

MINUTES OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE/WORK SESSION  
Monday, May 18, 2015 @ 6:00 p.m.  
City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Patricia Wheeler called the Committee/Work Session to order at 6:19 p.m., immediately following adjournment of the public hearing. Present were Council Members Susan Coletti, Steve Higgins, Chakira Johnson, Richard Mailman, and Andrea Redmond – which constituted a quorum. Council Member Steve Wells was absent.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Council Member Higgins gave the invocation and Council Member Mailman led the pledge of allegiance.

READING OF COMMUNICATIONS

None.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE DAY

Council Member Johnson made a motion to adopt the agenda of the day. Seconded by Council Member Susan Coletti.

Motion passed 5-0.

CITIZENS COMMENTS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Planning and Zoning – None.

Community Affairs – Council Member Susan Coletti reported that she recalled that Council has discussed on past occasion getting signs that announce that Stone Mountain is a golf cart community. DDA Executive Director Mechel McKinley addressed Council. She informed Council that Officer Bob Hillis has presented a draft of the sign to her and that she and he have had some discussion on the matter. The sign is still in draft phase. Council Member Coletti also reported that Art Station is planning its Plein Air event for September 2015. It is an event where artists come to town and paint local area attractions and scenes. This year Art Station is asking for sponsorships of \$250 each from the Downtown Development Authority and the City to purchase one of the paintings.

Economic Development/Downtown Development Authority – Executive Director Mechel McKinley gave the DDA report. She informed Council of her activity for the month of May 2015 and that she has begun to break her report down into the different committees that the Development Authority has. She also informed Council that 1) during the Farmers Market to be held June 2<sup>nd</sup>, partners from Project Generation Gap will be present and EBT dollars will begin to be accepted at the market; 2) the Economic Development committee has been working on a commercial property list for properties within the DDA area; 3) there is a photo and an article in the latest edition of the DCVB magazine on the ribbon cutting at the depot; 4) there was a successful cemetery clean-up on May 2<sup>nd</sup>; and 5) the organization is continuing to work on sponsorship for the rest of the year. Ms. McKinley thanked everyone for their support of “Tunes by the Tracks” and the Color Vibe event. Council Member Mailman made comments about the “Tunes by the Tracks” events and that the banners for the event should be available this coming Thursday. He also made comments about the success of the Color Vibe event and the Farmer’s Market.

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Ms. McKinley discussed with Council the proposed Tax Abatement Ordinance. She informed Council that this type of program has never been implemented in a downtown. She explained the parameters of the three year tax abatement which would be triggered by a \$100,000 investment into a downtown commercial building – outside of the purchase of the building. She explained that this tool can be used as an incentive for persons to purchase commercial property in the downtown area. City Manager Gary Peet, Council Member Mailman, Council Member Redmond, and Council Member Coletti also weighed in on the discussion. Topics for discussion included change in the amount of the investment that would trigger opportunity for the abatement, the possibility of having levels of abatement, ways to distinguish event participants, determining an average cost of the commercial buildings in the city of Stone Mountain, communicating with the property owners to make sure the selling price of each building is reasonable, and whether the abatement would be retroactive to include the rehab of buildings that would have taken place before the abatement ordinance is actually adopted.

Ms. McKinley discussed with Council the proposed Redevelopment Tax Incentive Ordinance (Blight Tax). If a property is deemed to be blighted the municipality can impose an additional tax on the property. City Manager Gary Peet weighed in on the discussion. Ms. McKinley also discussed with Council the things that the additional revenue can be used for, that the additional revenue can go into the City's general fund, and that the use of the monies can be specified by Council. A list of acceptable uses, along with other information on the tax, was provided in the proposal packet. Ms. McKinley asked that Council study the packet for future discussion on the matter and that there are other municipalities like Griffin and Albany that have implemented this type of tax. Council Member Redmond voiced a concern about the outcome of the blight tax assessment on properties within the historic district. City Manager Gary Peet responded that this will be one of the things that will be researched in preparation of drafting the proposed ordinance. This matter will be revisited during the next work session.

Finance – No report.

Community Outreach – Council Member Redmond reported that a citizen has complained about being charged for calling 911. The charge is imposed by local governments on every citizen that has telephone service – both landline and wireless. She also reported that the community watch group has been discussing designating safe houses in the neighborhoods that citizens (i.e. children) can go to when they are walking and feel unsafe. Safe houses have already been implemented on Forrest and on Ridge. Ms. Redmond also expressed her opinion that increased participation in the City's events will help to decrease complaints about the events. She encouraged citizens to come to the Farmers Market, and she asked that those people that attend "Tunes by the Tracks" be attentive and mindful of the people around them that are trying to enjoy the music over the conversations that are being had around them.

Public Safety – Council Member Mailman reported that he, Chief Troutman, and Mr. Gary Peet are working on several things, including working on ways to deter traffic issues in some of the City's "hotspots". Mr. Mailman also encouraged citizens to report unlawful activities, including repetitive traffic violations being committed in certain areas.

Public Works – No report

Historic Preservation Commission – HPC Chair Al Capogrossi reported that the commission held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and heard three Certificate of Appropriateness applications and one matter for discussion. Two of the applications were approved and one was denied. HPC suggested that an alternative plan be submitted for the application that was denied. He encouraged Council to attend the monthly

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meetings of the HPC. There was some discussion about the denial of the COA application for the church on West Mountain. Alternative methods and ideas were suggested. Council Member Coletti asked about the application submitted by Cicely Austin for one of the vacant HPC seats. City Clerk ChaQuias Thornton informed Council of the steps to take in confirming the applicant for the seat. Mayor Wheeler asked Council to make their recommendation to Council. Council Member Johnson moved that the recommendation of Cicely Austin's fulfillment of the 6<sup>th</sup> HPC seat be considered for placement on the regular council meeting agenda for appointment by the Mayor and confirmation by Council. Seconded by Council Member Coletti. Passed 5-0. Mayor Wheeler approved the addition of the matter to the agenda for the June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 regular session of Mayor and Council.

Visitor Center – Kim Cumbie, VC Manager reported that the Visitor Center had 238 visitors from 26 states and 8 countries during April 2015. She announced that the ALL THINGS STONE MOUNTAIN DAY was held Monday, May 4, 2015. She reported that two new persons have volunteered to work at the visitor's center – one is to begin volunteering next month. She reported on the numbers and information related to the 2015 Color Vibe event held Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and the benefits of the event. She reported to Council that the Color Vibe event held in Stone Mountain is the Color Vibe organization's third largest event of the year and the organization's favorite event of the year. Color Vibe has already asked that they be able to hold the event in Stone Mountain again in May of 2016 and a conference call will be held with a Color Vibe representative to finalize the numbers for the event held this past Saturday. She also reported on the article that was written in Doc's News on the event. Council Members Johnson and Mailman, and City Manager Peet expressed their opinions of the success of the event and the tangible and intangible benefits of hosting an event of this magnitude within the City of Stone Mountain. Mayor Wheeler openly thanked Mrs. Cumbie for going above and beyond the call of duty during the event to help a patron of the event to search for her vehicle and to comb the City's streets to make sure there was no litter left behind after the event.

#### STAFF REPORTS

Code Compliance – Code Compliance Officer Sanja Roseberry reported for Code Compliance. She gave her monthly status report and report of the code compliance related cases issued to date for the month of May 2015. Ms. Roseberry informed Council that she has been working with Administration to determine whether there are sanitation customers that have more than one container. She has also worked with Administration to determine delinquent business license holders and to notify those license holders of their delinquency. Other compliance issues that Officer Roseberry has dealt with include (but are not limited to) animal cruelty, doing work without permit, and non-compliance with the City's sign ordinance. Officer Roseberry discussed with Council the Certificate of Occupancy issue with a property on Cloud Street, the complaint of damage to the fence of a residence on Fourth Street, and status of the rehab of 5444 Rockbridge Road. Mr. Peet informed Officer Roseberry that the City has a contract with a company that maintains a foreclosure registry that will help to locate the owners of some of the properties that have code compliance issues.

#### Public Works

Public Works Director Jim Tavenner gave the Public Works Report. He informed Council that: (1) There were 19 community service workers for last month and 12 to date for May 2015 (2) DeKalb County milled and inlayed the section of Ridge Avenue that was included on the resurfacing projects list – he suggested that a section of E. Ponce De Leon replace Ridge on the list – Council agreed (3) the trees have been taken down in the cemetery (4) the 40ft trailer was moved from Stone Mountain Park to the Public Works shop (5) there is a small drainage problem on Rockborough Drive (6) SM&E will try to boar all of the free product from well #5 at Main and West Mountain (7) the beaverdam on James B. Rivers Memorial is on private property (8) 2,370 pounds of trash has

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been collected by public works year to date, and (9) Georgia Power is still waiting on delivery of the light pole for the corner of West Mountain and Main Street. Council Member Redmond asked if the City can be sprayed for mosquitoes. Mr. Tavenner is to check with Dekalb County to see if they can provide the service. He further reported that the bid packet for the East Mountain Sidewalks project has been noted by GDOT for comments.

Public Safety

Chief Troutman reported the April 2015 statistics for citations and warnings issued. Mr. Troutman further reported on the burglaries occurring in the City. There were three burglaries reported for the month of April – one each on Charity Way, Main Street, and E. Ponce De Leon Avenue. He reported on the departments Z scores and gave detail of some of the criminal arrests made in the City, giving information about the suspects and the nature of the criminal activity. Chief Troutman informed Council that the police department did receive the DNA blood report for a burglary that occurred in 2011 and the suspect was served a warrant in prison and has been officially charged with the burglary. Chief reported that the stolen property taken during the burglary that took place on Skyline Drive has been returned to the owner. A juvenile will be charged for a burglary that occurred on Skyline several months ago. The Juvenile Justice System will serve the warrant and take the juvenile into custody. The police department has been commended by the DeKalb County Chief of Police for solving the burglaries. Chief Troutman thanked Ms. Betty Pompay for her communicative effort and for informing the police department of some things that should be reported to the department. He also commented on the success of the Color Vibe event and he thanked Visitor Center Manager Kim Cumbie for her efforts during the event. City Manager Gary Peet also commended Chief of his take charge effort during the event. Chief Troutman reported that a juvenile was reported missing during the event and was found shortly after being reported. Council Member Coletti asked if citations are still being issued for low hanging pants. Chief Troutman reported that he has informed his officers that they are to continue to write tickets for the offence. He also reported that the gentleman that was preaching on the streets without permit was cited and arrested on the day of the Color Vibe event, after being warned several times before the arrest.

City Clerk ChaQuias Thornton gave the City Clerk's report. She reminded Council that Personal Financial Disclosure Reports for those officials not in an election are due by July 1, 2015 and for those in an election year, the report is due with 15 days of qualifying. She also reported that 1)work has begun with Officer Roseberry to confirm an accurate listing of the businesses located within the corporate city limits of Stone Mountain, 2)she has begun implementing a test of processing occupational tax certification application documents by the scan/email process, and 3)work has begun with Executive Director Mechel McKinley to devise a process whereby potential business license holders will meet with Ms. McKinley at the beginning of the application process. Mrs. Thornton also gave updates to Council on the 901 4<sup>th</sup> Street – Mountain View, Third Street – Habitat, and 154 Main Street – Westgate Plaza projects.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Consent Agenda

None.

**NEW ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

Ordinance 2015-05 – Utility Permit Ordinance

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Council Member Johnson completed the first read of the ordinance as such, “An Ordinance to Amend the Code of the City of Stone Mountain, Georgia Chapter 25, Article II, to Provide for the Administration and Regulation of Public Right-of-Way, the Issuance and Regulation of Right-of-Way Permits, and for All Other Lawful

Purposes...” City Manager Gary Peet provided further explanation of the ordinance. He informed Council that this ordinance updates City code Chapter 25- Streets and Roadways - for excavations.

Resolution 2015-18 – Tower Cloud Application

Council Member Johnson completed a read of the resolution as such, “A Resolution of the City of Stone Mountain Georgia Approving the Application of Tower Cloud, Inc. to Place Telecommunication Lines and Facilities in the Public Rights of Ways...”

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT –City Manager Gary Peet gave a Revenue and Expense Summary Report for the month of April 2015. He reported that all funds are on budget after adjustments for annual expenditures and payroll. Mr. Peet also gave the City Manager’s Report. He informed Council that 1) the credit card terminal used for fine payments in City Hall has been replaced by a card reader connected to Courtware Solutions software, and 2) the administration met with City Auditor Jimmy Whitaker to review the preliminary audit and the City will receive an unqualified audit for FY2014. He also gave further updates on the East Mountain Street Sidewalks and Streetscape Phase II capital projects.

Mr. Peet asked that Mayor and Council consider entering into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel. Council Member Johnson made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel.

Seconded by Council Member Coletti.

Motion passed 5-0

Council exited the meeting room. Executive Session was held.

Council entered the meeting room. Council Member Johnson made a motion to reconvene the Work Session.

Seconded by Council Member Coletti.

Motion passed 5-0

Council Member Johnson informed those present that there were no actions to be taken per the discussion during the Executive Session to discuss personnel.

Council Member Coletti asked that all would keep Helen Goddard in their prayers, she is in the hospital.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Coletti.

Motion approved 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 P.M.