

CITY OF THOMSON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 12, 2009

6:30PM

CITY HALL

Present:

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

Also Present:

Fred Guerrant
Marquis Murray
John James
Chris Smith
Billy Hobbs, the McD. Mirror
Bob Flanders
Dave Dunaway
Rev. Herman Gilmore
Janet Gilmore
Dwayne Boutwell
Mike Dunn
Donna Branch, WTHO
Bea Hart-Moss
Marion C. Ivery

Mayor Usry welcomed all to the Regular Council meeting of February 12, 2009. The invocation was given by Councilmember John Smalley followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENTATION:

The City of Thomson received a bronze plaque from the South Atlantic All Star Team for its 2008 Relay for Life efforts. This plaque represents per capita giving of \$198.04 per member (total team of 85). The total for our team reported to the Relay for Life effort was \$16,833.40.

Marquis Murray and John James, representatives from the City of Thomson Police Department introduced *Eba*, the new City of Thomson Drug Dog, to the Council. *Eba* is a three year old German Shepard that is also used as a tracker. Police Officer John James spent three weeks training with *Eba*.

MINUTES:

Councilmember Belton moved to approve minutes of the Regular Council meeting on January 8, 2009. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilmember Smalley moved to approve the minutes of a Revolving Loan meeting on February 5, 2009. Councilmember Brown seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Councilmember Smalley moved to approve the recommendation from the Development Authority requesting a loan in the amount of \$150,000 to assist Thomson Plastics with a 50,000 sq. ft. addition to their facility in Thomson. Councilmember Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

This loan features an interest rate corresponding with the Federal Funds Rate as established by the Federal Reserve Bank, floating and adjusting every six (6) months.

NEW BUSINESS:

Planning and Zoning – Dewayne Boutwell-Rear Setback-219 Whiteoak Street:

Fred Guerrant presented Mr. Dewayne Boutwell's request for a variance for the reduction in rear setback from 25' to 11' for a new multi-purpose garage building which is being constructed. The Planning Board recommended the approval in the reduction in rear setback to the structures current location, provided it is never used as a permanent residence.

Councilmember Belton moved to accept the board's recommendation. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Request for Street Ministry-The Old Frontier: (Chris Smith)

Rev. Chris Smith from the Old Frontier Ministry requested permission from the Council to conduct a street ministry in the park adjacent to the Thomson Twin Cinemas on Main Street, Thomson. Rev. Smith desires to minister in the park on Friday and Saturday nights. The objective is to present an alternative life style wherein the individual spends his "spare time" in more industrious pursuits and to have positive role models on site. There were no objections to Rev. Smith's request. The Council gave their approval.

Resolution to Authorize Application CDBG:

This resolution authorizes the filing of a 2009 Community Development Block Grant application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The City of Thomson will provide citizens an opportunity to participate in the development of the application by holding a public hearing at City Hall before submission of the application.

Councilmember Smalley moved to accept the resolution to authorize the CDBG application. Councilmember Lunceford seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Tax Relief Request – Senior Residences:

Prior support commitments regarding tax abatements by the City were made to the Senior Residences project, located on Highway 17....a DCA tax credit project.

Councilmember Smalley moved to abate the Senior Residences city property taxes for 10 years, starting with 2008. Councilmember Belton seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried. The Senior Residences will be reviewed annually and as long as the apartment complex maintains its DCA status as a tax credit project the tax abatement

will remain in place. Should there be improvements or additions to the project, the tax value of these improvements will not be covered under this motion.

Street closure – Journal Street to Main and Clary Alley (McDuffie Arts Council):

McDuffie Arts Council has requested a street closing in order to accommodate their 1st art show. This show will take place on May 30, 2009. The street closing will consist of Journal Street from Main Street to Clary Street. The Council's display will be in the parking lot behind the District Attorney's office.

Replacement of Recycle Truck:

City Attorney Don Powers presented the proposal to transfer \$17,000 from the Gas line relocation capital fund (reduced to \$458,000) for a _ ton heavy duty truck in the Gas department. The Gas truck being replaced will be "recycled" to the Recycling Dept. to replace a truck that is now unsafe to operate and too costly to repair. Bids have gone out and will be presented in the March 2009 meeting.

DISCUSSION REPORTS:

Housing Report from Bob Flanders and Mike Dunn:

During the previous administration, the City of Thomson adopted a Housing Code Enforcement Ordinance that allows the City to identify and take action on old structures that are not in accordance with the code. Mr. Flanders and Mr. Dunn developed a list of structures under review for repair, removal or referral to court. The list consists of 32 structures. Court action will be taken on 3 additional structures. These three (3) structures are heir estates. The 34 structures (two were added at Council) are located on or around the gateways as you travel into the City. Mr. Flanders recommendations for this above list are:

- (1) Notify the owners of the dilapidated property to see if they will agree to clean up the property;
 - (2) Set up time frame to get work done; follow up with citations if compliance is not forthcoming;
 - (3) Partner with Springfield Baptist Church to clean up properties that the church owns as well as properties in the immediate vicinity.
 - (4) Group the Josie West estate property city-wide and treat as one body of property for notice and court action.
 - (5) Continue working with our Neighborhood Associations.
 - (6) Initiate City wide surveys of trash, appliances, vehicles and unkempt lots to be presented to the Mayor and Council for review monthly, along with follow up letters to property owners, citations, etc.
 - (7) Finally, initiate court action against property owners not responding to notices.
- Councilmember Jones moved to accept the Housing Report from Bob Flanders with the recommendation to adopt a process to act on the properties in need of rehab, removal or referral to court. Councilmember Belton seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

City Administrator's Report:

A public meeting was held at Springfield Baptist Church. The purpose was to gauge the interest in applying for additional CHIP rehab funds in 2009.

Big Creek is essentially finished. There will be a council meeting and/or Water Sewer Commission at the plant in the near future.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

Dianne L. Landers
City Clerk