

CITY OF THOMSON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
August 9, 2007

7:30PM

CITY HALL

Present

Robert K. Knox, Jr., Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Kenneth Usry, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
J.T. Wiley, Councilmember
Jay Jones, Councilmember
Don Powers, City Administrator
Dianne Landers, City Clerk

ALSO PRESENT

C. J. Locklear
Billy Hobbs, McDuffie Mirror
Donna Branch, WTHO
Rev. Donald Jackson
Sammy Cudshall
Jim Wallace, McDuffie Progress
Harold Hyatt
Joyce Hyatt

Absent:

Jimmy Plunkett

Mayor Knox welcomed all and called the Regular Council meeting for August 2007 to order. The invocation was given by Councilmember Jay Jones followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

On behalf of the Relay for Life group, Mayor Knox presented Chief Sewell and the City of Thomson Team a plaque for their significant contribution. The City Team, led by Chief Sewell, raised over \$21,000 toward the fight for a cancer cure. Our City of Thomson Team was recognized as the BEST OVERALL TEAM at the 2007 Award's Banquet.

PRESENTATION

Rev. Don Jackson, Vice President of Special Programs, NAACP presented the Safety Check Program. This is a program that provides daily telephone calling to all enrolled citizens to check on the well being of individuals who live alone. There is a yearly cost to the city if the program is implemented. The program started in February 2007, and seven Georgia cities signed up and are using the program. The Mayor and Council agreed to take a look into the references provided by Rev. Jackson before making a decision.

MINUTES

Councilmember Smalley moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of July 12, 2007, seconded by Councilmember Wiley. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Purchase of House and Lot at 524 Railroad Street:

Mayor Knox explained that in February 2005 Thomson and McDuffie County adopted an urban redevelopment plan that was submitted to the Department of Community Affairs and accepted as part of the City's housing strategy. One of the objectives cited in that document stated: **"A local loan program to assist first time homeowners will be researched and initiated if feasible."**

From this component of the redevelopment strategy, the City Staff is developing Thomson's "New HOPE" Program (Home Owner Partnership Enterprise). The idea is to develop ways that home ownership can be promoted, initially using funding from in-house HODAG funds (Housing Development Action Grants). The balance in this account is around \$600,000. Further our goal is to help preserve existing housing stock and return target properties that may be headed toward the rental market to private ownership. Rehabilitation and providing low cost loans that serve to make a home affordable for a low to moderate income owner will be the methods this program will use. This program will be administered by City of Thomson personnel. Councilmember Belton moved to adopt the "New HOPE" program and to purchase the property at 524 Railroad Street for \$25,000. Estimates for renovation are in the \$25-\$30,000 range. Councilmember Smalley seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Historic Preservation Update:

The Council listened to several comments and requests that had come to City hall concerning the Historic preservation district and its boundaries. Examples are:

- (1) Extend the district out each "gateways" to the City limits.
- (2) Do not include the back section of Hickory Hills.
- (3) Do not include Grier Circle, Lumpkin, Hickory Hill Drive, and Westview.
- (4) Consider neighborhoods built on the West side of Wrens Hwy, such neighborhoods over to Central Road.
- (5) Post e-mail comments on line.
- (6) News and updates on HPC in water bills.

TEE-1 Schedule and Work Plan:

City Administrator Don Powers stated that work on the Transportation Enhancement Project -1 will began after Labor Day in the parking lot behind the theatre. This parking lot will be completely rebuilt. The construction will then move to Railroad and finally to Main Street.

NEW BUSINESS:

Local Assistance Road Program List – 2007:

L.A.R.P. road proposal list for 2008 are: Mobley Street, Beechwood Drive, O'Neal, Salem, Sills, Anderson Ave, and Pineview Drive.

Local Assistance Grant for \$12,000 to support McDuffie County Library:

The City of Thomson/McDuffie County received a grant from the Governor's Local Assistance Program through the help of Senator Whitehead in the amount of \$12,000 for Capital Improvements at the Library.

Planning Commission Board Replacement:

Nancy Morris currently serves on the Planning Board and her term ends this year. Ms. Morris no longer desires to serve on the board. The City asked Connie Dozier if she was interested in serving and she indicated that she would. Mayor Knox recommended Ms. Dozier to fill the unexpired term till the end of this year.

Councilmember Smalley moved to accept Connie Dozier to replace Nancy Morris on the Planning Board, seconded by Councilmember Jones. Motion carried.

Historic Preservation Committee Replacement:

Mr. Charlie Bellman, an original member of the Committee has moved to Augusta and had to resign. Therefore, we are left with a vacancy. Bob Flanders, newly retired as the City Administrator, was suggested as the replacement. Of course, he brings a lot of insight and knowledge to the Committee. Mayor Knox recommended Bob Flanders to replace Charlie Bellman, whose term expires May 18, 2008.

Councilmember Usry moved to accept Bob Flanders to replace Charlie Bellman on the Historic Preservation Committee, seconded by Councilmember Belton. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- The GAC project at both water plants is in the testing phase. The testing determines just exactly how much water needs to be filtered to bring the whole system into compliance, daily.
- Bob Flanders is officially retired as of July 31 and advising as needed on the 2008 budget until it is approved and in place.
- Qualifying dates are August 27-August 31, 2007 from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Dianne L. Landers
City Clerk