

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, September 13, 2021

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

Minutes – August 23 and September 2, 2021

The minutes of the August 23, 2021 meeting and the September 2, 2021 Special Called meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by an unanimous consent.

Constitution Week

Commissioner Quick presented a joint City/County proclamation proclaiming September 17 – 23, 2021 as Constitution Week in our community. 2021 is the 234th Anniversary of the United States Constitution.

National Recovery Month

Commissioner Davis presented a joint City/County proclamation recognizing September 2021 as National Recovery Month in our community. This proclamation was presented to Ms. Terry Morgan and Ms. Claudia Hamilton.

Georgia Small Business Week

Mayor Pro Tem Stevenson presented a proclamation proclaiming the week of September 12 – 18, 2021 as Georgia Small Business Week in Rome. This proclamation was presented to former City Commissioner and Mayor Evie McNiece, Chamber of Commerce Director Jeanne Krueger, Cassandra Wheeler representing Georgia Power, and local entrepreneur Jarrod Johnson.

Harold Storey

Mayor McDaniel presented a proclamation recognizing the 99th birthday of Mr. Harold Storey. Mayor McDaniel spoke of Mr. Storey, not only regarding his impact on the local community, but also his service as a decorated War II veteran. Mr. Storey and Mr. Jake Hager were viewing tonight's meeting from Mr. Storey's home in Rome.

2020 Audit Presentation

Mr. Christopher McKellar, from Mauldin & Jenkins, presented highlights of the 2020 City of Rome Audit. Mr. McKellar spoke of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Review (CAFR) and the auditor's discussion and analysis. The first seventeen pages of the analysis were reviewed by Mr. McKellar. Mr. McKellar emphasized that there were no findings or notable recommendations as a result of the 2020 Audit. Mr. Rich briefly highlighted a new cyber security position that has recently been created for the City of Rome.

First Reading – Rezonings

Commissioner Quick announced that the following two rezonings will be placed on First Reading:

- A) Z21-08-03 – Request to rezone from Suburban Residential to Heavy Commercial for the property located at 109 Sunset Drive, Rome, GA 30161, Floyd County Tax Parcel J15W-060. (Planning recommends approval, 6-0).
- B) Z21-08-04 – Request to rezoning from Suburban Residential to Community Commercial for the property located at Sunset Drive, Rome, GA 30161, Floyd County Tax Parcel J15W-054. (Planning recommends approval, 6-0).

A Public Hearing for these two items will take place at the September 27th City Commission meeting.

Curfew Ordinance Amendment

Commissioner Askew presented an amendment to Rome’s Curfew Ordinance as recommended by the Public Safety Committee. The Public Safety Committee has recommended amending our current Curfew Ordinance to change the time of implementation from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Rome’s Teen Curfew Ordinance was originally adopted in April 2018. At that time, the original proposal was for a 10 p.m. curfew. However, during the discussion prior to adoption, that time was changed to 11 p.m.

In light of ongoing problems downtown, primarily caused by large groups of youths – many of whom are well below 17 years of age, there has been ongoing discussion for possible remedies. Reducing our curfew from 11 p.m. to 10 p.m. has been one of the recommended measures. Commissioner Askew moved to approve the ordinance amendment as recommended by the Public Safety Committee. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion.

Commissioner Collins began the discussion by expressing his opposition to the proposed amendment. Commissioner Collins’ primary concern is how this would affect parts of Rome other than downtown. Commissioner Collins feels that in some of our communities, it is common for youths younger than 17 years of age to be out past 10 p.m. while going to the store or running other errands for their grandparents or other family members. Commissioner Collins also expressed his concern how a 10 p.m. curfew would affect youths who may be out attempting to visit restaurants that are open past 10 p.m. such as McDonald’s or Burger King. Commissioner Collins requested that this matter be tabled and that the Task Force that has been referenced by the Public Safety Committee be given time to form and make recommendations concerning our youth problems. Commissioner Davis also expressed her opposition for the proposal. Commissioner Davis originally voted in opposition to the Curfew Ordinance. She stated she is totally in favor of an ordinance that would address misbehaving youths of any age at any time; however, she does oppose an ordinance that criminalizes activity simply because of a person’s age. She encouraged the City to allow the Task Force to work on this matter. Commissioner Doss voiced his support for the amendment citing a recommendation by the Public Safety Committee and the support by the Downtown Development Authority. The Task Force that has been referenced is not comprised of elected officials and will take time to meet and ultimately make recommendations. Commissioner Stevenson expressed her opposition to an ordinance that would penalize children for being children. She encouraged the Task Force to make their recommendations and reminded others that the ordinance is applicable citywide and not just downtown. Commissioner Askew also expressed opposition to the proposal and encouraged time to be given to the Task Force to analyze the problem, discuss potential solutions

with the youth in our community, and ultimately make recommendations to the City Commission. Commissioner Askew stated that some feel that these youths that have been causing problems in downtown Rome have nothing else to do. Mayor McDaniel stated this has been an ongoing problem, and the downtown businesses are experiencing problems due to the activity of some youths and feel that action should be taken now. Some businesses and individuals have suggested a 9 p.m. curfew rather than a 10 p.m. curfew. Mayor McDaniel referenced other entities such as Lenox Square Mall in Atlanta that have established policies regarding youths who are not properly supervised by a qualified adult. Mayor McDaniel encouraged action on tonight's matter and reminded the Commission that it could always be changed at a later date if a better solution is determined. Commissioner Collins again addressed the Board stating that he could support this matter if it applied to downtown only. Commissioner Bojo stated that he supports a curfew; however, he is not convinced that a 10 p.m. curfew will solve our current problems. He would like for the Task Force to have time to address the matter. Commissioner Bojo, while he had the floor, moved to table this matter. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion to table, and it was approved by the following vote:

YES: Stevenson, Bojo, Davis, Askew, Collins

NO: Cochran, Doss, Quick, and Mayor McDaniel

Rome/Floyd Development Authority

Mayor McDaniel announced that the Rome/Floyd Development Authority will meet on Tuesday, September 21st at 10 a.m. in the Manis Business Center.

Finance Committee

Mayor Pro Tem Stevenson announced that the September meeting of the Finance Committee has been canceled.

Transportation Policy Committee

Commissioner Cochran announced that the Transportation Policy Committee will meet on Wednesday, September 15th at 10 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Health Department/COVID Report

Commissioner Cochran announced that, as of today, there have been 226 COVID-related deaths in Floyd County. Floyd County currently has a vaccination rate of 42% for those of who have received only one of the vaccination doses (of the 2 shot varieties) and a rate of 36% of residents who are fully vaccinated. Commissioner Davis stated that our community would need an 80% vaccination rate in order to get the COVID matter under control. She encouraged everyone who has been vaccinated to attempt to get an unvaccinated person to receive the inoculation.

Commissioner Cochran reported that the contributing factors to COVID deaths are obesity (with a body mass index greater than 30), diabetes, and heart disease.

Commissioner Collins encouraged everyone to support our healthcare workers.

Housing Committee

Commissioner Davis announced that the Housing Committee is currently waiting on final ARP Expenditure Guidelines from the US Treasury before housing incentives as recommended can be implemented.

Committee Nominations

Commissioner Doss announced that Mr. David Clonts is being nominated to serve on the ULDC Board of Adjustments, and Ms. Tayesha Lydle is being nominated to serve on the Downtown Development Authority. There were no objections to Commissioner Doss' request/motion, and by unanimous consent, this was done. A vote on these nominations is scheduled for September 27th.

Tennis Center Management Agreement

City Manager Rich stated that the City of Rome has solicited bids for management of the Rome Tennis Center at Berry College and the Downtown Tennis Center. For the past year, the Tennis Centers have been managed by the Greater Rome Convention and Visitors Bureau. However, with the success the City has had with the Stonebridge Golf Course management company, the feeling is that the day-to-day operations of the Tennis Center could be the most effective and efficient with a management company oversight. Mr. Rich further explained that bids have been taken, and one proposal was received that is acceptable. This proposal is from Cliff Drysdale Tennis. This company is an arm of Troon. Troon is also the parent company of Indigo Golf Partners which manages Stonebridge Golf Course. Commissioner Doss moved to approve the Tennis Center's Management Agreement subject to final negotiations by the City Manager and final approval by the City Attorney. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Tourism

Commissioner Doss announced that the Tourism Committee will meet next on Wednesday, September 22nd at 11:45 a.m. in the Rome Area History Center.

Historic Preservation Commission

Commissioner Doss announced that the Historic Preservation Commission will meet on Wednesday, September 15th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Trails Committee

Commissioner Doss commented on the City of Rome's Trail System. Rome has a tremendous trail system, and it continually is improving. This is a very special quality of life issue for our community, and Commissioner Doss encouraged everyone to explore our trails.

Alcohol Control Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Alcohol Control Commission is scheduled to meet on Monday, September 20th at 5 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers.

Downtown Development Authority

Commissioner Quick announced that the Downtown Development Authority will meet next on Thursday, September 16th at 8:30 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Parks and Recreation

Commissioner Askew announced that the Parks and Recreation will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, September 21st at 11:30 a.m. at Shag Williams Park in Shannon, 40 Minshew Road NE. Following this ribbon-cutting ceremony, the Advisory Board will meet at noon in the Banquet Room.

Public Safety

Commissioner Askew announced that the Public Safety Committee will meet on Tuesday, September 21st at 2 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful Commission

Commissioner Collins announced that the Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful Commission will meet on Monday, September 27th at 1 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioner Collins announced that the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will meet on Thursday, September 16th at 11 a.m. at the Rome Civic Center.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor McDaniel adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk