

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, MARCH 20, 2023, 6:30 PM.

Mayor Steve Horton presided with Mayor Pro-tem Anthony Henderson, Council members: Susie Keck, 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. Council member Fleeta Baggett was absent.

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

1. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on March 6, 2023.

Motion carried unanimously.

Council member Anthony Henderson entered meeting at 6:34 PM.

2. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve the **final** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISION OF TITLE 13 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 13.08.380 (RIDERS AND ADJUSTMENTS) OF CHAPTER 13.08 (ELECTRIC SYSTEM) THEREOF**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the **final** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISION OF TITLE 2 OF THE SAID

CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 2.32.030 (CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD) OF CHAPTER 2.32 (POLICE DEPARTMENT) THEREOF**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to amend the agenda to add “Discussion of CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) target areas.”

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to amend the agenda to add “Discussion and acceptance of the Ashford Park Development Final Plat.”

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Claudette Anuszczyk of 7138 Woodland Ave SE stated the speeding control measures in place on Woodland Ave are not working. Ms. Anuszczyk stated a speed hump is present but ignored, and she has come close to being struck by speeding vehicles while collecting mail from her mailbox. Ms. Anuszczyk further stated many residents of Woodland Ave feel their safety is at risk.

Mayor Horton stated he would like to share contact information for Ms. Anuszczyk with the City Manager and the Police Chief.

Mr. Matt Crowe of 843 Cornish Mountain Rd, Oxford GA stated he would like the Council to consider what the people of the community want in regards to high-density housing. Mr. Crowe stated he surveyed many citizens of the City and County in regards to high-density housing and no one was in favor. Mr. Crowe asked Council to do what is best for the community, be stewards of the community, and evaluate their vision for the community in considering the upcoming vote for the Alcovy Rd Overlay. Mr. Crowe stated the overlay was written not by the municipality but by the developer, and public services will not have sufficient incoming tax revenue from the proposed 680 apartments or townhomes. Mr. Crowe stated he settled at his current residence knowing the property zoning was M-2, and strongly urged Council to have it remain as such.

Ms. Kathryn Henderson of 155 Waters Edge Dr. stated there are many issues she is concerned with regarding the proposed Alcovy Rd Overlay including traffic and the already strained school system. Ms. Henderson stated she taught school in the Newton County School System for 30 years and has seen the result of uncontrolled growth, forcing teachers and students out of school buildings and into trailers for years as well as requiring disorderly schedules for the students.

Mayor Horton stated the Alcovy Rd Overlay proposal is scheduled to come before the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 11, 2023 and a public hearing will be held. Mayor Horton stated another public hearing will be held at the April 17, 2023 Council meeting, and encouraged the public to attend.

6. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Keck to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **off-premises consumption** only for:

Pace Street BP

2106 Pace Street

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Keck to appoint Danny Wisner to the Citizen’s Review Board.

Motion carried unanimously with East Ward members.

8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to **table** the first reading of a proposed charter amendment to Section 2.05 and Section 2.11 until the April 3, 2023 Council meeting due to an advertising issue.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve a Contract For Electric Power Service with Archer Aviation, contingent upon Archer Aviation and City attorney being in agreement and signing the contract.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve a five-year license agreement with Communications Venture Corporation, d/b/a INdigital, amounting to a discounted first year cost of \$12,480.00 and annual recurring cost of \$14,352.00, for 911 RapidSOS Premium Services and Software.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the sole bid from Live Event Solutions for a sound and lighting production provider for Legion Field outdoor venue events, including a two-year contract, with fee based on each event/project that is included in the rental fee charge.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to reject all received bids for a fireworks provider.

Motion carried unanimously.

A RFP will be re-bid to include Newton County's contribution to the proposal when determined.

A discussion ensued regarding CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) target areas. Mayor Horton stated several citizens contacted him regarding signs posted near the Washington Street Community Center informing the community of a public meeting, and the sign was informing of a public meeting for the Sandhill-Texas Alley community to attend on March 23, 2023 regarding applications for the CDBG. Mayor Horton stated there are three targeted areas in need of housing improvements discussed in the past during GICH meetings (Georgia Initiative for Community Housing) including Settlers Grove, Green Acres, and Covington South. Mayor Horton stated he contacted Special Projects Coordinator Randy Conner for an explanation of why the Sandhill-Texas Alley Community target area was chosen for the CDBG. Mayor Horton stated his concerns being Council did not make the decision to select the Sandhill-Texas Alley community as the target area for the CDBG as elected representatives of the community, and that the public meeting was not brought to the attention of Mayor and Council. Mayor Horton stated the target areas should be Settlers Grove, Green Acres, and Covington South as discussed during previous GICH meetings. Mr. Conner stated the housing conditions survey was based on an

urban re-development area, not the entire City. Mr. Conner stated the areas identified for the GICH program were not chosen based on housing conditions, but for connectivity, food deserts, service access, and crime occurrence. Mayor Horton disagreed with Mr. Conner. Mr. Conner stated the CHIP grant was denied for the Green Acres community, and the higher concentration of a low-moderate income sub area is the primary factor for the CDBG. Mr. Conner stated a smaller target area must be created to be eligible, as the urban re-development area has more than doubled in size, and the Georgia DCA actually prefers one street selection. Mr. Conner believed an email was sent from him to Council informing of the public meeting and updating Mayor and Council on the CDBG. Mayor Horton questioned the percentage of owner-occupied homes in the Sandhill-Texas Alley area, and Mr. Conner stated 65% of homes were owner-occupied, 35% of homes were corporate owned, and the area is inside census tract 1007 being the highest concentration of low-moderate income. Council member Davis would like a committee formed for the CDBG. Mr. Conner stated there is a very small timeframe to have information for the grant gathered and submitted, deadline being June 2, 2023, and staff has the specific knowledge and qualifications to apply. Council member Keck questioned why an area in either Settlers Grove, Green Acres, or Covington South was not considered. Mr. Conner stated the grant is highly competitive and the low-moderate income percentage was the primary factor in choosing the area in order to increase score. Council member Morgan stated the City Manager should be aware of things in order to keep Council informed, and he feels City staff is not working under Council direction. Mr. Conner stated he moved forward as he believed he was given instruction to do by Council. Mayor Horton stated he would like everyone to work together, and questioned Council on opinions regarding Mr. Conner moving forward from this point regarding the area selection for the grant. Council member Keck suggested allowing Mr. Connor to move forward. Mr. Conner discussed all of the work required for the grant application, as well as what is required from the homeowners. Mayor Horton stated he still has concern that the proposed area is contrary to the GICH program.

13. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Keck to approve Special Projects Coordinator Randy Conner to move forward with the CDBG application and the selection of the Sandhill-Texas Alley area as the targeted area.

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

City Planner Renee Criswell gave a detailed report and staff recommendations regarding the Ashford Park Development final plat.

14. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Morgan to accept the Ashford Park Development Final Plat, with contingencies for developers to work with staff to meet needed technical standards including:

- Minor as-built items
- Final site inspection for road requirements
- Developer responsibility for all installation, easements and fees related to water and sewer
- All sewer easements will be platted and deeded to the City of Covington after inspections and as-builts of sewer
- All water and sewer construction is to follow current City of Covington standards and specifications

Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from the City Manager:

-Congratulations to Electric Department for receiving the Platinum Level Safety Award from the Electric Cities of Georgia presented by the Georgia Municipal Safety Task Force

-RSVP for the Boards and Committees Appreciation Banquet coming out this week, please respond by March 31, 2023

Deputy City Manager John King stated there is a Community Clean-Up down the Washington St corridor scheduled for Saturday March 25, 2023 beginning at 9:00 AM, weather permitting.

Council member Morgan stated he knows many City employees as he worked for the City as well, and it is important to have the right people in place for their position. Council member Morgan stated everyone has a responsibility for their position and all information is needed by Council to address the community. Council member Morgan stated his intentions were not to offend, and feels City employees do not respect elected officials. Council member Morgan stated Ms. Williams would like an update on the three-way stop at Conyers and Emory Streets.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated the property with hedges blocking southern view from the stop at Conyers St recently approved the City to improve the sight distance by cutting them back, and staff will continue to evaluate measures to improve intersection.

Mayor Horton stated there is a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Residence Inn on Thursday March 23, 2023 at 11:00 AM, and a Work Session scheduled for March

28, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Covington Municipal Airport. Mayor Horton stated there is a ribbon cutting scheduled on March 29, 2023 for Ascend Technologies Battery Recycling at 11:00 AM. Mayor Horton reiterated staff and Council should be informed of decisions in order to look out for one another.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk