

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
July 25, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

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

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

There was absent: Mr. Harvey

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Woods said good evening and thanked everyone for coming to the Council meeting. She stated she wanted to make sure everybody knows about the medical assistance program that will be coming to the City of Monroe. She said the National Guard will come to the City to perform all kinds of test and the information is on the City's website.

Mr. DJ Fortenberry, Community Relations Liaison, stated the City will be hosting a Medical IRT (Innovative Readiness Training) and all four branches of government will be in Monroe to give no cost medical care to everyone that comes to the Civic Center from August 4<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> from 8am until 4pm. He further stated the program will also run on Sundays from 1pm until 4pm. He said they will offer one time dental services, eye exams, wellness checks, and mental health checks with about two hundred military personnel that will be in the community from all over the country for 14 days. He noted it is a first come, first served and there are no scheduled appointments, and it will also be at the West Monroe Convention Center, but the Monroe Civic Center will be a larger operation.

Ms. Woods said if anyone thinks they need any of those services to please come out and take advantage of it because it is in our community and it is totally free. She thanked Mr. Sean Benton, Water System Manager, and Mr. Marvin Cherry for the amazing job they had done. She said she appreciates them being out in the community answering questions and trying to help them deal with the overgrowth of grass. On another note, she said she would like to talk to anyone out there that knows about anyone that is vandalizing the Ester Gallo Community Garden. She stated the garden is there for the citizens and residents of that community. She said they are fine with people wanting to use some of the vegetables but to openly vandalize it, it is unacceptable. She further stated she wants everyone to know they will have patrol out there and if you are seen doing it, they will get you. She said they have seeds, all the gardening tools, and everything people need to be successful but it's not fair to come out and take something that doesn't belong to you. She noted this is a mild warning and she will request additional patrol to be in that area. She said the garden is there for the convenience of the community and it is not there to make the people that want to participate afraid.

Mr. Marshall welcomed everyone to the Council meeting, and he thanked everyone for their concerns and prayers in regard to his wife. He said she was dealing with some medical issues, and she is doing a lot better. He said there are a couple of things going on in the community such as the Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA) are having a summer IT workshop teaching kids about technology and career development as it applies to data processing. He said Ms. Essie (EJ) Maxwell, Founder of EJMax Solutions LLC, is spearheading the project all week at the Emily P. Robinson Recreation Center from 8:30am until about 4pm. He said they have laptops, games, drones, and they will be teaching a little bit of everything this week. He noted this is a solution to resolve some of the issues in the community as far as kids having a direction on what career path they would like to take. He further noted these are things they can do without a college degree, and he is excited about it. He said Omega Psi Phi, Monroe Black Chamber, and The B Law Firm are hosting a school supply drive at Mount Zion August 12<sup>th</sup> from 8am until 12pm and the Region 8 Community Outreach are holding a school supply drive on August 12<sup>th</sup> from 10am until 2pm at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens and zoo pavilion. He noted the Art Crawl is on August 3<sup>rd</sup> Downtown at Art Alley starting from 5pm until 9pm and he said if your not doing anything on

that day to go out and look at some of the exciting arts and crafts. He further noted Monroe City Academy League has begun their fall registration and if you know any kids looking to play sports reach out to Mr. Tyree Hollins and Mr. Tre Hunter. He said they also have websites and social media access, and they are also looking for sponsorships.

Mrs. Dawson said she wanted to inform everyone the basketball murals are in the process of being painted at the Powell Recreation Center and Charles Johnson playground. She said she is hoping everyone will notice they have been barricaded off because they were having issues with people driving on the murals while they were being primed. She said if you see the barricades please do not drive on the murals while they are being painted. She said they want to make sure they get the murals painted fast for the children to enjoy once they are completed.

Mrs. Ezernack stated Mayor Friday Ellis is not able to be here this evening, but he wanted to introduce Mrs. Emily Stogner the new Media Relations Director for the City of Monroe.

Mrs. Emily Stogner, Media Relations Director, said she grew up in Ruston, LA but she has been here in Monroe living with her family. She said she is coming from experience, and she worked with the Ruston-Lincoln Convention & Visitors Bureau. She said she is really excited, and she has grown to love this community over the past seven years just being able to invest more time and energy to grow in the City.

Mrs. Ezernack stated the City is excited to have her as well.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Woods the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of July 11, 2023, were unanimously approved. (Mr. Marshall abstain he was not present last meeting.) (There were no public comments.)

#### PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnation was removed from the agenda:

(1.) 4000 ½ Halsell Street (D3) (Owners – Kenneth Wimberly, et al) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove this item.

Mr. Michael Wimberly, Covington, GA, stated he didn't know the property was in the condition that it is in now. He said he is asking the Council to at least give him 60 days to straighten everything out.

Mrs. Ezernack advised Mr. Wimberly to speak with Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tommy James. She said she thinks there was some confusion about the address and that is why the Council is removing the item from the agenda. She said if Mr. Wimberly speaks with Mr. James to inform him of his plans then it will be brought back before the Council at the next meeting.

#### ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8547 accepting the RFP Response of Manchac Consulting Group, Inc. to provide external professional management services for the Water Pollution Control Center and the Wastewater Collection & Transmission System and further authorizing an authorized city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if this is a continuation of the project has been underway for some time.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, said yes.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8548 accepting the RFP Response of Manchac Consulting Group, Inc. to provide external professional management services for the Water Pollution Control Center and the Wastewater Collection & Transmission System and further authorizing an authorized city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Sean Benton, Water System Manager, for answering the Council's questions and informing them about this project.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution

No. 8549 authorizing an authorized city representative to purchase equipment for the Monroe Regional Airport off state contract and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Consider an Application by Christopher Sledge dba Parlor 5, 428 DeSiard St., Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2023 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.)

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if Mr. Christopher Sledge was present.

Mr. Marshall said Mr. Sledge is not here.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Sledge for investing in our community.

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider request from Grotto Foods Group for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of this location (1030 North 6th Street) to have off-premises alcohol beverage sales in the B-2 (Neighborhood Business District). The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows this as a Major Conditional Use in the B-2 (Neighborhood Business District). Major Conditional Uses are those uses that require another level of approval; therefore, this request comes before the City Council for their approval in addition to that of the Planning Commission. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is recommended for acceptance by the Planning and Zoning Board. She said there was some confusion in the packet, but she thinks the Council have received another memo from Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning and Urban Development.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8550 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis, to approve and submit the City of Monroe's FY 2023 Annual Action Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Project No. B-23-MC-22-0005 in the amount of \$736,229 and the HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) Program Project No. M-23-MC-22-0206 in the amount of \$363,998 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning and Urban Development, said it is that time of the year again where they meet with the public, learn priorities, and put together an annual action plan. She said the total allocation for the Community Development Block Grant is \$736,299 which is a little less than last year. She said the CDBG dollars are designed to help the City address our low to moderate income and every year they put together a plan. She stated the five year consolidated plan has to be looked at every year to make sure the priorities the City decides to invest in are consistent with the plan and they start with housing. On another note, she said they are taking applications for the LEAD program on August 5<sup>th</sup> and it's a major investment in our community. She said they have applied for the grant and if awarded to them it will allow them to continue with the program. She said the program requires a match that's why they are highlighting it again in the plan because they are using CDBG dollars to match the Lead hazard control dollars as required. She noted two community agencies Counseling on Aging and Goodwill request and submitted all required documentation for funding. She said they spent time walking through the rules prior to the application process. She said there are activities the City will partake on such as requesting funds through Community Affairs to fund defibrillators at the Community Centers. She stated they hope to replicate the housing expo and housing is a major component of what we do educating the public, partnering with local banks, and developers. On a different note, she said they also want to spend time with nonprofit organizations and put together a series of workshops to work with small nonprofits to teach them how to compete applications and what documentations are needed in order to secure funding. She said as far housing their plan is to focus on Our Home funds for reconstruction and repair substandard housing. She introduced Ms. Tisa Dhaliwal, Director of Community Development.

Mrs. Ezernack said once again Ms. Hill has wild the Council with all these wonderful programs that she presents and being able to work with the citizens to enact the plan and show wonderful results. She thanked Ms. Hill for all their hard work, and she said the City appreciates her.

Ms. Woods thanked Ms. Hill and she stated her, and her team do an amazing job in the community, and it has not gone unnoticed.

Mayor's office:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8551 approving and authorizing an Agreement for local services by and between the City of Monroe and the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Roy Heatherly, Monroe Chamber of Commerce, welcomed Mrs. Stogner and Ms. Dhaliwal to the City of Monroe. He noted on behalf of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce board and all the members thanked the City and He said they are honored to have this partnership with the City. He said he is happy to answer any questions the Council may have or any suggestions.

Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Heatherly for the energy he brings, and she said it is a certain amount of energy and light he brings to make it fun. She thanked him for all the good work and hard work the Chamber of Commerce is doing in the City.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8552 authorizing a Cooperative Agreement between the City of Monroe and the LSU AgCenter related to Louisiana Cooperative Extension Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8553 approving a Maintenance Agreement between the City of Monroe and the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development relative to mowing and litter pickup within the limits of the City of Monroe, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8554 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, LLC for Monroe Potable Water Storage Tank Modification, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8555 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, LLC for High Service Control Vault Repairs, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No.8556 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Close Out Change Order No. Five (5) for the Texas/Standifer Trunk Sewer Emergency Repair Project, between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction LLC for a decrease in the contract amount by \$111,358.57 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No.8557 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, LLC for the Texas/Standifer Trunk Sewer Emergency Repair, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, Mr. Kevin Cosby, and Mr. Arthur Holland, Project Manager, he said they meet up on these sites and a lot of people don't see all the work they put in behind the scenes. He thanked them for their corporation and urgency in those matters. He thanked Congresswoman Julia Letlow and Senator Katrina Jackson for their contribution to these projects as well.

(e) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No.8558 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Amendment No. One (1) to the Professional Services Agreement between the City of Monroe and Arcadis U.S., Inc. related to

the Texas Avenue Lift Station to Standifer Street Lift Station, Gravity Sanitary Sewer Main Repair/Rehabilitation and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted Mr. Morgan McCallister to speak about this item for the sake of people listening at home for them to understand this is an ongoing project.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, noted the Phase 1 covered approximately 9,200 linear feet of a major trunk line serving the City of Monroe. He said this project is a continuation of what the City is calling Phase 2 which includes cleaning, cctving, engineering evaluation, point repairs, and sliplining of the entire section. He said they looked at Phase 1, ran some numbers, met with engineering, and cut back by holding off on sliplining. He further noted they are looking at roughly 3 million dollars for Phase 2 and the cleaning and components must be done but they are looking into some funding. He reiterated that because the City cut the sliplining out to save roughly 6 million dollars they are not wasting 3million that was put back. He said the cleaning aspect of Phase 1 removed 300 tons of debris and it was massive undertaking that was successful.

Ms. Woods said she knows it is a major undertaking and somebody has to do it.

Mr. McCallister said yes and it's all underground, so you can't see the finished product.

Ms. Woods said yes it's underground and you can't see the finished product, but you can definitely feel it if its not done.

#### INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing a designated city representative to execute a lease between the City of Monroe and Selman Hangar, L.L.C. and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Marshall and approved to Introduce an Ordinance to amend the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and providing further with respect thereto – Applicant – City of Monroe/Transit (P&Z) (Ms. Woods nay)

Mr. Eugene Payne, 1705 Reed Street, wanted to know why Transit is apart of this Ordinance.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said this Ordinance is to rezone the area to a B3 District for the new transit terminal. She said the City Council approved for the City to purchase property from the police jury for a new transit terminal.

Mr. Payne wanted to know why the Ordinance needs to be amended.

Mrs. Ezernack noted it is amending the map to included this to be a B3 zoning.

Mr. Morgan McCallister stated the current property the City is acquiring from the Parish is section C and in order to clean the map up the City has to rezone section C to have consistent zoning in B3. He said ultimately the City will be left with two lots the Monroe Transit Terminal and the other remaining portion that the health unit is already situated on.

Mr. Payne wanted to know why this was not cleaned up before it was brought to the Council.

Mr. McCallister said it is just order of operation and it was not time to rezone before the purchase of the property.

(Mrs. Dawson leaves Council meeting at 6:41pm)

Ms. Ellen Hill, Director Planning and Zoning, said they use the word amendment because the map is changing, and the City is going from one zone to another. She said the Council has to approve a map amendment, but it goes to the Planning Commission first.

Mr. Payne said the project has been on the table for years and why now.

Mrs. Sturdivant stated the City hasn't purchased the property yet. She said the police jury approved and there are a lot of moving parts and once everything is finalized the City will then close on the property.

Mr. Payne wanted to know why the property was even considered.

Mrs. Sturdivant said the City decided after multiple reviews and sites that was the best option and the Council approved that as well.

Mr. Payne said the original plan already had property.

Mrs. Sturdivant said that is correct, but the property owner could not meet on a purchase price. She said by law the City can't pay more than appraised value therefore the City can not proceed with the purchase, so they shifted it down some.

Mr. Payne said there are many things going on that the public doesn't understand and there is a lot of money to be spent on these projects. He said he is curious on why this project jumped up and now the Council is amending a zoning for the particular property.

Mrs. Ezernack noted she can speak to that because this is what she does but she did not have anything to do with this particular project. She said when you purchase a piece of property you have a due diligence period and that is when you make sure your zoning is correct. She said to make sure it does not have environmental issues, correct legal description, get surveys, and all kinds of information and if some of those reports do not come back as you wish you don't purchase the property. She further noted this is nothing that is out of order, and it happens often in Planning and Zoning, people purchase property amending the zoning map to change the zoning of a particular site.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know could the Transit Terminal be built on the current zoning.

Mrs. Ezernack said if the City meets the criteria which they have done.

Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, said the project is popping up because the City finally have all of the pieces of the funding to move on the project.

Mr. Payne said the public is yet to be notified about certain things about Transit.

Mrs. Rowell stated everything has been on the agenda.

Mr. Payne said it's not just what is on the agenda, but the project is suspicious to him. He said he is concerned about what is actually going on and he has questions. He said he curious to know how this project is being handled and who is handling it. He said it is his understanding is management company that was managing Monroe Transit has been sold. He said what is the future of the Monroe Transit system with the City building this multimillion dollar action what would be the citizen's interest.

Mrs. Ezernack stated this particular facility will be long to the City of Monroe and who ever is the management company will not change the ownership interest of that facility and land. She further stated if Mr. Payne has any other questions he can come to the next meeting for final adoption or ask questions to the Legal Department in the meantime.

Mr. Payne noted he has a lot of questions, and he is curious to why this is coming up at this time.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance declaring certain immovable property located on S. 14<sup>th</sup> St. and Orange St., Monroe, La, as no longer being needed for public use, and authorizing the same to be sold to Piney Grove Baptist Church 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:

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,180 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Robin R. Green, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to part of Lot 4, Sq. 62, Layton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition, Frtg 50.36 ft on west side S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., depth of 133.67 ft on south line, depth of 127.86 ft along north line & a rear width of 50 ft, (no situs) S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Ouachita Parish, District 4, Monroe, Louisiana, Parcel #74804, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 30, 2014, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,181 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Robin R. Green, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to part of Lots 2 & 3, Sq. 62, Layton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition, Frtg 75.66 ft on west side S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., depth of 127.86 ft on south line, depth of 118.04 ft. along north line & a rear width of 75 ft, (no situs) S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Ouachita Parish, District 4, Monroe, Louisiana, Parcel #74805, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 30, 2014, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,182 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Hayward Foy, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to Lot 16, Sq. 4, Johnston's 1<sup>st</sup> Addition, 3201 Polk St., Ouachita Parish, District 4, Monroe, Louisiana, Parcel #50522, by adjudication at tax sale dated July 1, 2013, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(d) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,183 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Joey Kedley, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 5, Daisy Sub-Addition of Lots 5 and 6, Block 23, Terminal Heights Addition, Ouachita Parish, 1016 Alabama St., District 4, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 28, 2013, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(e) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,184 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Joey Kedley, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 8, Daisy Terzia's Sub-Addition of Lots 5 and 6, Block 23, Terminal Heights Addition, Ouachita Parish, 1018 Alabama St., District 4, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 10, 2015, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

#### CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION:

(1.) Mr. Gerald Graves stated he lives in the Swartz community but for 53 years he has lived on South 1<sup>st</sup> Street. He said the railroad crossing on Kansas Lane and Millhaven has always been a problem to get across. He said yesterday the train came to a complete stop for 5 minutes and then started again but he timed 45 minutes of stops. He said after 45 minutes of stops he decided to go back out to Highway 80 to get over to the Southside of Monroe. He further stated he talked to Mayor Ellis about this issue and the Mayor mentioned an overpass or underpass in that area. He said he thinks the City needs to get something done because he would think the traffic is just going to get worst if Amtrak is to come through the City.

Mrs. Ezernack said Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, can update Mr. Graves on what is going on with that particular situation.

Mr. Graves said if someone had an emergency even an ambulance couldn't get across and that is the quickest way to get to the hospital from where he lives.

Mrs. Ezernack said she appreciates Mr. Graves bringing this to the Council's attention and Mr. McCallister should be able to update him and maybe bring that issue forward.

Mr. Darian Belton, 3512 Bon Aire, said he would like to inquire if there are any codes or zoning restrictions to cultivate the parkways. He said he believes that is the grass between sidewalks and roads. He said a lot of cities utilize them to beautify the neighborhoods and fight blight by strategically planting and nurturing greenery in those forgotten corners. He said the City can create a tapestry of vibrant colors and a haven of nourishing produce. He said these spaces are often overlooked and underutilized but possess untapped potential to breed life and vitality into urban

landscape. He said such endeavor would not only enhance the aesthetics of our neighborhoods but also foster a deeper sense of community pride engagement. He said neighborhoods with well attended gardens have been shown to experience a decrease in blight, improve property value, and heightened community pride. He said Seattle, WA implemented the Urban Forest Management Plan which included planting fruit trees in public spaces as part of the City's effort to increase the tree canopy cover and provide access to freshly grown fruit for residents. He said utilizing parkways for beautification is an investment in the City's identity and it signals to the world we take pride in our community, lets get growing.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m., upon motion of Ms. Woods and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack  
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley  
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray  
Staff Secretary