CITY OF THOMSON
PUBLIC HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 10, 2021

6:30PM | Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:	Also Present:
Kenneth Usry, Mayor	Acting Chief E. J. Bess, TPD
Alton Belton, Councilmember	Chase Beggs, Planning & Zoning Dir.
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember	Wayne Parham, McDuffie Progress
Keryl Corley, Councilmember	Phillip Green
John Smalley, Councilmember	Nora Douglas
Scott Whittle, Councilmember	Richard Knowles
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk	Elizabeth Brown
John Waller, City Administrator	Valerie L. Marshall

PUBLIC HEARING

At 6:30pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry welcomed all to the Public Hearing of the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendations concerning White Oak Landing Development.

Planning and Zoning Director Chase Beggs presented the background on the Planning Commission's recommendations. Crowell & Company bought 189.9 acres on Whiteoak Road in 2006 and asked to have them annexed into the City expressly for the purpose of joining the sewerage system. It proved cost prohibitive for either the City or the developer to extend the sewerage service to the parcel and they now would like to 1.) get approval to open Phases 1 and 2 of the proposed White Oak Landing subdivision, and 2.) receive a variance to allow septic tanks and drainage fields in lieu of sewerage connections on each lot in those phases.
The McDuffie County Planning Commission voted to recommend the two phases, comprising seventy-five lots, be approved with the following conditions: sidewalks be installed along the frontage of the property on Whiteoak Road; a vegetative buffer be left along the outside of the subdivision; and lots be a minimum of one acre. On the question of a sewerage variance, the Commission voted to recommend the variance as long as the lots were a minimum of one acre.

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:
Phillip Green of Crowell's engineering firm, Southern Partners, Inc., spoke about the portion of lots already platted that are 40,000 square feet (0.918 acre) and that waterfront lots are allowed to have septic systems at only one-half acre. He noted that in order to make all lots one acre, the developer would lose approximately three lots, but that no costs would be reduced. He asked that the one-acre requirement be waived and the 0.918 acre lots be permitted. Mark Gilliam of Crowell & Company stated that not all of the seventy-five lots are under one acre and also asked that the one acre requirement be waived in favor of a

40,000 square foot minimum. Mayor Usry and Councilmember Smalley both expressed that the difference between 0.918 acre and one acre is negligible.

There being no questions, comments, or other concerns, Mayor Usry closed the public meeting at 6:42pm.

COUNCIL MEETING

At 6:42pm, Mayor Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order. Councilmember Smalley gave the invocation, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN COMMENT:

Nora Douglas addressed the Mayor and Council and would like the drain pipes at Lincoln Drive and Mobley Street to be cleaned out, stating that no matter how much you clean the ditches, the pipes are what is backing up water into people's yards. She also brought attention to 831 Mobley Street where a house burned and the owners have allowed the lot to become overgrown. The same is happening to a lot at the corner of Sycamore Street and Poplar Street. The Mayor thanked her and called for the next speaker.

Nathaniel Usry has lived on Ansley Drive Extension since 1978, across from fourteen units of apartments. The apartment complex's dumpster has been a constant garbage problem, and now visitors are dumping from their cars onto the parking area. The garbage eventually blows onto the private properties across the street. Mr. Usry is hoping that Code Enforcement can do something and fine the owners or someone to get their attention. Councilmember Whittle said that the owners had been contacted about the amount of trash being dumped out of the back of the apartments and notified the owners that they may be fined. Mayor Usry assured Mr. Usry that they will try to find a solution for the homeowners, and thanked him for the information.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Corley to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a. Work Session, May 10, 2021—A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.
b. City Council Meeting, May 13, 2021—A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

BUSINESS:

a. Twenty year Service Award
   Ronald Toney has worked with Water Treatment for all but six months of his twenty years with the City. Mayor Usry and Director Chuck Cumber presented him with a certificate and honorarium, and thanked him for his dedication and outstanding work ethic.

b. Recommendation of Planning & Zoning, re:
   Approval of White Oak Landing Phases 1 & 2

