

**CITY OF THOMSON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

April 10, 2008

7:30PM

CITY HALL

Present

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Clifford Lunceford, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Bernice Brown, Councilmember
James Jones, Councilmember
Don Powers, City Administrator
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney
Dianne L. Landers, City Clerk

Also Present

Brink Bradshaw
Jim Wallace, The Progress

Mayor Usry welcomed all to the regular Council meeting of April 10, 2008. The invocation was given by the Mayor, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

MINUTES:

Councilmember Smalley moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council meeting on March 13, 2008 and the Special Call Council Meeting on March 26, 2008. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. The motion was carried by all.

OLD BUSINESS:

Second Reading of Ordinance #538 to amend the Sale of Alcohol on Election Day.

This is the second reading of an ordinance to allow the sale of alcohol inside the city limits of Thomson on any election day. This amended Ordinance will match McDuffie County's ordinance allowing the same in the County. Councilmember Belton moved to approve the ordinance, seconded by Councilmember Jones. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Guidelines for Façade Grants.

In years past, The City of Thomson has funded a façade grant program designed to stimulate and facilitate private investment in the downtown area. The Council asked the HPC to recommend new guidelines and these were presented at the March Council meeting.

The purpose of the program is to assist business owners within the recognized façade district boundaries by providing funds to revitalize, renovate and beautify commercial property thereby creating a more vibrant, thriving downtown environment. Highlights of the proposed new guidelines are:

- An application will be required prior to spending.
- Eligible properties must be within the façade district.
- Grants may be awarded up to a maximum of \$7,000 based on approved guidelines
- One dollar of exterior façade grant awards will be matched for every two dollars spent for interior or exterior renovation, paid for and documented by the applicant.
- In-kind work is eligible as match but must be approved and monitored by the HPC

The City of Thomson has budgeted \$20,000 for Façade grants for 2008. Councilmember Lunceford moved to accept the guidelines and recommended the maximum amount per grant of \$7,000 per applicant. Councilmember Smalley seconded the motion. Motion carried by all.

Façade discussion then shifted to boundaries of the new façade district. The proposed expanded boundaries are Church Street on the west side, from the Methodist Church to West Hill Street. Gordon Street is the boundary on the north side from Church to Greenway. Greenway and Black Street make up the eastern boundary. Hill Street from Black to Church Street is the Southern boundary. Brink Bradshaw, a local businessman with property outside the proposed new boundaries, asked if the Council would consider extending the boundary past the Methodist church to include his business location, and/or have the façade district be one in the same with the Historic District.

Mayor Usry explained that the new façade district covers only the Downtown area and is intended to focus the grant money to the downtown area, not over the whole historic district. He then posed the question to the Council as to whether we should accept or extend the boundaries.

After some discussion, Councilmember Belton moved to adopt the boundaries as proposed in the new guidelines. Councilmember Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

Interim Community Development Director.

The City Council met in a called meeting March 26, 2008 to discuss and agree on hiring Bob Flanders as the interim Director of the Community Development. The job includes the duties of Executive Director of the Housing Authority as well. In order to confirm the discussion and the agreement reached in executive session during the 3-26 meeting, Councilmember Lunceford moved to allow the City Administrator to execute a contract with Mr. Flanders as interim Community Development director. Councilmember Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Resolution from Municipal Gas Authority.

This resolution to the Municipal Gas Authority appoints Mayor Kenneth Usry as the voting delegate for the City of Thomson. It also appoints Charles Cason as an alternate voting delegate.

Councilmember Smalley moved to accept the Resolution to the Municipal Gas Authority, seconded by Councilmember Jones. Motion carried.

City Indigent Defense Counsel – Replacing James Jones.

James (Jaye) Jones served as the City of Thomson Indigent Defense Attorney until he was appointed to City Council, in 2007. The Indigent Defense Attorney serves defendants that request Counsel and can not afford to pay. Councilmember Jones recommended Attorney Lucy J. Bell, who indicated she would be willing to serve as Counsel, at a rate of \$200.00 per court session attended.

Councilmember Belton moved to accept the recommendation of Attorney Lucy J. Bell and that the cost per court session attended be \$200 vs. \$150 (the fee for Councilman Jones while he served in that capacity). Councilmember Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried.

Bid proposal – Vehicle in Administration Department.

The 2008 budget included an Administrative vehicle for the Administration Department. The City's budget is \$22,000. The bidders were:

Culpepper Ford	
2008 Ford Escape XLT	\$16,636.97
Thomson Motor Centre	
2008 Jeep Compass	\$16,019.00
2008 Jeep Patriot	\$17,119.00
Bobby Jones Ford	Withdrew bid
Stokes Hodges	No bid submitted

The City Administrator recommended that the Council approve the Ford Escape from Culpepper Ford even though it was \$617.97 higher than the Jeep Compass. The recommendation was based on the Escape being a bit larger than the Jeep Compass, and his research on comparing the quality of the vehicles which were submitted for bid. Council Belton expressed concern about not accepting the lowest bid, and the effect that might have on future competitive bids.

Councilmember Smalley moved to approve the recommendation from the City Administrator, seconded by Councilmember Brown. Councilmember Jones abstained from voting. Councilmember Belton opposed. Motion carried by a vote of 3 to 1.

Bid proposal – Vehicle in Police Department.

The Patrol Vehicle for the Police Department is budgeted for \$22,000. The bidders were:

Culpepper Ford 2008 Crown Victoria	\$20,414.95
Bobby Jones Ford 2008 Crown Victoria	\$19,816.95
Thomson Motor Centre 2008 Dodge Charger	\$21,895.00
Stokes Hodges	No bid submitted

The Police Chief's recommendation was Culpepper Ford in Thomson. This vehicle will replace the 1998 Ford.

Councilmember Lunceford moved to accept the recommendation from the Police Chief, seconded by Councilmember Smalley. One abstained. Motion carried.

Street Closure – Entrance and Exit to McCorkle to E. Hendricks-Chamber of Commerce Annual Car Show.

The Chamber of Commerce Annual Car Show will be April 26, 2008 from 11am – 5pm. It was the approval of the Council that the designated streets to be closed for this event.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Pitt Street CDBG project is moving ahead. The first loan application has been awarded to Ms. Eva Battle for the rehab done on her house. Bid advertisements for infrastructure work go out in May.

Shiloh Nunn, a meter reader for the City was seriously injured in a car wreck on Stagecoach Road Tuesday evening. He is currently at MCG. Our prayers go out to our co-worker and his family. He has been with the City about one year.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm.

Dianne L. Landers
City Clerk