

REGULAR MEETING

December 11th, 2017

The Bessemer City Council met in regular session on Monday, December 11th, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall.

Members Present

Mayor Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Dan Boling, Joe Will, Howard Jones, Alfred Carpenter, and Donnie Griffin were all present. City Manager, James Inman and City Attorney, David Smith were also present. Council member Kay McCathen was absent.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Wes Brown, First Wesleyan Church Senior Pastor led in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the December Agenda

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the December agenda was approved with no revisions.

Special Presentations

Student Appreciation- Students from Bessemer City High School, Bessemer City Middle School, Bessemer City Central Elementary School, and Bessemer City Primary School were recognized by their principals and City Council as part of the Student Appreciation Program.

Dr. Judy Moore, Principal of Bessemer City High School, and Mayor Smith, recognized the following students of the month: Yesennia Salgado 9th grade representative; Jessica Elmore 10th grade representative; Keishawn Jamerson 11th grade representative; and Artie Medrano 12th grade representative.

Mrs. Fran Decanal, Principal of Bessemer City Middle School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Middle School representatives: Ethan Wilson 6th grade representative, Jamarcus Meeks 7th grade representative, and Kayden Bishop 8th grade representative.

Mrs. Caroline Black, Principal of Bessemer City Central Elementary, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Central Elementary School representatives: Zach Sanders 3rd grade representative; Gabriel Pugullah 4th grade representative; and Kyann Perriguann 5th grade representative.

Mrs. Erin Morehead, Guidance Counselor of Bessemer City Primary School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Primary School representatives: Sawyer Gardner Kindergarten representative; Jacob Parton 1st grade representative; and Kinslee Justice 2nd grade representative.

Approval of Minutes

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, November 14th, 2017 Regular and November 28th Work Session meeting minutes were approved.

Acceptance of Official Canvass (Abstract of Votes)

Upon motion of Howard Jones and unanimous vote, the Abstract of Votes (official canvass from the Gaston County Board of Elections) from the municipal election held on November 7th, 2017 was approved as follows:

Kay McCathen- 243 Votes, Alfred Carpenter- 281 Votes, Donnie Griffin- 279 Votes

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for City Council to discuss any items or business pertaining to the 2015-2017 City Council. There was none.

Adjourn Sine Die of the 2015-2017 Bessemer City Council

By motion of Howard Jones and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned Sine Die for the 2015-2017 Bessemer City Council at 7:19 PM.

Oath of Office: Offices of City Council

Mayor Becky S. Smith administer the oath of office to Alfred Carpenter and Donnie Griffin. Upon completing the Oath, both became Bessemer City Council members to serve until 2021.

Call to Order

Mayor Becky S. Smith called the December 2017 meeting of the 2017-2019 Council to order.

Approval of December Agenda

Upon motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the December agenda was approved with no revisions.

City Council Appointments

The following appointments were made by City Council:

Mayor Pro Tempore- By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, Joe Will was appointed to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) - by consensus of City Council, Mayor Becky Smith and Joe Will (alternate) were appointed to serve as the TAC representatives from the City.

Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) - by consensus of City Council, Kay McCathen was appointed to serve as the CCOG representative from the City.

ABC Board Liaison- by consensus of City Council, Joe Will and Dan Boling (alternate) were appointed to serve as the ABC Board Liaisons from the City.

Steering Committee- by consensus of City Council, Donnie Griffin was appointed to serve as the Steering Committee representative for the City.

Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Dan Boling:

- Resolution for New Year's Shooters-Authorization Request- An annual resolution authorizing the New Year's Shooters to perform their opening ceremonies in front of City Hall from 12:00 AM until 12:30 AM. Additional shooting will take place within the City Limits between the hours of 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM on New Year's Day. The Ridge Runners will provide the City with a schedule of events and a current roster of member names, addresses and phone numbers prior to the event.
- 2018 Annual Meeting and Holiday Schedule The annual meeting schedule for Council Regular Meetings, Council Work Sessions, Planning Board/Board of Adjustments Meetings and holiday schedule for the City of Bessemer City.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. The following individual came forth:

- Terry Michael Battles Jr. of 1302 N. 12th Street: Mr. Battles addressed Council regarding code enforcement issues at his residence of 1302 N. 12th Street. Mr. Battles stated that Code Enforcement Officers, Dave Taylor and Captain Harp have made him aware of his citations. Furthermore, Battles mentions that he is currently trying to address the issues, but he is unemployed and has limited resources. Mr. Battles concluded his remarks by asking Council to allow him more time to address the issues.

Resolution-Historic Tax Credit

Economic Development Officer, Joshua Ross addressed Council regarding the Historic Tax Credit resolution. Mr. Ross stated that the resolution was needed to encourage Congress to continue the program. The Historic Tax Credit program in conjunction with state funds help keep and create economic growth in local communities, such as the proposed Osage Mill Redevelopment project. The Osage Mill Redevelopment project is a joint endeavor with a private developer to rehabilitate a 260,000 square foot textile mill located in the heart of downtown. The project will include 175 apartment units and 30,000 square feet of retail/commercial space. City Manager, James Inman requested that Council sign a cover letter to be sent with the resolution.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, the Historic Tax Credit resolution was adopted. A copy of the resolution is on file at City Hall.

Public Hearing – Project Wonder Woman

Per NCGS 158-7.1, the City is required to hold a public hearing prior to approving industrial economic development projects.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding Project Wonder Woman was opened at 7:38 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of Project Wonder Woman. The following individual came forth:

- Steve Nye of Gaston County Economic Development Commission expressed his support of Project Wonder Woman. Nye requested that Council approved the project, as it would provide over 175 jobs and a \$36 million investment. Project Wonder Woman salaries are projected to be \$46,000 compared to the Gaston County average of \$34,000. If approved the resolution would allow the project to occupy 45 acres in the Southridge Industrial Park and receive a level 3 incentive grant from the City and County. This grant would reimburse the company a certain percentage after funds have been invested over several years.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of Project Wonder Woman. There was none.

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding Project Wonder Woman was closed at 7:42 PM.

Resolution-Project Wonder Woman

By motion of Howard Jones and unanimous vote, the Project Wonder Woman resolution was adopted. A copy of the resolution is on file at City Hall.

Resolution-Authorizing and Directing City Attorney to Petition Superior Court

Code Enforcement Officer, Dave Taylor addressed Council regarding the resolution to authorize David Smith, City Attorney, to petition Superior Court to order property owners of 1302 N. 12th Street to comply with minimum housing code. Mr. Taylor stated that the house had extensive electrical and façade issues. Light discussion was held.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, the resolution authorizing and directing City Attorney to petition superior court to order property owners of 1302 N. 12th Street to comply with minimum housing code was adopted. A copy of the resolution is on file at City Hall.

Ordinance to Demolish- 201 E. Georgia Avenue, 108 West Georgia Avenue, and 118 West Carolina Avenue

Code Enforcement Officer, Dave Taylor addressed Council regarding the ordinance to demolish properties located at 201 E. Georgia Avenue, 108 West Georgia Avenue, and 118 West Carolina Avenue. Mr. Taylor stated that all of the houses had severe exterior and interior damage and subsequently did not meet the minimum housing code.

City Attorney David Smith informed Council that he had spoken with the property owner, Gaston Properties Inv. LLC, and his counsel, Doug Arthur regarding said demolitions. Discussion ensued

between Mr. Smith and Doug Arthur. Arthur requested that Council allow the owner 45 days to bring all properties to minimum housing code. Gaston Properties Inv. LLC stated that the properties had not been brought up to code, as County Zoning would not issue a zoning permit for additional work because a demolition order was pending.

By motion of Joe Will and 1-4 vote with Donnie Griffin, Dan Boling, Alfred Carpenter, and Howard Jones in opposition, the motion to adopt the ordinance to demolish properties located at 201 E. Georgia Avenue, 108 West Georgia Avenue, and 118 West Carolina Avenue failed.

Discussion ensued between Council, David Smith, Doug Arthur, and Gaston Properties Inv. LLC.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and 4-1 vote with Joe Will in opposition, the motion to adopt the ordinance to demolish properties located at 201 E. Georgia Avenue, 108 West Georgia Avenue, and 118 West Carolina Avenue if they are not brought up to minimum housing code within 45 days passed.

Ordinance to Demolish- 120 W. Carolina Avenue

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the ordinance to demolish property located at 120 W. Carolina Avenue was adopted.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, James Inman addressed Council regarding the following items:

2018-2019 Annual Budget Planning Retreat- City Manager, James requested that Council review their calendars and plan to attend the 2018-2019 Annual Budget Planning Retreat on Thursday, February 22nd – Friday, February 23rd at Dole Fresh Vegetables (220 Southridge Parkway).

By consensus of City Council, the 2018-2019 Annual Budget Planning Retreat will be Thursday, February 22nd – Friday, February 23rd at Dole Fresh Vegetables (220 Southridge Parkway).

City Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Donnie Griffin inquired about the possible strip mall discussed at prior meetings. City Manager Inman addressed his concern, by stating that a zoning permit had been administered. Council member, Alfred Carpenter stated that he enjoyed serving with the 2015-2017 Council, and is excited about continuing the great work with the new Council. Council member, Joe Will wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year's. Council member, Dan Boling also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year's.

Closed Session

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, Council went in Closed Session at 8:33 PM pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss a personnel matter.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, Council came out of Closed Session at 8:45 PM.
No action was taken in closed session.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, City Manager, James Inman's contract was amended and reinstated for another five years.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

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