

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
November 09, 2021
6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers-City Hall
MINUTES

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date, November 09, 2021, at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

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

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

Council members present for roll call: Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, Mr. Douglas Harvey, Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr., Mrs. Kema Dawson.

Council member (s) absent: NONE.

Chairman Marshall declared a quorum.

The Invocation was done by Reverend A.B. Johnson, Senior Pastor, Rose of Sharon Baptist Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilwoman Woods.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.
2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.
3. Ms. Woods welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting; she thanked Rev. Johnson for the invocation. Ms. Woods commented that her District 3 community meeting has been rescheduled for November 15, 6:00 p.m., Marbles Recreation Center on Renwick Street and invited those who would like to share to attend. She expressed her condolences to the family of Patricia Ann Blackson Roberson, an icon to the community who served the community and she asked prayers for the family. She congratulated the Black Regional Chamber of Commerce on an outstanding inaugural mixer on two weeks ago; it was a phenomenal experience. She acknowledged the President of that organization, Ms. Roberson and thanked her for all that she is doing for the community.
4. Mrs. Dawson thanked those for attending and for listening online. She thanked Ms. Roberson for what she is doing in the community and region, it is much needed. She announced an event, Be Thankful, a Thanksgiving gospel concert to be held at the Civic Center on Sunday at 5:00 p.m. and it is free to the public. She yielded her time to her Pastor, Rev. Tegitra Thomas of First Missionary Baptist Church, Monroe. Rev. Thomas shared information that First Baptist would be donating 75 turkeys to the city, and 15 turkeys would be equally distributed to each Council member for their district constituents.
5. Mayor Ellis thanked Pastor Thomas for the Thanksgiving blessing of the donation; Mayor Ellis commented that he and his executive team had a busy two weeks, they attended several ribbon cuttings throughout the City, including the beautification projects across the City where citizens will now see and continue to see beautification efforts along the 2nd Street underpass, the Plum Street underpass, Forsythe Avenue, Texas Avenue, Lee Avenue and Washington Street beautification projects during the future. He said the beautification project efforts with Entergy will continue; he thanked the city employees for their hard work on the projects and also thanked the City Councilmembers that showed up for the ribbon cuttings. He met with the Sound Diplomacy group that is working with GNO, Greater New Orleans and throughout the State of Louisiana and they are studying municipalities and what cultural tourism and music do to a local economy. The City of Monroe took the Chamber of Commerce's Board of Director's on a bus tour around Monroe where they were able to share current and future projects. He attended Leadership Ouachita's graduation, and there were three City of Monroe employees that graduated, including LyDetera Ross, Meghan Risinger, and Patience Talley, a new generation of leaders within the community that are being cultivated. Mayor Ellis spoke today at the Young Professional's luncheon with Ray Manning and talked with them about the project on tonight's Council agenda for final adoption. He also hosted a Connect Louisiana meeting, discussing broadband initiatives in the North Delta Region; Mayor Ellis announced new city vehicles for different city departments being un-veiled. He spoke at MLK Jr. High school for their Light in the Darkness program speaking to the students about being good citizens and giving back to the community.

He thanked Representative Pat Moore and School board member Betty Cooper for putting together a multi-jurisdictional meeting and action plan on violence in the communities and look forward to the collaboration and participating in it. He thanked MCAL for their work and pouring into the youth.

Council Chairman Marshall welcomed each one present and those watching on social media. He commented about the beautification project of the planting of the magnolia trees throughout the city. The Twin City Corps of Olivier organization are looking for volunteers to assist them with cleanups in the area of the old Holsum bakery. He thanked State Representative Pat Moore and School Board member, Betty Cooper for hosting the wonderful forum there were great ideas and do look forward to having more meetings in the future related to gun violence control and saving the youth. Mr. Marshall said there is a lot to be done and it will take parents, coaches, teachers, leaders, pastors and that everyone has to come to the table and be consistent about getting things done.

Upon a motion of Mrs. Dawson and a second by Mr. Harvey, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of October 26, 2021, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 1007 South 5th Street (D4) (Peoples' Loan Service, Inc, James D. Wesley; Jerry B Wesley; James D and Jerry B Wesley) (Non-curator - OPPJ) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved for property to be condemned and property owner to be given 30 days or December 10, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or to demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments).

Comments: PowerPoint slides of pictorial evidence for the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Tommy James; he recommended condemnation and 30 days. Mr. Marshall said he did go by and was familiar with the dilapidated structure.

2. 3204 Jackson Street (D4) (Reginald Charles Wilson) (There were no public comments). Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved for property to be condemned and property owner to be given 60 days or January 10, 2022, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or to demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments).

Comments: PowerPoint slides of pictorial evidence for the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Tommy James; he recommended condemnation and 60 days. Mr. Marshall said he did go by and was familiar with the dilapidated structure.

3. 212 Moore Street (D4) (Tommy Lenard) (Non-curator- OPPJ) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved for property to be condemned and property owner to be given 30 days or December 10, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or to demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments).

Comments: PowerPoint slides of pictorial evidence for the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Tommy James; he recommended condemnation and 30 days. Mr. Marshall said he did go by to look at the structure and said that you could barely see the structure.

Brandon Creekbaum, Assistant City Attorney, commented to Chairman Marshall that it is not moving to demolish it within 30 days, the property owner has 30 days to come into compliance or it will be put on the demolition list.

Mayor Ellis thanked Tommy James for what he is doing and also Ellen Hill; it is refreshing to know that a proactive approach is being taken on blighted properties; he thanked them for their attention.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment NONE.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8105, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (Exhibition Reception and Curator’s Talk for Kogyo Japanese Theatre Woodblock Prints) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Administration: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider fourteen (14) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider thirteen (13) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved.

Comments: Ms. Kenya Roberson, inquired as to which businesses where the applications for Mr. Harvey commented that the Council packet information can be found online each Thursday prior to the Council’s meeting.

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class E Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments).

(d) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class D Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved.

Comments: Mrs. Vickie Krutzer, citizen, inquired about the agenda item alcoholic permit class.

(e) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Consider one (1) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class G Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments).

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8106, authorizing a city representative to execute Change Order Number 1, between the City of Monroe and Bright Construction for an increase of \$12,310.00 to the contract cost of said Housing Rehabilitation Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mrs. Ezernack asked if the increase was due to them finding additional items once they got started. Mrs. Downs said that was correct.

Legal Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8107, authorizing the director of administration to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Greater River Oaks Garden Club for the construction/erection of a sign denoting “River Oaks” on a city servitude at the Deborah Drive/Forsythe Avenue entrance of River Oaks Subdivision and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Woods inquired about the agenda item. Mr. Creekbaum commented that the garden club is wanting to put a sign at the entrance of River Oaks located at the city’s servitude; a cooperative endeavor agreement allowed the garden club to erect a sign within the servitude; they will be one hundred percent responsible for erecting and maintaining the sign, and they recognize that the city has obligations as it relates to utility work that may have to be done in that location.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8108, authorizing a city representative to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with LSU Ag Center and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Marshall thanked the City and LSU Ag, Kerry Heafner to assist with the community garden project beginning in District 5; trying to bring life to the community and looking at different ways to remove the "food deserts", and to give kids a life skill training and is excited for the efforts being made and look forward to it coming to fruition.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8109, adopting the finding of the Environment Audit by the Department of Environmental Quality for the State of Louisiana and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: NONE.

Police Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8110, authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to sign and accept a Louisiana Highway Safety Enforcement Commission Grant for the 2022 fiscal year grant and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Fire Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8111, authorizing an authorized city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) to the Centurylink Drive Bridge Contract between the City of Monroe and Louisiana Bridge, Inc. for an increase of \$12,228.00 in the contract amount and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8112, authorizing the director of administration to enter into and execute Task Order #3 between the City of Monroe and S. E. Huey Co. for the Benoit Recreation Center Parking Lot Improvement Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mrs. Dawson commented that she was excited about the project and that it has been needed at Benoit Recreation Center for a very long time.

BREAK IF NEEDED: NONE.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the exchange of property between the City of Monroe and Robert Kendell Stone and Cynthia Grace Bennett Stone pursuant to La. R. S. 33:4712 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mrs. Ezernack commented this item was to improve the drainage in the area; Mr. Creekbaum commented that it is being done in connection with the I-20 Board, exchanging a 50 ft. parcel of land for another 50 ft. parcel of land to widen the ditch to improve drainage.

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

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

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,087, approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the International Union of Operating Engineers, AFL-CIO, Local 407 and further providing with respect thereto. (Public Wks-WTP) (There were no public comments).

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing:

1. MPD Sergeant Craig Honeycutt, the Patrol Sergeant for Team B and Sergeant and Arms for the MPD Union Local No. 81, spoke regarding the contract agreement; he commented about the current condition of the state of the MPD related to the manpower and it has taken the department a long time to get to this state. He explained the manpower shortage and coming up with innovative ways to reduce calls, and there are non-emergency calls that they don't take anymore and there are calls that they take over the phone due to the workload because of manpower issues. He commented that several employees are filling in the slots, working their shifts and then filling in for others, and a 50,60,70 hour work week is not uncommon, especially in Patrol. They have several employees that are out, recovering from surgeries, some are on administrative leave. They do have dedicated officers that are working with shoulder issues, knee issues, and an officer is working with a broken tailbone right now and they know that MPD is shorthanded, and they want to be there for the fellow officers, and the citizens. He commented they are right now at 55,000 calls of service and will probably be at 60,000 before the end of 2021. He explained the scenario of employees not being able to take days off due to manpower issues and they have to be there otherwise will be considered AWOL. He commented that they didn't get to this point and it's not the current Mayor's fault because he is working to correct the issue; it is not Chief Zordan's fault because he has done everything they have asked him to do; he has done things to boost morale, and believe everyone understands that it has gone beyond boosting morale, something else must be done; they can't retain people and the Chief will hire eight people and lose nine or ten for various reasons. He asked how did they get in this position, saying that the men and women of the police department in his opinion were not a priority; he said ten years ago there was a vote, the union body of the Monroe police department voted, there was a raise given and that was the last time the men and women got a raise besides the two percent that's every year; he said with the incentives that were taken away, that men and women weren't coming to their departments, they are losing people to other departments because they have better incentives, better pay. He said they aren't competitive with other departments, and this is something that Chief Zordan realized, and they had to act and one of the things not helping is the defund the police rhetoric. He commented that someone at a council meeting stated that we shouldn't judge all police because of the act of one bad apple, does it make all of them bad apples. He commented that just as people don't want to be judged by the color of their skin, that police officers don't want to be judged by the color of their uniform, but as individual actions and words. He understands they have support in Monroe. He commented that we all need one another and for the city to maintain the vision of OneRoe, that the city needs to take steps and what's going on tonight, took ten years to get here and to get to the vision, there would need to be a fully manned functional diverse department and it is necessary and do believe that the journey needs to start tonight. When he joined the union board it was his intention along with Sgt. Andley, Pres. Of Union and Det. Chris Turner, V.P. to make the department better or leave it better than they found it, and this is what was told to Mayor Ellis when he first took office. He commented three months ago, the board realized the condition of MPD and what the future looked like for the police department with attrition and others leaving and met with the Mayor, Mrs. Sturdivant, Chief Zordan and others and explained to them the gravity of the situation being severe; he commented that it would get worse, and they wouldn't have much of a police department in the next couple of years. He said the spirit of the contract is to raise up the department, help attract, hire, and attain employees, so that they can build a better department. If the contract is adopted, the City of Monroe can take the lead and set the example for other local agencies, cities, the State, as well as other States and cities and the one's that are choosing to defund the police and not support the police that are now finding out that is not the solution to the problem and now, they are panicking and

scrambling for police officers. Sergeant Honeycutt thanked Mayor Ellis, Chief Zordan, and Mrs. Sturdivant for their sincere efforts at negotiating the contract; he believes this is the first time that the City has ever acted in good faith with Mayor Ellis' leadership in getting the contract done and improving the Monroe Police Department; there are stipulations in the contract that they are not all happy with but do believe it's enough and it did pass the Union body 122-16 was the final vote. He thanked the City Council for allowing them to speak tonight and asked them for the consideration of the adoption of the contract. He thanked the citizens of Monroe for their support.

2. Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Honeycutt for coming and explaining it to everyone in such a calm manner and hopes that the citizens at home listened to the words and realize the treasure that the city does have and must preserve it and make it grow.

3. MPD Sergeant Tim Antley, Union President of Local 81, commented that he represents the Union body of the Police department. He said this is a very big breaking point in whether or not the MPD will have any amounts of candidates coming forward, not only police officers, but dispatchers, booking, clerical staff. The Union voted 122-16 in favor of the contract. The patrol officers are diminishing and the one's leaving are the ones seeking out better paying jobs or work conditions. Improving the quality of life for the citizens of Monroe is the direction in which they along with Chief Zordan are wanting to go. This entails the cost of vehicles, improving upon work conditions and they cost money. People are leaving because they can go and make more money somewhere else. He encouraged them to look at what the police department is right now, it is cohesive, and there is a movement they believe will entail better conditions, better pay. It has taken them ten years to get here, and, in that time, the police department has dwindled from 180 odd employees and now down to 130-140 with the clerks, dispatchers. He urged and encouraged the Council to look at what they want to do with the plans for Monroe; this hasn't happened over night; it took ten years; employees are working 12 hour shifts and then being called back in to work another day on their off day. A minor shortage for a couple of hours can make a difference. They are fielding all the calls and are anticipating being well over 50,000-55,000 before the end of the year. He asked that they take it into consideration and thanked them for their time.

Chairman Marshall commented that they do sympathize with them and thanked them for their time and dedication and do know that it isn't easy. He said they can't put a price or a salary on what they do on a daily basis for the city. He thanked them on behalf of the Council and will continue to be in prayer for them and said if there is any way they can support them, they will.

Seeing no one else come forward, the Public Hearing was closed.

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,088, approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the International Union of Police Associations, Local No. 81, AFL-CIO and further providing with respect thereto. (Police Dept.) (There were no public comments).

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Marshall opened the Public Hearing:

1. Brian Davis, citizen, Executive Director for La. Trust for Historic Preservation. He voiced his support for the project and commended the Council for pursuing the property that has been vacant for 25 years and to turn it from a blight into a district and a destination; creating an investment in economic development through historic preservation that it is going to provide for future pay raises for other things for the city.

2. Mr. Roy Heatherly, Monroe Chamber, commented his excitement and support for the project. He thanked Mr. Manning for attending a meeting with the Chamber Board.

3. Mr. Barry Stevens, President of Northeast La. Arts Council, commented that he wrote a letter in support of it, but wasn't able to attend the last council meeting and wanted to share in person his support of the project. He commented that he was excited about the project and the steps being taken and thanked the Council for their consideration in taking it to the next level.

4. Mr. Malcolm Modley, President of Emy Lou Biedenharn Foundation commented that he was impressed at the last council meeting with the presentations; he stated the foundation supports the project strongly and the amphitheater and hotel downtown would mean foot traffic and that would mean good things for the organization and the entire city.

5. Ms. Kenya Roberson, President of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce commented and challenged the Council that minorities are included in the project. Her concerns for wanting to meet with Mr. Manning and never received a call, or anything from the Mayor. Mr. Marshall introduced Mr. Manning to Ms. Roberson and encouraged him to meet with them and share information that he shared with the Monroe Chamber to have an idea and insight on what's going on. Mr. Manning commented that he would make it happen.

6. Mr. David Willie, Executive Director for Choosing Independence, commented that they have a big investment in downtown. He supports the project, as his property is downtown, but would like to know how it would help everyone and to ensure there is inclusion for everyone.

Seeing no one else come forward, the Public Hearing was closed.

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,089, authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from Bricks & Timbers, LLC, situated in Ouachita Parish with a municipal address of 205, 209, 215 & 305 Walnut Street, Monroe, La, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Woods commented that she has had numerous conversations with the Mayor and Administration regarding the project; she has talked with Mr. Manning and Mr. Campo and they have assured her that inclusion will be present and said that she was comfortable; do believe this is something that will be beneficial to the City as a whole and having the conversation with all involved and from a city wide perspective, there will be incentives shared within all of the districts as a direct result of and it will be a land lease and the dollars will be shared among the districts equally, some of the dollars, not all. There will also be sales tax from the project; do believe it will be a win, win for all. It's economic development and will keep citizens here and bring others to Monroe. The goal is to continue to be trailblazers instead of trail managers. This will be good for the entire city as a whole.

Chairman Marshall commented that this is not something that was rubber stamped as some have said. There have been hours and hours of communication by Mr. Campo and Mr. Manning regarding the project. Mr. Marshall said the City has to start somewhere and allow the administration to do what they are put here to do and if we don't then we aren't doing our jobs as Council members. Everyone has had conversations about inclusion, and this is not the last conversation; those that want to be included, will make sure that it happens. He thanked Mr. Campo and Mr. Manning's transparency, and their commitment to the project, and look forward to working with them on this project and others to come.

Vice Chairman Dawson commented that in speaking with the Mayor on several occasions and so far, the Mayor has been a man of his word to her. She has no doubt that everything discussed was going to be put on the table about inclusion, that it will happen and if it doesn't happen, then he will have to answer to Council; she said that she would call the Mayor out on the issue. She commented that she has received phone calls from individuals, and this is not the same project of the prior Administration, it's not the same cost, it's not even the same idea. There were a lot of concerns that it was shut down previously with the previous Administration, and it is not the same thing. Mrs. Dawson said she was happy to be able to preserve a historic building in downtown Monroe and preserving it will only add to Monroe; she commented that the citizens elected them for change and asked that they be allowed to be that change and prove to them to try and make a difference. She thanked the public for trusting them with the project, it will be something that no other Administration has ever been able to accomplish and am hopeful that big things can be accomplished in the next few years while in office, and her plans are do what she has said that she will do.

Mrs. Ezernack commented that she has been in a lot of the meetings, and as far as inclusion, that it has been discussed with questions; they have been assured that the process will include it. Mrs. Ezernack commented that she wasn't apart of the drive through the City event, due to not being on the board and asked that the Mayor could possibly put together another one with other stakeholders and do the same thing for those that are interested in the project to have the opportunity. She thanked Mr. Campo and Mr. Manning for being present and answering all of their questions, this is an opportunity for the city to grow and can't imagine the impact at this point and what it will mean in the years down the road. She thanked the Mayor for the vision and do support the project.

Mr. Manning thanked everyone for the comments; he commented that he has been in the arena of inclusion all of his career and have been on both sides. He explained his involvement with the New Orleans sewage and water board and inclusion was a big part of his service on the board, as well as being on the other side of procurement and having a level playing field for those wanting to be included. He commented the RFP samples that would share with the Administration regarding inclusion would be best of class across the nation. He wanted to share that information to be on public record and have lots of ideas on how to do it and making it happen.

Mr. Campo commented his remarks when his first contract was approved, that he spoke about inclusion and his best friend Ray Manning, a world class architect. He said 100 per cent of the design effort is being performed by Ray Manning, an African American Architect. He commended Council on doing a great job, the meetings have been thorough, asking a lot of questions and the citizens should be proud.

Mayor Ellis thanked everyone for their trust in the process; there is a lot of work to do, and it means a lot to him.

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

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,090, authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from Laty McPhee, LLC, situated in Ouachita Parish with a municipal address of (no situs) North Grand Street, Monroe, La, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Curtis Garth, citizen, spoke regarding a legal concern.
2. Kenya Roberson, citizen, thanked everyone for attending their first mixer for the Monroe Black Chamber of Commerce. She told the Mayor that she missed him at the event; the Mayor commented that his daughter had surgery. She looks forward to working on behalf of minority businesses.
3. Kevo Meredith, citizen, owner of a local downtown business spoke regarding an event that was held downtown and the safety of other businesses, patrons, citizens who come downtown; there was a shooting downtown.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Meredith for what he does in the City and commented about the shooting and how he hopes that people will value the life of others and the City moving forward to solutions.

4. Vee Wright, commented regarding downtown project, police approved contract, and the city surplus.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m., upon a motion of Mrs. Dawson and seconded by Mrs. Ezernack. (There were no public comments)

Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr.
Council Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Jacqueline Benjamin
Council Secretary