

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, May 9, 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 Quick opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – April 25, 2022

The Minutes of the April 25, 2022, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by a unanimous consent.

Peace Officers Memorial Day

Commissioner Askew presented a joint city/county proclamation proclaiming May 13, 2022, as Peace Officers Memorial Day in our community. This proclamation was presented to Rome Police Chief Denise Downer-McKinney. Chief McKinney spoke briefly regarding the Peace Officers Memorial Day event and described it as a way to honor those officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty and to serve as an inspiration to current and future police officers.

Professional Municipal Clerks Week

Mayor Pro Tem Cochran presented a city proclamation proclaiming the week of May 1 through 7, 2022 as Professional Municipal Clerks Week in the City of Rome. This proclamation was presented to City Clerk Joe Smith.

State of the City

City Manager Rich took the podium to deliver the 2022 State of the City presentation. Commissioner Rich went into detail with a PowerPoint presentation, which covered many areas of city operations. Mr. Rich stated he is very proud that Rome finished 2021 in a strong financial position. Revenues have exceeded expenditures and the result has been an increase in Rome's fund balance. He commented in particular in regarding the increases to public safety salaries and a healthy increase in our Local Options Sales Tax distribution. Considerable time was spent on city facilities including Stonebridge Golf Course, Rome Tennis Center, as well as Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax projects that have affected various facilities. Rome's housing shortage and the projection for numerous housing developments were covered and Mr. Rich recognized Rome's employees as our most valuable asset.

BRIDGE Academy

City manager Rich and Human Resources Director Kristi Shepard recognized the inaugural class of Rome's BRIDGE Academy. The following employees participated in this session:

Jackson Abercrombie – Purchasing
Hannah Bagley – Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful
Misael Castrejon – Rome Police
Rhonda Flemister – Rome Police
John Hendrix – Water & Sewer

Jeff Hill – Water Reclamation Facilities
Kristi Kent – Tourism
Kelley Parker – City Manager’s Office
Suzanne Parris – Community Development
Jamie Stone – Rome/Floyd Fire
Lisa Winston – Transit
Sarah Huffman – Human Resources – Facilitator/Trolley Driver

It was noted that the BRIDGE academy originated from the City of Rome Employee Engagement Committee.

2022 Election Qualifying Fee Resolution

Secretary Smith explained that even though this is not a city of Rome election year there will be a special election this year with the purpose of filling a vacancy on the Rome board of education. This general election will take place on November 8, 2022.

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt a resolution which would set the qualifying fee for Rome Board of Education election at the normal qualifying fee at 3% of the Annual Salary (\$126). Commissioner McDaniel seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor. The qualifying period for this election will be from August 15 through August 19, 2022 and qualifying will take place at its normal location – the Rome City Clerk’s Office.

Annexation Special Use Permit and Rezonings – First Reading

Secretary Smith announced that the following annexation, specials use permit request and rezonings are being placed on first reading.

- A) A22-05-01 – Request to annex the property located at 112 Fieldwood Rd: Floyd County Tax Parcel K13Y346, zoned Suburban Residential (No Change). (Planning Commission recommends approval, 7-0).
- B) SUP22-05-01 – Request for a special use permit for a change in use from a hotel to apartments for property zoned Community Commercial located at Avenue A, Floyd County Tax Parcel J13Y479. (Planning Commission recommends approval, 7-0).
- C) Z22-05-03 – Request to rezone from Office Institutional to Suburban Residential for the property located at Burnett Circle; Floyd County Tax Parcel H13J130. (Planning Commission Recommends approval, 7-0).
- D) Z22-05-04 – Request to rezone from Heavy Commercial to Light Industrial for the property located at 14 and 15 Commerce Court; Floyd County Tax Parcel J15W250 and J15W251. (Planning Commission recommends approval, 7-0).
- E) Z22-05-05 – Request to rezone from Neighborhood Office Commercial to Duplex Residential for the property located at 301 and 303 Redmond Road; Floyd County Tax Parcel I13W098 and I13W099. (Planning Commission recommends approval, 7-0).

These all come with a unanimous recommendation for approval from the Planning Commissioner and public hearings have been scheduled for the May 23rd City Commission meeting.

Alcohol Sales Permit Ordinance Amendment

Commissioner Quick moved to adopt an amendment to Rome’s Alcohol Ordinance which would require Alcohol Sales Permits for person working as security guards at pouring establishments unless that person is a POST certified police officer. Commissioner Askew seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The Alcohol Sales Permit requirement specifies that security guards will be required to undergo a background investigation and will not be allowed to obtain the permit if they are a convicted felon.

Water and Sewer Ordinance Amendment – Local Limits for Discharges

Commission Collins moved to adopt an ordinance which would codify Rome’s maximum allowable daily concentrations for pollutants. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

These levels were set by resolutions in 2020 however, this action will place the enforced levels in Rome’s ordinances.

Z22-04-08 Rezone the former NW GA Regional Hospital Site

Assistant Rome/Floyd planner Brice Wood reintroduced the Rezoning File Z22-04-08, the request to rezone the former NW GA Regional Hospital site located at Division Street and 100 Marable Way; Tax Map # I13X015, I13X016, and I13X017 from Office Institutional to Heavy Industrial. He reminded the Commission that this rezoning file was addressed at the April 25th City Commission meeting and ultimately resulted in the request being tabled. Commissioner Collins moved to remove this item from table, Commissioner Quick seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Mr. Wood once again reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties and stated that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezone request as well as the Planning Commission staff. The recommendation was that if the property were rezoned that the applicant/owner would create a barrier to reroute commercial truck traffic more towards the bypass, which is intended for such trips thus avoiding Charlton Street (East of North Division Street) and other inner-city streets.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Missy Kendrick speaking on behalf of the Rome/Floyd County Development Authority. Ms. Kendrick once again stated that the Development Authority favors rezoning of this site to Heavy Industrial. Ms. Kendrick stated they are in favor of retaining one existing building on this site to be used as a daycare for industries that may locate at this site. They also favor retention of the existing chapel and pavilion. A 100-foot buffer on the east side of the property is also an acceptable condition as well as a new ingress/egress traffic plan.

Speaking in opposition to the rezoning request was Danny Price, 6 Woodvalley Drive, and in house counsel for Berry College. Penny Evans-Plant, 511 Charlton Street. speaking on behalf of the Summerville Park Neighborhood Association. Carrie Noble, 209 Timothy Ave., Chris Reyes, 202 Oakwood Street, and Vincent Mendez, Rome, GA.

Mr. Price stated that Berry College is opposed to the rezoning of this property as presented. Berry College is in favor of rezoning the western portion of this property to allow the expansion of existing industries which border on the west of side of this property. Mr. Price reminded the Commission that Berry College has industrial property available on Technology Parkway and sees this rezoning as a competition to their currently available property. Mr. Price also noted that there are numerous Berry College faculty and staff members which live in the nearby Summerville Park neighborhood and this property is approximately four tenths of a mile from the recently developed Spires Senior Residential Complex. Even though the Development Authority will recruit industries that are of low impact, once the property is rezoned Heavy Industrial there are many potential uses that could be offensive to the surrounding properties. Ms. Evans-Plant restated some of the points voiced at the April 25th City Commission meeting regarding the Summerville Park neighbors concerns of this site's zoning of Heavy Industrial and its potential impact of Summerville Park neighborhood. Ms. Noble primarily concentrated on the potential negative impact to West Central school and the nearby residential neighborhood. Mr. Reyes expressed a concern that the Development Authority can recruit industry for this area without anyone else's approval after the property is zoned Heavy Industrial. Mr. Mendez referenced the original development concept for this site which included a mixed-use plan which he feels is more advantageous to our community.

With there being no rebuttal comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Collins expressed his confusion regarding what condition maybe acceptable to the Summerville Park neighborhood and others opposed to the regional rezoning. Collins reminded everyone that the NW GA Regional Hospital existed at this site for many years likely with more employees than the new industry will bring to this site. There were also negative conditions that existed with the hospital.

Commissioner Collins moved to approve the rezoning request for the former NW GA Regional Hospital site as requested from Office Institutional to Heavy Industrial with the following conditions:

- 1. That the main entry to the property be off of Redmond Road.**
- 2. That there be a 100-foot buffer extending along Division Street which faces Charlton Street.**
- 3. That there being signage reading "No Large Trucks" travelling in either direction on Charlton Street**
- 4. That the existing church and pavilion be left in place on this site (preference).**
- 5. An industrial air quality meter reader be in place. No on-site incinerator for disposal of waste or byproducts and also no on-site boilers or fuel recapture apparatus that use waste or byproducts as fuel – no land fuel on site.**
- 6. Ask that the Rome/Floyd Development Authority recruit high tech and neighborhood friendly industries (preference).**

Commissioner Quick seconded the motion.

There was considerable discussion by the commission regarding the marketing of current Berry properties as well as the potential expansion of existing industries which border this property. The Summerville Park neighborhood was thanked for their input and their willingness to negotiate and consider zoning conditions which would make this action more acceptable. Commissioners expressed confidence towards the Rome/Floyd Chamber of Commerce and the Rome/Floyd Development Authority in regard to their efforts to recruit industries that are more beneficial to our community and industries that do not produce pollution and waste that is historically associated with industries. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran congratulated Commissioner Collins for his efforts in establishing a compromise regarding this rezoning request. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran repeated some of his statements made at the April 25th City Commission meeting regarding potential problems and issues that could be associated with the industry at this site. Commissioner Cochran added that they are 6,373 persons living within one mile of this site (not counting Berry College dorm students). Cochran also added some new information regarding pollution, reminding everyone that of the waterways in our community, only two contain fish that are edible (due to high levels of pollution). The Commissioners also expressed their resolve for high quality jobs in our community to improve our quality of life and to retain our youth.

With the discussion completed, Commissioner Collins motioned to approve this rezoning with conditions was approved by the following vote:

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

NO: Cochran

Rome/Floyd Development Authority

Mayor Stevenson announced that the Rome/Floyd Development Authority would meet on Tuesday, May 17th at 10:00 a.m. in the Manis Business Center.

Finance Committee

Mayor Pro Tem Cochran announced the Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday May 18 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room. Rome Board of Education will be presenting their FY2022-2023 budget.

Public Works, Traffic and Transit

Mayor Pro Tem Cochran announced that the Public Works, Traffic and Transit Committee will meet on Wednesday May 11 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Recycling Center Deficit Invoices

Commissioner Cochran moved for the City of Rome to pay a portion of the recycling center deficit for the first quarter of 2022. These deficits are shared three ways equally between Floyd County, the City of Rome, and the Solid Waste Commission. Each of these three entities will pay \$34,695.71 for their share of the first quarter deficit. Commissioner Cochran moved to approve the Solid Waste Commission share. Commissioner Bojo seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor. Commissioner Cochran moved to authorize the payment of the City of Rome portion. Commissioner Collins seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Redevelopment Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced there will be a called meeting of the Redevelopment Committee on Wednesday May 11 at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room. Among other issues on the agenda for the meeting, there will be a review of the Four Stone Redevelopment Plan for West Third Street and potential tax allocation districts on Martha Berry Boulevard and North Broad Street.

Transportation Policy Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Transportation Policy Committee will meet on Wednesday, May 18 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Alcohol Control Commission

Commissioner Beeman announced that the Alcohol Control Commission is scheduled to meet on Monday May 16 at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers. *(This meeting has been cancelled)*

Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful

Commissioner Beeman announced that the Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful Commission will meet on Monday, May 23 at 4:00 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Historic Preservation Committee

Commissioner Beeman announced that the Historic Preservation Committee will meet on Wednesday, May 18 at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Library Board

Commissioner Beeman announced that there is a vacancy on the Library Board for a City of Rome appointee. Steps are under way to find the appropriate person for this position.

Tourism

Commissioner Doss congratulated our local tourism officials and our Downtown Development Authority Board regarding numerous events that were occurring in our community last week and the very large crowds in attendance.

Downtown Development Authority

Commissioner Quick announced the Downtown Development Authority will meet on Thursday May 12 at 8:30 a.m. in the Carnegie training room.

Fire Overview

Commissioner Askew announced that the Fire Overview committee will meet on Tuesday, May 10 at 10:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Public Safety Committee

Commissioner Askew announced that the Public Safety Committee will meet on Tuesday May 17 at 2:00 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Peace Officers Memorial Service

Commissioner Askew announced that the Annual Peace Officers Memorial Service will take place Friday, May 13 at 11:00 a.m. at the Law Enforcement Complex Memorial Plaza.

Rome City Commission Salaries

Commissioner Collins announced the General Administration Committee has discussed the annual salaries paid to the Rome City Commissioners. The General Administration Committee moved to proceed with a serious evaluation of a possible salary increase (Charter Amendment).

Stonebridge and the Rome Tennis Center

Commissioner Collins announced that the new Stonebridge General Manager – Lief Smith and the new Manager at the Rome Civic Center at Berry College – Colt Gaston were both in attendance at the most recent General Administration meeting. Part of the discussion at that meeting involved the recruitment of more minorities for tennis in our area.

Youth Council

The concept of forming a Youth Council was discussed at the General Administration Committee and the Committee recommended that the City move forward with the serious exploration of this group. Commissioner Beeman will be working with the City Manager's Office regarding this matter.

Rome/Floyd Parks and Recreation

Commissioner McDaniel announced that the Rome/Floyd Parks Recreation Authority will hold its Advisory Board meeting on Tuesday May 17 at noon at the Shorter Avenue Headquarters.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk