

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, JUNE 21, 2022, 6:30 PM.**

Mayor Steve Horton presided with Mayor Pro-tem Fleeta Baggett, Council members: Susie Keck, Anthony Henderson, Charika Davis, Kenneth Morgan, and Don T. Floyd, Interim City Manager Tres Thomas, Assistant City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, Deputy Clerk Amanda Huggins, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present.

Mayor Horton gave the invocation and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

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1. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on June 6, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

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2. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on June 13, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

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3. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **on-premises** consumption only for:

**Johnny's New York Style Pizza      10176 Carlin Drive**

Motion carried unanimously.

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A public hearing was held at 6:43 PM regarding the rezoning of 40.39 vacant acres at 10860 Covington Bypass Rd by 78 Development Partners, LLC. Planning and Zoning Director, Marc Beechuk, presented a detailed staff report for an amendment of the FLUM and rezoning request from M-I and NR-2 to CR {Tract 3} and NR-2 {Tracts 1 and 2}. Developer Danny Herman was in attendance to speak in favor of the rezone request.

4. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve an amendment to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and rezone request from 78 Development Partners, LLC for 10860 Covington Bypass Road as discussed by staff.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Morgan, Davis, and Henderson voting for. Council members Baggett and Floyd voting against.

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5. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve initiation of a text amendment regarding regulation/restriction of build-to-rent housing/subdivisions in all or certain areas of the City of Covington and the possibility of requiring an affordability clause.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council members Morgan and Davis voting against.

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6. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve a resolution imposing a moratorium on the acceptance of zoning petitions and applications for preliminary flats and SUP for residential developments until September 19, 2022.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council members Morgan and Davis voting against.

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7. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve appointment of Travis Moore to the Planning Commission, to fill the unexpired term of Lee Aldridge.

Motion carried unanimously.

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8. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve appointment of Felicia Sanders to the Planning Commission, to fill the unexpired term of Mike Lassiter.

Motion carried unanimously.

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9. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve the re-appointment of Shawn McGovern to the Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

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10. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the re-appointment of Bobbie Shepherd Planning Commission.

Motion carried unanimously.

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11. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Davis to approve a resolution **designating the secretary of the Board of Adjustments and Appeals** shall have authority, without additional action, to approve or issue any form or certificate necessary to perfect the petition described in Title 5 of the Georgia Code for review of lower judicatory bodies and upon whom service of such petition may be effected or accepted on behalf of the lower judicatory board or agency, during normal business hours, at the regular offices of the City; and **the mayor** shall have authority to accept service and upon whom service of an appeal of a quasi-judicial decision may be effected or accepted on behalf of the City, during normal business hours, at the regular offices of the City.

Motion carried unanimously.

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12. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority's agreement for Annual Consultant Services for the City's own as needed use in compliance with the Newton County Shared Cost Initiative, through the end of 2023 which allows the expedition of certain waste and storm water infrastructure projects.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, Davis, and Henderson voting for. Council member Morgan voting against.

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13. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve a 5 year contract with Wattum Management Inc., for Electric Power Service.

Motion carried unanimously.

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14. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a price increase for underground and overhead electric contractors UTEC Construction, Inc.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, Davis, and Henderson voting for. Council member Morgan voting against.

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15. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the Airport's AWOS (Automated Weather Observing System) replacement and installation by sole source provider DBT Transportation Services in the amount of \$139,588.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

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16. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Davis to approve decommissioning a transmitter in the field due to outdated technology by DBT Transportation Services in the amount of \$3,000.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

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17. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve resolution specifying Mayor Steve Horton and Interim City Manager Tres Thomas as designees to communicate City decisions with respect to the Trust by jointly executing written directions to MEAG Power and the Trustee.

Motion carried unanimously.

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18. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to amend the current budget to include additional revenues and expenditures as actual figures become available.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council members Davis and Morgan voting against.

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19. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve **first** reading of proposed charter amendment to modernize the budget provisions:

“AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 2.08 AND SECTION 6.02 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON; TO REPEAL ALL OTHER ACTS AND ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Baggett, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council members Davis and Morgan voting against.

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Mayor Steve Horton informed everyone the budget approved on June 13, 2022 had some things not included such as the sewer expenditure project previously approved and property tax digest information that is not yet available. The Mayor stated there will need to be future budget amendments.

Ms. Charlotte Cain discussed a new international sport called Drone Soccer and it was suggested she share information on it. Ms. Cain stated the sport promotes children ages 12 years and up to build and fly drones. Ms. Cain further stated this encourages different career opportunities. Ms. Cain stated a recreation center or non-profit organization could put a team together and purchase different packages or there are school classroom bundles available which includes training for instructors. Ms. Cain further stated fundraising opportunities and grants are available also.

Ms. Carla Ferry discussed issues with a Council member regarding her property. Ms. Ferry passed out informational packets received from an open records request and discussed a citation she had been issued which resulted in a court date. Ms. Ferry informed the Mayor and Council that the citation is not something that can be enforced by the City of Covington and would like the citation eliminated so she can move forward with her healthcare treatment for breast cancer.

Council member Davis stated she would like time to review the packet and address the matter at a later time. Council member Davis expressed regret for Ms. Ferry's diagnosis and apologized for not reaching out to her.

Comments from the City Manager:

- GMA Convention being held June 23-June 28 in Savannah

Council member Keck stated that she is sorry for Ms. Ferry's illness and that she is after the house Ms. Ferry addressed, that is out of code, and not Ms. Ferry personally. Council member Keck further stated she concerned that anyone would think she was not concerned about the entire city and she would like divisive conversation to stop. She will be out of town tomorrow and be gone for two and a half weeks.

Council member Morgan stated he feels like there are some issues to be resolved between the City and Ms. Ferry and there are bigger issues than just one house within the City. Council member Morgan further stated everyone is important and no one should be heard more than others on Council as well as contacted about all issues. Council member Morgan stated his request for a text amendment for speed bumps was heard and not acted upon and that nothing has been done about pre-paid meter service as a result of a problem within this organization which appears divisive. Council member Morgan stated he did not like the way things were going and the community needs to be served better.

Council member Baggett stated the pre-paid meters have been addressed and are being worked on.

Council member Morgan asked for Council member Baggett to address him directly.

Mayor Horton asked that no one get out of order.

Council member Baggett stated she gets upset when Council member Morgan throws the race card and that the East Ward Council members had been told they were not welcome at the Petty Hill event by Council member Morgan.

Council member Morgan stated Council member Baggett was lying.

Council member Davis stated she has received a text message from a constituent in regards to Latham Home Sanitation not going through City Hall customer service and contacting them directly by phone. Council member Davis further stated there is no record of complaints with the City in doing this and wanted Latham to stop.

Mayor Horton stated Council member Davis is correct and this issue should not still exist.

Council member Floyd stated residents of Conyers Street have complained to him about speeding and that people are going to get hurt at the trail. Council member Floyd also stated the public restrooms at the Covington Square had been destroyed again and would like something done to stop this.

Mayor Steve Horton requested City Manager Tres Thomas to have the engineers look into some type of speed barrier at the Conyers Street location and other crossing locations of the trail and to also address securing the bathrooms.

Council member Henderson stated a citizen in the historic district received a letter about her house needing to be painted and it was recommended she sell her car to get the money if needed for the painting. Council member Henderson requested this be relaxed as there are bigger issues.

Mayor Horton stated he would like staff to look into possible grant programs for or postponement of code enforcement issues and utilities assistance as times are tough and mentioned Council had wanted to address these issues previously as well.

Council member Keck stated people want to help out others during tough times but don't know how and suggested a "day of service" be looked into.

Mayor's comments:

- SPLOST meeting with the county on June 27, 2022 at 6 PM
- Mayors of Newton County will meet June 22, 2022
- Meeting to continue discussion on EMS/hospital service on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 3:00 PM

- Future discussion needed in regards to designating the CPD building as the Covington Police Department/Almond J. Turner Law Enforcement Building
- Juneteenth parade was successful, well attended, great presentations of dancers and singers inside the Square
- Upcoming July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration.

Mayor Steve Horton emphasized he was the one wanting the build-to-rent issue brought up and addressed as he wanted the Council to be aware of what was to come.

City Manager Tres Thomas addressed Council member Morgan's concern over the text amendment being written for speed bumps in that there are conflicts with a traffic calming policy adopted years ago by Council and that he is working with the Planning and Zoning director on other options. He stated there is a text amendment being worked on that needs to be massaged and he will present it at next Council meeting.

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Being no further business meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

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Steve Horton, Mayor

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Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk