

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL  
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018  
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, Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor Brinson Barker, Life Bridge Ministries, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the March, 2018 Employee of the Month Award (Charles Brantley, Lawrence McCoy, and Gloria White, Public Works Department).

Charles Brantley began his employment with the City of Valdosta Public Works Department in June, 1985 and presently holds the position of Crewleader. Charles supervises and participates in the mowing of City right-of-way, operates equipment such as tractors with a bush hog, hand and power tools, and leaf blowers. Lawrence McCoy began his employment with the City of Valdosta Public Works Department in August, 1988 and presently holds the position of Heavy Equipment Operator. Lawrence operates a knuckle-boom truck to collect and transport yard waste, recyclable materials, and other items along a pre-determined route. Gloria White began her employment with the City of Valdosta Public Works Department in April, 1997 and presently holds the position of Light Equipment Operator. Gloria participates in the mowing of City right-of-way, operates equipment such as hand and power tools, weed-eaters, and leaf blowers. “I am my brother’s keeper” is an appropriate statement to use when referring to these three Public Works employees who helped a former co-worker find his final resting place. Former employee, Earnest Harwick, passed away in late December of last year with no family or friends coming forth to claim his body. Upon hearing the news, Charles, Lawrence, and Gloria showed tremendous compassion when they stepped up to help their friend in his greatest time of need. Faced with obstacles from the funeral home, they were able to claim Mr. Hardwick’s body after seeking assistance from Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody. They raised the funding necessary to give Mr. Hardwick the appropriate burial he deserved. The City is fortunate to have workers who are not only leaders in this community but are leaders with sympathy and willing to go the extra mile. It is for these reasons and many others that the Employee Relations Committee nominated Charles Brantley, Lawrence McCoy, and Gloria White as Employees of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the February 22, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2018-6, AN ORDINANCE FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 218 - USE REGULATIONS, SECTION 218-13 - STANDARDS OF USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Consideration of an Ordinance for Text Amendments to Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Section 218-13 - Standards of Use and Development of the Land Development Regulations as requested by the City of Valdosta (File No. VA-2018-04).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that the City of Valdosta is requesting to amend the Land Development Regulations (LDR) Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Section 218-13 - Standards of Use and Development, as it pertains to the supplemental standards for manufactured homes (mobile homes) on individual lots. These Amendments were initially proposed last November, but were withdrawn by the City prior to reaching

the final Public Hearing, and have now been amended to reflect some additional language. These Amendments are being proposed at the request of City Council, who discussed this concept at their 2017 Mayor/Council Retreat. Specifically, the proposed Amendments pertain to the rules regarding the replacement of existing “nonconforming” manufactured homes which do not meet current standards (typically - singlewide mobile homes that were placed on a lot many years ago). Manufactured Homes in the City of Valdosta are classified as one of three types (classes) based on the definitions below. In short, they can typically be thought of in the following simple terms: (1) Class “C” - built before 1976 (when the national construction standards changed), (2) Class “A” - a doublewide that also meets certain standards such as pitched roof, etc., and (3) Class “B” - a singlewide or one that does not quite meet the Class “A” standards. For a Manufactured Home in Class A, the manufactured home is fabricated in an off-site facility for installation or assembly at the building site and it has a label certifying it is constructed in compliance with the Federal Manufactured Home and Standards Act (42 USC 5401--5445) and meets each of the following development standards: (1) The minimum width of the installed home shall be in excess of 20 feet over at least 70 percent of its length. (2) The pitch of the home's roof has a factory-installed fixed, nominal, or true minimum vertical rise of four feet for each 12 feet of horizontal run. (3) The roof of the home has a minimum six-inch factory installed roof overhang on each of the dwelling's perimeter walls. (4) The exterior wall materials shall consist of brick, masonry, or stone, or siding consisting of wood, hardboard, aluminum or vinyl, covered or painted, but in no case exceeding the reflectivity of gloss white paint. Corrugated materials are not permitted for exterior walls. (5) The exterior roof materials shall consist of asphalt or composition shingle, wood shake, wood shingle, standing seam metal, clay or ceramic tile, but not including corrugated metal, plastic or fiberglass. For a Manufactured Home in Class B, the manufactured home is fabricated in an off-site facility for installation or assembly at the building site and it has a label certifying it is constructed in compliance with the Federal Manufactured Home and Safety Standards Act (42 USC 5401--5445) but does not satisfy the criteria necessary to qualify the unit as a Class A Manufactured Home. For a Manufactured Home in Class C, the structure is transportable in one or more sections, which in the traveling mode, is 8 body feet or more in width or 40 body feet of more in length or when erected on-site is 320 or more square feet, and which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities and includes the plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems contained therein and manufactured prior to June 15 1976. A "mobile home" as defined O.C.G.A. § 8-2-131 is a Class C Manufactured Home within the meaning of these Land Development Regulations. Any legally existing manufactured home on its own lot that does not meet current Class “A” standards is considered a legal nonconforming use, as well as a legal nonconforming structure. In order for this structure to be replaced, the new structure must meet Class “A” standards as well as all zoning-related requirements such as setbacks and Zoning District requirements (CUP or SE in either R-6 or R-M Zoning). A comparison was done of Mobile Home development standards in other cities in Georgia which are considered to be our peer communities. In all of the cases, singlewide mobile homes are only allowed either in an approved Mobile Home Park, in Agricultural Zoning, or in Residential Zoning that specifically allows such dwellings. All of these communities have also adopted special design standards for mobile homes, and most all of them do not allow the replacement of an existing nonconforming mobile home with another nonconforming mobile home (such as replacing a nonconforming singlewide with another singlewide). For such situations, the City of Valdosta already has a process in place (PELUC) which allows the possibility of reestablishing a nonconforming use/structure that was lawfully in existence prior to the change in regulations. Such situations are reviewed and considered by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBOA) on a case-by-case basis, and Staff believes that this process is sufficient. There is no justification to amend the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR) to make an exception for this particular kind of nonconforming situation over all others. The LDR's “statement of intent and purpose” for nonconforming situations (Section 234-1) includes the language: “Such non-conforming situations are hereby declared to be incompatible with authorized and permitted uses and regulations within the district(s) involved. It is the intent of the City to allow these non-conformities to continue, on a limited basis, until they are otherwise removed or cease.” Staff found the request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and recommended denial of the proposed Amendments. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their February 26, 2018 meeting, found it inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended denial (7-0 vote).

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether there was wording in there about reducing the cost on a case-by-case basis. Matt Martin stated that it was not in the Ordinance but is something that they do as a matter of Policy. In the Neighborhood Revitalization Area, there is already a Policy in place to look at that; however, this is an administrative decision and is a case-by-case basis if they demonstrate some type of hardship or need. This

actually applies to anything that they collect fees for. Councilman Howard stated that they are not talking about not allowing people to replace a mobile home but they will still be allowed to replace an existing mobile home with a newer model. Matt Martin stated that was the proposal and also to allow that to happen under these guidelines without having to go through a Public Hearing. Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that we have that process now but the change is that they will not have to go through the process. They have had this since 2009 to allow singlewide and doublewide mobile homes to be replaced. Matt Martin stated that they have had only one of those cases since 2010. Councilman Howard stated that he would like for it to come before Council because of what might happen if they get a mobile home that is five years old but it looks bad. Matt Martin stated that there are already standards in place that they would have to meet all of the requirements and be inspected to be inhabitable. Mark Barber stated that the Policy currently states that the Building Official has to physically inspect all replacement manufactured homes before any permits are issued. Matt Martin stated that this would be on properties that are already approved by City Council for the use as a manufactured home. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to whether they would have an option of replacing a singlewide mobile home. Matt Martin stated that they had already been doing that and one of the changes they are making requires that they come and talk to the Planning and Zoning Staff. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether Vanessa Flucas, Neighborhood Development Manager, could discuss some of the things that she has been experiencing. Vanessa Flucas stated that they have the Community Development Block (CDBG) Grant Program and there are other times throughout the year that they have other types of Programs to help out. Councilwoman Tooley inquired about the chart that lists a singlewide mobile home on an individual lot. Matt Martin stated that was a comparison chart and if someone came in to get a permit to place a singlewide mobile home on a vacant lot without going through any process they would not be eligible. Councilwoman Tooley stated that the chart is confusing because it says a doublewide is only allowed in R-6 or R-M with a CUP Public Hearing. Matt Martin stated that was not a regulatory chart and was for information purposes only. It shows how other governments in Georgia regulate manufactured homes.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was adopted (5-2) with Councilman Carroll and Councilman Norton voting in opposition to enact Ordinance No. 2018-6, an Ordinance for Text Amendments to Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Section 218-13 - Standards of Use and Development of the Land Development Regulations as requested by the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

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

Consideration of bids to purchase six traffic cabinets for inventory replacement.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that every year the City must restock its inventory of various specialized parts for traffic maintenance. Annual purchase of six traffic cabinets is necessary to replace the inventory of traffic cabinets taken from the warehouse for signal maintenance over the past year. This purchase was budgeted in the adopted 2018 Fiscal Year Budget. Due to the total cost of this requisition exceeding the administrative threshold, the purchase requires City Council approval. Traffic cabinets typically need to be replaced for various reasons such as accidents at intersections, lightning strikes, and occasional power surges. Staff routinely pursues insurance claims and reimbursement against responsible parties in the case of traffic accidents. The frequency of traffic cabinet replacement varies and is unpredictable. The fact that this type of equipment is not readily available locally creates the need for restocking and warehouse inventory. Bids were opened on February 27, 2018, at 10:45 a.m. and two bids were received. The low bid was submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$53,100.00. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$53,100 for the purchase of six traffic cabinets.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid was submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$53,100 for the purchase of six traffic cabinets for inventory replacement.

Consideration of a request to place speed bumps on Worthington Place between North Valdosta Road and Hunters Glen.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in August, 2017, Gerone Anderson, who resides at 107 Worthington Place, approached the Traffic Division about acquiring speed bumps on Worthington Place between North Valdosta Road and Hunters Glen. A 24-hour speed/traffic count study was conducted on Tuesday, August 15, 2017 and Wednesday, August 16, 2017. The study revealed that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed limit was 11.2 and 11.6 mph, respectively, over the posted speed limit of 30 mph. This is an indication that speed bumps are warranted for this street in Worthington Woods. Over the last month, Mr. Anderson secured signatures from seven of the nine property owners or residents on this street meeting the 70% rule of the Speed Hump Policy. Having satisfied that requirement of the process means the matter must go before the City Council for approval. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve request to place speed bumps on Worthington Place between North Valdosta Road and Hunters Glen.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a request to place speed bumps on Worthington Place between North Valdosta Road and Hunters Glen.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that from 1975 to 1979 he served at Moody Air Force Base as an active duty military Veteran. He went to other Air Force Bases and returned to Valdosta in 1989. He retired from the Air Force in 1991. Mr. Rhynes stated that he has never been placed under a Criminal Trespass Order until after the death of Kendrick Johnson at the Lowndes County High School. Not too many weeks ago he violated that Order and he addressed Lowndes County School Superintendent Wes Taylor and members of the Lowndes County Board of Education, who are all white and all male. He told them about his Criminal Trespass Order and they have not even given him a courteous reply. He has also addressed the Valdosta City Council and the County but he knows that it is not Council’s responsibility; however, it happened in the City Limits of Valdosta. He has violated no law yet he has been banned from all properties of Lowndes County High School. His citizenship rights as a Veteran and a United States citizen have been denied. He has it on audio from two Lowndes County Sheriff’s Deputies and nobody in Valdosta, Lowndes County, or the State of Georgia will remove him in writing from this disgraceful and unfair Criminal Trespass Order. This says to the citizens that they too could be stopped and placed under criminal trespass just as he was. He cannot stop in his struggle to ensure that no one else is put under such a disgraceful and ignorant act. He does have some people standing by and they are going to address it at the United Nations. Valdosta, sooner or later, will be forced to say something to this black Veteran who served his nation with distinction.

Rachael Bradley, Director of Southside Recreation Center, stated that she and Chris Bergman, President of the Southside Board Recreation Center Board of Directors, would like to thank the Mayor and Council for their past support of the Recreation Center and to let them know how important their past donation was to them. The funds that the City gave them for 2017 helped support them and keep the doors open at Southside Recreation Center from August to November of this year. Without that support they would not have been able to continue to serve the at-risk, low income youth. Ms. Bradley asked for Council’s continued support.

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that the annual Strategic Initiative Summit (SIS) will be held on March 16-17, 2018 at the Lenox River Ranch in Lenox, Georgia. They are putting some finishing touches on the Agenda which will be forthcoming.

The Valdosta Fire Department will hold a promotional ceremony on March 9, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Annex Building Multi-Purpose Room.

The Azalea Festival will be held on March 10-11, 2018 at Drexel Park. There will be lots of vendors and activities and we are hoping that the predicted rainfall on Sunday will hold off until the event ends.

Daylight Savings time will take place on Sunday, March 11, 2018 at 2:00 a.m. so everyone will need to set their clocks forward.

South Georgia Loves Moody Week will be March 12-17, 2018 and there is a week-long schedule of activities to celebrate the Airmen at Moody Air Force Base and their families. The Counties that are participating in the events include Berrien, Cook, Lanier, and Lowndes. We will also be celebrating our recent designation as a Great American Defense Community. There are only five of these nationwide so we are very proud of this accomplishment.

There are eight spots left for City Government 101 and applications will be taken through March 16, 2018. We are hoping that this will fill up quickly and Council is encouraged to reach out to citizens in their Districts.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Citizens Police Academy will begin on April 12, 2018 and we are looking forward to that.

The South Georgia Coalition for employment will host a job fair at the Rainwater Conference Center on Thursday, April 26, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Police Chief Brian Childress has been very involved in this great community resource.

Council is encouraged to have citizens in their Districts sign up for E-News on the City's Website. Each Monday citizens will receive a newsletter which is filled with information about meetings, job fairs, educational opportunities, and events that are going on in the City.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Vickers stated he has noticed that the left turn signal on the traffic light located at the intersection of Norman Drive and St. Augustine Road needs to be adjusted. If you are traveling on St. Augustine Road and try to make a left turn the light turns very quickly. The other day there were 15 cars stacked up but only 6 of them could make the turn. He asked Pat Collins, City Engineer, if someone could check the timing of the traffic light to see if it could be adjusted.

Councilman Carroll stated that this is the first time ever that our community has been designated by the Defense Communities Organization. We have done a lot of things over the years to show Moody Air Force Base and the Airmen how much we appreciate them and how important they are to our community. Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, is doing a great job in keeping us updated on the events for South Georgia Loves Moody Week. We need to all show Moody how much we appreciate them. We are competing against four other cities across America and we are Title Town and Winnersville. Anything that we can do collectively as the Mayor and Council will be greatly appreciated.

Councilman Howard stated that it is very important for our citizens to come out and see what the Council is doing. He thanked everyone for coming to the Council Meeting tonight and encouraged citizens to reach out to Council members if they have any complaints or problems. He also asked that the citizens look at who is representing them and what District they are in.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked the Public Works employees who worked to get an appropriate burial for one of their former co-workers and for allowing her to be a part of the program. She could not thank them enough for what they did.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to who the current liaison is for Moody Air Force Base. Mayor Gayle stated that Parker Greene is still the liaison and Larry Hanson is his shadow. Larry Hanson goes to Washington, D.C. more than anyone these days and he is doing a great job. Since his new job as Executive Director of the Georgia Municipal Association, he has been to Washington three times and he uses those occasions to visit the Pentagon and other places. He has agreed to continue to do that until the middle of 2018. We also have a South Georgia Military Affairs Committee that is made up of representatives from Lowndes County, Lanier County, Berrien County, and Cook County. There is a lot of work being done to secure new missions and to make sure that

everything at Moody Air Force Base is seen by those in charge. Councilman Vickers stated that you make provisions for war in times of peace. Mayor Gayle stated that Moody has been one of the most deployed Air Force Bases of any Base in the United States during the war in Afghanistan.

**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 8, 2018 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:06 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 22, 2018.

---

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

---

Mayor, City of Valdosta