

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

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

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

There were absent: Mr. Harvey and Ms. Woods

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

The Invocation was led by Mr. Arthur Holland, Project Manager

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Holland for that inspirational prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting. She also thanked the Marshalls for being at the meetings.

Mr. Marshall thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting. He commended Planning Urban and Development on their Blight Boot camp this past weekend. He said that it was very informational, and a lot of people's concerns were addressed. He also wanted to thank everyone that came to the Community Job fair that was held at Emily P. Robinson last Friday. He said it was very informational, with a lot of great resources and jobs that many weren't aware of, that were available. He posted a few links on his social media page of the jobs that are open for anyone searching for employment. He thanked Mrs. Erika Louis for spearheading that event and many other events she has coming up in the community.

Mrs. Dawson did not have announcements.

Mayor Ellis thanked everyone for coming out tonight and those that are watching via Facebook Live. He said that last week he had a good meeting with the Governor moving into capital outlay season. He wants everyone to be tuning in to Facebook, they will be posting some of the key priority projects throughout the city that will affect the quality of life. He also said that he met with Department of Transportation (DOT) about multiple sidewalk projects that are about to happen in the city and making sure they are on target to go forth. He said that he had an opportunity to present a couple of the City's projects to Harvard Graduate School of Design students for the Just Mayoral City Lab. He said it's a Cohort of Mayors from St. Louis, Kansas City, and Albuquerque. He said it is a great opportunity for the City to get technical expertise, have a new set of eyes on some issues that we must do design interventions looking at Americans with Disabilities (ADA) for designing sidewalks. He said the goal is to have a complete streets model so when the City goes in to do work in the community, we will have to have sidewalks apart of it. He said that we would have to adjust the City's capital plan because sidewalks since 1952 have been the responsibility of property and business owners to take care of the maintenance and installation. He said it's the City's goal to have a complete streets model to adjust our capital plan to include sidewalks as well because that's something that is a big need in all our communities that we are mobile and we have safe places to walk, lit and beautified places. He said that it was a great experience being able to collaborate with the Cohort of Mayors over the last 18 weeks. He also said he went to Washington, D.C to secure the City's final support letters from members from Texas, to Louisiana, to Mississippi, and Georgia for the I-20 Rail. Amtrak will be submitting their application to the Federal Rail Administration to fund the entire route. In the fall we should know the status of application, but he believes that since every member of Congress and members of the Senate who touched that portion of I-20 that were willing to write letters of support, is strong. He said that we have Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), members that were there for them and Amtrak supporting this project. On another note, he wanted to thank all who were involved in the Blight Boot Camp being able to see an energized community around finding ways they can take control block by blocked and be able to communicate and work together with the city just to clean up the neighborhood. He said sometimes people just needed to get in contact with people that can just help maybe faith based or non-profit organizations. He also said that he would like to give a hats off and thanks to the Monroe Police Department and Fire Department for beating everyone at the

Dragon Boat Races for the Children’s Coalition for Northeast Louisiana. He also gave a big thank you to the FunRoe Crew for putting on the Earth Day Celebration at the Zoo last Thursday, a great project for the City of Monroe. He also announced that the State of the City is Sunday, May 7, 2023, on KNOE at 7am, CBS at 5:30pm, KNOE at 10pm, on the ABC Network at 12:30pm, and KTVE and KNOE at 10am and 10:30am, tune in to know the things that each division and department are doing. He said that there will be a twist on it where you will be hearing from the residents about how the project and programs have impacted their lives and community.

Mrs. Dawson said she had a couple of things she needed to address tonight as far as public comments on certain items on the agenda. She said when you come to the podium, please state your name, address for the record, and you will have three minutes to make your comments regarding that agenda items. She said please be reminded that this is not a question answer session for you and the administration, the questions can come to the council, or if the council wants the administration or the employees to address something or answer any questions for them that’s what that is for. She said that you have between Thursday when the agenda comes out up until Tuesday at 6pm to address any questions with the administration or department heads or your council members. She stated that the Council is here at the meeting to take care of the business of the City. She also said you have Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm to call the City Council’s office at 318-329-2261 or you have the Council’s Research Coordinator phone number 318-732-2244, contact those numbers between Monday and Friday 8am to 5pm. She also stated that when your three minutes are up, please be mindful to take your seat so we won’t have any interruptions with the meeting so that we can move forward with the remainder of the meeting.

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of April 11, 2023, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnation was removed:

1. 120 Egan Street (D3) (Owner- S. Birds LLC) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to remove this item because Mr. Tommy James, Chief Code Enforcement, wants to talk with property owner to check on progress of home because it looks like they have done sufficient amount of work on the property. (There were no public comments.)

(2.) 1303 Griffin Street (D3) (Owner- 1st Lady Properties) Notice to show cause was served. There was no one present. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, 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 was an open dilapidated structure that was in court February 28th. It has also become an unattractive nuisance, upon pulling up there were people running out of the property and according to the neighbors, unsavory acts have been taking place at this property as well. Mr. James is asking the council to condemn this property forward to public works for possible demolition within 30 days to bring it into compliance.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8506 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the General Claire I. Chennault Foundation (Red, White & Blue Airshow) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8507 granting an exception to the Open container Ordinance to the Friends of Chennault Aviation & Military Museum (Movie Night) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open container ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8508 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to El Paso Mexican Grill (Cinco De Mayo) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an application by PVBLIC Ventures LLC dba Quickway Truck Stop, 3019 Hwy 165 Bypass, Monroe LA 71202 for a New 2023 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an application by Hailey Ray dba Tailgators-Tailgators LLC, 200 Alexandria road, West Monroe LA 71291 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 stated that she wanted to clarify that this particular location is 519 Desiard Street where they are registered with their LLC.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an application by Angelique Drew Conner dba Kravin's Restaurant, 705 Winnsboro Rd., Monroe LA 71201 for a Renewal 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.)

Mayor's Office:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8509 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and Ouachita Green and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Tim McIlveene, Volunteer Chairman of Ouachita Green, stated he wanted to thank the City of Monroe for their support and partnership. He said the City of Monroe is a great partner for them, they certainly enjoy the cleanup days with the different city council members. He stated that they are in between directors at the moment, but once they have the new director in place, they will arrange a meeting to give a proper update on what is going on with Ouachita Green and the City of Monroe. He said he wanted to briefly share some statistics from 2022 with what Ouachita Green did in Ouachita parish. He stated they engage in over 3400 volunteers, they had 68 litters pick up at beautification events, planted nearly 100 trees throughout the parish. They had 182,000 pounds of litter picked up, they had almost 92,000 pounds of recyclables collected and recycled. They had 101,000 pounds of household hazardous waste collected and properly disposed of, and they engaged in over 2000 youth's education; it was a good year. He again thanks the City of Monroe for their support, and they look forward to continuing to build a relationship and thanked them again for all they do to keep our community greener and cleaner.

The Council thanked Mr. McIlveene.

Department of Community Affairs:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8510 authorizing the temporary closure of Chennault Golf Course, Bogie Drive, and adjacent area during certain times to the general public from May 5th through May 7th, 2023, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8511 Adopt a Resolution authorizing a designated city representative to execute (Close Out) Change Order No. One (1) for the Pedestrian Bridge at Renwick Improvements Project, between the City of Monroe and W.L. Bass Construction, Inc. for a decrease in the contract amount by \$42,953.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to introduce the Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire full ownership interest of the property described as lot in Lot 9, Stubbs Young Bayou Addition, fronting 82.11 ft on east side of 20th St., depth 100 ft along north line of Grammont St., bearing municipal address 2001 Grammont St, Monroe, La, by adjudication at tax sale dated June 13, 2011, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to introduce the Ordinance declaring certain movable property of the City of Monroe as being no longer needed for public use and authorizing Henderson Auctions to proceed with the sale of the said movable property and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Marshall asked if there was a date for the sale.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney answered June 8th.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to introduce the Ordinance declaring certain immovable property in Monroe located at 3901 Jackson Street as no longer being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold to HP Investments, LLC, pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. John Flippo, HP Investments, stated they are the developer of Northern Louisiana for Dollar General and this store is our new 12,000 square foot prototype that adds groceries, fresh fruit, and produce. He said the older prototype that they had was 10,000 square feet and did not include fresh fruit and produce, so that is something they have added in too, especially stores that go into neighborhood areas. He stated one of the things that they went back and forth with this store is whether or not they can get the groceries in there. He also said that Dollar General looks at the numbers and counting cars. He said he was trying to explain to Dollar General that it's impossible to count foot traffic. He said whenever he is out there, he gets some feedback from people who are walking by asking what's going on and that they are excited about it being there. He said that if you have any questions, he's here to answer them.

Mayor Ellis stated that he appreciates their tenacity when the City expresses the need that there are residents that live in this area that would like to see fresh produce options; and to see a grocery store, which has been one of the largest questions or requests that we've had for south Monroe and having the availability to have a grocery store south of Winnsboro Road. He also said that he appreciates him, his time, and efforts to explain this project.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

(1.) Mr. Christopher Orange, 3901 Old Sterlington Road, stated that he's sent a couple of emails to Senate representative Mr. Cassey pertaining to affirmative action, he wanted to make sure that the City understood that he is very concerned about any resources that may not be given preferential treatments specifically to minorities and blacks. He said he just wanted to make sure that the education piece goes towards helping some of the folks here and traditional minorities.

(2.) Ms. Aalaya Cooper, 1002 Park Avenue, said on behalf of Southside Economic Development District and the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, she wanted to invite the Council and the City to a collaboration event specifically for the business owners, entrepreneurs, and stake holders. She stated that April 30th through May 6th is National Small Business Week, and they are celebrating that week, hosting a networking event at the African American Heritage Museum on Friday, May 5th at 7pm.

(3.) Mr. Elijah Brass III, 1317 N. 6th Street, stated that just as Ms. Cooper said they are so excited to be able to offer this event to our community and to those that we serve. He said that this is the opportunity for us to come together and network, get our businesses out there, and most importantly the theme is “Collaboration is the Key”. He said they wanted to put a strong emphasis on collaboration with businesses in all their endeavors. They invite every one of the council members, those in leadership, and anyone else in the audience that would like to participate, to please come out and participate as well as passing the word to fill up the room with as many people as possible to help with these initiatives in the future.

(4.) Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, stated that initially she didn’t have anything to say until Madam Chair put the stipulations in reference to being able to come comment and question items on the agenda. She said that she wanted the council to keep in mind that this is the opportunity for the citizens of the City to come and listen and to be educated and to get information and to ask questions. She noted the statement to be made that we cannot ask questions, that puts us limited as to what we can inquire about. She says that she does understand that the offices are open Monday through Friday, but this is the time that is delegated for the citizens to be able to get information as well as ask information. She further stated to have the stipulations to three minutes, sit down, or be escorted by the Marshalls is a bit much.

Mrs. Dawson asked Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, for point of information if she would please clarify what the Council’s bylaws state regarding public comment.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, stated that the rules that were adopted in 2010, any person wishing to address the council prior to a vote on any agenda item shall be limited to three minutes. She said that it was passed September 2010.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 pm, upon motion of Mr. Marshall and it was seconded by Mrs. Ezernack.

Mrs. Kema Dawson

Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley

Council Clerk

Mrs. Rachel N. Washington

Council Research Coordinator