The McDuffie County Planning Commission voted to recommend that the two phases comprising seventy-five lots be approved with the following conditions: sidewalks be installed along the frontage of the property on Whiteoak Road; a vegetative buffer be left along the outside of the subdivision; and lots be a minimum of one acre in size. A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the Planning Board recommendation concerning Phases 1& 2. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve the motion.

c. Recommendation of Planning & Zoning, re:
Approval of White Oak Landing Septic System Variance

The McDuffie County Planning Commission voted to recommend the variance as long as the lots were a minimum of one acre in size. Councilmember Smalley spoke of the developers having annexed the property into the City with the expectation of sewerage being available. He feels that since that is not possible at this time, that the Planning Board requirement of one acre lots should not be approved by the Council. Mayor Usry brought up that the Council should vote yes or no on the complete recommendation, and then discuss the one acre question. Councilmember Smalley made the motion to approve the recommendation of the Planning Board as presented. Councilmember Belton seconded and a vote of 5-0 was taken to approve the motion.

Mayor Usry started the discussion that Phillip Green of Southern Partners, Inc. is now asking for a variance from the previous vote's topic. He is asking that the lots currently platted as 40,000 square feet (0.918 acre) be allowed to have septic systems installed. Councilmember Belton asked how many of that size lots are in the development and Mr. Green answered that approximately half of them are. Councilmember Belton made a motion that we approve the developer's request that all lots, none of which are less than 40,000 square feet, be approved for septic systems in Phases 1 & 2. Councilmember Smalley seconded, and a 5-0 vote approved the motion. Mayor Usry stated for the record that he is opposed to modifying the Planning Board's recommendation.

d. Ordinance #577-Meeting Time Change to 6:00pm

The first reading of Ordinance 577 was held. The second reading will be at the July 8th meeting.

e. Thomson West By-Pass Natural Gas Relocation Bids

City Administrator Waller spoke on the need to move the Milliken gas lines in the area of the West By-pass that is being constructed. Requests for Proposal went out and bids were opened May 17th. CA Waller recommends the Council award the contract to South East Connections, the lowest bidder at $299,390.08. This will be reimbursed by the County, as it is their road project. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley to approve that recommendation. Councilmember Belton seconded and a 5-0 vote approved the gas line relocation contract.

f. Community Development Block Grant Updated Policies and Procedures

An updated Policies and Procedures document for all CDBGs was received from the state and in order to continue being eligible for the grants, the City must adopt and follow these new rules. A motion was made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the adoption these policies and procedures. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

g. Borders Street Discussion
Mayor Usry brought the Council up to date on the First Baptist Church's request to prevent thru-traffic across the First Baptist Campus using Borders Street to avoid the red light on Hill Street. First Baptist Church leaders wish to make their campus safer during the times that there are planned activities. The house on the corner of Borders and Church Streets has been removed and plans are in place to shift the playground. The church is trying to find a solution for the street to remain open, but also be able to close it at certain times for safety. All Councilmembers were encouraged to visit the area and be prepared for more discussion.

Council Report:
Councilmember Keryl Corley reported on the Gas Department's required calls happening now, and urged everyone to participate in the survey when they call.

City Administrator Report:
CA Waller reported that the City will be receiving $2,100,000 over two years through the American Rescue Plan Act. Funds have to be committed by the end of 2024, and disbursed by the end of 2026. The winning bid for the 2021 LMIG project was submitted by C&H Paving and came in under budget. Nine City streets will be paved and we will have some funds left over for other projects. The Environmental Protection Agency will be here for an inspection of the Water Treatment Plant and Water Distribution System June 14-18. Waste Management has been in almost daily contact with the City taking care of the details of the garbage transition. A flyer about the changeover is being handed out to City residents as they come in to do business or pay their bills.

Mayor Report:
The Mayor reported that the City hosted the GMA District 7 meeting today at the Depot. The association shared a lot of good information and highlighted several services they offer to municipalities. There was a very good turnout.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:
A motion to move into Executive Session for a Personnel matter was made by Councilmember Smalley and was seconded by Councilmember Whittle. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve the motion and the session began at 7:18pm.

A motion to move out of Executive Session was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson. A unanimous vote of 5-0 moved the meeting back into regular session at 7:36pm.

There being no other business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson. A 5-0 vote was taken to approve the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucretia W. Ferguson

Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk

Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor