

CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN  
WORK SESSION COUNCIL MEETING  
875 Main Street  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083  
June 20, 2016  
MINUTES

Commented [kes1]:

**PRESENT:** Mayor Patricia Wheeler, Mayor Pro-Tem Chakira Johnson, Council Members Steve Higgins, Andrea Redmond.

**ABSENT:** Council Members Susan Coletti, Richard Mailman and Steve Wells

**STAFF:** City Manager Gary Peet, Chief Chauncey Troutman, City Clerk Cha-Quias Miller-Thornton, Public Works Director Jim Havenner, Executive Director Mechel McKinley, Visitors Center Manager Kim Cumbie, Assistant City Clerk Kate Settle.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** Council Member Higgins gave the invocation. Council Member Johnson led the pledge to the flag.

**READING OF COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE DAY:** Council Member Johnson made a motion to adopted the agenda of the day. Council Member Higgins seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 3 to 0.**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Diana Hollis, 735 Mountain Village, expressed her concerns regarding Municipal Court Judge Dean Jackson handling the case regarding transitional homes in her area.

Sara Abrams, 976 Ridge Avenue, announced the Medlock Park Committee had their first meeting. They have decided to work toward small increments of change. They have received a book lending tree donated by Park Pride. They hope to have a dedication of the lending tree on Saturday, August 27 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. She would like to have an item placed on the July meeting agenda to discuss more fully what the Committee discussed. Ms. Abrams distributed minutes from the Medlock Committee's first meeting.

Al Capagrossi, 526 Poplar Spring and Ed Hampson, 1023 Forest, spoke of their concerns regarding the overall look of the City: sidewalks, trash in the parks and streets. They also spoke of the perception as you enter the City and cited the body shops and the damaged West Gate Plaza. They were also unhappy about properties at the border of the City limits and hoped the Council would become more of a force with DeKalb County to get those properties cleaned up. Messrs. Capagrossi and Hampson also hoped Council would address MARTA about getting smaller busses to service the residents of Stone Mountain.

## COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. *Planning and Zoning*: None.

B. *Community Affairs*: None.

C. *Economic Development/Downtown Development Authority*: Mechel McKinley announced there is an open house at the Stillwell House scheduled for Saturday, June 25. She will be hosting input from the public for the Comprehensive Plan at the Farmer's Market. This Friday will end the Spring Session of Tunes by the Tracks.

Ms. McKinley reported that three new businesses opened in the month of May. Twelve businesses have opened in 2016. Ms. McKinley was encouraged by the numbers. She addressed Messrs. Capagrossi and Hampson's concerns regarding West Gate Plaza and explained there were a lot of working parts but the owner does have the checks from the insurance companies. The owner is waiting on a contract from the contractor. Once the contract has been signed, the work should begin quickly.

Ms. McKinley reported that there will be a Fish Fry and Movie for the Back to School Bash. She had a meeting with MARTA regarding the vacant lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. MARTA is going out for bid on the lot and Ms. McKinley hoped to provide the company working on the bid package with marketing materials regarding the City of Stone Mountain.

D. *Finance*: None.

E. *Community Outreach*: Council Member Redmond reported she has enjoyed this series of Tunes by the Tracks. She wished more businesses had been opened to receive the influx of visitors. The Art Stroll was very successful. The book sale raised \$2100 dollars. She also attended Jazz under the Stars at The Village Corner. She hoped more people would come out to support activities in the community. Community Watch is planning a Bar-B-Q and they are also distributing flags for the Fourth of July.

The Yard of the Month was difficult to select because of the drought in the area. The yard selected was one that had not been tended to for a long period of time. The yard of the month was awarded to Louise Johnson's home. Mary Swisher has designed the signs for Yard of the Month.

Council Member Redmond has been working with several of the churches in the area to provide lunches to the children in our community. She reported that DeKalb County does have a summer food program. All children eat for free. The sites can be found on the DeKalb County website.

Council Member Redmond spoke to comments made during Public Comment and reported she had spoken to MARTA's Communication Director regarding the need for smaller busses to

service the City and she will speak to them again. The agenda moved to H. Historic Preservation.

F. *Public Safety*: Chief Troutman presented a certificate of commendation to Ms. Lightfoot of Garden Walk for working with the Police by staying on 911 while a burglary was taking place in her home. The police caught the suspects and all of her personal items were returned. Her assistance broke a ring of burglaries taking place in three counties. He introduced Officers Palmer and Aponte. Chief Troutman thanked them for helping the Police in getting drugs off the streets of the community. He reported the Officers recently pulled over a man who had a number of weapons, drugs and money in his car. The agenda moved to I. Visitors Center.

G. *Public Works*: None.

H. *Historic Preservation Commission*: Mr. Capagrossi, Chairman of Historic Preservation, reported the Commission had a meeting on June 8 to review a request for 841 Second Street. The Preservation Commission did not approve the project for lack of information. The Commission met again on June 16. The information presented did not meet the Historic Preservation Guidelines. He hoped the Council would support the Commission's decision. The agenda moved to F. Public Safety.

I. *Visitor Center*: Kim Cumbie reviewed her report with the Council. She has been attending meetings with Atlanta Metro Tourism Association Meetings and the Business Association Meetings. Ms. Cumbie is working with the Business Association in putting together campground bags and local hotel bags for July 4. She hoped to complete the bags by the 28<sup>th</sup>.

## STAFF REPORTS

A. *Code Compliance Officer*: Officer Roseberry distributed a report outlining 42 warnings. She reported, since school has ended for the year, property destruction has increased, people sleeping in vacant homes, etc. She reported the transitional homes will be closing on Rankin Street. The transitional homes by Mountain Village have been closed and replaced by a new problem. Officer Roseberry noted that some of the issues are taking place on the weekends. She has received permission to have a flexible schedule in order to come out during the weekend to monitor code violations. Officer Roseberry updated the Council on the storage of vehicles at the auto body shops on James B. River Dr. The shops have to be in compliance by June 30. They will then receive tickets and go to court.

B. *Public Works Director*: Jim Tavenner reported there have been 16 community service workers this month. Last month, there were 38 community service workers. He reported on the funds coming from GADOT Local Maintenance Improvement Grant and the City's match for road improvements. McCurdy Park has a very large tree that needs to be removed and at Lela Mason Park there is roof and decking on the pavilion that needs to be replaced. He reported on the timeline for completion of the replacement of the junction box at 682 Rockborough Drive. 5,430 pounds of trash have been picked up by Public Works since the first of the year.

- C. *Chief of Police:* Chief Troutman reviewed the activity report and noted the difference in activity level between morning and night shifts. He has increased patrol on Ridge Avenue. The Police have been putting extra patrols at the parks. Mr. Hampson reported on a small group of teenagers riding on scooters. He felt they were a hazard to the community.
- D. *City Clerk:* Ms. Thornton was pleased to announce the City is now capable of taking debit and credit card payments. She hoped this was the start of new initiatives to offer more effective services to the Public. Ms. Thornton reported the Clerk's Office has been working toward a more efficient process for those wishing to start a business in the City. She announced there will be three public hearings to discuss the milage rate being held on June 27, at 11:00 am and 6:00 pm and July 5 at 7:00 p.m. The hearings have been posted on the website, as well as, placed as ads in The Champion. She thanked the City for the opportunity to attend Leadership DeKalb.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. *DeKalb County Use of Facilities Agreement – Rock Gym \$16,500.* Council Member Johnson asked if a meeting has been set with the School Board to possibly discuss terms. The Mayor reported that a meeting has not been set and relayed her discussions with a school board member and others at the DeKalb Schools. Mr. Peet reported he had communicated to the School Board that the agreement went before them and the discussion was postponed. Mayor Wheeler spoke of her initiatives.

Mary Beth Reed, 769 Lake Drive, Snellville, GA. Ms. Reed thanked Council for postponing the decision on the Rock Gym last meeting. She reported that citizens are writing the School Board to help educate them on what the Rock Gym means to the community. She hoped the City could enter into an interim agreement and have a meeting to discuss the terms. The current terms indicate the School Board may believe the Rock Gym is more viable to rent for events. The building is much older and needs improvements. She thought it was time to form a Task Force with the ultimate goal of acquisition and to take the alumni up on their offers to help.

Council Member Redmond reported many have volunteered to help and hoped the school board would consider gifting the building to the City.

Catrina Grant, 13 Pennybrook Lane, offered her support and her friends' support to volunteer to help clean up the Rock Gym and Ridge Avenue.

Council Member Johnson asked what the plan of action will be going forward. The item will be up for a vote within the next two weeks. Mayor Wheeler indicated she would touch base with her contacts during the GMA Conference in Savannah. Discussion among the public included: possible activities that could be held at the Rock Gym, continuing to have Tunes on the Tracks throughout the year, pickle ball, fundraising ideas, and using the alumni data base.

## NEW BUSINESS

A. *Consent Agenda.* None.

B. *Amend the Employee Classification Plan:* Mr. Peet reported that the Administrative Department has been working on re-organizing and transitioning employees into different roles. Initially the Council voted on the new position of Assistant City Manager. During the transition process, it became apparent the City would be merging duties of the Administrative Secretary with some of the duties of the City Clerk, therefore, the title of Assistant City Clerk just made sense.

Council Member Johnson requested clarification regarding the appointment of City Clerk on August 1 and the Assistant City Clerk on August 3. Mr. Peet explained the Assistant City Clerk position would be filled until the appointment takes place. Council Member Redmond requested clarification of the salaries of the positions. Mr. Peet explained the salaries for City Manager and City Clerk are appointed by Council.

C. *Agreement between LOUD Security Systems, Inc. Sales and Monitoring Agreement for the City of Stone Mountain:* Mayor Wheeler reported LOUD Security Systems, Inc. bought out NASH. City Manager Peet reported the contract is month to month at a rate of \$20.83 a month. Council Member Johnson asked if the services were comparable and City Manager Peet assured her that they were the same and the contract was being honored by LOUD.

D. *Intergovernmental Agreement between DeKalb County and the Cities of DeKalb for the Use and Distribution of Proceeds from the One Percent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax:* Mr. Peet reported there will be a meeting of all of the DeKalb municipalities Mayors and City Managers on June 21. At first look the City did not have any concerns, there have been proposed changes since that time and the City does have concerns. Council Member Johnson asked to have communication regarding the meetings tomorrow.

Discussion turned to educating the public on HOST and SPLOST and possible ways of making information readily accessible to the citizens. It was the consensus of the Council to put a page on the Website re: SPLOST.

E. *Request to Change Regular Council Meeting Day from the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday to the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each Month:* Mayor Wheeler received requests to make the time of the meeting a little earlier as well as changing the day of the week. Council Member Higgins asked to table the item until next meeting as a limited number of Council Members were present. Mayor Wheeler recognized Ms. Kim Cumbie. Ms. Cumbie reported the first Monday of the month is the night of the Business Association Meeting. Council Member Higgins made the motion to postpone the discussion of this item until the next work session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson.

**Motion approved 3-0.**

## NEW ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

- A. *Ordinance 2016-13 Ad Valorem Tax Rate*: Council Member Johnson read the title of the ordinance into the record. City Clerk Thornton announced the dates of the public hearings as June 27 at 11 a.m. and 6:00 p.m./July 5 at 7:00 p.m.
- B. *Ordinance 2016-14 Text Amendment to Appendix A Zoning – Accessory Structures*: Mayor Wheeler reviewed the timeline with Council Members. Discussion included a Council Member's attempt to put a garage on his property; his meeting with the Historic Preservation Commission and their recommendation and the possible need for a variance application. Council Member Johnson recognized Mr. Al Capagrossi. She asked Mr. Capagrossi if it would be beneficial to the City in the long run. He indicated it would be beneficial. The amendment would have to go before Planning and Zoning Committee. City Manager Peet thought the proposed garage should go through the variance process. Council Member Redmond motioned to table the discussion of Ordinance 2016-14 until more members of Council are present. Council Member Johnson seconded the motion.  
**Motion carried 3-0.**
- C. *Ordinance 2016-15 Text Amendment to Appendix A, Zoning – Parking on Grass*: Mayor Wheeler spoke to the history of the item. City Manager Peet reported the issue is no longer considered a property management issue but a land use issue. He reported the County has taken the same issue out of their property maintenance code and moved it to land use. Council Member Redmond made note of typographical errors in the document and thought Item 6 should be combined with Item 5 and to correct the numbering throughout once the change has been made.
- D. *Resolution 2016-21 Appointment of the City Manager*: No comments were received.
- E. *Resolution 2016-22 Appointment of the City Clerk*: No comments were received.
- F. *Resolution 2016-23 FY 2016 Budget Resolution*: Mr. Peet reviewed the need for the amendment: the nuisance abatement lien for the property demolished on East Mountain Street had an additional cost come in for the clean-up of the debris. The second item was the transfer of funds from the Police Department. The funds are being transferred from the cost of two radios to computers. One of the vehicle computers is in need of replacement.
- G. *Resolution 2016-25 Resolution in Support of SPLOST*: Mr. Peet explained that both the HOST and SPLOST must pass together by referendum this November in order for the City to receive funds from SPLOST. The funds will be calculated by per capita distribution by the 2010 Census data. He reported funds generated with a one cent sales tax with our population would be \$4,712,647. The State requires that the fund be used primarily for capital projects. Mr. Peet reviewed the proposed list of projects.

Council Member Redmond asked for a page dedicated to the importance of this issue. Council Member Johnson suggested making presentation material available online and at events. She

felt receiving the SPLOST would be wonderful in assisting the City in repairing and maintaining the City's current assets. Council Member Johnson asked Mr. Peet to put the draft proposed list online.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mayor Peet reviewed his monthly report with Council. Mr. Peet expressed a need for a call meeting of the Annexation Committee to give them recent updates. He asked Mayor Wheeler for a date. She asked to try to set up the meeting for Friday, July 8 at 4:00 p.m.

He reviewed the budget report. Based on the analysis, the City is doing better than expected. Mr. Peet reported on the transition preparation. He praised Ms. Thornton for her financial expertise and her efforts of training staff for the City Clerk Position and the Assistant City Clerk positions. Mayor Wheeler reported on Ms. Thornton attending meetings with her and she has introduced Ms. Thornton to a number of people. Mayor Wheeler was pleased Ms. Thornton would be attending Leadership DeKalb.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR:** Mayor Wheeler will not be available next week because she will be attending the GMA Conference.

Council Member Johnson announced the Stone Mountain Historical Society will be having a pancake breakfast on July 4<sup>th</sup> from 8-11a.m. The breakfast will be held at the Wells Brown House on Ridge Avenue.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Council Member Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Higgins seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

**Motion Approved 3-0.**

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Patricia Wheeler, Mayor

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ChaQuias Miller-Thornton, City Clerk