**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**June 17, 2024**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation by Joe Thompson, and Roll Call**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was led by Mr. Joe Thompson. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Josh Hill, Chris Hewett, Lois Allen, Greg Goolsby, Charles Wilder, and Mike Dodd. Also in attendance was the Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie and the City Attorney, Bobby Melton. Six members of the council were in attendance for the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be six votes (Hill, Hewett, Allen, Goolsby, Wilder and Dodd).

Mayor Wilson recognized a milestone for Mr. Bobby Melton, the City Attorney, he was admitted to the bar on June 13, 1974.

**Approval of the agenda**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the minutes** **from the council meeting held on June 3, 2024.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the minutes from the council meeting held on June 3, 2024. Seconded by Mr. Dodd.

Mr. Hill requested to amend the minutes from the council meeting held on June 3, 2024 to correct his vote to be in opposition of the approval of a 4-way stop at the intersections of E. Johnston Street at N. Harris Street and E. Johnston Street at N. Kimbell Street to a.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the minutes from the council meeting held on June 3, 2024 with the requested amendment. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of recommended appointments of Denise Buff and Leslie Waters to the Convention & Visitors Bureau Authority.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the recommended appointments of Denise Buff and Leslie Waters to the Convention & Visitors Bureau Authority. Seconded by Mr. Hill; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing to consider** **Annexation of certain properties and Zoning after annexation, and Rezoning of certain properties within the city; George Emami- Prime Point Ventures, LLC and Hiram Harbuck- Blake Ventures, LLC**

Mr. Melton stated that the ordinance would allow annexation into the city on a number of parcels of property on a survey from 2006 and on another survey subsequent to that. The property is partially located inside the city. He stated that part of the ordinance would request Residential-Multifamily for the use of townhouses. Those portions not within the City of Forsyth would be annexed with proposed zoning of Residential-Multifamily for the same use of property. It went before planning and zoning and was advertised in the Monroe County Reporter. As required by Georgia law a certified letter was sent to the Monroe County Commissioners Office notifying them of the annexation of petition; followed by a second form of communication with a copy of the plat. He stated it was sent May 24, 2024 and he has nothing on file as a response, nor has he received anything from the County Commission Office.

Mr. Will Campbell, the Project Manager, stated that the Planning and Zoning committee had concerns about Residential-Multifamily (RM) due to the concerns of accessing property solely on Willis Circle, it would be straining the infrastructure, and the narrow roads. He stated it would make sense to annex those properties into the City. Based on analysis from the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Residential- Moderate Density (R3) and Residential- Multifamily (RM) would both fall in line with surrounding properties with such properties as Forsyth Gardens and Elder Manor.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the Annexation of certain properties and Zoning after annexation, and Rezoning of certain properties within the city; George Emami- Prime Point Ventures, LLC and Hiram Harbuck- Blake Ventures, LLC.

Mr. Steven Rowland, at 107 Industrial Park Drive, stated it is 6.2 acres made up of four parcels. Three of which they are asking to be annexed and the fourth parcel is partially in the city they are asking to be rezoned from Residential-Moderate Density (R3) to Residential-Multifamily (RM). He stated that they are aware of utilities and streams that come through the property. They plan to design a development that would meet state requirements. He felt that the Regional Commission gave a favorable analysis. Mr. Rowland stated that they feel the city streets are in appropriate condition.

Mr. George Emami, requested to speak after those in opposition to allow him to answer any questions, they may have.

Ms. Cassandra Gaines stated that the area is modest in terms of size, rich in history and character. Adding townhomes in the neighborhood would increase traffic tremendously and if the roads must be widened, they will be in the front door of several homes. She advised that she agrees with having progress in the community, however she doesn’t believe this location is the best fit. She questioned if the properties are annexed to the city limits how would affect the children that are attending K.B. Sutton Elementary. Which School would they be attending. She also questioned how it would affect the property value and requested the proposed idea be rejected.

Mr. Allen Wise questioned what is considered small housing. He stated that he didn’t see why the community had to be compacted in that area, asked that they take that into consideration of how much traffic it would bring, unless they have another entrance.

Mr. Willie Moreland, at Moreland Avenue, stated that it is a house and a church on the street, and it is overgrown with trees. He stated Moreland Avenue has never been a complete road.

Ms. Gwendalyn Maddox stated that she lived in that area for over twenty years. She advised she spoke that George and expressed her concerns for the elderly, roads, and the amount of traffic.

Ms. Jaunita McDonald, at George Street, stated that her daughter is handicapped and expressed her concerns about the traffic and roads.

Mr. George Emami stated that he and the engineering company have come up with a new plan. He introduced Mr. Cecil Henderson and stated that they had come to a written contract for a piece of property that he owns. This would eliminate traffic in the Willis Circle and Gilmore Road neighborhoods. He stated that by law the council could approve zoning with conditions. Mr. Emami answered questions concerns of those in opposition.

Ms. Linda Zellner, at 34 Powell Road, questioned the traffic on Moreland Avenue.

Mr. Thomas Hansford, at 85 Straight Street, questioned what about the people living in the neighborhood.

Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing for councils’ consideration.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the Annexation of certain properties and Zoning after annexation, and Rezoning of certain properties within the city; George Emami- Prime Point Ventures, LLC and Hiram Harbuck- Blake Ventures, LLC for discussion. Seconded by Mr. Hill

After a brief discussion Mr. Hill offered a motion to amend the original motion to allow no access to Willis Circle if the subject properties are annexed and rezoned. Seconded by Mr. Wilder; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to amend the motion to add that Moreland Avenue must be sufficient and up to city standards or the project would fail. Seconded by Mr. Hill; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Noah Harbuck questioned what would happen if the property were annexed and Moreland Avenue is not sufficient.

Mr. Wilder offered a motion to table the Public Hearing for the proposed Annexation of certain properties and Zoning after annexation, and Rezoning of certain properties within the city; George Emami- Prime Point Ventures, LLC and Hiram Harbuck- Blake Ventures, LLC until July 1, 2024 to allow surveying of Moreland Avenue. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a variance request by Amber Whitfield for The Barkery Grooming Boutique.**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the variance request by Amber Whitfield for the Bakery Grooming Boutique. Seconded by Mr. Hill; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a variance request by Josh Hill for The Fox Den signage.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the variance request by Josh Hill for the Fox Den signage with the condition that the sign be turned nightly at 11:00p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously with five votes (Hewett, Allen, Goolsby, Wilder, and Dodd) and one abstention (Hill).

**Approval of** **demolition of the Water Works building.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the demolition of the Water Works building. Seconded by

Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of street closure request on June 30, 2024 for John Walton.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the street closure request on June 30, 2024 by John Walton. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Requisitions Greater than $6,000**

* **Davis Plumbing Company - $46,704.00**
* **Core & Main - $22,888.32**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the requisitions greater than $6000.00 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Assistant City Manager’s Report**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, the Assistant City Manager, reported that:

-Administration submitted the annual hotel/motel tax report to DCA.

-The Police Department has submitted the 2024 Bullet Proof grant.

-Five new full-time and one temporary team member have been hired for Public Works, the department is fully staffed.

-The Fire Department completed the Splashpad repairs on the flooring.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Bobby Melton, the City Attorney, stated that the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System sent out a restatement of the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan in the form of a proposed ordinance for adoption by the city. The plan is qualified under the Internal Revenue Code, to ensure the tax-exempt status. It has been updated to qualify with everything since the last adoption of this ordinance. It must be readopted by the city no later than July 8, 2024.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson reminded everyone to get out and vote from 7:00a.m. to 7:00p.m. at designated precincts. He encouraged everyone to download the City App for better ways to communicate with the city. Mayor Wilson stated that he and council will be attending the Georgia Municipal Annual Convention in Savannah for training.

**Additional Business**

Mr. Wilder advised at the merger between Washington Drive and Highway 83S (MLK Jr. Drive), a second stop sign was placed on the left side of Washington Drive causing traffic to stop on Highway 83.

Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utility Director, stated he would get someone out to look at resolving that issue.

**Public Comments**

Mr. and Mrs. Criswell at 477 Sunset Terrace, stated they arrived home, and the electricity was off. They stated they received a call from Mr. Batchelor who stated that the contractors accidentally hit their power line while digging and told them to notify an electrician. She questioned who was responsible for having the issue fixed. Mrs. advised that her mother lives in her basement; they currently have a generator and was not sure it would last throughout the night.

Chief Bunn advised the Fire Department will provide the family with a generator if needed.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to hire a contractor to fix the electrical issue, if it cannot be fixed by tomorrow to place the family in a hotel until it is fixed. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Allen sent out get well wishes to Ms. Linda Hampton

**Executive Session (land acquisition)**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion for executive session for land acquisition at 8:02p.m. Seconded by

Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to end the executive session at 8:13p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to adjourn at 8:14p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes submitted by:**

**Shayla Furlow, Assistant City Clerk**