

WORK SESSION

JANUARY 6, 2021

The City Council of the City of Athens met in Work Session on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 5:30 p.m. in the Derek D. Daniels Conference Room of the Athens Partnership Center, 201 West Corsicana St., Athens, Texas and immediately following convened in Special Session. This meeting was open to the public; however, seating was limited to maintain social distancing.

with the following members present to-wit:

Monte Montgomery, Mayor  
Councilwoman Toni Clay, Mayor Pro Tem (via video conference)  
Aaron Smith  
Robert Gross  
SyTanna Freeman

Elizabeth Borstad, City Manager  
Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary

Staff Present: Rodney Williams, Interim Chief of Police; Audrey Sloan, Director of Development Services; Mandie Quigg, Finance Director; Derek Whiteley, Director of Information Technology; David Campbell, Code Enforcement Officer,

others present: Sheriff Deputy Kevin Halbert, TSgt. Timothy Johnson, Michael Hannigan, Mark Carroll, Jack Bailey, Mo Morrison, Steve Grant, Janice Vaughn, Dillon Vaugh, Trish McGuffey, John McGuffey, Blake Daniels, Marti Shew (via video conference)

constituting a quorum at which time the following proceedings were enacted, to-wit:

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Mayor Monte Montgomery.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No action was taken.

Mayor Montgomery recognized TSgt. Timothy Johnson in the audience. He stated TSgt. Timothy Johnson is serving our Country and stationed in England as an Air Traffic Controller. There was a round of applause.

DISCUSS POSSIBLE MAY 2021 BOND ELECTION

Elizabeth Borstad, City Manager, introduced the item and explained it is to discuss a possible May 2021 Bond Election specifically for the construction of a Police Station.

Ms. Borstad stated Marti Shew, Director Hilltop Securities Inc., prepared a preliminary schedule of debt, and a schedule of the debt if the issuance took place immediately after the passage of a Bond in May 2021.

Mayor Montgomery stated he is in favor of a Bond Election; however, Council should be prepared to show the Citizens how the money would be spent.

Ms. Borstad stated in parallel with the Bond Election staff has submitted an application to the USDA Rural Development Grant. She explained there is a site plan that shows the facility adjacent to the current police station. She stated the USDA Grant will not cover the entire cost of constructing the building. She stated the issuance of some form of debt would be needed.

Rodney Williams, Interim Chief of Police, provided highlights into the layout of the police department facility. He further explained the building will allow for expansion and growth.

Councilmember Gross agreed a plan is needed prior to asking the Citizens to vote for a Bond Election. He also stated other locations should be looked at.

Councilmember Smith stated the city will receive some grant reimbursements and staff should research if this would reduce the amount of debt to the citizens.

Ms. Shew explained the calendar deadlines for ordering a May 2021 Bond Election.

Councilwoman Freeman stated Council should consider the land the city currently owns as this is an attraction for work that needs to be done on the North side.

Councilwoman Clay stated the construction in the current location will improve in the area.

After additional discussion, it was the consensus to discuss the item again for a possible November 2021 Bond Election.

#### DISCUSS ORDINANCE REGULATING RENTAL PROPERTIES

Ms. Borstad explained the item has been discussed in the past and this is a starting place for Council to begin discussions regarding regulating rental properties. She further explained there has been mixed emotions regarding what is currently being presented. She explained the Ordinance is not set in stone.

Audrey Sloan, Director of Development Services, explained the purpose of the Ordinance as follows:

- Create a registration process for both SF and MF rental properties
- Establish minimum standards to protect the health and safety of the tenants
- It would allow for inspections to verify compliance with those standards
- The registration process will provide staff with an updated database with contact information for owners, property managers and tenants which is information that could be utilized in Code Enforcement to contact the correct parties to ensure quick and efficient violation resolution
- It also establishes guidelines for short-term rentals like Airbnb's and helps the city verify that hotel occupancy taxes are being remitted

Ms. Sloan explained the draft Ordinance is divided into two (2) sections:

The first section is Single-Family & Duplexes which includes:

- Single Family dwellings
- Duplexes
- Mobile/Manufactured homes
- Town Home dwelling units
- Short Term Rental Properties

The second section division is Multi-family which includes any building or structure containing three (3) or more dwelling units:

- Excluded from this Ordinance would be any facility providing medical, rehabilitation, or health care including but not limited to:
- Group Homes
- Assisted Care Facilities
- Nursing Homes
- Hospitals and Clinics

Ms. Sloan discussed the provisions for both divisions which included registration, minimum standards, inspections, violations, appeals and penalties.

Councilmember Gross stated the majority of landlords and property owners do a good job maintaining their properties. He stated the main purpose is to ensure rental properties are safe for the renters He stated the document appears harsh and the Ordinance should be reevaluated.

After much discussion, vetting of the Ordinance, hearing from landlords, and developers; Ms. Borstad suggested a Sub-Committee be formed to address how the City would regulate distressed rental properties.

The Sub-Committee will consist of the following:

- Councilwoman Freeman
- Elizabeth Borstad
- Audrey Sloan
- David Campbell

#### DISCUSS A REQUEST FROM DILLON MANUFACTURING FOR THE CLOSURE AND ABANDONMENT OF A PORTION OF NEEDMORE STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY

Ms. Sloan explained the item was discussed in September 2020. She stated Janice Vaughn has asked Council to revisit the item for the possibility of it appearing on a future agenda for consideration.

Ms. Sloan stated the request is for the closure of a portion of Needmore Street that is adjacent to the property owned and occupied by the company. Ms. Sloan presented images for the requested closure with access points.

Ms. Sloan further explained there are no City water or sewer lines located within the area to be closed. She stated there are gas and electric utility lines and both ONCOR and Atmos are requesting utility easements to be retained over their respective infrastructure.

After discussion, it was the consensus the item will appear on the January 11, 2021 agenda as the first reading of the Ordinance.

#### UPDATE AND DISCUSSION REGARDING ATHENS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

Mayor Montgomery provided an update on the expansion project at Athens Municipal Airport. He explained employee changes have occurred within TxDOT and the City may not receive the previous requested funding.

After discussion, it was the consensus the City needed to obtain concrete information from TxDOT the City's potential for receiving funding, and after this information is received; the City Council can determine how to proceed regarding the expansion project at Athens Municipal Airport.

#### ENTER SPECIAL SESSION

The City Council convened in Special Session at 7:06 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT  
CODE, SECTION 551.074 (PERSONNEL MATTERS; CLOSED MEETING)  
DELIBERATIONS REGARDING FUTURE DUTIES AND EMPLOYMENT  
OF THE PROSPECTIVE CHIEF OF POLICE FOR THE CITY OF ATHENS

THE CITY COUNCIL RECONVENES IN OPEN MEETING

The City Council reconvened in Special Session at 8:07 p.m.

CONSIDER AND TAKE ACTION, AS NECESSARY, RESULTING FROM  
DELIBERATIONS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS  
GOVERNMENT CODE, SECTION 551.074 (PERSONNEL MATTERS;  
CLOSED MEETING) DELIBERATIONS REGARDING FUTURE DUTIES  
AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE PROSPECTIVE CHIEF OF POLICE FOR THE  
CITY OF ATHENS

No action was taken.

MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL AND/OR CITY MANAGER UPDATES  
INVOLVING COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ISSUES OF PUBLIC SAFETY

There was no request for future agenda items.

Mayor Montgomery stated the COVID numbers are increasing daily and encouraged everyone to be safe.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 11<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, 2021

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Monte Montgomery, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary