

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
January 11, 2022
6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers-City Hall
MINUTES

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date, January 11, 2022, at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Carday Marshall, Sr., Chairman, called the meeting to order.

The roll call was done by Ms. Carolus Riley, Council Clerk.

Council members present for roll call: Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr., Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, and Mrs. Dawson. (Mr. Harvey entered in after roll call at approximately 6:07 p.m.)

Council member (s) absent: Ms. Juanita Woods.

Chairman Marshall declared a quorum.

The Invocation was done by Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, and the Pledge of Allegiance by Mr. Marshall.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed each one present and apologized for being late.
2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed each one present and thanked them for attending. She commented about a Constituent contacting her regarding her thanks to Mr. Westrom and the team from the sewer department who did a repair at her home today; the repair caused them to have to dig up her yard in the easement area and she said the team was courteous, helpful, and left the property in better condition than they found it with the landscaping. The Constituent thanked them for coming out so quickly and scheduling the major repair and getting it done.
3. Mr. Marshall welcomed and thanked each one for attending the meeting; he thanked those who participated in the cleanup this past Saturday, approximately 40 people, and it was an awesome cleanup. He thanked Public Works for coming out prior to the cleanup and did work in the areas of Lee Avenue, Jackson Street, and other streets in between, it looks great. He thanked Theta Mu from Carroll Jr. High, Wossman and Carroll High Schools and Mr. Kevo with Two Dudes for volunteering; he thanked Mr. Aundi Brown with Ouachita Green who does an awesome job putting the events together, and the host of kids and the community who came out and helped. He said it only takes a little to keep the areas clean and have to take pride in the community and this is what is being pushed. He spoke with a homeowner about the importance of keeping their area clean and taking pride. The mindset has to change in order for things to be better. He announced a kids Mardi Gras parade on February 12th in District 4; Ms. Judy Babb, President of Krewe De Riviere spoke regarding the upcoming Mardi Gras event. Mr. Marshall announced the Color Purple this weekend where his daughter, will be in the play; he asked that the citizens come out and support the play, as it will be an awesome program. Passion does a great job with putting on the programs. There will be a Friday night production, and two on Saturday. He thanked all of the city workers for what they are doing and to continue doing the great work.
4. Mrs. Dawson welcomed each one present, thanked them for attending, and wished everyone a Happy New Year. She asked everyone to continue staying safe due to the covid numbers increasing, and to a wear mask, get vaccinated and whatever they feel that needs to be done to stay safe. She made an announcement regarding a Constituent of District 5, Mr. Harry Brown, a retired Ouachita Parish Deputy Sheriff, and former investigator for the DA's office commenting that he is in need of a kidney and will be traveling to Birmingham on this Thursday to UAB Kidney Transplant Center and hopefully on January 25th to the Tulane Kidney Transplant Center in New Orleans; she asked prayers for his family, his wife, Mrs. Ira Brown. Mr. Brown is the father of Harry Jr. and also City Marshall Deputy, C.J. Johnson. The family thanks the City of Monroe for their outpouring of love. She announced her first District 5 Community Townhall meeting for 2022 this Thursday, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Public Safety Center; items of discussion will be the Cultural Arts District, Community Garden, Purchasing Policy, and the Housing Development. She asked that if anyone had questions or comments to send to her email at Kema.Dawson@ci.monroe.la.us or call the Council's office at 329-2261. She announced the production of the Color Purple on this Friday and Saturday at the Monroe Civic Center sponsored by the Arts of Passion; she will be in the production, and it will be great; tickets can be purchased at the ArtsofPassion.com.

6. Mr. Jimmie Bryant was present on behalf of Mayor Ellis, and he had no communications. Mrs. Kelsea McCrary made a presentation on behalf of Mayor Ellis to Mr. Ralph Calhoun, of the Biedenharn Museum. The presentation was made in recognition for the month of January being Museum month.

Upon a motion of Mr. Harvey and a second by Mrs. Ezernack, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of December 28, 2021, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 2915 South Grand Street (D4) (Owners - Edith Campbell Est c/o Swansea Kotz and OPPJ)

Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 60 days or March 12, 2022, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Pictorial evidence and discussion of the current state of the property was presented by PUD Director, Mrs. Ellen Hill. Mrs. Hill commented that the property's condition has been in the condition for a very long time. Mrs. Hill commented they have been in contact with the homeowner's daughter, but she hasn't been able to do anything with the property because she doesn't have the resources.

2. 404 Hippolyte Avenue (D4) (Owners - Ervin Lee & Brandy Favre) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 180 days or July 12, 2022, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot.

Comments: Pictorial evidence of the current state of the property was shown by PUD Director, Mrs. Ellen Hill and discussion on the property's condition was made; the property recently changed hands in terms of owners. She said per the property maintenance code that has been adopted, simply boarding up the property does not address the code deficiencies and asked that the property be condemned. Mr. Marshall asked if the new owners stated what they plan to do with it and Mrs. Hill commented that code enforcement did speak to the owner and this is the extent to what he has done, he has pulled no permits, and there is no plan written down that says what would be done with the property. Mr. Marshall said he had gone by and there are boards are up, but the back is full, and one of the boards are down.

Mr. Ervin Lee, owner, commented that the property would be brought up to code; the mail was being sent to the wrong address to a property on Oregon Trail; someone reached out to him on Facebook letting him know that a letter for him came to their address and once the letter was given to him the court date had passed. He contacted the city letting them know that the information was sent to the wrong address, and was told that it takes six months to go to Council; he was told to mow the yard and board it up, and he did that, and after that he gets another letter, which went back to the same Oregon Trail address, wrong address, which he stated he had previously corrected them with the address, and the resident on Oregon Trail again forwarded the letter to him. He contacted the city and is the reason he is present tonight. He stated that his plans for the property was to have the house ready in zero to six months. Mr. Marshall asked Mrs. Hill to get with Mr. Lee; he commented that he knew Mr. Lee's reputation for building and rehabilitating properties; he commented that Code Enforcement is doing their job and doesn't know how the correspondence got misplaced; he asked Mr. Lee to let Mrs. Hill know his plans for the property and for him to understand that the city is not trying to condemn his property for the sake of condemning it. Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Lee for rehabilitating properties. Mr. Lee commented that he would be willing to take any other properties to rehab them. Mr. Harvey asked if they were going to condemn with a timeline. Mrs. Hill commented to Council the way that this works with everyone is that the owners have the opportunity to deal with the property and if he says zero to sixty days, then they can condemn it and see if whether or not it gets done; this is a property that has been in that condition for a while whether he just purchased it a few months ago or not, it's still something in the community that has been an eyesore, and if someone pulls the board down, it becomes a danger to children in the neighborhood. Mr. Lee commented there were many properties in condition, and that she has a lot of work to do then. Mr. Marshall commented that he would give Mr. Lee six months. Mr. Lee commented that he could consider it being done.

Mr. Lee commented for the record that she needs to be replaced with someone else. Mrs. Ezernack commented that this is not the venue and not to attack. Mr. Lee commented that he wasn't attacking her but telling the truth. Mr. Harvey commented they didn't want to discuss replacing anyone but wanted to talk about the property. Mr. Lee commented that it would be done.

3. 303 Wilson (D5) (Owners - Samuel & Shirley M McMillan) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 60 days or March 12, 2022, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Pictorial evidence of the current state of the property was shown by PUD Director, Mrs. Ellen Hill, and discussion on the property's burned condition; they have had contact with the owner, it has been open for several months; since it burned, doesn't believe they ever closed it off and it is in the same condition. She said normally they try to get a burned property to Council quickly and work with the owner if they rehab the property. Mrs. Dawson commented that she is aware that the owner has been in contact with Mr. Tommy James that they would come up a solution, and this is as of last week when she talked with Mr. James. Mrs. Hill commented that she didn't see any notes, that says they have a plan as to what they are doing, and a lot of people with burned structures do try to save it, but this property has been in this condition for a while. Mrs. Dawson commented that the owners are no longer in Monroe, and they do everything by phone and will give Mrs. Hill the owner's contact information.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment NONE.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8154, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin Cities Krewe of De Riviere (Mardi Gras Parade) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration: Public Comment: None.

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment: None.

Legal Department: Public Comment: None.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8155, authorizing a designated city representative to enter into an agreement with the Chesapeake Group LLC for governmental relations and related professional services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Public Works: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8156, authorizing a city representative to execute Change Order Number 2, (MLU Runway 14/32 Extension – Phase 2) between the City of Monroe and Merrick, LLC., for runway grade adjustments and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8157, authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with DRC Emergency Services, LLC and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Mr. Harvey thanked Public Works for this item, and he has received a lot of feedback from the community and do understand that the city is suffering from manpower just like other businesses and municipalities. He thanked everyone for moving forward with it. Mr. Marshall asked how long the services would last. Mr. Sean Benton commented that it would be between six to eight weeks of running the services, and hopefully get everything caught up; if it's not done within that time, then they would need to come back to Council

and ask for additional time; the goal is getting a lot of the debris that have been plaguing the districts for a long time, to get it up and out of the way.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: None.

Police Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8158, accepting the bid of Guidry's Uniforms, for police specialized uniforms, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said services. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8159, accepting the bid of Guidry's Uniforms, for police uniforms, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said services. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8160, authorizing an authorized city representative to readvertise for bids for a one-year contract with the option to renew two (2) times for police equipment if terms and prices remain the same and not to exceed a total of three years. The source of funds will be the Police Department Uniforms & Equipment Account. (There were no public comments.)

(d) ADD-ON: Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to add to the agenda to Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City of Monroe to advertise for bids for Ten Chevrolet Tahoes equipped with Police equipment for Monroe Police Department and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8161, authorizing the City of Monroe to advertise for bids for Ten Chevrolet Tahoes equipped with Police equipment for Monroe Police Department and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Fire Department: Public Comment: None.

Engineering Services: Public Comment: None.

BREAK IF NEEDED: NONE.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Whitfield and Company LLC all rights, title, and interest that the city may have acquired to the Lots 2 & 3, Square 19, Unit 4, Booker T. Washington Addition, Ouachita Parish, 3610 Gayton St., Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 30, 2000, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Joseph and Milleny Walters all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 16, Square 2, Blanks Addition, Ouachita Parish, 207 Morton St., Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 13, 2016, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda to Introduce an Ordinance declaring certain immovable property in Monroe located on Washington St. between North 11th St. and Pendleton Street and a strip of land on Pendleton Street between Washington and Adams Street, as no longer being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold to Michael Echols Enterprises, LLC pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL ADOPTION AND SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING:

None.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Cornelius Carter, citizen, spoke regarding concerns he had for the and his work environment.
2. Ms. Jacera Francois introduced herself.
3. Mrs. Sonya Jacobs, citizen, spoke on behalf of Ms. Francois being a recent certified DBE and an artist, who wants to work for the City of Monroe. Ms. Francois shared her website: www.jacerafrancois.com; her degree is in marketing and a lot of her marketing projects are on her website and she is painting to broaden her portfolio and they can be found on her website. Mr. Marshall welcomed her and thanked her for coming and do look forward to seeing some of her work in the city.
4. Ms. Kenya Roberson, citizen, spoke regarding the Black History Parade on February 26, 2022, and offered applications to anyone interested in participating to contact her; she asked for information on the City of Monroe's MLK program to pass along; Mr. Harvey offered his flyer to her, and Mrs. Dawson commented to Ms. Roberson that she tagged her about the event on Facebook so that it could be shared.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m., upon a motion of Mr. Harvey and seconded by Mrs. Dawson. (There were no public comments)

Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr.
Council Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Jacqueline Benjamin
Council Secretary