

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
November 14, 2023
6:00 p.m.

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

The Invocation was led by Elder Donald Givens.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Givens for giving such a beautiful poem and prayer. For clarity, she wanted to know if her microphone was on, and she noted last time she did announcements her microphone was off, and no one heard her announcements. She stated that it is very good to see everyone, and God has been busy in Monroe, LA and he has been gathering his flowers for their heavenly home. She expressed her condolences to Judge Tammy Lee and her family. She said their mother, who was a jewel and a big person in the community, passed away on Sunday and before a week has passed, she has been funeralized and life is going on. She noted if you see Judge Lee, her siblings, or anyone in that family please share with them your condolences because they are going through a hard time right now. She stated that she was at the service, and it was a beautiful service fitting for a woman of her stature, a queen. She further noted she is asking for condolences for former Councilmember Mr. Kenneth Wilson, his wife, and Mr. Daryll Berry, Monroe City School Board, on the passing of their mother and mother-in-law. She said that she is close with her mother, and she understands how difficult this can be. On another note, she stated she will not be in town for the employee breakfast, and she took the opportunity to say Happy Thanksgiving and she thanked all the City of Monroe employees for all the wonderful things they do. She further stated there are a lot of things the City needs to work on but there are a lot of things that are being done that are good in the City. She gave a special presentation to Elder Donald Givens to thank him for the melodious music he has given this community over the years and his continued service to our community.

Mr. Marshall thanked everyone for coming out to the City Council meeting. He said he had a long day working with Mr. John Robert Smith, his staff, administration, and some of the participants in the community that traveled on South 2nd Street. He said they observed the corridor to gather information on how to make it safer and how enhancing that area can make it more accessible for pedestrians that are handicapped, for the roads, and bikers. He said Mr. Smith is going to elaborate more on this project and he expressed his appreciation for Mr. Smith taking the time to see how the community can better enhance District 4 and the City of Monroe as a whole. On another note, he announced "Jazz on the Que Note" on Saturday, and he said if you are not doing anything come party with the Ques. He expressed his condolences to Coach Tank (Mr. Alex Washington) who lost his mother, and he said her Homegoing service will be November 17th. He noted there has been a lot going on in the community and a lot of talk about criminal activity and he said he wants to continue to have those conversations. He said the City kind of puts it to the waste side and don't put much emphasis on it, until it happens again. He further noted he is going to keep applying pressure and he said he had a chance to talk to a couple of business owners about no loitering. He said he encourages all business owners along the corridors that there is no need for anyone to be standing outside of their business for hours at a time. He said business owners have agreed to put up no loitering signs and it is voluntary. He said the City is trying to make our streets safer, not only for the kids but anyone who wants to stop in the City of Monroe. He said the City wants to make sure everyone is comfortable and safe.

Mrs. Dawson thanked everyone for being in attendance and she expressed her condolences to the families that have lost loved ones in the past few weeks. She announced Load up Delivery, LLC, a courier company, and she said if you are in need of any type of courier service, please contact

Mr. Xavier Lee at loadupdelivery@gmail.com. She said the Community Family of Faith Church will host Feast of Hope on November 21st at 11:00am, they will be feeding 400 people, and the Monroe Police Department will be in attendance passing out sanitizer bags and winter survival kits. She noted if you would like to attend please contact Pastor Vance Price or Community Family of Faith Church. She announced the stage play, "The Secrets in the City", produced and directed by Mr. Donterrio Anderson on Sunday, November 19th at the Monroe Civic Center at 5pm, tickets for general admission are \$20, VIP \$40, and \$30 at the door. She said Arts with Passion presents "A Christmas Musical Dinner Theatre" on Sunday, December 10th at 5:30pm at the Mount Zion Family Life Center, tickets are \$30, and for more information visit artswithpassion.com. She further noted if you know anyone who is needing a turkey for the Holiday season, please inbox her to let her know. She said First Missionary Baptist Church will have a Turkey Giveaway on Friday, November 17th from 1pm to 5pm at the 507 Swayze Street Monroe, LA 71201. She said if you know anyone needing a turkey she can reserve one for them or they can call First Missionary Baptist Church at 318-325-7417 to pick it up on Friday. She noted Nash In A Dash are having a Praise-Giving Celebration for Seniors on Wednesday, November 15th at 11am at the Monroe Civic Center Convention Hall. She further noted if you know of any seniors that would like a Thanksgiving meal, please have them attend this event. She further announced the groundbreaking of the Dollar General Market this week coming to District 5. She said the estimated date of opening is February 2024. She thanked everyone who has put their hands into this project to make it happen and she said the City has been needing this for a very long time.

Mayor Friday Ellis stated to be on the lookout for new park furniture which was some of the short term projects for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. He said some of the immediate projects are popping up such as the basketball murals, all the work with the City parking lot, lighting and beautification with the City recreation centers. He said these are small things the City is working toward for everyone to understand, these are not plans that sit on a shelf there are dollars aligned and the City is making it happen. He said the Dollar General (DG) groundbreaking is causing a lot of excitement for residents and some residents have to travel 5 miles to make groceries. He said the store will not only serve people in South Monroe but also residents South of Ouachita Parish. He thanked the staff that pressed really hard to ensure that this was not only another Dollar General but a Dollar General market. Mayor Ellis further announced the memorial building dedication in honor of former Monroe, LA Mayor Abe Pierce on Monday November 20th. He said the City had the pleasure of honoring a very special man in the community and he said Elder Givens makes up a unique fingerprint of Monroe. He said it wouldn't be Monroe without the saxophone man and he said Mr. Givens picked up the saxophone at the age of 62. He said he is a veteran who served during the Vietnam War and the City wanted to honor him to thank him for his service and continuing to serve the City of Monroe. He said Mr. Givens was given the key to the City, but it didn't turn out the way the City wanted it to. Mayor Ellis presented Mr. Givens with a key to the City of Monroe. On another note, Mayor Ellis introduced Mr. John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor and Mr. Dustin Robertson, Program Manager Thriving Communities with Smart Growth America. He stated they have been in town for the last day and a half to talk to the City about what they call complete street and the safety of residents on the street. He said a while back the City Council passed matching funds for the City to pursue a Raise Grant to redo the corridor from South 2nd Street and Winnsboro Road all the way down into the City's downtown core connecting residents to the future Amtrak station. He said he can't think of a better team than Smart Growth America to provide technical assistance and come into the community, to provide community feedback because the City is ultimately designing the road for the community. He said Mr. Smith has been a friend to the City of Monroe for a very long time. He said Mr. Smith has been working very hard in front and behind the scenes to expand passenger rail along the I- 20 corridor.

Mr. John Robert Smith, Senior Policy Advisor, stated on behalf of his colleague Mr. Dustin Robertson, Program Manager Thriving Communities wanted everyone to know how pleased they are to be back in Monroe. He said he has been in Monroe a number of times and what struck him about Monroe is the possibilities the City have and the fact the City is moving and acting on those possibilities. He said he told the Mayor and Mayor Ronny Walker of Ruston, LA several years ago they would get the City a train from Meridian, MS or Dallas/Fort Worth, TX and they will take the Crescent train which travels from New York to New Orleans and when it passes through Meridian it will split and bring the over night section across central Mississippi, North Louisiana, and into Dallas/Fort Worth, TX. He said he also happen to be the Chairman on the board for

