

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, January 24, 2022

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Mayor Stevenson presided with Mayor Pro Tem Cochran and Commissioners Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins, and McDaniel present. Commissioner Collins opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – January 10, 2022

The Minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by an unanimous consent.

Pleasant Valley Road – Chulio Road Guest Comments

Mr. Duke Hale, 41 Dover Drive, addressed the City Commission. Mr. Hale stated his reason for speaking tonight is to keep the proposed Pleasant Valley Preserve residential development before the City Commission. Mr. Hale spoke specifically about conditions on Chulio Road. He outlined his personal experiences on this section of road since moving to the Hampton East Subdivision eight years ago. He mentioned problems with Chulio Road such as road width, shoulder drop-offs, blind entrances and curves, oncoming traffic, and blinding vehicle lights at the hill near the Highway 411 intersection.

Mr. Hale also commented on communication from City Manager Rich regarding past efforts to get SPLOST Funding dedicated for Chulio Road improvements, which have all been unsuccessful. Mr. Hale concluded his comments by referencing the name of the planned residential development of Hampton Preserve. Mr. Hale questioned what is being preserved at the new planned development.

Service Pins

Mayor Stevenson, along with City Manager Rich and Human Resources Director Kristy Shepard, presented service pins for City of Rome employees who have completed 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 years of service.

The following employees were awarded these service pins:

Last Name	First Name	Department	Year Pin
Norton	Joey	Building Inspection	20
Hoppes	Debbie	Facilities	20 *
Rhinehart	Toni	Finance	20 *
Helms	Nate	Fire	20 *
Hunt	Greg	Fire	20
Stone	Lee	Landfill	20 *
Sailors	Pete	Police	20 *
Strickland	Gloria	Police	20

Studdard	Patricia	Police	20	
Yarbrough	Tony	Police	20	*
Spivey	William	Solid Waste	20	*
Gordon	Clay	Transit	20	
Creamer	Eugene	Water	20	
Middleton	Bryan	Water	20	
Parker	Kyle	Water	20	
Rayburn	James	Water	20	*
Abbott	Greg	Fire	25	*
Collier	Grant	Fire	25	*
Hickman II	Steven	Fire	25	*
Holder	James	Fire	25	*
Ramey	Robbie	Fire	25	*
Blair	Rusty	Police	25	*
Watson	Ernie	Street	25	
Schroeder	Bill	Water	25	
Gibson	Janice	Transit	30	
Moser	Jim	Police	35	*
Holsey	Laron	Solid Waste	35	*
Nelson	Lamar	Water	40	*
Webber	Paul	Police	45	
Vines	Randy	Water	45	*

* Present

Mr. Rich congratulated these employees for reaching these milestones with the City of Rome. He also commented on the importance of career employees and the valuable experiences to our workforce.

City Employees – Education Accomplishments

Mayor Stevenson, along with City Manager Rich and Human Resource Director Kristy Shepard, recognized the following City of Rome employees for their education accomplishments in 2021:

Name	Department	Degree	
Javier Daniels	Fire	BACHELOR OF BIBLICAL STUDIES	
Jamie Stone	Fire	BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN FIRE ADMINISTRATION	*
Philip Little	Fire	ASSOCIATES OF SCIENCE IN PARAMEDICINE	*

Brittany Griffin	Planning	CONGRESS FOR NEW URBANISM (CNU)	
Matt Cowan	Police	ASSOCIATES OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE TECHNOLOGY	
Justin Messer	Public Works	LOCAL ASSISTED PROJECTS (LAP)	
Tim Garrett	Solid Waste	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	*
Teresa Harrell	Water	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	*

* Present

Alcohol Ordinance Amendment – First Reading

Secretary Smith reported that an Alcohol Ordinance amendment is being placed on First Reading tonight, which would amend the wine pouring and consumption hours. This ordinance amendment is scheduled for a Second Reading at the February 14th City Commission meeting:

Street Closing Ordinance – Jennings Street

Commissioner Cochran moved to adopt an ordinance which would finalize the process to close Jennings Street and deed the property to the adjoining owner. This section of Jennings Street is approximately 266 feet in length and 50 feet wide. The adjoining owner is the Fountain Family Properties LLLP. Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-01-03 Rezone 410-414 East First Avenue

Commissioner Quick introduced rezoning file Z22-01-03, the request to rezone property located at 410-414 East First Avenue from Community Commercial and Light Industrial to Multi-Family Residential. This property is identified by Tax Map #s J14F-062, 063, 064, 065, 066, 067, 068, and 071. The Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning request.

Rome Planner Artagus Newell reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property. Mr. Newell stated that the owner wishes to develop approximately 41 townhomes on this site.

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order and speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. David Buckel, of the Buckel Design Group, Duluth, Georgia. Mr. Buckel explained that the owner’s plan is to develop townhouses on this site. Approximately 41 units will be planned, and the units will be two-story units with one car garage and three-story units with two car garages. The entrances to this development will come from East 4th Street. There will also be overflow parking onsite. With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the Public Hearing.

Since this property is located within the Historic District, the Historic Preservation Commission approval will be needed for this site plan.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request to Multi-Family Residential as submitted. Commissioner Askew seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-01-06 Rezone Woodrow Wilson Way

Commissioner Quick introduced rezoning file Z22-01-06, the request to rezone property located on Woodrow Wilson Way from Multi-Family Residential and Community Commercial to Multi-Family Residential. This property is identified by Floyd County Tax Map # I13W-002. The Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval.

Rome Planner Artagus Newell was present and reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property. Mr. Newell explained that this is approximately 14.4 acres in size and is currently owned by Berry College.

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Jimmy Byars, 19 Rockridge Road, and representing Berry College. Mr. Byars stated that the north side of Woodrow Wilson Way would be developed as part of this plan, and this will contain an apartment development. Also speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Josh Mindell of Gateway Development. Mr. Mindell stated that 200 units of multi-family housing are planned for this development. These will be market rate apartments, and their evaluation is that the demand for these units is currently present.

Speaking in opposition to the planned development was Ms. Angela Ravino, 1410 Kingston Highway. Ms. Ravino stated that she moved to Rome and appreciates the tranquility of our community, and she fears that this plan and other planned developments will take away from Rome's charm.

Mr. Josh Mindell offered brief rebuttal comments stating that he feels this planned development on Woodrow Wilson Way will be a credit and an asset for Rome. With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request as submitted, and Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion.

There were brief comments by the City Commissioners concerning this rezoning request. Questions were posed, and it was clarified that this will be taxable property and privately owned. Gateway Management, a sister company of Gateway Development, will manage the property. Construction will begin later this year with units planned to come online during the summer of 2023. It was explained that the expected rental rates will be approximately \$1,050 for one-bedroom units, \$1,400 for two-bedroom units, and \$1,600 for three-bedroom units. Commissioner Cochran has not participated in the discussion and explained that he would not vote on this matter due to having contracts with Berry College.

With the discussion concluded, Commissioner Quick's motion to approve the rezoning request as submitted was approved by the following vote:

YES: Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins, and McDaniel
ABSTAIN: Cochran

ULDC Amendment – Townhomes and Tri/Duplexes Along Major Streets

Commissioner Quick presented a proposed amendment to the Unified Land Development Code. This amendment would allow townhomes and tri/duplexes along major streets with restrictions. Planning Staff has recommended approval, and the Planning Commission unanimously supported the amendment.

Rome Planner Artagus Newell reviewed the proposed amendment and displayed a city map showing major roads and collector-type streets. Mr. Newell explained that, while major roads do include the state routes that pass through our towns such as Turner McCall Boulevard, Martha Berry Boulevard, and Broad Street, it also includes other streets. Examples given were 5th Avenue, West Third Street, John Davenport Drive, Division Street, Redmond Road, Riverside Parkway, and Calhoun Avenue. “If these multi-family uses are not allowed along major roads, then it pushes them deeper into areas that have traditionally been neighborhoods of single-family detached homes.” There have been numerous incidences where someone has attempted to rezone property to multi-family residential in areas that predominantly consist of site-built, single-family detached homes and faced massive opposition from the neighbors. Many of these requests were ultimately turned down and many of them should have been because they should have been constructed closer to major roads, and fortunately, the ULDC has always prohibited this.

