**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**August 21, 2023**

**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 John Howard, Chris Hewett, Greg Goolsby, Mike Dodd, and Ralph Ogletree. Also in attendance was the City Manager, Craig Mims, Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie, and City Attorney, Bobby Melton. Five members of the council were in attendance for the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be five votes (Howard, Hewett, Goolsby, Dodd, and Ogletree).

**Approval of the agenda.**

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

**Approval of the minutes from the called meeting and regular council meeting held on Aug. 7, 2023.**

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

**Bicentennial Proclamation**

Mayor Wilson presented the Bicentennial Proclamation.

**Pastor Miller – Aldermen Hall Discussion**

Mr. Craig Mims, City Manager, advised he spoke with Pastor Miller about possibility of leasing space at Alderman Hall and it would not restrict usage for court sessions.

Mr. Heath Miller proposed the city of Forsyth lease the Aldermen Hall for two years with an option to buy. He advised they would like to come in and finish up renovations and move in at the end of September. He advised during the initial two years they would like to have a maintenance contract with the city for the building that would cover electric, plumbing, structural and HVAC as part of the lease agreement.

Mr. Howard advised that it needs to be publicly known to everyone before we let one person have the building.

Mr. Goolsby advised it needs to be discussed with the court to identify their needs.

Mr. Howard advised they discussed using the top floor for a small business resource center.

Mr. Miller asked if Scoops came privately to request the building they are currently in or if it was made public.

Mayor Wilson advised Mr. Miller approached him with the idea of using Alderman Hall, he put him in touch with Mr. Mims. He questioned if it was legal to lease being that it was City property. He advised Mr. Mims to speak with Mr. Melton and it is legal.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to table the discussion until the September 5, 2023, council meeting to allow information to be obtained from court. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; motion carried unanimously.

**Public hearing to consider a variance request application by Josh Hill for 3 lots totaling 1.5 acres, tax parcel 054 019.**

Mr. Melton advised the variance request was advertised in the Monroe County Reporter August 2, 9, and 16. He advised the variance has a recommendation for the caveat to be built as designed and letter of support was submitted from the Board of Education.

Mr. Cody Ellis, Economic Development Director, advised the variance request came before planning and zoning in June. He stated the variance request is to allow preschool or daycare in R2 residential zoning, which is currently not allowed. Planning and Zoning wanted them to come back with a site plan for entry/exit into the daycare and subdivision. Planning and zoning recommended approval of the zoning request.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed variance request application for tax parcel 054 019; three lots totaling 1.5 acres.

Mr. Josh Hill advised the Fox Den will serve children 6 weeks old through 4k. The preschool/daycare will serve socially, emotionally, and academically for learning in Monroe County Schools. It will assist parents with quality childcare options. Eighteen new jobs will be created in the community.

Mrs. Linda Hampton questioned will the preschool/daycare be inclusive to all races?

Mr. Josh Hill advised yes; it will be open to all children in the community.

Mr. Hewett advised it has been some concerns about the traffic. He advised the Sheriff stated it would be a nightmare, but he could work with it.

There being no further comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed ordinance for rezoning request, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby questioned the developers take on the impact of traffic in the neighborhood?

Mr. George Emami advised they are aware of the concerns with traffic. He advised that Mr. Josh Hill calculated that forty to fifty percent of the children would be in the community. Having the preschool/daycare in that area will alleviate some of the traffic in town. He advised that the new site plan is a right turn in and a right turn out.

Mr. Josh Hill advised the preschool/daycare will be open from 6:30am to 6:00p.m. and that will help with traffic, most parents will drop off before school opens and pick up after the school hours.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the variance request application for three lots totaling 1.5 acres, tax parcel 054 019. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously with four votes (Howard, Hewett, Goolsby, and Mayor Wilson) and two opposing (Dodd and Ogletree).

**Public hearing to consider a rezoning request by the city for one parcel totaling 17.75 acres, tax parcel 054 009X.**

Mr. Melton advised the rezoning request is city-initiated to rezone tax parcel 054 009X located at the intersection of Highway 18 and Industrial Park Drive from MI, Manufacturing Industrial to HB, Highway Business. He advised the rezoning request was advertised in the Monroe County Reporter August 2, 9, and 16.

Cody Ellis, Economic Development Director, recommended that the city conduct and approve a city-initiated rezoning of the parcel of land located at the intersection of Highway 18 and Industrial Park Drive from MI, Manufacturing Industrial to HB, Highway Business for the purpose of future uses of commercial highway development. He advised that he spoke with Joyce White, and she agreed with the proposal; it would be easier to sell lots in the future if they are already zoned properly.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed rezoning request by the city for tax parcel 054 009X, totaling 17.75 acres.

Mr. W. James Green advised it was a good idea to rezone as Highway business. He asked that Planning and Zoning consider other areas when they come before them.

There being no further comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed ordinance for rezoning request, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the request for rezoning for one parcel totaling 17.75 acres, tax parcel 054 009X. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of indication of roundabout support from Department of Transportation.**

Mrs. Ivie, Assistant City Manager, advised the Georgia Department of Transportation has been evaluating the intersection of State route Highway 42S and Montpelier Road on the southside of town for the intersection approvements. She advised they need the indication of roundabout support form signed, agreeing to pay the power bill for any lighting installed and to fund the maintenance costs associated with landscaping that would be installed.

Mr. Goolsby questioned the concerns brought before the council during the initial discussion for the roundabout project.

Mayor Wilson advised Mrs. Janice Storey drafted a letter based on council recommendations and it was sent to GDOT. Upon sending the letter she received a request Georgia Department of Transportation to cover the cost of lights and maintenance.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to table the discussion until the September 5, 2023, meeting to allow them to look further into the discussion that was held at a prior meeting. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of appointments to the Main Street/Downtown Development Authority Board.**

Mrs. Ivie advised we have three ladies that are interested in the board: Kelly VanDevusse, Linda Hampton, and Tracy Williams.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to appoint Mr. Goolsby. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to appoint Mrs. Linda Hampton. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Tracy Williams advised she would step down being that her business is new to Forsyth.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to appoint Mrs. Kelly VanDevusse. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a street closure request for the 2023 Mary Person High School Homecoming Parade on Sept. 28, 2023.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the street closure request for the Mary Person High School Homecoming Parade. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of an event permit and standard location release for TLC’s 7 Little Johnston’s show.**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the event permit and standard location release for TLC’s 7 Little Johnston’s show. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a permit for a group assembly by Life Chain on October 1, 2023.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the permit for a group assembly by Life Chain on October 1, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a street closure request for Fox City/ Jonah’s on October 7, 2023.**

Mr. offered a motion to approve the street closure request for Fox City Brewing and Jonah’s on Johnston on October 7, 2023. Seconded by Mr.; the motion carried unanimously.

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

**Core & Main - $54,282.50**

**Georgia Hydrant - $7,000**

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

**City Manager’s Report**

Mr. Craig Mims, City Manager, reported that:

-Budget meetings were held with each department.

-Senior team meeting held- two committees formed:

* Technology committee chaired by Cody Ellis.
* Benefits committee chaired by Regina Ivie.

-The renovations have begun a sixty to ninety completion is expected.

-Four recruits going through the hiring process at the Forsyth Police Department.

-The Fire Department has repaired the Splashpad.

-In the last two weeks we had three first step meetings led by Mr. Cody Ellis.

-Verizon has approached the Economic Development Director with the possibility of leasing some space

for a cellphone tower.

-Main Street has completed their final summer concert series.

-The remainder of the events for this year include:

* Trick-or Treat around the Square
* Tree Lighting and Shop Small Saturday
* December Shop Small Event
* New Years Eve Ball Drop and Concert

-Boom mower is back up and running its normal route.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Bobby Melton had no further business to report.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson had no further business to report.

**Additional Business**

No additional business.

**Public Comments**

Mr. W. James Green advised that he spoke with Mayor Wilson regarding code enforcement and blighted properties along the areas of Sharp Street and Jones Street. He advised the Monroe County Hospital owns most of the properties. Mr. Green stated that maybe a meeting needs to be set up with the county and the hospital board to address the issues.

Mrs. Kerri Swearingen advised Alderman Hall has come into discussion several times. Lee Street Park is very underutilized, and they discussed ways the DDA can get involved and inform people that it is there for use. Alderman Hall is a huge building that can be used for several possibilities downtown.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to go into executive session at 7:05p.m.to discuss legal and property matters. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to end the executive session at 7:25p.m. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes Submitted by:

Shayla Furlow, Executive Admin. Assistant