Amtrak for a few years and they were 3 weeks from starting that train when unfortunately, the administration at the time zeroed out all funding for passenger rail. He said Amtrak has applied for a grant from the federal government, policy that was wrote to be in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), very strong support from Senator Bill Cassidy, and from the congressional delegation across North Louisiana. On another note, he noted he was on the City Council for four years and for 16 years he was the Mayor of his hometown, which was a full time position, and he has been in Washington, D.C. for the pass fourteen years doing the work he does now. He said Mr. Dustin Robertson has been working with him out of the thriving communities portion of their work at Smart Growth America. He stated Smart growth America is a mission driven entity and they are not for profit, and you can't pay them to say something they don't believe. He said their mission is whoever you are and wherever you live, you deserve to live in a neighborhood that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient. He said they should be designing this built environment rather its water, sewer, or roads for human beings first. He said a city street should be something an automobile can navigate but also elderly, young, and people that are less mobile can safely navigate. He said they had a presentation Monday, and they did a walk audit where they walked on the actual sidewalk. He said they had an afternoon work session because this is not something he comes to do to the City, but they come to do it with the City, and these are the City's streets, neighborhoods, and homes. He said hopefully what they presented will broaden the City's perspective and open the City's eyes to some possibilities they may not have thought could be achieved. He continued his power point presentation showing possible changes that can be made in the City to make crosswalks and sidewalks safer. He said it didn't cost the City of Monroe a dime for them to come and this is paid for by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Smith for coming to the City of Monroe.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if once the project is done can the City reapply and take the same project to another part of the City.

Mr. Smith said absolutely, understand this is not a quick fix but it is about getting started and taking that success to do another piece of it and gradually building on it. He said the City has to make that application compelling, but it can apply wherever.

Ms. Woods said she likes it and would like to see it in District 3.

Mr. Harvey said obviously, there is a lot of energy put into these studies and even if the City doesn't do the full study, how does the City take these temporary principles. He said no matter which part of the City the feedback always comes down to sidewalks. He noted a very close friend was struck by a suburban earlier this week just out running wearing high risk clothing. He further noted he doesn't know a citizen throughout their neighborhood that doesn't share a version of that concern. He said once you're there it's very costly to get it back and he said as somebody who has engineering principles he understands that. He said the question to him is how does the City do for one and apply it to many.

Mrs. Dawson said she was at the presentation last night where she received a lot of questions and feedback from people. She thanked Mr. Smith for what he is doing for the City of Monroe.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Smith for coming and he said the City travels to conferences and when the City meet people you bring back things to implement. He said he likes Mr. Smith's and Mr. Robertson's mindset and he said how many of the City's roads are two lanes that can be narrowed to one lane with interventions. He said people may be willing to trade a lane of traffic for protected barriers and the City has to remove themselves from the mindset of its just sidewalks. He stated the City have opportunities now for temporary interventions that the City can try. He further noted the City has to weigh the cost of the things we do but there are some very inexpensive ways the City can start now to test and see how it goes.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Smith for bringing all the wonderful ideas and enthusiasm to what the City's community could be. She said the Councilmembers would all wish to have the opportunity at some point to take some of these concepts and make them into reality in their Districts. She said if nothing else have a starting point, start small and let it grow, and she said she thinks Mr. Smith has planted that seed just with the conversation tonight and what he has reported in the last few days. She thanked Mr. Smith for being in the community and being as excited as the City is as well.

Mr. Smith stated the excitement of the citizens that were in the room working all day was something that would boost your spirits and they worked hard.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of October 24, 2023, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnations were considered:

(1) 105 Malvern St. (D4) (Curator; Owner – Patricia Bell Cloman) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was 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. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is an open dilapidated structure, and it was presented in Environmental Court in January 2023 which was determined a blight and nuisance. They are asking that the property be condemned.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know has there been any communication with Ms. Cloman.

Mr. James said no.

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

(2) 901 South 19th St. (D3) (Curator; Owner – Gertrude Johnson) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was 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 is a dilapidated structure, and it was presented in Environmental Court in January 2023 where it was determined a blight and nuisance. They are asking that the property be condemned.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if Mr. James had any conversations with anyone from this property.

Mr. James said they have not.

Ms. Woods motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to get the property torn down and rid the property of all obnoxious growth and debris.