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order concerning the amendment. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Collins moved to table this proposed amendment until it could be studied further. Commissioner Collins feels that this change will “change the face of Rome”. He also suggested that this be considered as a City Commission Retreat topic since the City Commission will likely have a Planning Retreat schedule within the next two months. Commissioner McDaniel spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance, stating that it will allow the type of construction that Rome has when it is growing. Commissioner Collins again expressed his opposition and suggested that this be saved for a retreat topic since there has been no input to this point by the City Commission. Commissioner Cochran agreed that tabling the request is probably the best course of action at this time. Commissioner Cochran seconded, and that motion was approved by the following vote:

YES: Cochran, Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Askew, and Collins
NO: Quick, McDaniel

Re-Adopt the ULDC and Zoning Maps

Rome Planner Artagus Newell stated that it is time for the City of Rome to re-adopt the Unified Land Development Code and Zoning Maps. This is an annual process that the city undertakes each year.

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order concerning this re-adoption. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to re-adopt the Unified Land Development Code and Zoning Maps. Commissioner Doss seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Newell reviewed the statistics for the previous year regarding such items as annexations, rezonings, and SUP files, along with Historic Preservation and Board of Adjustment applications.

City Manager Vehicle – Decal Exemption

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order concerning the proposal to adopt a resolution to exempt the City Manager’s vehicle from the State of Georgia Decal Requirement. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition, and the Public Hearing was closed. Commissioner Quick moved to adopt a resolution to exempt the City Manager’s vehicle from the State of Georgia Decal Requirement for 2022. Commissioner Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Inmate Agreement

City Manager Rich explained that he is recommending the adoption of an agreement which would provide an additional inmate crew. This crew will be used primarily at the Landfill for litter control. The agreement is for calendar year 2022 at a price of \$62,153.30. This amount will be paid from the Solid Waste Fund.

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt the Inmate Agreement. Commissioner Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

South Meadows Groundbreaking

Mayor Stevenson announced a groundbreaking ceremony would be held for the South Meadows Apartment Homes on Friday, January 28th at 11:30 at 12 Pollock Street.

GMA Training

Mayor Stevenson expressed her appreciation to the citizens for allowing the City Commissioners to attend the Georgia Municipal Association Cities United Conference recently in Atlanta. Mayor Stevenson spoke of the amount of training that was provided at this conference and that would allow our commissioners to better serve and to help make Rome the best city in Georgia.

Certificates of Accomplishments

Mayor Stevenson announced that Commissioner Jim Bojo had received his Certificate of Achievement from the Georgia Municipal Association for completion of the 72 hours of training for this certification. Commissioner Randy Quick has received his Certificate of Excellence having completed 120 hours of training. Commissioner Quick has also completed the Robert E. Knox Municipal Leadership Institute.

COVID Report

Commissioner Cochran reported that, as of January 23rd, there have been 21,241 confirmed cases of COVID in Floyd County. There were 1,018 cases confirmed last week. A total of 335 Floyd County deaths have been contributed to COVID with five occurring last week. Commissioner Cochran also stated that the mortality rate for the Alpha and Delta surges of COVID were 1 in 50, while the Omicron variant has resulted in a mortality rate of 1 in 350.

Solid Waste Commission

Commissioner Cochran announced that the Solid Waste Commission will meet on Tuesday, January 25th at 8:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Metropolitan Freight Study

Commissioner Cochran announced that the Transportation Policy Committee had voted to participate in the Metropolitan Freight Study for our community.

Shorter Avenue Paving

Commissioner Cochran reported that, after communications with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the scheduled paving of Shorter Avenue has been moved from 2025 to 2022.

Development Oversight Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Development Oversight Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 1st at 10 a.m. at the Floyd County Administration Building.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee will meet next on Thursday, February 3rd at 8:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Atlanta Gas Light Paving

Commissioner Bojo inquired regarding the status of Atlanta Gas Light's final paving after the big pipeline project in our community. Mr. Rich responded that the majority of the work was done; however, there was still some touchup paving left in a few areas in our city.

Clocktower - 150th Anniversary

Commissioner Doss announced that there will be a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the City of Rome Clocktower on January 27th at 11:30 a.m. at the Clocktower grounds.

Downtown Development Authority

Commissioner Quick announced that the Downtown Development Authority will meet on Thursday, February 10th at 8:30 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Planning Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Rome/Floyd Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, February 3rd at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Youth Task Force

Commissioner Askew announced that the next meeting of the Youth Task Force Committee is scheduled for February 1st.

Community Development Committee

Commissioner Collins announced that the Community Development Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 8th at 10 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful - Cleanup

Commissioner Collins announced that Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful Commission will hold a road and trail cleanup in partnership with TRED on Saturday, February 5th from 9 a.m. until noon at the GE Trail, 1935 Redmond Circle.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk