

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
April 23, 2024
6:00 p.m.

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

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

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

There was absent: Mr. Harvey & Ms. Woods

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

The Invocation was led by Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked everyone for sharing their evening with the City Council.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Marshall said good evening, and he stated he had no announcements at this time.

Mrs. Dawson said good evening, and she thanked everyone for attending the City Council meeting.

Mayor Friday Ellis stated for the last couple of days the City had updates from our delegation in Washington. He said yesterday was Senator John Neely Kennedy and today was Congresswoman Julia Letlow for the Monroe Chamber of Commerce Congressional Update Luncheon. He further stated the luncheon was for them to lay out their goals, priorities, talk to the City about what is going on in Washington, and most importantly about money. He noted the City has a \$25 million RAISE grant application (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) to reconstruct the South 2nd corridor with protected sidewalks, biking, hiking, walking, transit, beautification, and lighting. He said the City scored highly favorable for the first round of the application which is very rare and there are drainage projects happening throughout the City. He said the City put their projects in front of the delegation and as a group of elected officials throughout the Parish to tell them what the needs and wants are as a community. He said the City looks forward to more trips and conversations to talk about bringing dollars back home. He said Congresswoman Letlow has been a great friend to Monroe with the Texas Standifer trunk line funding, the Calypso Street pump station funding, and expansion of small business incubator at the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) funding. He noted it is always good to work with the Chamber and hear from young professionals because they are the future. He said it is always fun to get in front of young professionals to hear from them and encourage them to get active in their community. He further noted that young professionals just want to know where to plug in and once plugged into the community the chances of them staying is much greater. On another note, the Mayor said Leadership Ouachita is another group of young professionals for organizations to put people in leadership roles to learn more about the Parish, businesses, and nonprofits. He stated it was a good opportunity for elected officials and he was joined by Councilwoman Dawson and Councilman Harvey. He further stated the topic was Politics in the City and they talked about how the Council, the Mayor, and the Administration work together to achieve the goals inside each community. He said Love the Boot Week dates are all about keeping a clean community working together with Ouachita Green and other leaders for litter pick up. He said clean communities are always important to build healthy communities. Next the Mayor invited friends from the LOPA to talk about their mission and introduced Ms. Roslyn Downs with the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency.

Ms. Roslyn T. Downs, LOPA, stated she was invited by the local Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency, and she said she had the pleasure of meeting the community educators. She said she has been blessed to be able to share her story. She said as we all know this month is set aside to bring special attention to organ, eye, and tissue donation. She further stated she is a recipient of a living donor who happens to be Mr. Shanderic L. Downs, her big brother. She noted organ, eye, and tissue donation is something that either has affected us or it will. She said it may come to your

friend or family member's home and it may even come to yours's. She said on April 1, 2016, this one person's life changed, and she said in reality it was a domino effect of not just her life but the lives of those around her. She further noted her son who was two at the time, her siblings, her parents, and her friends were all affected by her diagnosis of an autoimmune disease and the need for a liver transplant. She stated she was told she would need a transplant within a year but unfortunately there aren't enough donors, and she would be on the list for five to six years. She said God placed at that moment, one desire in the heart of her big brother to give her over 60% of his liver. She said he was a father of two young kids with one on the way and he had a wife, but he had one simple desire to keep his little sister around a little while longer. She said one statement, one major life event, one day, or one time can literally change the trajectory of your life. She said you take that time to educate yourself and see how vital your voice can be. She noted as a donor you have the power to save up to eight lives and the power to change or improve the quality of life for 75 more. She further noted instead of choosing to be reactive to news that we receive about a health diagnosis or life issue in general; she implore you to be proactive about your health. She said there is power in numbers and prayer. She said she knows she stands on the prayers of others and if you can't take away anything from this moment just remember to be kind, to be unselfish, and to pray for yourself. She stated love is action and you decide what that act will look like for you. She said you decide how you will help somebody and what legacy you will create. She said organs don't go to heaven, souls do, and you don't need that where you're going; so why not help somebody to live longer. She further stated even if it's not helping them live longer but helping them improve the quality of their life. She said pledge to simply be kind, whatever that looks like for you, and educate yourself about the importance of donations.

Mayor Ellis presented Ms. Roslyn Downs and the Louisiana Procurement Agency with a proclamation to recognize the vital work and contributions of the LOPA. He said their dedication to facilitating organ and tissue donation across our communities is commendable and deeply appreciated. He noted the LOPA's commitment to saving lives through the procurement and transplantation of organs and tissues serves as a beacon of hope for those in need of life saving treatment. He said this month-long observance serves as a reminder of the profound impact that organ and tissue donation can have on individuals, families, and communities. He stated on behalf of the Monroe City Council and the citizens of Monroe to express our deepest gratitude to the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency for their unwavering dedication to saving and enhancing lives. Mayor Ellis proclaimed the month of April in the City of Monroe as well as national, "National Donate Life Month."

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson and seconded by Mr. Marshall, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of April 23, 2024, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

1. 2509 Gordon Ave. (D4) (Owners – David & Madlyn Murrell) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 90 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 the property owner has done work on this structure but it is still dilapidated. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the owner 60 days to bring the structure into compliance. He said they had a brief discussion, and the owner was going to use it as an outreach place, and he would like to give him the opportunity if he's still interested.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if Mr. Murrell would like to share the progress he has made and what he has planned for the structure.

Mr. David Murrell stated they are trying to get the structure renovated to make the building into a ministry. He said there were some setbacks and when the storm came it did a lot of damage to the back part of the roof. He said he didn't know until he removed the front part and he thought someone ran into the building. He noted the neighbors tree fell on the structure and caused damage to the front of the roof. He further noted they are trying to get things together for someone to look at the building to give them a price for the renovations.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if Mr. James and Mr. Murrell are in contact with each other.

Mr. James and Mr. Murrell stated yes.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this property is in D4.

Mr. Marshall wanted to clarify that Mr. Murrell is waiting on a quote.

Mr. Murrell said yes, they are trying to find someone who will do the work to get the building into compliance, and it's mostly roof damage from the storm. He said it was unfortunate that the tree fell on the front part, and they didn't have as much damage until the tree fell on it.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if between time Mr. Murrell could get the structure to a place where its cleaned up.

Mr. Murrell said yes, they can get that done.

Mr. Marshall motion to condemn the property giving the owner 90 days to bring the structure up to code or remove the structure and any obnoxious growth further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Marshall stated Mr. Murrell should continue to work with Mr. James with process and any questions he may have as he moves forward.

2. 906 Burroughs St. (D5) (Owner – Nancy Del Major) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 90 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.)

Mr. James stated he has been in contact with the property owner and their plan is to demolish the structure. They are asking that the property to be condemned, giving the owner 90 days to bring the structure into compliance or demolish the structure.

Mrs. Dawson motion to condemn the property giving the owner 90 days to demolish the structure get rid of all obnoxious growth and debris further providing with respect thereto.

3. 4004 Lee Ave. (D4) (Curatorship - Owner – MGB Properties LA LLC) c/o Renita S. Benjamin Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack 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.)

Mr. James stated this property burned over a year ago and it is an unsafe structure. They are asking that the property be condemned.

Mr. Marshall motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring the structure up to code or remove the structure and obnoxious growth and debris further providing with respect thereto.

4. 4112 Ponder St. (D3) (Curatorship – Owner – 1st Lady Properties LLC) c/o Morgan Livingston, Agent (1st Lady Properties LLC) c/o Charlon Brown Perkins, Manager. Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 90 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.)

Mr. James stated he has had contact with the property owner, and this is another refurbished property that they're working on. He said they have put windows in, but they have been broken out. They are asking for the property to be condemned, giving the owner 90 days to bring the property back into compliance.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is definitely Ms. Woods's district. She motion to condemn the property giving the owner 90 days to bring the structure into compliance or demolish the structure and remove the obnoxious growth and debris.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8700 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to El Paso Mexican Grill (Cinco De Mayo) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8701 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to Damian Harris for an event (R&B on the Ouachita at the RiverMarket) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8702 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the ACE Development of NELA for event (BrewFest at the Forsythe Boat Dock first pavilion area 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:

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider an Application by Sukhwinder Singh dba Forsythe Travel Plaza, 2221 Forsythe Ave., Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2024 Class B 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.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider an Application by Anothony Merrells dba Bourbon Car and Lounge, 5203 DeSiard St., Monroe LA 71203 for a New 2024 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)

Mrs. Dawson thanked Mr. Anothony Merrells for wanting to put another business in the City of Monroe.

Mr. Merrells stated he really appreciated the City Council.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the Monroe Regional Airport Taxiway Delta Construction Phase 1 Project. The estimated cost of construction is \$13,500,000.00 with a DBE Goal of 8.31%. The source of funds is FAA Funds. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for a new Class "A" Pumper Apparatus. The cost of the new equipment is estimated to be \$500,000.00. The funding for this item will come from the Fire Department's Capital Fund. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8703 approving Change Order No. Thirteen (13) for the Water Treatment Plant Renovation and Expansion Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Passover a Resolution accepting as substantially complete work done by Benchmark Construction Group of Louisiana, LLC for the Saul Adler Recreation Center Parking Lot Improvements Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8704 approving Change Order No. One (1) for the Ruffin Drive-Water Distribution System

Improvements Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8705 accepting as substantially complete work done by Amethyst Construction, Inc for the North 6th Street Improvements (Louisville Ave. to Stubbs Ave.) Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

ADD-ON: Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to add to the agenda item (e) Resolution approving Change Order No. One (1) for the Banquet Hall Air Handling Unit Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8706 approving Change Order No. One (1) for the Banquet Hall Air Handling Unit Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Marshall wanted to know the explanation for the Change Order.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, stated this is for the Banquet hall air handling project at the Civic Center which is roughly a \$618,000.00 project. He said once the contractor got in there it was determined there were some apparatus equipment that needed to be changed out. He said it is roughly a \$72,000.00 change for isolation valves and pumps and so forth. He said it is a very limited workspace within these areas and this is one in order to properly attach and for the equipment to work properly.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if there is a timeline for when these parts have to be ordered and if there will be a delay.

Mr. McCallister stated there are varying lead times but the overall project the City is anticipating to be done mid-July.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a lease between the City of Monroe and Oakwell Commuter Rail LLC at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Charles Butcher, Airport Director, stated the City is excited about getting a restaurant, bar, and gift shop at Monroe Regional Airport. He said the Mayor asked him a couple times when the airport would get this, and he has been working on it. He said the CEO of the company will fly in next time to be able to answer questions for the Council.

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

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.
Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,215 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Lonnie Hudson, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 20, Square 2, Blanks Addition, Ouachita Parish, 824 Marx St., District 5, Monroe, La, by adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 22, 2018, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.
Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,216 adopt an Ordinance revoking a portion of Grammont Street from South Stanley Avenue to its dead end and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.
Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,217 adopt an Ordinance amending and supplementing the City of Monroe Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2023-2024 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Ms. Johnnie Thomas, 414 South 8th Street, stated her car was stolen last month out of her driveway and she said Monroe Police were very good. She said Officer Paige came out to talk to her that morning and that afternoon they had found her car. On another note, she said the election is over except for the runoff and she said there are still too many signs out. She noted she doesn't think the City should have to pick them up because they didn't put them out. She said they need to be removed and the people that were running should make that happen. She noted on Monday morning the City workers were mowing around City Hall and she thinks that should be done on a Thursday or Friday because there are people coming through. She said she doesn't know what can be done for them to change the date. Lastly, she said it looks terrible over by the Grand Plaza and the grass is tall.

Mayor Ellis stated the City had a month of rain and the mowing crews are getting caught back up, but the City will take her suggestion. He further stated the City always love seeing Ms. Thomas here and participating.

Mrs. Ezernack said she is sorry that happen to Mrs. Thomas's car and she is glad Monroe Police found it for her quickly.

(2.) Mr. Mickle Elliot, 3500 Polk Street, thanked the Mayor for putting up a flag in front of the recreation center. He said every day he gets up and he sees the torn flag and he didn't think the City cared about the military. He said he was getting ready to come again but he looked up and saw the change.

Mayor Ellis wanted to know if Mr. Elliot was in the army.

Mr. Elliot said yes sir.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Elliot for his service, and he stated he often buys flags for schools. He said he would give Mr. Elliot his cell phone number and any time he sees a flag that needs to be replaced he will replace it.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Elliot for coming out to give a very nice comment.

The being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Marshall and it was seconded by Mrs. Dawson.

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

For extended details on the council meeting please call the Council Clerk Monday-Friday at 318-329-2252 to schedule an appointment to listen to the minute recording.