(3) 906 South 20th St. (D3) (Curator; Owners – Willie and Edna Rankin) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was 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 is an open dilapidated structure, and it was presented in Environmental Court in June 2023 where it was determined a blight and nuisance. They are asking that the property be condemned.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if there has been any conversation with anyone from the property.

Mr. James said no.

Ms. Woods motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to demolish the property, rid it of all obnoxious growth and debris.

(4) 3311 Richmond St. (D4) (Curator; Owners – Michael David Pittman, Elizabeth Grace Pittman Johnson, Angela Christine Pittman, Maude Lee Lenard Pittman, Cropprue rental Properties, LLC, Tchailleh Jones) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was given 60 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 said this is an unsafe dilapidated structure with a large tree that is hanging off the back. They are asking that the property to be condemned.

Mr. Marshall said he had the opportunity to speak to one of the ladies listed as an owner and she asked for 60 days. He said she wasn't aware she was involved in the property.

Mr. James stated he would like her to get the tree off the structure sooner than later because it is a safety hazard.

Mr. Marshall said he will let her know and he motion to condemn the property giving the owner 60 days to remove the trees, debris, and any obnoxious growth.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by, Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8621 accepting the base bid of Amethyst Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$1,079,545.60, for the North 6th Street Improvement Project and authorizing a 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 on North 6th Street.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, stated this is a rehab of a particular section of the roadway from Louisville Avenue to Stubbs Avenue. He said it will be the typical mill and overlay of the surface but also repairing some storm drainage, sewer, and water.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8622 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation for an Exhibition Reception and Talk for the Unchosen Ones: Portraits of an American Pastoral by RJ Kern, 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.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8623 authorizing the naming of the Harvey H. Benoit Community Center Playground in the City of Monroe, Louisiana, as the Sister Margaret Ann Sanders-Jackson Playground and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Ebony Wright, 401 Vegas Drive, thanked Councilwoman Dawson and she stated after speaking with her, her heart is the fullest it has been, and she said her grandmother loved her community dearly and showed it with intense devotion. She said her grandmother taught in the Monroe City Schools for over 40 years and she was named Monroe and the State teacher of the year. She said it is her honor to be back from Baton Rouge, LA to continue her legacy teaching in the same school district that her grandmother was in. She stated in February of this year her grandmother passed away from breast cancer. She further stated that even though she grew up in Ruston, LA and went to school, on Fridays she was always in Monroe with her grandmother at Benoit. She said Benoit is where she had her fondest childhood memories, and she was excited to take aerobics classes with her grandmother and go to the many events at Benoit. She said one of the last memories she has of her grandmother is walking her children to the same park at Benoit with her grandmother.

Mrs. Dawson stated Mrs. Margaret Sanders is a lot of the reason she is what she is today because of some of the things she gave to her such as her love for the community, her church, her sorority, and family. She said she grew up in the New Light Baptist Church and she was one of the women she looked up too. She said the first thing Ms. Sanders said to her when she got in office is what are we going to do about that playground. She said with her being at the playground she knew exactly what they needed. She said Mrs. Jackson was one of the main reasons that she wanted to get playground equipment at Benoit.

Department of Administration:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Zhong Ying You and Dong Dong Lan dba Ronin Steakhouse and Sushi House, 4681 Pecanland Mall Dr., Monroe LA 71203 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 comment.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by, Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider twenty-five (25) Renewal Applications for a New 2024 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Ms. Woods unanimously approved to Consider twenty-two (22) Renewal Applications for a New 2024 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Ms. Woods unanimously approved to Consider three (3) Renewal Applications for a New 2024 Class C Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider one (1) Renewal Application for a New 2024 Class D Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by, Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider two (2) Renewal Application for a New 2024 Class E Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Consider two (2) Renewal Applications for a New 2024 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:

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by, Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8624 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, Inc. and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

Addon: Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to add a Resolution approving and authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for, accept, and provide \$400,000 in matching funds for congressionally directed spending on the Texas-Standifer sewer trunkline project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8625 approving and authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for, accept, and provide \$400,000 in matching funds for congressionally directed spending on the Texas-Standifer sewer trunkline project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if Ms. Meghan Risinger would explain this item to the Council.

Ms. Meghan Risinger, Grant Writer, said this item certainly wasn't planned but thanked the Council for allowing them to add the item to the agenda. She said the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reached out and asked for the City to submit an application, but the City can't submit without the City Council's approval. She noted this is a project the City has been working on for a while and Congresswoman Julia Letlow got the funding into the bill. She further

noted this will be money towards the City Texas/Standifer trunkline and the City has to officially request the funds. She stated it is 2 million dollars from Congresswoman Letlow and a 20% match which is \$400,000.00.

Mayor Ellis said the Texas/Standifer trunkline from the Texas high lift at Texas Avenue and 18th Street all the way done to Standifer has been clogged for about 9,000 feet. He said this is the City's opportunity to clean it out and it is a huge task. He noted the City saw this as a huge problem for economic development and anybody that wants to build a home or start a business that have to get Will-Serve letter for sewer. He further noted that if you can't get a Will-Serve letter, you can't land businesses and quality development. He said it is a quality of life issue because for the residents that dump into the line there will be times inflow and infiltration will cause backups in the home and no one should live that way. He thank the City Council and staff for making this project a priority and he said the City has already started the work on this project which is long overdue.

Department of Public Works:

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by, Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider request from the Water Treatment Plant Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the purchase of a Ford F-450 Flatbed Truck. The estimated cost of the truck is \$70,000.00. The source of funds is Water Capital Funds. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by, Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8626 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to accept a Community Air Service Development Grant from the United States Department of Transportation and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8627 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development for the East Street & Parkview Drive Sidewalks Project (H.015200) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor Ellis stated this is another sidewalk project in front of Wossman High School that will allow for students and residents to be able to go to and from the school safely.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8628 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into an Agreement for Professional Services with Inspections Unlimited, L.L.C. to provide Certified Building Official (CBO) Inspections Services for the Inspections Division and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8629 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into a Cooperative Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Office of Facility Planning and Control for the Booker T. Washington Stormwater System Evaluation and Upgrades Planning and Construction Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8630 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. Two (2) for the Saul Adler Recreation Center Parking Lot Improvements Project adding ninety-eight (98) calendar days to the contract time and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Engineering for this project which is long overdue, and she is happy to know it is in process.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8631 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Task Order No. 15 with CSRS to provide Engineering and other Professional Services related to the Desiard Street Improvements (S. Grand St. to N. 6th St.) project on behalf of DEDD and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take Corporeal Possession of the property described below and sell to Kevin Lee, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 6, Square 19, Alexander's Addition, Ouachita Parish, 3910 Lee, District 4, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 4, 2018, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Introduce an Ordinance amending and reenacting Section 4-15 of the City of Monroe Code relating to Alcohol License Fees for new businesses and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods stated this item is for introduction and she will vote aye, but she has questions about it.

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.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,203 revoking a portion of Adams Street from North 14th Street to North 18th Street and further providing with respect thereto - Applicant – James Machine Works – (PUD/P&Z) (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack noted for the record, there is a small change the City verified the legal description of the subsequent plat with the new legal description. She further noted it was a small something the City needed to confirm. She stated she thinks it was discovered it didn't change the layout or anything at all but the legal description.

Ms. Woods said she had the opportunity to meet with the great folks at James Machine Works. She thanked James Machine Works for inviting and sharing with her what the City was doing. She stated for those listening at home she wanted to be clear, and everybody kind of knows where James Machine Works is on Adams Street. She noted when she was there visiting cars were going back and forth down the street and it really is a safety hazard for not only employees at James Machine Works but for people that are visiting and for cars. She said they have their business on both sides of the street and when cars are going fast up and down that street, it interrupts and could cause all kinds of safety issues. She further noted she had people talk to her about other places where they would potentially like to close streets off but those are conversations to have at a later time. She said she is supporting this closure for the safety of the people that work at James Machine Works and for regular citizens that are moving back and forth. She said it is closed to cars but not to pedestrian traffic. She said if that is the way you walk, know that is still going to be open for you to walk that way, but you will not be able to drive vehicles through there for the record.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked James Machine Works for being in the community and providing the jobs for many years. She said the City appreciates James Machine Works investment in the community. (James Machine Works staff stated they have been operating in the City of Monroe since 1927.)

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

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,204 prohibiting parking of commercial vehicles and construction equipment in residential areas and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

There being no objection from the Council and before moving to the next item on the agenda Mrs. Dawson stated the ribbon cutting for the Sis Margaret Sanders Jackson playground will be Tuesday November 21, 2023, at the Benoit Recreation Center. She stated they are asking all family, friends, sorority members, and church members to be in attendance and everyone that loves her in the community.

Citizen's Participation:

(1) Mr. Jeremy Taylor, P.O. Box 8453 Shreveport, LA 71148, said he came to speak today about a situation that he has been thinking about dealing with Carroll High School. He said he is a former Monroe citizen, and a Carroll High School graduate and homecoming season is a big deal. He said there was an unfortunate incident that happen Friday, and he sends his condolences to the family. He said that incident had nothing to do with the Carroll High School homecoming festivities. He stated typically when something happens in that area they attach it with the school or function that is bringing the crowd. He said he personally enjoyed the police officers being in the area and he loves that Thursday night there was a lot of police officers deployed in that area. He further stated he thinks what would be feasible or would bring more enjoyment to that is if the City would adopt some form of Resolution to make homecoming a season. He said he doesn't know to many places that do homecoming the way the City of Monroe does when it comes to homecoming. He said to make it a season similar to Mardi Gras, Black History Parade, and different things of that nature. He said which will allow the City to participate and deploy more officers in that area and he is not saying the entire week or weekend because he knows that could be a heavy situation. He noted there are nights such as the block party where there are a lot of citizens out. He further noted if there is a Resolution the City has the manpower to protect and serve the well being and safety of the citizens. He said the City doesn't have to worry about the officers having to protect the actual street such as riding down the street saying that if you don't get out the street they will deploy mace. He said they actually deployed mace Thursday because some citizens wouldn't get out of the street. He said he applauds the Monroe City Police for being there and he said there were some unfortunate incidents were some youth were caught with some weapons and he is glad they were caught. He said in fact at some point if the City will take into consideration to adopt a Resolution to make Homecoming season he thinks it would be a beautiful thing.

Mayor Ellis said he would love to talk to Mr. Taylor and possibly sit down with him and Chief Victor Zordan, Chief of Police, to discuss why police presents is different between nights between the events. He said he would love to talk about how the City can do something and he said he applauds Mr. Taylor for coming forward with solutions.

Ms. Woods said she talked to Mr. Taylor on the phone, but she didn't recognize him today. She said she would like to continue the conversation she started with Mr. Taylor as well.

Mr. Marshall stated he will be in touch with Mr. Taylor.

(2) Ms. Johnnie Thomas, 4014 South 8th Street, said the project that was on the corner of South 8th and Orange Street has been completed and she would like the City to clean it up.

Mayor Ellis said he will personally put in a call, and he will be sure that Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, have some strict requirements. He said he told them when they moved in the area to take good care of Ms. Thomas. He said with Ms. Thomas being here today to tell him that the area needs some work he will take that personal.

Mr. McCallister stated he contacted Atmos Entergy and Com Traffic Engineering about the issue and it should be wrapped up as soon as possible.

Ms. Thomas stated she appreciates everything the City employees and Councilmembers do for the City of Monroe. On another note, she announced on Saturday November 18, 2023, at 11 am the PEEP organization and President Kenneth Wilson are feeding the senior citizens at Mount Zion Family Life Center. She said if there are any senior citizens that would like to attend please stop by and she said there will be a lot of good food and your presence will be very welcome.

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

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

