

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, August 28, 2023

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. on 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. Mayor Stevenson opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag. City Manager, Sammy Rich was absent from the meeting.

Minutes – August 14, 2023

The Minutes of the August 14, 2023, meeting as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Noise Complaint – River Remedy

Three residents of East 4th Street were present tonight to address the Commission regarding noise originating from River Remedy Brewery, located at 320 Glen Milner Blvd. Addressing the Commission tonight were Mike Schieffer 312 East 4th Street; Bill Harbin, 314 East 4th Street; and Ben Levy, 318 East 4th Street.

All three of these gentlemen stated that their backyards faced Glen Milner Blvd. and were in relatively close proximity to River Remedy Brewery. Adding that River Remedy often has outside bands and that the noise is excessively loud in their backyards. Mr. Schieffer pointed out that the police are often called, however they either come and speak to Mr. Justin Shepard, operator of River Remedy, and the volume is reduced, they visit and there is no change in the volume, or the police do not show up. It was also stated that this problem has been going on for 18 months and can happen as many as six days a week. These gentlemen feel that this is a clear violation of City Code, Section 14-5 and/or 14-6.

Mr. Levy played a recording made from his backyard at approximately 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 22nd. Mr. Levy feels that his audio recording clearly displayed the excessively loud noise from this establishment. The comments were concluded with the statements that this problem appears to be an enforcement issue and that their property values are suffering from these violations, and they are entitled to peaceful enjoyment of their property.

Following the conclusion of these comments, there was a brief discussion by the Commission concerning this matter. Assistant City Manager, Meredith Ulmer, stated that the city attorney and the police department are working on a possible amendment to Rome's noise ordinance and this draft document could be discussed at the September 19th Public Safety Committee meeting. Commissioner Cochran stated that the neighborhood has been very patient with these excessive noises and the problem should be addressed. Commissioner Collins pointed out that our current noise ordinance leaves the determination to the investigating police officer regarding if the noise is too loud. Both Commissioner Askew and Commissioner Cochran expressed their support for a noise ordinance with a decibel level included. Commissioner McDaniel stated that the Alcohol Control Commission could take action against River Remedy's entertainment license if there is evidence to support such action. Secretary Smith stated that he has spoken with Mr. Shepherd regarding the noise complaints previously. He also

reported that there have been no citations issued by the police department, which typically occur before the Alcohol Control Commission holds a License Hearing.

Justin Kelley – Comments Regarding Mayor Stevenson

Mr. Justin Kelley addressed the City Commission and made comments regarding Mayor Sundai Stevenson. Mr. Kelley pointed out that while Stevenson was elected to the Rome City Commission during the 2015 election, she signed a document in 2017 to renew her notary public certificate in Gordon County and certified with that 2017 document that she lived in Gordon County. Mr. Kelley pointed out that Mayor Stevenson was not being truthful with either Gordon County or the City of Rome regarding her residency since she could not have more than one primary residence.

Mr. Kelley requested that Mayor Stevenson resign as Mayor of the City of Rome and as a city commissioner due to this deception. He further stated that if Stevenson would not resign, the City Commissioner should remove her from office.

Mr. Kelley left a packet of information with each of the commissioners and the news media regarding this matter.

Vincent Mendes – Downtown Noise and Mayor Stevenson Comments

Mr. Vincent Mendes, 201 East 3rd Avenue, addressed the Commission. Mr. Mendes spoke of the excessively loud noise that is experienced downtown. This noise is generated by vehicles, especially pick up trucks with after market exhaust systems that are specifically designed to be loud. He said these vehicles often are also accompanied by profanity laden music. He further stated these violators do not stop and spend money in our community. He encouraged the police department to vigorously enforce this matter and mentioned the possibility of a camera system that is able to issue citations for excessive noise, similar to the speed cameras currently in place in our community.

Mr. Mendes while at the podium took the opportunity to also follow up on comments made by Justin Kelley. He summarized Mr. Kelley’s comments as “utter poppycock” and expressed his displeasure of the accusations publicly made against Mayor Stevenson. The City voters will have the opportunity on November 9th to decide if six of our commissioners should stay in office.

A23-08-05 Annex 126 McHenry Drive

Commissioner Quick presented annexation file A23-08-05, the request to annex property located at 126 McHenry Drive with Suburban Residential zoning. This property is identified by Floyd County Tax map number I15W-210. The Planning Commission has recommended approval with the current Suburban Residential zoning.

Rome/Floyd Planner, Brice Wood, reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property. This 13-acre tract of property contains a mobile home development with approximately 168 residents. This site is located near the former McHenry School.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed. Commissioner Quick moved to approve the annexation at 126 McHenry Drive with Suburban Residential zoning as requested and Commissioner Cochran seconded. It was clarified that if this property is annexed and one of the mobile homes were to be destroyed in the future, it could be replaced. There was also a brief discussion that regarding the condition of the road serving

these mobile homes. The general consensus is the road is not in very good condition. The City of Rome Solid Waste trucks may not be able to travel on this existing road and a solution for garbage pick up may need development. The discussion concluded. A motion to approve by the following vote:

Yes – Cochran, Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew and Collins

No – McDaniel

SUP23-08-04 – Special Use Permit Request for 510 Harper Avenue

Commissioner Quick presented Special Use Permit Request 23-08-04. This is a request for an SUP for duplexes at 510 Harper Avenue. This property is zoned High Density Traditional Residential and identified by Floyd County Tax Map number J14E-153. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this SUP.

Rome/Floyd Planner and Director, Brice Wood, reviewed this file displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Wood stated that the owner has indicated they would like to convert the single-family home into a duplex, with the possibility of an additional duplex.

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

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the SUP for duplexes at 510 Harper Avenue as requested. Commissioner Collins seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z23-08-06 – Rezone Technology Parkway Property

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning request Z23-08-06. This request is to rezone property located on Technology Parkway near the Mathis Road intersection from Community Commercial to Light Industrial. This property is identified by tax map number H12W-018. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this rezoning request.

Rome/Floyd Planning Director, Brice Wood, reviewed this file displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Larry Maxey. Mr. Maxey was speaking on behalf of property owner, Tom Spector. Mr. Maxey indicated that this property will likely be developed in the future and warehouses are being considered at this time. There was no one else to speak regarding the matter and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request for this Technology Parkway property from Community Commercial to Light Industrial as requested. Commissioner McDaniel seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z23-08-09 – Rezone 406 and 416 West 5th Avenue

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-08-09. The request to rezone property located at 406 and 416 West 5th Avenue from Office Institutional to Urban Mixed Use. These properties are identified by tax map numbers J13Y-131 and J13Y-132. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of the rezoning request.

Rome/Floyd Planning Director, Brice Wood, reviewed this file displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property. Mr. Wood indicated that a portion of this property has been used as a church.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Jimmy Byars, representing Trinity Methodist Church. The request for rezoning is to allow the highest and best use of this property and Urban Mixed Use is the desired outcome. There was no one else to speak regarding this matter and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request of 406 and 416 West 5th Avenue from Office Institutional to Urban Mixed Use as requested and Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion. This item was approved with the following vote:

Yes - Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins and McDaniel
Abstained – Cochran (Trinity church member)

Labor Day Holiday

Assistant City Manager, Meridith Ulmer, reported City offices will be closed on Monday, September 4th in observance of the Labor Day holiday. Garbage and yard waste schedules will be amended during that week.

North Broad Property Swap

Commissioner Bojo explained that the Community Redevelopment Committee has discussed and recommended a property swap in North Rome. The concept is to swap property located at 1148 North Broad Street and identified by map number J13O-035 for property located at 1702 North Broad Street and identified by map number J13I-285. The proposal is for an equal trade with no money changing hands. The SPLOST funded youth center planned for 1148 North Broad Street will now be located at 1702 North Broad Street.

Commissioner Bojo moved to approve this North Broad property swap. Commissioner Collins seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee will meet on Thursday, September 7th at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Julie Harris – Associate Planner

Commissioner Beeman welcomed Ms. Julie Harris as the new City of Rome Associate Planner. Ms. Harris has worked previously in the Rome Downtown Development Office. Ms. Harris will be the Associate Planner and will also be working with historic preservation matters.

Trail Sponsorship – Advent Health

Commissioner Doss announced that Advent Health (formerly Redmond Regional Medical Center) will be the sponsor of our local trail system for the next five years. Advent had submitted a proposal for this sponsorship. A presentation by Advent Health regarding our trail system sponsorship was presented in caucus prior to tonight’s meeting. Two proposals were submitted regarding trail sponsorship and Advent Health was chosen as the most advantageous sponsor.

Planning Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, September 7th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Landmarking Committee

Commissioner Askew announced that the Landmarking Committee will meet on Wednesday, August 30th at 2:00 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Finance Committee

Commissioner Collins announced that the Finance Committee will meet on Wednesday, August 30th at 10:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Historic Preservation Commission Nominations – Logan Boss and Paula Blayock

Commissioner Collins announced that the Committee on Committees has recommended that Mr. Logan Boss and Ms. Paula Blalock be nominated for reappointment to the Historic Preservation Commission. A vote on these nominations is scheduled for the September 11th City Commission meeting.

Committee on Committees

Commissioner Collins announced that the Committee on Committees will meet prior to caucus on September 11th.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk