. The nomination for Firefighter Gilliard was submitted by Captain Robert Mercer in regard to Firefighter Gilliard’s heroic effort while off duty. Here is what Captain Mercer wrote, “Firefighter Jarvese Gilliard is being nominated for Employee of the Month due to actions taken while off-duty on May 2, 2021 when he witnessed a shooting take place at the intersection of Williams Street and East Alden Avenue. Firefighter Gilliard called 911 to report the shooting then went to begin a patient assessment on the victim. He remained with the victim until Valdosta Police Department arrived on the scene and established control. Although he had no duty to act, Firefighter Gilliard entered an unsecured scene with the offender’s whereabouts unknown and did what he could to ensure the victim was cared for until additional help arrived. His actions reflect the care and dedication to members of our community that every City employee should strive to display. With his prompt action, the offender was apprehended nearby, and the victim received emergency medical care quickly.” It is for this reason and many others that the Employee Relations Committee nominated Firefighter Jarvese Gilliard as the July Employee of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the June 24, 2021 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-17, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 1.00 ACRE FROM OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P) TO RESIDENTIAL-PROFESSIONAL (R-P) ZONING**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 1.00 acre from Office-Professional (O-P) to Residential-Professional (R-P) Zoning as requested by Crown Real Estate Development, LLC (VA-2021-12). The property is located at 2006 Baytree Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their June Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Crown Real Estate Development, LLC is requesting to rezone 1.00 acre from Office-Professional (O-P) to Residential-Professional (R-P). The property is located at 2006 Baytree Road at the southwest corner of Baytree Road and Ellis Drive. The property is currently vacant, and the applicant is proposing to subdivide the property into four lots for the construction of four residential duplexes. Duplexes are not a permitted use in O-P Zoning, but they are allowed in R-P Zoning. 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 existing land use pattern in this immediate area is a mixture of office, light commercial, and all forms of residential ranging from single-family homes to duplexes, to multi-family. The existing zoning pattern of the area fits the same mixture; however, the CAC Character Area designation calls for a little more intensive of a development pattern which completely excludes single-family residential and encourages a mixture of high-density residential upward through all forms of

commercial. Throughout all of the CAC Character Areas, this area along Baytree Road west of Gornto Road has remained the least-intensive in development pattern and has been evolving only very slowly. Up until 2006, the property was zoned and developed as residential. It was then rezoned to O-P in 2006 for a plan to be developed as a medium-sized Daycare center; however, that use never materialized and the property has remained vacant ever since. In this particular location, both offices and high-density residential development seem like logical choices based on the surrounding patterns; however, O-P Zoning does not allow residential usage beyond that of single-family, whereas R-P Zoning allows both offices and all densities of residential. The applicant’s proposal for a small grouping of four duplexes is on the lower end of the intensity scale of what could otherwise be developed in R-P, but this Zoning keeps the “possibility” of offices, apartments, and even a small/medium Daycare center as a potential future development choice. 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 June 28, 2021 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Bill Kent, Innovate Engineering & Surveying, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Kent stated that he represents the Developer and they have developed multi-family housing in this neighborhood as well as several successful duplexes.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2021-17, an Ordinance to rezone 1.00 acre from Office-Professional (O-P) to Residential-Professional (R-P) Zoning for property located at 2006 Baytree Road as requested by Crown Real Estate Development, LLC, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-18, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 1.14 ACRES FROM HIGHWAY-COMMERCIAL (C-H)(COUNTY) TO HIGHWAY-COMMERCIAL (C-H) CITY ZONING**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 1.14 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H)(County) to Highway-Commercial (C-H)(City) Zoning as requested by Dineshkumar Patel (File No. VA-2021-13). The property is located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their June Regular meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Dineshkumar Patel is requesting to rezone 1.14 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H)(County) to Highway-Commercial (C-H)(City). The property is located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road along the north side of the road between I-75 and James Road. The property is currently vacant, and the applicant is proposing to develop this as a Dairy Queen restaurant with drive-thru. The applicant is requesting annexation of this same property, which is being reviewed and processed concurrently under Case File No. VA-2021-14. The property is located within a Regional Activity Center (RAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-H Zoning. The existing land use pattern in this area is dominated by commercial uses associated with commerce along I-75. The existing parcel is a remnant from some of the original commercial development at Exit 18 but has suffered from the widening of North St. Augustine Road many years ago as well as it is very small and has an irregular boundary shape. The applicant’s proposal as a Dairy Queen for this site is a relatively small footprint compared to some of the other nearby commercial development, but it seems to adequately fit within the property’s existing boundaries. Continuation of the existing C-H Zoning for this property (but changing from County to City), and offering the same range in commercial uses, also seems appropriate and logical. 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 June 28, 2021 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Bill Kent, Innovate Engineering & Surveying, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Kent stated that the applicant needs City water and sewer service and that is what prompted the need for annexation and rezoning. In the western tip of the parcel, they are still working out details as proposed in the plan as well as details for the new truck stop across the street.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2021-18, an Ordinance to rezone 1.14 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H)(County) to Highway-Commercial (C-H)(City) Zoning for property located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road as requested by Dineshkumar Patel, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2021-19, AN ORDINANCE TO ANNEX 1.14 ACRES INTO THE CITY OF VALDOSTA**

Consideration of an Ordinance to annex 1.14 acres into the City of Valdosta as requested by Dineshkumar Patel (File No. VA-2021-14). The property is located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their June Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Dineshkumar Patel is requesting to annex 1.14 acres into the City of Valdosta. The property is currently vacant and located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road along the north side of the road between I-75 and James Road. This request is running concurrently with the Rezoning Request (File No. VA-2021-13), and it has been properly noticed to Lowndes County pursuant to State law. The applicant is proposing to annex this property in order to avail themselves of City water and sewer services to facilitate development of the property as a Dairy Queen restaurant. The property is currently located within a Regional Activity Center (RAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. There is currently no proposed change to this Character Area designation as a result of annexation. The property is contiguous to the Valdosta City Limits on three sides and it is fully eligible for annexation into Valdosta. This property has been vacant for many years and these Annexation and Rezoning Requests represent an effort to infill commercial development on this irregular-shaped parcel of land. Staff found the annexation request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their June 28, 2021 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2021-19, an Ordinance to annex 1.14 acres located at 1395 North St. Augustine Road into the City of Valdosta as requested by Dineshkumar Patel, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ORDINANCE FOR ESTABLISHING PROMOTIONAL**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-10, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT FROM THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GDOT) TO PROCEED WITH RUNWAY 4/22 CRACK SEAL AND REMARKING**

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a contract from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with Runway 4/22 crack seal and remarking.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority desires to proceed with repairs to Runway 4/22 for crack seal and remarking. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has offered to fund 75% of the costs at the Valdosta Regional Airport. The matching funds (25%) will come from Airport funds. There will be no City of Valdosta funds required for this Project. GDOT is preparing a contract in the amount of \$100,556 for the Project. The contract will be delivered to City Hall. The contract must be executed and returned to GDOT expeditiously in order to secure the funds. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor Scott Matheson to execute the contract. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve

the Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with Runway 4/22 crack seal and remarking.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2021-10, a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with Runway 4/22 crack seal and remarking at the Valdosta Regional Airport, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

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

Consideration of bids for one Ford Mustang vehicle for the Valdosta Police Department (Bid # 57-20-21).

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that the Valdosta Police Department needs to replace a 2016 Ford Mustang that was recently lost due to an accident. The vehicle was parked on the side of the road when wrecked which resulted in a total loss. The City was awarded approximately \$27,500 from the Insurance Company of the other driver that was charged with the accident. Sealed bids were received on June 29, 2021. The only bid received was submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$38,120. The City last purchased a Mustang in 2016 which was five years ago and the cost was \$31,332.00. This price offered is acceptable since it has been quite a while since the last purchase. Police Chief Manahan recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$38,120 for the purchase of a Ford Mustang vehicle for the Valdosta Police Department.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$38,120 for the purchase of a Ford Mustang vehicle for the Valdosta Police Department.

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, stated that he would like to know if the City was going to work together with him on the economic development proposal for the southside of town that he presented at the Work Session on Tuesday, July 6, 2021.

Charles Moore, 806 Myrtle Street, stated that he had a complaint about the sewer being stopped up at the corner of Mystic Street and Gordon Street. It runs down to Myrtle Street through the residents' backyards. The drain is stopped up and it is a mess. Mr. Moore stated that he has been there for 37 years and he has never seen anything like that.

Norman Moore, 802 Myrtle Street, stated that he has a sewer that is damaged and the City workers put orange cones there a year ago. He has been calling and nothing has been done. Also, his street really needs widening because it connects onto the City of Valdosta Utilities and Public Works facilities and when the equipment comes down that street they have to pull over to the side of the road or in the ditch to let them pass.

Debbie Sempert, 952 Lakeside Drive, stated that she would like to see the Sound Ordinance made a little clearer. The list of days, random feet, and random times is crazy for anyone to understand. Since the middle of May, there have been fireworks from 7:30 a.m. until someone decides to go and make them stop. She feels like she lives in Baghdad right now but she does not. She is not against fireworks but there needs to be a better system. For instance, maybe they should not be on sale as long and have specific times and dates for them to be set off. She has seen little children set them off in the road which they are not supposed to be doing. She is tired and would like to sleep one whole night because they are shooting the fireworks off from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. and it is a lot to deal with. She has an elderly mother that lives with her and the noise is really getting to her as well. The fireworks are so loud and the entire neighborhood is tired of it.

Wendelin Hodges, 1416 Continental Drive, stated that she lives down the street from Scott Park and they have a lot of traffic coming down the street; however, the cars are racing and speeding. People are not giving consideration that it is a residential neighborhood. The speed limit should be 30 miles per hour but they are driving 70 to 80 miles per hour. She was sitting outside on Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. and there were two vehicles

racing down the street racing. There was an accident on that street years ago and someone died. They do have Stop signs at the end of the street where Scott Park ends and then the next Stop sign is at the end of Bethune Street. That is a large gap. The safety issue for her is that if they are speeding and doing it consistently and no one can stop them, then there will be another tragedy. They did a traffic study but nothing has been resolved. She is very concerned for herself, her neighbors, and the children in the neighborhood. She would appreciate it if something could be done. It is an older neighborhood and there are a lot of good people living there.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that he met with the Valdosta School Superintendent Cason and he was surprised to learn that Dr. Cason was not familiar with the Executive Order by the President. He has been called to cover Brunswick, Douglas, and Gordon concerning this Executive Order. He was also called to Atlanta but he did not go there for that big meeting. There are Zoom Meetings being discussed about this money. This is a big situation, especially in the black and impoverished communities, because of the way the Executive Order is written. He wanted to let the Council know that it is not just Valdosta or Waycross, this is a State and Nation-wide movement. They have legal people on standby and they are serious about this. He hopes that Valdosta is taking this serious as well.

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that he wanted to thank the City employees who worked during the storm yesterday. They did an incredible job in keeping the citizens safe and they were able to keep up with the damage as it was happening. Those are the caliber of employees that we have at the City of Valdosta. We have the best team assembled and he is very proud of each and every one of them; however, when the storm is over, our work still continues and we are out there right now cleaning up and monitoring things. As citizens are cleaning up their property from the storm, they need to keep the yard debris separate from their trash which will help us to get through the neighborhoods in a timely manner.

The Maker’s Market will be held on Saturday, July 10, 2021 at the old Courthouse square from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There will be over 40 vendors along with live music and food.

The Valdosta On-Demand Transit has hit over 13,000 rides in a two-week period. It continues to grow and we are working on any issues that have come up.

We had approximately six spills due to the storm and these were all from manholes and not the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The spills on Gornto Road and Wainwright Drive were over 10,000 gallons and we were required to report those to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD); however, regardless of the size, we still report them to the EPD in order to be fully transparent. We do not like to have spills, but we are much better off at this time with a storm like that. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how much rain we got from the storm. Mark Barber stated that we received from five to ten inches of rain depending on the location.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mayor Matheson stated that on Friday, July 9, 2021, there will be live music at the Turner Center Art Park from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The food vendor will be Ella’s Top Corral and The Pour House will be there with beverages. Also, the Mayor thanked the City employees for a job well done during the storm yesterday.

Councilman Howard stated that he wanted to thank John Robinson for his presentation at the Work Session. He also wanted to thank the citizens who came and spoke under Citizens to be Heard tonight.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked Mark Barber, City Manager, for keeping them in the loop with what was going on yesterday during the storm.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that there are a lot of things that need to be done in some areas and they have been working on it for a number of years. It might not look like things are going on in certain areas but they are working on it. The southside is probably the oldest part of Valdosta and it will take a while to get it back up to par. They are working on it though.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**07/08/21 CONTINUED**

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 8, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:08 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, July 22, 2021.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta