

CALLED MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, FEBRUARY 13, 2023, 5:30 PM.

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

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

Mayor Horton stated the called meeting is in regards to Legion Field and the related associated use procedures and requirements. Mayor Horton further stated a promoter has attended a few recent Council meetings with concerns about the rules and procedures requirements for events at Legion Field, particularly regarding the sound/decibel level requirement.

Community Development Director Ken Malcom stated there have been meetings with a promoter and the Community Development Department, and said promoter does not agree with decibel requirement of no greater than 60 decibels. Mr. Malcom further stated providing a sound production provider was discussed in the meetings, and there is no signed contract with said promoter currently.

City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated Mayor Horton received an email from said promoter's business partner, Ms. Sanders, alleging racial discrimination against them. Mr. Turner further stated Ms. Sanders questioned the RFP process for a sound production provider/technician for concerts at Legion Field, as only one non-minority provider was offered to use by Community Development. Mr. Turner stated a RFP process should be in place for sound production providers in regards to Legion Field concert events that could comply with City noise ordinance.

Council member Baggett stated the venue at Legion Field is a community venue and not a concert venue, and Council needs to decide at this meeting that only community sanctioned events should be allowed at Legion Field beginning July 1, 2023. Council member Baggett further stated Legion Field is a community park with a stage, and should be treated as such.

Council member Morgan stated Legion Field venue should benefit community as a whole.

Community Development Director Ken Malcom stated other venues were researched, including Chastain Park. Mr. Malcom displayed a visual of a production rig used at Legion Field concert events and stated a RFQ would be advertised for a sound production provider to monitor and operate in order to limit and reverberate sound. Mr. Malcom read the qualifications for a sound production provider and stated legal has reviewed and approved them. Mr. Malcom stated the fee for the sound production provider would be included in the facility rental fee, and payment to the sound production provider would occur after the events were complete by the City.

Council member Floyd stated the noise ordinance must be enforced, and events at Legion Field should be restricted to events that benefit the community.

Council member Davis would like the Legion Field event contract to remain as is.

Council member Baggett stated there needs to be clear guidelines on the expectations at Legion Field.

Mrs. Kim Carter stated there does not need to be any professional concerts at the Legion Field venue, and she would like to see a published set of rules and regulations.

1. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Morgan to authorize the Community Development Department to solicit Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Sound Production Providers for Public Events for Legion Field and to adjust the fee schedule to pass along the cost to the applicant of event.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Floyd to limit the use of Legion Field's outside public events to City's community partners, non-profit 501c3 and Georgia non-profit corporations, commencing July 1st, 2023.

Council member Morgan stated he would like a work session further discussing the public events allowed at Legion Field.

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

Council member Floyd stated there was an issue with parking at the Mystic Grill brought to his attention, and he would like clarification.

City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated someone informed him the owner of the Mystic Grill was placing cones or ropes around parking spaces on the Square for exclusive use. Mr. Turner further stated the ordinance does not allow someone to rope off or place cones part of a road, sidewalk, or parking space for personal use, and City of Covington Police is to enforce removal of the blockades within twenty-four hour notice or such shorter time as Council deems. Mr. Turner stated if the blockades are not removed, City of Covington Police are to issue a citation for obstruction a public space.

Council member Morgan stated he has never witnessed parking spaces blocked off by cones or rope.

Council member Keck stated a parking permit should be required.

Mrs. Kim Carter stated if an ordinance is in place to handle parking blockades it needs to be enforced, and she has pictures to prove Mystic Grill ropes or cones off parking spaces at approximately 11:00 PM and parks cars in said spaces the entire next day. Mrs. Carter stated more enforcement is needed regarding violations of said ordinance.

Council member Baggett stated Sherwood's Flowers places cones around parking spaces during the day as well.

Mayor Horton stated the blockading of Square parking spaces will be placed on the Council agenda for February 20, 2023

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk