

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, March 27, 2023

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 McDaniel opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – March 13, 2023

The Minutes of the March 13, 2023, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Education and Sharing Day

Commissioners McDaniel and Beeman presented a proclamation proclaiming April 22, 2023, as Education and Sharing Day in the City of Rome. This proclamation was presented to Jeffery Rosengarten, representing CHABAD of Rural Georgia.

Billy Cooper

Mr. Billy Cooper addressed the Rome City Commission during the special caucus session prior to the beginning of tonight's meeting. Mr. Cooper spoke regarding the funding proposal to build the new Rome Middle School, and is opposed to borrowing funds to obligate the next three ELOST referendums or the city property tax payers.

Park Court – Street Closing Resolution

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt a resolution which would initiate the process to close a portion of Park Court. Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

This closing is necessary due to the residential units that are being constructed on 2nd Avenue at this site of the former AT&T building.

Senior Citizen Center – Name Change Resolution

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt a resolution which would change the name of Rome's Senior Center located at 409 Riverside Parkway to the Rome Community Center. Commissioner Quick second the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor. City Manager Rich reported this is in association with a rebranding of this city facility.

A23-03-01 Annex 210 Harrison Road

Commissioner Quick presented annexation file A23-03-01, the request to annex 210 Harrison Road. This property is identified by Floyd County tax map number H12Z-413 and is zoned Suburban Residential. There is no proposed change in the current zoning.

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps, and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Wood stated this is a single family residential dwelling.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the annexation request of 210 Harrison Road with Suburban Residential zoning, Commissioner McDaniel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z/SUP 23-03-01 Rezone 936 N 2nd Avenue

Commissioner Quick presented file Z/SUP23-03-01, the request to rezone property located at 936 N. 2nd Avenue, from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential and issue a special use permit for use as a duplex. This property is identified as Floyd County tax map number I13Z-202. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended the approval of this request.

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps, and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Wood stated this property has been used for a duplex for some time.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the request to rezone 936 N. 2nd Avenue from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential and issue a special use permit for a duplex. Commissioner Askew seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z23-01-04 Rezone Technology Parkway Property

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-01-04, the request to rezone property located on Technology Parkway NW and identified as Floyd County Tax Parcels H12W-016F and H12Z-006A, from Light Industrial to Heavy Industrial. The Planning staff has recommended denial of this request, and the Planning Commission unanimously recommend approval.

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps, and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Wood stated that the applicant intends to locate incinerator equipment on this property. Mr. Wood also stated that a letter opposing this rezoning was received by the Planning Commission staff, however it was inadvertently left out of the packet of material sent to the Planning Commission members and others.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. Speaking in favor of the rezoning was Mr. Lee Bagley, 932 N. 2nd Avenue. Mr. Bagley stated he would like to locate his air incinerator at this site. Mr. Bagley reported that this equipment was operating at a property on John Davenport Drive. He described this air incinerator as creating minimal ash or emissions, however heavy Industrial zoning is needed to acquire a permit to operate this equipment. Mr. Bagley stated this is a very clean operation and the wood debris brought to this site would be incinerated almost immediately with little on site storage. With there being no one else to speak regarding this matter, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Cochran had recused himself from this matter at the initial introduction by Commissioner Quick.

Due to the omission of the letter opposing this rezoning, Commissioner Quick moved to send this request back to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Askew seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor (with Commissioner Cochran not participating or voting).

Z23-03-02 Rezone 1008 Calhoun Avenue

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-03-02, the request to rezone 1008 Calhoun Avenue, identified as Floyd County tax map number K13Y-302, from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of the request.

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps, and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Wood stated that this property does contain a residential structure that has been used for residential purposes and the rezoning request would match the use of the property. Mr. Wood also stated that there are other properties in the area with similar issues that could for rezoning.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request of 1008 Calhoun Avenue from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential. Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Good Friday Holiday

Manager Rich stated that City offices would be closed on Friday, April 7th in observance of the Good Friday holiday. Garbage, recycling, and yard cart services will be amended during this holiday schedule. The Walker Mountain Landfill will be closed all day on Friday, April 7th but will be open on Saturday, April 8th.

Joint Services Committee

Mayor Stevenson announced that the Joint Services Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 4th at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee will meet on Thursday, April 6th at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Riverside Parkway and State Route 1 Loop Contract

Commissioner Beeman moved to approve the adoption of a consultant agreement with EXP US Services Incorporated for planning and design work for the intersection of Riverside Parkway and State Route 1 Loop. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion. Commissioner Beeman also moved to adopt Task Order #1 associated with this same project. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion and the vote for the adoption of both documents was unanimously in favor.

