

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
October 26, 2021
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, October 26, 2021, 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: Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, Mr. Douglas Harvey, Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr., Mrs. Kema Dawson

Council member (s) absent: NONE.

Chairman Marshall declared a quorum.

The Invocation was done by Reverend Lenard Montgomery, and the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilwoman Ezernack.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey thanked everyone for attending; thanked Doug Seegers, Community Affairs for the planting of the trees along Forsythe Avenue.

2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting; she thanked Rev. Montgomery for the prayer.

3. Ms. Woods welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She commented that her evening with Juanita at Powell Recreation Center on last week was well attended and informational. Her next district meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Marbles Community Center.

4. Mrs. Dawson thanked those for attending and for listening online. She announced on Saturday that the Monroe City Academy League will have the youth flag and chapel games from 8:00 am – 1:30 pm and from 5:00 pm-7:30 pm there will be a fall festival, they are looking for sponsors for \$1200-\$1500 total, so that it can be a no cost event for the youth; some of the activities will include games, concession vendors, trick or trunk and hayrides for the entire family. The Boo at the Zoo event will be held October 30, 2021, from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and the funds raised will be used to purchase a sloth; there will be costume contests, animal encounters, train and boat rides, food, and shopping. She encouraged everyone to come out and enjoy this event.

5. Mayor Ellis thanked those for attending and also those that were watching on social media. Mayor Ellis thanked ULM for partnering with the City of Monroe to have their homecoming celebration kickoff. The zoo received the eighty eight accessible train car and thanked the private donor of the train. There are trees being planted throughout the city on Forsythe Avenue and the Plum Street underpass will be flagged for the planting of trees and the 2nd Street underpass for beautification efforts and it is funded from a grant from Entergy. He yielded the remainder of his time to Mr. Campo to give Council and update on the downtown masterplan. Mr. Campo of Campo Architects gave an overview of the masterplan for the Downtown; he also thanked Mayor Ellis and the City for assisting eight of his employees during Hurricane Ida. He continued on with the brief overview by presenting a PowerPoint presentation which covered the table of contents information in the Phase 1 booklet covering the process of the What, Where and Why portions of the master plan and he gave information on those items under the categories. A website has been setup to allow districts to give them input information from the districts. After the presentation, he commented that the next phase would conclude in November would be assessment of information and compiling it into a document that will be shared and it will set the stage for the next phase, a more thorough assessment of the programming needs and the third phase, the implementation phase.

Council Chairman Marshall welcomed each one present and those watching on social media. Mr. Marshall commented there would be an urgent action planning meeting at Richwood High School Gymnasium on Saturday, October 30, 2021, at 10 a.m. He asked that those concerned would come out to discuss how they can help the youth of your City.

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Upon a motion of Mrs. Dawson and a second by Mr. Harvey, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of October 12, 2021, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment: NONE.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment: NONE.

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. Dawson, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8096, confirming the appointment of Tyrone Goodin to the Southside Economic Development District Board of Commissioners and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Goodin commented that he looked forward to serving; Mayor Ellis and Mr. Marshall thanked him for his willingness to serve.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8097, authorizing a city representative to enter into and execute a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and Northeast Louisiana Arts Council and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mrs. Ezernack asked if this was the same agreement; Mrs. Sturdivant said it was the annual agreement.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8098, authorizing a city representative to enter into a Professional Services Contract with Manning, APC for a Feasibility Study and Development Guidelines related to Downtown Monroe and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Ray Manning of Manning APC, an architecture firm will be engaged in developing conceptual and visiting documents for the preparation of an RFP for developers for a property that the city intends to acquire at 503 Walnut Street. Mr. Manning explained the agenda item by presenting a PowerPoint. Mrs. Dawson asked that the survey would be completed by citizens for the downtown area and to go to www.monroe.city to complete the survey.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8099, authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to submit an application for state financial assistance to the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Division of Aviation (La Dotd) for the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Ms. Vee Wright, commented regarding the opportunity to have more participation from Black businesses.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8100, authorizing the temporary closure of Forsythe Boat Ramp and adjacent area to vehicle traffic from November 1st through November 5th, 2021, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

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(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack; Voting YES: Ezernack, Harvey, Marshall, Woods; Voting to ABSTAIN: Dawson; approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8101, authorizing a city representative to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Arts With Passion Production Company, Inc and further providing with respect thereto.

Public Comments: Ms. Kenya Roberson asked for an explanation of a cooperative endeavor agreement; Mrs. Sturdivant explained the cooperative endeavor agreement as noted in Article 7; Section 14 C of the Constitution of the State of Louisiana which provides the agreement for public purpose.

Police Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Fire Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8102, accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and Amethyst Construction, Inc., for the Forsythe Boat Ramp Parking Lot Improvements Project, and further providing with respect thereto.

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8103, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute an agreement with Volkert, Inc., to provide Professional Engineering Services for the State Project No. H.007289 Kansas Lane Extension Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(c) ADD-ON: Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to add to the agenda to Adopt a Resolution authorizing an authorized city representative, to re-request for bids on the pedestrian bridge at Renwick Improvements Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$525,000.00 The DBE goal is 0% and source of funds Capital Infrastructure sales tax revenue funds. (There were no public comments).

Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 8104, authorizing an authorized city representative, to re-request for bids on the pedestrian bridge at Renwick Improvements Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$525,000.00 The DBE goal is 0% and source of funds Capital Infrastructure sales tax revenue funds.

Comments: Ms. Woods expressed her appreciation for the bridge; she asked about the zero DBE goal; Mr. Holland that the job is getting ready to go out for bids. He explained the project was a specialty item, and there is cleaning and lead paint removal over a state highway and they must meet the state qualifications. Ms. Woods commented her concerns for looking for contractors with the skillset. Mr. Holland said they would look into it. Mayor Ellis asked if it was considered a state project and Mr. Holland said it was a city project in the state right of way and it requires them to follow DOTD guidelines. The contractor must be a DOTD certified contractor that can bond that amount. The contractor must be licensed in Louisiana.

Mrs. Sonya Jacobs, commented regarding a contractor, Mr. A.R. Brooks and mentioned his credentials. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that the city has had numerous contracts with Mr. Brooks and the city has reached out to him on the water treatment plant painting projects and wanted him to do the majority of the project and he said the project was too large.

Ms. Vee Wright, commented regarding the dbe goal for the project.

Mrs. Dawson said the city is getting ready to send the project out for advertising and anybody can see it and bid on it.

Ms. Marie Brown commented her concerns for the project and to have inclusion.

Mr. Trey Hunter commented his concerns for DBE program and to grow the program to ensure it has enough people that meet the requirements for DBE contractors.

Mrs. Rowell commented they have posted the DBE position and have been getting applications and the City also have a new director of Purchasing, Mr. Curt Kelly.

Mrs. Dawson commented that she and Councilman Marshall have been working on the program in the background and want to see more DBE's and would like to talk with some that are saying they haven't been able to get to the table; she would like to know names. Mr. Marshall said there is a need to have more dialogue, as there are people in the city that can help people get qualified and educating them on DBE participation.

Ms. Kenya Roberson commented that the current process is not working and would love to work with those interested to help them get certified.

Ms. Melissa Jean Byers commented regarding the DBE participation and the DOTD and the city focusing on downtown and Desiard Street, and the \$1.4 million dollars being spent on one street and one district downtown.

BREAK IF NEEDED: NONE.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the International Union of Operating Engineers, AFL-CIO, Local 407 and further providing with respect thereto. (Public Wks-WTP)

Comments: Ms. Vee Wright commended the city on the contract. Ms. Marie Brown commented regarding the item and asked if the city would consider the employees that have been with the city for two years are still on part time and it needs to change so that they can get benefits.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the International Union of Police Associations, Local No. 81, AFL-CIO and further providing with respect thereto. (Police Dept.)

Comments: Ms. Vee Wright commended the city on the contract and thanked the police for their service. MPD Detective Chris Turner, VP of the local union board; commented that it has been a decade since their last contract, and this is the first time that they agree with the Chief and the Mayor; the union voted 88 percent yes on the contract. Mayor Ellis thanked the police force for their service. Mrs. Ezernack thanked MPD for their service.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from Bricks & Timbers, LLC, situated in Ouachita Parish with a municipal address of 205, 209, 215 & 305 Walnut Street, Monroe, La, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.)

Comments: Ms. Kelsea McCrary explained the agenda item and the benefits and importance of the redevelopment of the building.

Ms. Vee Wright commented asked if the building was tied to the previous presentation by Mr. Manning.

Mayor Ellis commented about the projects that are being done in all the districts.

The public sector members commented regarding in favor of the building and the importance of how it would benefit the City; those members included the Chancellor of La. Delta Community College, Dr. Esters, Mr. Seth Hall, ULM Chief Strategy Officer (representing Dr. Berry), Mr. Roy Heatherly, President of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Roy Arthur, owner of Miro's restaurant, Ms. Aimee Kane, V.P. of Business Development for St. Francis, Mr. Larry Bratton, DEDD.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for coming and giving their valuable information and is excited about the project, as it is a trailblazing experience and want to be a part of it. She asked Mayor Ellis how the project would impact District 3. Mayor Ellis commented that sales tax dollars help all districts. Mrs. Ezernack commented that the businesses, ULM, and the medical school that are in her district benefit the entire community and this project is the same type of activity. Mayor Ellis explained the land lease agreement and it is benefitting the districts. Mr. Marshall said in traveling to various cities, he looks to see what best practices there that he can take back to Monroe. In addressing the concerns of his constituents when they see a large amount of money being spent in one location and you have to address both things; you want to see growth but making sure that things are being

done in a balanced manner to benefit the city as a whole and this will benefit the city as a whole. There are different perceptions, and you have to address those differences. The benefits are there, and the numbers make sense, and it will help each district, and these are the types of investments that we want to see. He thanked Mr. Campo and Mr. Manning for their transparency, and he told Mr. Manning that he appreciates his vision and that is similar to his own and has seen it but didn't know how to get it there. Mrs. Ezernack commented that the team has been assembled and to bring the city to this vision is outstanding and do appreciate the Mayor for finding them and bringing them onboard. Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Manning and commented that his work can be seen from Jacksbury to the New Orleans Convention Center projects and throughout the state of Louisiana; he is highly respected throughout the State and Country and is proud that he is a part of the City of Monroe's new legacy.

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from Laty McPhee, LLC, situated in Ouachita Parish with a municipal address of (no situs) North Grand Street, Monroe, La, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

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

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Public Hearing was closed.

(a) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to finally adopt Ordinance No. 12,083, extending and enlarging the boundaries of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, providing for the recordation of the entire boundary as amended: establishing the effective date thereof, and providing further with respect thereto – Applicant – I-20 Corridor Properties & North American Land Dev. (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Public Hearing was closed.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to finally adopt Ordinance No. 12,084, adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and to rezone a ±54-acre tract of land presently located in Ouachita Parish from OS, Open Space to B-3 (General Business/Commercial) District to develop a wide variety of commercial and service activities, restaurants and hotel development – Applicant – I-20 Corridor Properties & North American land Dev. (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Public Hearing was closed.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to finally adopt Ordinance No. 12,085, amendment to Chapter 37, Zoning, of the Code of the City of Monroe, Article III, Use Districts, Section 37-37 Commercial Use Districts, Table 3.3 Commercial Districts Permitted, Conditional Uses, in the Use Standards to add in the table referring to the restaurant, full-service. (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Councilman Chair Marshall asked legal for an explanation of the item. Mrs. Sturdivant commented they are adding a section on the chart where people will know that when opening a business, and the conditions of the permit depending on the zoning classification, and it will be listed in the chart in Muni-Code.

(d) ADD-ON: Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to add to the agenda to adopt an Emergency Ordinance declaring the HVAC chiller located at the Benoit Community Center in immediate need of replacement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to finally adopt Emergency Ordinance No. 12,086, declaring the HVAC chiller located at the Benoit Community Center in immediate need of replacement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Kenya Roberson, citizen, spoke regarding the La. Board for Black Chamber of Commerce for the State and she announced there is a Monroe regional Black Chamber that will have twelve parishes included they will have a mixer on Thursday at 6:00 p.m.; she asked that her Council come out to be informed, as invitations were sent out and offered invitations to each one.
2. Brian Davis, Executive Director for La. Trust for Historic Preservation, commented regarding the agenda item on the building purchase and the Campo Architect team and Mr. Manning.
3. Vee Wright, commented regarding her involvement as a community activist and her concerns for the city and it is thriving.
4. Jessica Hollins, commented regarding Monroe City Academy League and it's partnership with the City of Monroe; she updated the City on their activities to date and the future activities. She thanked the City for their partnership.
5. Stonewall Hunter III, commented regarding the Monroe City Academy League and the upcoming activities this weekend and future activities. Mrs. Dawson asked for the cash app information for the league.
6. Tyree Hollins, thanked the City for their support of the Monroe City Academy League and the opportunities presented to the youth of the City. Mayor Ellis commented that Ray Wright has given the league steep compliments and do appreciate their service to the City. Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Hollins and the league for their vision and support; they are doing an awesome job.
7. Sonya Jacobs, commented to Mr. Hollins about his goal for the league and she offered \$1200 to the league by JS Consultants, and she thanked them for their service. She asked on behalf of Vincent Brown, DC Design the process for getting started with the downtown project; Mr. Brown is a commercial licensed contractor, and he does a lot of work in the area. Mr. Manning said he could email him and to include him in the pre-proposal process.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m., upon a motion of Ms. Woods 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

***For extended details on the Council meeting please call the Council Clerk, Monday-Friday at 329-2252; also, a recording of the minutes can be sent via email to you.**