

**CITY OF THOMSON
REGULAR MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL
July 8, 2010**

6:30 PM

CITY HALL

Meeting Outline

PRESENT

Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Mayor Pro-Tem
Bernice Brown, Councilmember
James Jones, Councilmember
Clifford Lunceford, Councilmember
Donald Powers, City Administrator
Rhonda Brown, Deputy City Clerk

ALSO PRESENT

Donna Branch, WTHO/WTWA
Justin Schuver, McDuffie Progress
Billy Hobbs, McDuffie Mirror
Lynn Davidson, McDuffie Mirror
Frank Doyle
Barbara Doyle
Joe Nelson, Chief of Police
Brink Bradshaw
Beatrice Usry
Fred Guerrant, Planning & Zoning Bd.

ABSENT:

John Smalley, Councilmember
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney
Dianne Landers, City Clerk

Mayor Usry welcomed all present, and offered the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The Mayor talked about the tragedy that happened in our community and asked everyone to keep the Jason McCorkle family in their prayers.

MINUTES

Clifford Lunceford moved to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2010 council meeting, seconded by Alton Belton, all in favor, so ordered.

OLD BUSINESS:

2nd Reading Revised Subdivision Regulation: Mayor Usry asked for this to be tabled until the August meeting so that we could have a bit more time to look over the documents, with a few minor changes expected.

NEW BUSINESS

Variance – Mobile Home, Mendel Avenue: Fred Guerrant, Director Planning Commission, presented the recommendation of the Planning Commission concerning an application received from Mrs. Beatrice Usry. She requested allowance for placement of a double-wide manufactured home on a vacant lot located on the west side of Mendel

Avenue approximately 600 feet from its intersection with Gordon Street. The application was approved by the Commission with additional stipulations; skirting the unit with brick, block, or stone and adding a covered front porch.

Mayor Usry informed the council that the city has a zoning ordinance in place that prohibits mobile homes from being placed inside the city limits. He further spoke frankly about the area, its crime statistics, and about the number of rental units in the area....Ms. Usry's current house would be allowed to be rented if the mobile home was put in place as her primary residence. Mayor Usry spoke against accepting the Planning Commission recommendation.

After questions and discussion, Alton Belton moved to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission, seconded by Bernice Brown. The vote was two for acceptance and two against, Jones and Lunceford. Mayor Usry voted against the recommendations and it was defeated, 3-2.

Tax Credit Rental Project: Bridgeland Development, LLC, has two parcels totaling 29.7 acres under contract as they work on the application to DCA for approval of a Low Income Tax Credit Rental Housing project in the City of Thomson. These are competitive applications from all across the state and the applicants usually need the support by resolution of the local governments in order to score higher on the application. The site is located to the south of Harrison Road/150 intersection with frontage on Mendel Avenue and Hinton Drive. As stated earlier, Bridgeland is only asking the City Council to write a resolution to DCA supporting the tax credit project....they were not asking nor do they need to ask the Council for permission to build this project. If the application was accepted by DCA and awarded tax credit status, the builder could install the project as long as they met local codes and ordinances.

After discussion concerning the short and long term advantages and disadvantages of such a project, James Jones moved that the resolution to support the tax credit project be denied, seconded by Bud Lunceford, four votes were in favor, one vote no, so ordered.

Interlocal Cooperation Agreement Establishing The Thomson-McDuffie County Land Bank Authority:

Don Powers explained that the purpose of a Land Bank Authority is to give the City and County more flexibility with regard to properties that are non-revenue generating and/or non tax producing. It comes as a recommendation of the GICH Housing Team and will be a tool to use as the City and the County work on housing and property issues in the future. The County has also approved the formation of the Authority as well.

Alton Belton moved to approve the Thomson-McDuffie County Land Bank Authority Agreement, seconded by Clifford Lunceford, all in favor, so ordered.

Intergovernmental Agreement Fire Department Training Facility:

Don Powers, City Administrator, explained that the Thomson Fire Department has been working on a fire fighter training facility for the past eighteen (18) months. In an effort to avoid duplication of the same sort of facilities on the County side, Powers and Don Norton, County Mgr., asked the fire chiefs to see if they could hammer out a joint agreement between both City and County Fire Departments, for use of the single facility already under construction. This agreement would allow both City and County to

participate in the shared use of said fire department training facility. The City would initially take the lead role administratively and capital additions and funding going forward would be developed jointly by City and County.

Bernice Brown moved to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement Fire Department Training Facility, seconded by James Jones, all in favor, so ordered.

2010 Budget Amendment:

Mr. Powers explained that the budget amendments would correct any errors and/or miscalculations to the original 2010 budget and is an annual mid-year attempt to reflect what is actually happening, actual compared to budget. There will be a final correcting amendment at the end of the year as well.

Clifford Lunceford moved to approve the 2010 Budget Amendment, seconded by James Jones, all in favor, so ordered

2010 Tax Digest:

The 2009 tax digest is \$135,537,653 with a mill of tax worth \$135,538; the 2010 tax digest value is \$133,943,015 with one mill of tax generating \$133,943. The calculated rollback millage rate would be 5.399 for the 2011 tax year, compared to 5.400 for current year. The suggest rollback would decrease the total calculated 2011 taxes to \$723,158. Actual collections usually run about 95% of budget. It is recommended to adopt the rollback millage rate of 5.399, slightly lower than last year, but with no real consequence, either positively or negatively, on the 2011 budget.

Alton Belton moved to approve the recommendation of rollback of 5.399, seconded by Bernice Brown, all in favor, so ordered.

Police Department New Car Purchase (Chief Nelson):

There was only one bid submitted on the 2010 Ford Explorer in the amount of \$20,190.25 from Bobby Jones Ford.

Alton Belton moved to approve the bid of \$20,190.25 from Bobby Jones Ford to purchase a 2010 Ford Explorer for the Chief of Police, seconded by Clifford Lunceford, all in favor, so ordered.

Safety & Health Awareness Resolution:

The City of Thomson receives (from GMA) a Local Government Grant to help promote safety and health awareness in the workplace. Part of the criteria for receiving the grant is to pass a resolution supporting these activities. The resolution was presented and recommended to pass. The grant this year is \$7000.

James Jones moved to approve the Safety & Health Awareness Resolution, seconded by Clifford Lunceford, all in favor, so ordered.

OPEN FLOOR DISCUSSION:

Frank Doyle addressed the council about placing a directional sign on the corner of Main Street and First Avenue to help potential customers find his establishment on First Avenue. Mayor Usry directed Mr. Doyle to go back to the Planning & Zoning Board

with his proposed sign design and paperwork and that the HPC and Council would look at the proposal afterwards.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Don Powers discussed these items:

- The concept report for Railroad Street and Depot Grant TE projects can now be submitted. The final draft layouts of Railroad Street have been completed, approved by property owners in that area, and the concept report can now be finished and submitted to DOT.
- South McDuffie water expansion mains are out for bid. This will include portions of the necessary water mains and pumps that will provide water to Harlem.
- All initial budget meetings have been held with each department. Target for budget completion is October's Council meeting. The requirements for hearings are not as stringent when the rollback rate is adopted, so the budgeting process will be a little simpler in that regard this year.
- The engineering drawings and bid documents have been completed for the next phase of Pitt Street and are out for bid. Should have prices in before next council meeting.
- Mike Dunn is still on sick leave.
- The 2010 budget performance is on track.
- There will be a Housing Workshop held on Thursday, July 22nd from 5pm-7pm at the Thomson Depot. This workshop will highlight topics such as preparing for homeownership and USDA Rural Development Homeownership Programs. It is sponsored by the USDA office here in Thomson.

Mayor Usry talked about the contest held annually by GMA that is currently underway at the local middle school called "If I Were Mayor". Essays are submitted by students, on what they would do if they were involved in running our town. They are judged locally with winners submitted to the statewide competition.

Mayor Usry thanked the Police, Fire and Gas Departments on their quick response to the propane gas explosion in the community over the July 4th weekend.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

Rhonda P. Crawford
Deputy City Clerk