City Manger Rich explained that there is a \$1.4 million Georgia Department of Transportation grant that will be used for this project. The City's portion of this project is not to exceed \$196,000. The end result of the design change at this intersection, will result in two thru lanes from Riverside Parkway crossing

Georgia State Route 1 Loop. It was also noted that a left turn option from Chatillon Road onto Riverside Parkway will remain.

Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, April 6th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Solid Waste Committee

Commissioner Askew announced that the Solid Waste Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 28th at 8:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Trails and Riverways

Commissioner Doss announced that with the coming spring weather, more of our citizens are using our excellent trail and river access system.

SPLOST Appointments – 2023

Commissioner Collins moved to appoint Ms. Monica Sheppard, Mr. Jake Hager, and Mr. Sam Burrell, Jr to serve as city representatives on the 2023 Citizens SPLOST Committee. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Commissioner Collins announced that the fourth appointee to the SPLOST Committee has been discussed by the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees voted (2-1) to recommend that Mr. David Clonts be appointed as a City of Rome representative on the Citizens SPLOST Committee. Commissioner Collins announced that he has previously nominated Ms. Wendy Davis to serve as a city appointee.

With there being two nominations for the final SPLOST position, Secretary Smith announced that he would call the roll and each commissioner would name their candidate of choice, David Clonts or Wendy Davis.

Ms. Wendy Davis was appointed as the City of Rome’s appointee to the Citizens SPLOST Committee by the following vote:

- Cochran: Davis**
- Bojo: Clonts**
- Beeman: Davis**
- Doss: Clonts**
- Quick: Clonts**
- Askew: Davis**
- Collins: Davis**
- McDaniel: Clonts**
- Mayor Stevenson: Davis**

General Administration

Commissioner Collins announced that the General Administration committee will meet on Tuesday, April 11th, at 11:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room. The General Administration meeting scheduled for March 28th has been cancelled.

Rome Middle School – Caucus Discussion

Commissioner Collins announced that prior to tonight’s meeting, a special caucus session was held to continue discussing the new Rome Middle School. More financial information was presented by bond consultant Bill Camp and the City Commissioners discussed this data along with representatives from the Rome Board of Education. The City Commission is expected to have more information regarding final construction numbers by July 2023. A vote to authorize the issuance of bonds will be needed before bonds can be issued.

Food/Drink Ratio Variance Request – Steel N Spirits, 409 Broad Street

The food/drink ratio variance request tabled at the February 27th City Commission meeting was addressed. Mr. Nathan Roberts, owner of Steel N Spirits, 409 Borad Street, had requested that he be allowed to meet Rome’s food/drink ratio with products other than food. Mr. Roberts would like to accomplish this with the sale of unique salvaged steel products. Mr. Roberts was present at tonight’s meeting.

Commissioner McDaniel moved to remove this item from the table. Commissioner Collins seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Roberts briefly addressed the City Commission and restated his desire to operate a small bar at 409 Broad Street without food service and he described how he would like to meet Rome’s food/drink ratio with the sale of his steel products.

Commissioner McDaniel moved to approve Mr. Roberts’s food/drink ratio variance request and Commissioner Collins seconded. Commissioner Doss requested that Mr. Roberts be required to provide last call for alcohol at 10:30 p.m. and close at 11:00 p.m. each night. Mr. Roberts would have the option of petitioning the Alcohol Control Commission to be open later than 11:00 p.m. (as late as normal pouring hours) for holidays or special occasions. There were no objections to Commissioner Doss’s request. Commissioner Collins asked if there would be a special lower fee for this type of license holders who were required to close earlier, and Commissioner McDaniel reported that that was not an option at this time. The motion to grant the variance request was approved by the following vote:

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

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioner McDaniel reported that the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission is evaluating a program which would assist property owners in replacement of lead pipes that extend from the City’s water system to the individual homes.

The Regional Commission is supportive of Rome’s plan to build a reverse osmosis water treatment plant to address the forever chemicals that are in our water supply.

Greater Rome Convention Visitors Bureau

Commissioner McDaniel congratulated the Greater Rome Convention Visitors Bureau for their continued successful efforts in our community and that operation is highly respected throughout the State of Georgia.

Aundi Lesley Downtown Development Director

City Manger Rich stated that Downtown Development Director Aundi Lesley was currently attending a National Main Street Conference where she was one of the speakers. Ms. Lesley is addressing the open container ordinance which is applicable in Downtown Rome.

Former Commissioner Bill Irmschier

Commissioner Doss reported that former Rome City Commissioner Bill Irmschier recently had a serious fall and is in the hospital. Commissioner Doss encouraged everyone to keep Mr. Irmschier in their thoughts.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk