

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
September 13, 2022
6:00p.m.

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date at the Council's regular meeting place, the Council Chamber, City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Chairman Kema Dawson, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Ezernack, Ms. Woods, Mr. Marshall, & Mrs. Dawson

There was absent: None

Chairman Dawson announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by her designee.

The Invocation was led by Pastor Rachel N. Washington.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey thanked Pastor Rachel for the Invocation and he welcomed everyone to Council Meeting.

Mrs. Ezernack said it looks like the councilmembers have a full house. She wanted to welcome everyone to the City Council meeting. She stated she is glad everyone is sharing there evening with the Council.

Ms. Woods welcomed everyone to the City Council meeting, and she said the prayers at Renwick and Hwy 165 crosswalk were held today. She said it was very humbling service and well attended. She recognized Mr. Brady Matthews for his design on the Renwick crosswalk and she noted he is a Carroll High School graduate Class of 1993. On another note, she said the District 3 Community Meeting was very informative and they had discussions about Downtown Economic Development. She noted they are gearing up for the District 3 clean up on September 24th at the Morning Side Community near Smith Street. She said they are looking for volunteers with lawnmowers, tractors, and weed eaters to come out to help. She further noted knowing the City is well stressed on being able to get out into the neighborhoods and District 3 is taking the initiative on getting lots mowed. She wanted to thank the volunteers from Chase Bank for the pickup on Elm Street with Ouachita Green and she said their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Mr. Marshall thanked everyone for coming out to the council meeting. He said it was a blessing on today to bless the Renwick bridge and he also has spent many years walking across. He said it was good to see all the kids come out to write scriptures and encouraging words on the bridge. On another note, Mr. Marshall wanted to announce on Saturday September 17, 2022, there will be a prostate cancer screening at the Monroe Civic Center begins at 9 o'clock and it is free to everyone. He said on September 18th District 4 is having a movie night at Lida-Benton Park with community resources, vendors, jumpers, and activities for the kids. He said they will be showing the DC League of Super Pets and if you are not doing anything to come out.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to echo Mr. Marshall and Ms. Woods remarks and she stated it was an awesome experience at the Renwick Street bridge. She said one of the discussions before the prayers at the bridge was about the safety of the community and one of the reasons why the amount of money was put into the bridge to beautify it. She said it has been about three inspections to make sure it was safe for people to cross, and the council is thankful to the City of Monroe, Mayor Ellis, and the Councilmen for getting the project well on its way. She noted the project is not finish and there is still work to be done but the idea of the children in the community writing prayers on the bridge was awesome. On another note, Mrs. Dawson wanted to announce Districts 3 and 4 are teaming up to clean up on Saturday October 1, 2002, 10am until 12pm. She said they will meet at the King Oaks Masonic Hall at 10am but you can arrive as early as 9:45am. She said to mark your

calendars for Boo at the Zoo on October 29, 2022, from 10am until 2pm. She further noted the OMCAP, Ouachita Multi-Purpose Community Action Program, will present a community resource fair on Friday October 7, 2022, from 9am until 1pm. She wanted to thank everyone that came out to celebrate and remember September 11th on Sunday morning. She said it was happening all over the country and we should make sure to thank our first responders and thank those who have given their lives to protect us.

Mayor Friday Ellis echoed Mrs. Dawson remarks about our first responders, and he wanted to praise the men and women of the Monroe Fire Department including Chief Terry Williams. He stated today was a good day, seeing people come out to celebrate and pray over the students at Carroll High School. He said the inspiration came from St. Jude's Dream Home, before the home is built people come in to write prayers for the family. He further stated walking amongst the students and seeing the words of encouragement they were leaving for the next generation was very inspiring. On another note, Mayor Ellis announced on September 17, 2022, from 5pm until 9pm at the Downtown River Market there will be "the Rolling on the River" there will be a lot of food trucks, music, and good times for the community. He noted the City will begin rolling out information for the phase 2 of the Downtown Master Plan and work being put into the logo for Monroe Main Street. He further noted it has been a lot of time and work put into the logo to bring in elements of all the buildings from downtown. Mayor announced a blood drive will be held on September 26, 2022 in front of City Hall from 9am until 1pm in honor of Sickle Cell Awareness month.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of August 23, 2022, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, wanted to thank the City Council for taking the lead in getting constituents to help clean up the neighborhoods. He stated Code Enforcement will have a Blight Bootcamp on October 24th to talk about what Code Enforcement does and the permitting process.

(Correction Blight Bootcamp Saturday September 24, 2022, at the Monroe Civic Center Convention Center.)

The following condemnation were considered:

1. 704 Alabama Street (D4) Owner – Anton Laverne Causey) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon amended motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 60 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot.

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is a burned dilapidated structure, and it has been that way since 2019. They are asking that the property be condemned, and owner given 30 days

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if there has been any contact with the owner.

Mr. James stated no.

Mr. Marshall motioned to condemn the property and give the owner 30 days to bring the structure up to code.

Mr. Harvey seconded the motion to condemn the property.

Mrs. Dawson asked if anyone was present representing the property.

Mr. Anton Laverne Causey, 704 Alabama Street, said the last time he was in Environmental court he was informed it would be a 6-month process. He said he was not aware that when he came today that the property would be condemned in 30 days. He stated the money he saved to fix the property he used to relocate the mother of his children.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if Mr. Causey planned to do construction to the property.

Mr. Causey said yes, the plan was to use the \$500 to strip it down and have the inside of the structure boarded. He said mowing the yard is not a problem, but he is asking for a little more time.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if Mr. Causey has been in contact with Mr. Tommy James.

Mr. Causey said he didn't call him, but he has his contact information.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know how much time is needed.

Mr. Causey said maybe two months.

Mr. Marshall stated he will give him 60 days, therefore, amending his motion.

Mr. Harvey withdrew his second for 30 days and Ms. Woods seconded the motion for 60 days.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to inform Mr. Causey the 6 months doesn't affect what the Council's decision is tonight because it could be 6 months before the property is actually torn down. She informed Mr. Causey he should work with Mr. James to get it done before 6 months to take it off the condemned list. She said the most important thing is the communication with Mr. James to know where they are with the project and when they will pull the permit.

2. 406 Foster Street (D2) Owner – James W. Pollard III, Marsha A. Pollard Est.) Notice to show cause was served. There was no one present. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.) (Correction D1)

Mr. James stated this is an open dilapidated structure, and it was presented in Environmental court in June. He said he made contact with the owner and the owner stated she can't do anything with the property. They are asking that the property be condemned, and owner given 30 days.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know if anyone was present to represent the property. There was no one present.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8353 granting an exception to the Open Container to the Twin City Art Foundation for a public reception for the Joey Slaughter Exhibition at the Masur Museum of Art pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8354 granting an exception to the Open Container to the Community Affairs Department for a Downtown Block Party – Rolling on the Riverfront pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8355 authorizing a city representative to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Christopher Davis to expand the community garden located on Sherrouse Street and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said District 3 has a Community Garden in the Booker T. area on Sherrouse Street and currently there are thirty 4x8 boxes that have all been adopted. She said the garden is a beautiful project and she encourages everyone who hasn't seen it to take a look. She said there is a need and demand for these kind of services in our community. She stated they will be expanding, and Mr. Belton is the project manager for the garden. She further stated Mr. Belton informed her of things he needed and the City is giving some money to help continue with this project.

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider an application by Mario Mata dba Casa Real Mexican Bistro LLC, 201 Century Village Blvd. Suite 160, Monroe LA 71203 for a New 2022 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8356 accepting and approving the Systems Survey and Compliance Questionnaire for the City of Monroe for the fiscal year ending April 30,2022. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to clarify that the \$250,000.00 was the limit for the State.

Mrs. Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, said yes, that is the State's money.

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8357 authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. One (1) to the Central Warehouse Limited Improvements Contract, between the City of Monroe and Grindstone Construction, LLC, for an increase in the contract amount of \$19,078.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8358 authorizing the director of administration to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Miss Monroe Scholarship Pageant Organization Inc and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8359 authorizing the director of administration to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Ouachita African American Historical Society/Northeast Louisiana Delta African American Heritage Museum and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8360 approving and authorizing an agreement between the City of Monroe, the General Claire L. Chennault Foundation, and the Southern Heritage Foundation and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Nell Calloway, President, thanked the City for their support last year and she said it was a fabulous air show last year. She stated the City's investment of \$25,000.00 was turned into a 1.9-million-dollar economic impact to the community. She further stated they have almost 500,000 social media followers. She said thirty two percent of ticket sales were from out of state. She said there were about 5,000 people at the air show on Friday night and about 10,000 on Saturday. She said she feels it was a successful air show for the City of Monroe and it was the first air show they had in over 40 years. She noted the Red, White, and Blue Airshow is the best new event in Louisiana according to the Louisiana Life Magazine. She further noted they are extremely proud and want to have another airshow next year.

Mayor Friday Ellis asked Ms. Calloway to give a targeted date on when they are looking to bring the air show back.

Ms. Calloway said it will be May 5th, 6th, and 7th.

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8361 authorizing the city of Monroe/Monroe Transit System Drug and Alcohol Policy and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8362 authorizing the execution of a Non-Federal Preliminary Design Reimbursable Agreement by and between the City of Monroe, Monroe Regional Airport and the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Community Affairs:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8363 approving and authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and Northeast Louisiana Soccer Association (“NELSA”) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8364 authorizing a designated city representative to sign and accept a \$1,800,000 grant from the Monroe- West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau for Forsythe Tennis Courts expansion and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know what the City’s obligation is on this item.

Mr. Kevin Crosby, Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau, said the CVB is excited to team up with the City of Monroe to expand tennis courts and make tennis tournaments a reality. He said they are committed to put 1.8 million dollars towards seven additional tennis courts to make fifteen total tennis courts at Forsythe Park. He said this project will not only help the City of Monroe but will also help the parish as well as the entire region. He said the original study that the CVB performed was to see where funding should be put to bring people into our area to stay overnight was baseball, softball complex, multi propose indoor sports complex, improvement to soccer fields and tennis courts. He said they conducted an economic impact study in 2021 by Victus Advertiser and the direct impact of six new annual tournaments will bring in over 500 participants per tournament. He stated in about three years the City of Monroe will get there investment back. He further stated the CBV investment will take longer to get back because they will collect portions of the room night stays.

Ms. Woods said Mr. Crosby did really well talking about the economic impact of this project. She stated for the benefit of those listening from home she thinks we should give them an understanding on how the City is spending tax payers dollars. She stated again her question was what is the City’s obligation on this project and she wanted to know where the money is coming from.

Ms. Meghan Risinger, Grant Writer, said the City’s commitment is a little under 2.7 million.

Ms. Woods wanted to know where the dollars would come from.

Mrs. Rowell said it is Capital Project money set aside.

Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8365 approving and authorizing an agreement between the City of Monroe and the Fourth Judicial District Attorney’s Office for extra duty traffic enforcement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted a better understanding on what the City is doing on this item.

Mr. Victor Zordan, Chief of Police, said this agreement is for the local area enforcement program that the District Attorney funds and pays officers overtime rate to enforce traffic laws. He said officers would sign up on their off-duty days to enforce traffic laws within the City of Monroe.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if it will be a collaboration between all the law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Zordan said the other agencies already do it, but the Monroe Police Department is trying to be a part of it now.

Ms. Wood stated this is good because the City is putting more patrol on the street than what we had normally.

Mr. Zordan noted it is specifically for traffic laws and he further noted he is constantly getting complaints about speeding.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if this is an ongoing project or if the funds are limited.

Mr. Zordan said he doesn’t know the answer to that, but it must be on their off days. He said he doesn’t know because the District Attorney Office reimburses the City for it.

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8366 accepting the base bid of Murphy Bros. Trucking & Construction LLC, for the Kansas Lane Drainage Project in the amount of \$165,690.00 and the dba Goal is 6.39%, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know what the City is doing with the Kansas Lane Drainage Project.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, said at the intersection of Kansas Lane and Construction Avenue the structure is in the upper side of the drainage system before crossing the railroad track. He said there are two drainage boxes on each side of the roadway and a cross drain underneath the roadway connecting those drains. He said the system flows back towards Millhaven and it appears something may have hit the west structure. He stated the structure is cracked from top to bottom and the section of concrete has shifted. He further stated after the inspection of the structure it is something that needs to be repaired.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the cracked structure was the reason the road was blocked off.

Mr. McCallister said yes.

Ms. Woods said she has received a lot of calls on the road being blocked off. She noted it is good that the City has identified the problem and will be getting ready to take care of it.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove item (b) authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Three (3) to modify the Texas/Standifer Lift Station to aid in bypass operations, between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, for an increase in the contract amount by \$44,900.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know why item (b) was being removed.

Mr. McCallister noted the item was approved at the August 23rd Council meeting as an add-on. He further noted it was an oversight on his part and should not have been added to this agenda.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8367 authorizing the City of Monroe to advertise for bids for Phase 1 of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibit located at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know what will happen in Phase 1.

Mr. McCallister said Phase 1 encompasses an exhibit at the zoo and there are multiple alligator pools, otter pool, and other compounds as well. He said this phase and request to advertise was a set amount of little over 1.1 million to go towards this project. He said they have it broken out in a scope within the 1.1 million, however, they are adding landscaping, lighting, and an elevated feeding structure. He noted they wanted to include those alternates in the advertisement, and they didn't want to miss out in the event they can get it within the budget.

Ms. Woods wanted to know how the 1.4 million will be funded.

Ms. Risinger said there are multiple funding sources.

Mr. Harvey noted some of the funding sources are Capital Infrastructure, Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), and Ouachita Parish Police Jury.

Mayor Friday Ellis wanted to thank Michael Thompson and Lonnie Hudson for their donation to this project. He noted there are multiple funding strings paying for this project.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance granting authority for the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, to proceed with conduit financing through the **Louisiana Local Government Environmental Facilities and Community Development Authority (the "Authority") for City of Monroe Downtown Development Projects**, requesting the authority to make application to the Louisiana State bond Commission for approval; providing for the employment of bond counsel and other professionals;

and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (Admin.) (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said she knows the amendment has been included but for the purpose of everyone present wanted someone to come explain what the City is doing on this project.

Mr. Nnamdi Thompson, Government Consultants, noted previously the City entered into a Cooperative Endeavor with the Downtown Economic Development Board and the definitions that were written inside the Cooperative Endeavor related to the total assessed value as it was written. He further noted with the amendment it changed into a taxable assessed value and with that small change the \$12,900,000 had to be taken out.

Ms. Woods wanted to know what the Downtown Economic Development District will be doing to not exceed the 12 million dollars.

Mr. Larry Bratton, Downtown Economic Development District, said the TIF has kicked in and DEDD has a nice funding source in which they can proceed. He said DEDD submitted about six to eight projects, and they will be able to reimburse the City with the Marina which enhances what goes on at the River Market. He said he thinks it's a great addition to the downtown area. He noted on Walnut Street they have a power line that serves the bridge that open for the railroad, Endom Street Bridge, and it starts at the Louisville Bridge. He further noted using Capital outlay Funds to help support funding and the Desiard Street Project.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and approved to Introduce an Ordinance to amend the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to rezone a ±6.149-acre tract of land, from being B-3 (General Business/Commercial) District to the I-1 (Industrial Business) District, for the applicant to operate a used car dealership, at 430 Ouachita Avenue and providing further with respect thereto- APPLICANT: Brennan Castello (P&Z) (Mrs. Ezernack abstain) (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant noted she believes the Council members have the corrected copy because there was a typo in the Ordinance. She said nothing has changed except to add to provide for barbed wire.

Mrs. Ezernack said she sold Mr. Brennan Castello this property several months ago and they are doing a lot of improvements to the acres, therefore, she must abstain.

(c) Upon amended motion by Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Passover item (c) for Introduction an Ordinance declaring certain immovable property in Monroe located at 1400 and 1401 Stubbs Avenue as no longer being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold to Cole Sullivan pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statue 33:4712 until October 25, 2022, Council Meeting.

Mr. Danny Hunt, 1201 Stubbs Avenue, stated he occupies probably about seven to eight acres around this piece of property and looks forward to the City being a new neighbor. He noted he is aware of Statue 33:4712, but he said he sees the sell is being made to a particular individual Mr. Cole Sullivan that he doesn't know. He further noted his question is what is the intent of the property and what will it be used for because there are children, schools, and females in this area. He said he is concerned not knowing what will happen to the property being sold to an individual he doesn't know.

Mrs. Carolyn Hunt, 1201 Stubbs Avenue, said they own the church across the street from the property. She stated they are familiar with the area and all the new businesses that have come to the area. She further stated there is a school in the church, daycare down the street, banks, and other businesses in that area which is a beautiful area, and they would like to keep it that way. Mrs. Hunt wanted to know if any of the council members have an idea of what the plans are for the building.

Mr. Joe Montgomery, Legacy Recovery Service, said the Legacy Recovery Service will be a clinical manage low level intensity treatment program for individuals recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. He noted it will be a 24-hour facility and it will be managed by a medical director, clinical director, general manager, CITs, and cooks. He further noted it will create about fifteen to twenty jobs and it is monitored by the Department of Baylor Health.

Mrs. Ezernack noted she believes this facility is for individuals that come out of another treatment center, and they are coming back into the community. She echoed Mr. Montgomery statement that the facility is supervised 24/7 and someone is always on the property. She questioned if it will be set up like a clinic or hospital, if it is supervised by the Department of Health and Hospitals.

Mr. Montgomery said that is correct, and it is a level 3.1 facility, which is a low-level medical treatment facility, which is designed to catch individuals coming out of a 3.5 facility that is a higher intensity program. He said the individual will complete at least 30 days of treatment and they will come to their program for sixty to ninety days. He said they will receive five hours of counseling a week, training on social skills, and work development skills.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if the individuals will be inside the facility one hundred percent of the time.

Mr. Montgomery said they will be in and out of the facility with set curfew. He noted the individual will have the freedom to come and go for work or school.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if any of the individuals are felons.

Mr. Montgomery said there could be a case where an individual has prior drug charges. He said there will be no sexual misconduct and no high-level offenders.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if there are similar locations in community that are already operating this program.

Mr. Montgomery said there are two level 3.1 facilities in Monroe which are Millstone Recovery Women's facility on Hwy 165 South and the Serenity House Men's facility on Reddix Lane.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if the new location will be a men's facility.

Mr. Montgomery said this location would be a 48 beds men's facility.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if the location has already been zoned properly for the activity in this facility.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, Executive Director for Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, noted she has the same concerns the Council Chair has regarding if the individuals are felons and where the recipient's referrals will come from.

Mr. Montgomery noted most referrals will come from treatment centers in North Louisiana and every individual will have to complete at least 30 days of treatment at a level 3.5 facility.

Ms. Marie Brown, 1002 South 5th Street, said the facility on Hwy165 is horrible and there is no control over the people living in the facility. She said they are all in the community and Reddix Lane have the same problem. She said to put another facility like this in the community the neighborhood will change and there is no control on where the people are coming from. She stated she is happy the new facility will not be on the Southside, and they are having problems with the residents in the old facilities. She further stated to put them with children, and they relapse what do people think will happen. She said the people from the facility travel in the Minnie Ruffin and Wossman School zone, and there is a problem. She said she hates she wasn't coming to the council meetings during the time the Hwy 165 facility was passed, but it is the worst thing that has happen to the community.

Mr. Montgomery stated he understands Ms. Brown's concerns which is one of the reasons they are creating the new facility and there is a huge need for a facility that is ran properly. He said it is unfortunate some of the facilities aren't ran as good as they could be. He said that will not be the case with their facility and there will not be individuals walking up and down Stubbs Ave or loitering.

Mrs. Ezernack said she knows some people have concerns because there can be confusion on this type of structured program that is 24/7 operated and managed as opposed to sober living homes that are structured differently. She said from what she has read and researched it is more controlled but if the individuals do not conform, they are no longer part of the program.

Mr. Montgomery said that is right, it is a managed program and there are steps that must be taken to get through the program. He said there is a set schedule and training set up for the individuals, but if it is not being done, they are out of the program.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if the individuals are screened for mental illness or is it just a process of an application.

Mr. Montgomery reiterated the individuals are referred to them from a high-level treatment facility and they will not send individuals that need a higher level of care.

Mrs. Hunt said she understands the program well because she has worked with some of them that were on Jackson Street. She said she knows the community of Stubbs and 18th Street, how they have worked diligently over the last 7 years to help build up that area. She said a lot of businesses are there and she doesn't think this type of business will fit in that area. She said she hopes the City Council will consider not voting for this because she doesn't believe it's a good idea for the area.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know, if or when the individuals are kicked out the program where do they go.

Mr. Montgomery said there's no particular place they send the individual and they go back to where they were before the higher-level treatment program. He said whether that is home or a family member he can't answer that question.

Mr. Jimmy Gagné said around this area there are 10 treatment centers, and the individuals are getting thrown into town whether we like it or not. He said to respond to that, and he knows the location may not be ideal for everyone, but they are trying to do something that is not being done right now. He noted the individuals will be coming into the Garden District with no direction or with some extremely healthy direction. He stated he is 8 years sober today because he landed in Monroe and the recovery community showed him a different way of life. He further stated he is an example of what can happen when you fall into the right group of people and that is what they are trying to provide.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if they have an estimated amount of investment that will be used for improving the property in order to reach the standards that Health and Hospitals are demanding.

Mr. Montgomery said they will be making a substantial investment assuming everything goes through, and they will be purchasing the building for \$1,050,000.00 which is \$50,000 over the asking price. He said they will put about two and a half million dollars into renovations for the building to get it up to code.

Mayor Ellis wanted to thank Mr. Gagné for his transparency regarding his sobriety.

Mr. Hunt said they bought the property about six years ago and when people drove down Stubbs Avenue almost every building was for sale. He said everybody has worked to maintain the church and help build up the community. He stated they want to make sure the environment stays safe and wholesome. He said a pastor is known for its nurturing, caring attitude, and commitment.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if they have thought about having a community discussion with the businesses to get their feedback before moving forward with the project.

Mr. Montgomery said absolutely, and they understand the community concerns with this project, and they will do the best they can to make everyone comfortable. He said they would invite any one to the facility to show them what they will be doing and answer any questions.

Ms. Woods noted she would like to make a motion because they are in her District. She said she has seen the facility and she is aware of the plans they have for it, but she knows the church as well and at this time it would be hard for her to make a decision. She further noted she would motion for the Council to Passover, and they go back to have conversations with people in the community.

Mr. Montgomery stated they would be happy to.

Mr. Marshall seconded Ms. Woods's motion to Passover until a later time.

Ms. Vee Wright, West Monroe, wanted to thank Ms. Woods for her remarks and she stated that is precisely what she was going to propose. She said there are people here trying to start a business and businesses that already exist which seems to be very logical to have the businesses to sit down together.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if there is a set rule on how soon the introduction needs to come back to council for the final reading. She stated she knows it has a certain time to lay over, but could it be done beyond that time.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said yes, they have an addendum to extend the closing date. If the City Council approves the project, they will still follow within those time periods. She said she doesn't think the City will have a problem extending that in order for them to meet with the community, come back to council, and meet the advertisement requirements.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if the council would need to say they are Passing over the item, and council will wait until the community input meeting to be able to put it back on the agenda.

Mrs. Sturdivant wanted to know if council wants to give it until the October meeting.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know where they would find the community input meeting and what it will look like when it comes back to the agenda. He stated an introduction is a version of introducing it to the community. He further stated for the record as of right now he doesn't support the project. He noted he always allows things to go to introduction therefore the community can find out about it.

Mr. Marshall stated he doesn't think the pastors knew anything about the owners of the company or what they were doing. He further stated it would give the owners an opportunity to share and they're looking to invest one million plus dollars into the project.

Mr. Harvey stated something must be done before it comes back to agenda, but council hasn't defined what that something looks like. He noted an introduction to an ordinance is a public advertisement.

Mr. Marshall stated they are giving the owners an opportunity to go out and share with the community.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know how soon it should come back for introduction.

Ms. Woods reiterated the council should Passover the item and she wanted to know if it can be passed over until the October meeting.

Mr. Marshall seconded the motion to Passover until the first council meeting in October.

Mr. Harvey said the council hasn't informed the community on what they will do or what they have discussed in this meeting.

Ms. Woods stated she thinks council should just vote yes or no.

Mrs. Ezernack and Mr. Marshall informed Mr. Harvey the owners of the company will inform the community however they see fit.

Mr. Harvey said if council is going to Passover, they should state what they want done.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if there will be a community meeting.

Mr. Montgomery said he can coordinate with Pastor Hunt, and they can schedule a business meeting with the community.

Mrs. Ezernack stated she will not be at the first meeting in October but would like to hear the community's response. She wanted to know could it be Passed over until the last meeting in October.

Ms. Woods amended her motion to Passover until the last meeting in October and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Mr. Michael Castor, 1803 Booth Street, said he went to a Vista meeting on last Thursday and he lives on the Southside. He said he has family in the Booker T. area, and they came to support but were disrespected by some of the Mayor's administration. He said that's not right. He stated the Mayor had a meeting with him not long ago on how they can get things done but the Mayor's staff can't disrespect them.

(2.) Mr. James Tatum, Vice President Local #1160, said on August 30th after he was coming back from lunch to board his unit, he received a call from his wife, and she stated she slipped and fell. He stated he immediately informed his supervisor that he had an emergency. He further stated his supervisor informed him to notify the transit system general manager but at that time they had no one to relieve him. He said the supervisor told him he must take the unit out and he did, but normally in these situations they have someone come out and relieve you. He said with the state of mind he was in, worried about his wife, it could have been dangerous to the passengers and the public. He noted management doesn't have a plan for situations like this but back in the day they did. He further noted arriving back to the terminal the safety manager and supervisor were conversating, but no one came out to relieve him. He said the disrespect that was shown to him was unfair and someone should have relieved him so he could go be with his wife.

(3.) Mr. Eugene Payne, Green Street, echoed Mr. Tatum remarks regarding the Monroe Transit System management and he said he has commented on the same thing about the management company. He said they are paid a great deal of money, taxpayers' money, to do a lousy job in his opinion. He said the Monroe Transit Management should be investigated and they should be able to answer question he has had since last month's council meeting. He noted he gave his information to the administration and never was contacted. He further noted three minutes is not enough time to explain the situations going on with the Monroe Transit Management Company and in his opinion, this is the worst system in the State of Louisiana.

(4.) Mr. Christopher Orange Sr. said he is a resident in Mrs. Ezernack's District (2), but he is disappointed that no one recognized September 13th is National Bald is Beautiful Day. He stated he noticed there was a Broadband Survey and he wanted everyone to know the importance of everyone having access to broadband. He said he reached out to his representative Mrs. Ezernack via email, and she made sure she directed him to the correct people. He further stated the Governor came down and was talking about some of the money that is going to underserved communities such as Lake Providence, but Starlink has petition to stop access to broadband. He said it is very important that the community has access to resources and some things are communicated through these resources. On another note, Mr. Orange stated he may have left a bad taste in someone's mouth from the Southside Economic District, but he is behind SEDD as well.

(5.) Ms. Kenya Roberson, Executive Director of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, stated she started this journey almost a year ago and on October 29th the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce will be one year strong. She said they have truly made some strides in their endeavors, and she is asking the Mayor and all of the City Council members to be present to represent every district on October 29th at the Monroe Civic Center. She further stated they have a virtual seminar with Kenyatta Sparks and anyone who would like to participate is welcome, it will be September 24th. She said they will also have a nonprofit "Sip the Tea" for nonprofit organizations on Saturday October 8, 2022.

(6.) Ms. Marie Brown, 1002 South 5th Street, said she wanted the Mayor to notice the benches for the bus stops sitting in the rain, heat, and there is no sheds for the passengers. She noted she doesn't know how many members on the council talked about the water bills being high, but nothing is being done. She further noted council members spoke about it doing their campaigns and residents bills are constantly going up.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Harvey and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Kema Dawson
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary