

CITY OF LAGRANGE, GEORGIA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

October 9, 2018

Present: Mayor Jim Thornton; Council Members Jim Arrington, Nathan Gaskin, Tom Gore, LeGree McCamey, Willie Edmondson and Mark Mitchell

Also Present: Director of Utilities Patrick Bowie; Assistant City Manager Teresa Taylor; City Clerk Sue Olson; City Attorney Jeff Todd; Director of Community Development Alton West; Senior Planner Leigh Threadgill; Communications Manager Katie Van Schoor

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Thornton, the invocation was given by Rev. John Oliver of Rosemont Baptist Church and Mayor Thornton led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

On a motion by Mr. McCamey seconded by Mr. Edmondson, Council unanimously approved the minutes of the regular Council meeting held on September 25, 2018.

Mayor Thornton read a thank you note from Kay Durand, who recently completed her term on the Board of Planning and Zoning Appeals. Ms. Durand was recognized and given a plaque at their regular meeting on October 8, 2018, and she thanked the Council for allowing her to serve the community in that capacity.

A public hearing was held to receive comments on a request to rezone 1503, 0, and 1509 Hamilton Road from R-2 Residential to C-3 Commercial. No comments were received and Council heard the first reading of the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAGRANGE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE CITY; TO AMEND THE ZONING MAP AND ORDINANCES OF THE CITY SO AS TO RECLASSIFY WITH CERTAIN CONDITIONS THE USE ZONE OF REAL ESTATE LOCATED ON HAMILTON ROAD AND OWNED BY JAMES EVANS; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; TO FIX AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

LaGrange resident Forrest Johnson appeared before the City Council and presented an Open Records Request for documents relating to expenditures of the Bureau of Tourism for the past three fiscal years. The request was forwarded to staff.

Ms. Threadgill presented to the Council a Board of Planning and Zoning Appeals recommendation to increase the size of their Board from seven members to nine members. On a motion by Mr. Edmondson seconded by Mr. McCamey, Council unanimously voted to call for a public hearing to be held on November 13, 2018.

Ms. Threadgill presented to the Council a Board of Planning and Zoning Appeals recommendation to modify the notice requirements for rezoning initiated by the Mayor and Council. On a motion by Mr. McCamey seconded by Mr. Arrington, Council unanimously voted to call for a public hearing to be held on November 13, 2018.

Mr. Edmondson reported that the curbing and sidewalks have been completed on Colquitt Street and look very nice.

Mr. Arrington reported that he had received several calls from citizens concerning the ongoing housing issues at Tall Pines Apartments and he would like to know where we stand on this. Mr. West updated the Council, stating the Community Development Department has made several unannounced visits and are working with the management to correct the issues as much as possible. Mr. Gaskin stated he believes we need to apply pressure differently and involve our local Congressman, Drew Ferguson. Mr. Edmondson agreed and also suggested arranging a meeting with the LaGrange Housing Authority, DASH and CAFI to see what we can do to invest in our citizens. Mayor Thornton directed staff to arrange this meeting with the local authorities and asked Mr. West to take the lead.

Mr. Gore shared his family's experience this weekend at the new Great Wolf Resort, and wanted to let everyone know what a wonderful place this is for our community, and to thank everyone that was involved in making this happen for LaGrange.

Mr. Gaskin thanked Tiffany Pitts with HOPE Academy for appointing him to the Advisory Board. Mr. Gaskin raised concerns regarding the police department's response to violent crime as it relates to African-American victims.

Mr. Bowie presented copies of the September financial statements and payment of bills over \$2,000 for Council's information.

Mr. Bowie brought before the Council a request from the Troup County School System to permanently close a portion of Highland Avenue, between North Greenwood Street and Marshall Street, to construct a new athletic facility for LaGrange High School. He reported that the LaGrange Police Department has done a traffic study and they recommend that this section of Highland Avenue be permanently closed, but recommended modifications to the car rider drop-off and pick-up procedure on Marshall Street. Mayor Thornton instructed staff to mail letters to affected residents on Marshall Street, Highland Avenue, Bacon Street, Ridley Avenue, Beechwood Circle, Azalea Drive, Lakewood Drive, Camellia Drive, Banks Street, Elm Drive, Ivydale Drive and Wisteria Way to inform them of the public hearing. On a motion by Mr. Mitchell seconded by Mr. McCamey, Council voted unanimously to call for a public hearing to be held on October 23, 2018.

Mr. Todd presented to the Council information on a Development Agreement between the City of LaGrange and SLF-GA Mill Creek for the Mill Creek Station TAD #2. On a motion by Mr. Edmondson seconded by Mr. Gore, Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute the agreement. A copy will be on file in the City Manager's office.

Mr. Todd presented to the Council information on a commercial real estate sales contract with Hutchinson Traylor Properties, LLC. On a motion by Mr. Edmondson seconded by Mr. McCamey, Council voted 4 to 2 to authorize the Mayor Pro-Tem and Clerk to execute the contract. Messrs. Gore, McCamey, Arrington and Edmondson voted in favor of the contract and Messrs. Mitchell and Gaskin voted against it. Mayor Thornton did not participate in the discussion or vote concerning this matter due a conflict of interest.

Mr. Edmondson reported to the Council that the District 2 Council Members were having a meeting on October 14, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. at 110 Hamilton Road to discuss plans for the Christmas tree lighting in Frank Cox Union Street Park. He stated they plan to dedicate the service to our firefighters. He invited everyone to attend the meeting and will let us know when the date is set for the tree lighting.

Bishop L. D. Parker with the House of Transformation Miracle Ministries came before the Council to express his concerns with issues at Tall Pines Apartments and unsafe structures in the city. He also expressed concern with the recent utility rate increase. Bishop Parker has scheduled a meeting with staff to discuss these concerns. No action was taken.

In good news closing comments, Ms. Van Schoor announced that Chief Dekmar wrapped up his year as President of the International Association of the Chiefs of Police, IACP, last night in Orlando. President Trump thanked Chief Dekmar, his friend, for his "lifetime of distinguished service." He even made the cover of the Orlando Sentinel. Also, our fourth firefighter, Josh Williams, is finally coming home today. Williams is the final firefighter to recover from the Labor Day structure fire and has been in the hospital since September 3rd. Three other firefighters were also injured including Jonathan Williamson, Pete Trujillo, and Jordan Avera. They continue to recover from their injuries. Avera started back to work this week with light duty on Monday.

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned by Mayor Thornton.

Mayor

Clerk