

The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their monthly Work Session on Thursday, November 20, 2023, at the Public Safety Building at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Roxanne Whitaker presiding.

Present: COUNCIL: Mayor Roxanne Whitaker, Mayor Pro tem Gregg Stokes, Councilmember Daniel Bellavance, Councilmember Al Reeves, and Councilmember John Thigpen; STAFF: City Manager Debra Moore, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Barry Fleming; MEDIA: Skylar Andrews, The Augusta Press.

The Work Session was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:05 p.m.

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was given and led by City Attorney Fleming.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Consider Ordinance 2314 – An Ordinance to Amend Sec. 108-3 Definitions to State the Inspection Process to be Utilized by the City for Construction or Installation of Residences – 2nd Reading & Action: Community Development Director David Jenkins explained Ordinance 2314 is an ordinance amending Sec. 108-3 Definitions. This amendment is to add the inspection process and types of inspections for various types of residential structures within the city. Councilmember Thigpen questioned what type of inspections are done for fire inspection; Fire Marshal Pamela Nickles responded a Safety Inspection is done before the final inspection. City Manager Moore stated this amendment has gone before the Planning Commission for recommendation. The recommendation is for approval.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Request for Extension of Temporary Camping Permit; 6530 Bobcat Lane (Reference Sec. 108-131(f) – Action: City Manager Moore explained a temporary camping permit for 6530 Bobcat Lane was issued on July 27, 2023, due to damage to their home. The permit is to expire on December 28, 2023, at this time the temporary electric pole is to be removed. The property owner has stated the roof has been completed but there is still work to be done in the interior of the home. The contractor was scheduled to do work on the first of November to include abatement but ran into some issues with the insurance company. The owner has not heard back from the insurance company and is requesting an extension of the date in the event they do not have the approval of the insurance company in time or an issue with the scheduling of the repairs due to the holidays. Mr. Jenkins explained the definition and the process of the temporary camping permit. City Manager Moore commented council will need to determine the length of the time if the extension is approved.

Consider Variance Request VAR-2023-11-01 for 651 N. Fairview Drive; Map & Parcel 031 246; for Variance in the Side Setback - Action: Councilmember Thigpen asked if VAR-2023-11-01 is for side setbacks only; Mr. Jenkins responded that is correct. Councilmember Thigpen expressed concerns about the type of materials that will be used for the new garage and accessory building and wanted to verify staff has informed the homeowners of what can and cannot be done for the new construction, Mr. Jenkins

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Variance Request VAR-2023-11-01 for 651 N. Fairview Drive; Map & Parcel 031 246; for Variance in the Side Setback – Action (cont'd): responded they have. Councilmember Thigpen commented that the outside of the building cannot be a steel or metal structure. Councilmember Thigpen commented based on the way the ordinance is written it states certain building materials must be used for the garage if it is attached or detached. Mr. Jenkins explained the application is for a side variance for a proposed garage and accessory structure. Mr. Jenkins stated at the Planning Commission meeting there was discussion on what the view from the street would be for the building, which would be the garage doors and the vehicles. City Attorney Fleming stated if it is a detached garage it has to be of the same materials as the house. The homeowner, Mr. Ben Strickland explained to Council they are going to get a building permit for a metal roof for the house, and the roof will match the roof on the building. Mr. Strickland stated the building is a steel building with garage doors that will have remotes, not roll up doors, and it will match the house. Councilmember Bellavance asked how close this will be to the property line; Mr. Jenkins responded no closer than five feet, staff has not received any comments from the neighbors.

Consider Resolution 2023-14 - Operating Policy Updates and Policy Adoptions for Non-Criminal Justice Criminal History Records/Appointment of Personnel – Action: City Manager Moore explained after the recent GCIC audit we are required to update the policy's and appoint the Community Development Director as the Local Agency Security Officer and the Authorized Recipient Security Officer. The City of Harlem reviews Criminal History Records during the processing of alcohol licensing applications and are required to have regularly scheduled audit of the procedures by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

Consider Resolution 2023-15 - A Resolution to Adopt the Operating Budget FYE 12/31/2024 – Action: Mayor Whitaker commented Resolution 2023-15 is a resolution to adopt the operating budget FYE 12/31/2024.

Consider Proclamation Recognizing December 16, 2023 as Wreaths Across America Day in the City of Harlem – Action: The Proclamation is recognizing Saturday, December 16, 2023 as Wreaths Across America Day to recognize and honor those who serve. The ceremony will be held at the Harlem Cemetery at 12:00 p.m.

Consider Project Financing for Public Works Building Project and Multi-Purpose Park – Action: City Attorney Fleming explained Andrew Tritt from Stifel, Nicolaus & Company is present tonight to answer questions and to explain the proposed financing for the Public Works Building and the Multi-purpose Park projects. Mr. Tritt gave an overview of the financing of the \$4,000,000 for the proposed projects. The borrowed funds will be a revenue bond and will not be federally taxed. The council discussed the financing of the projects. Councilmember Thigpen asked the City Manager her thoughts on the financing for the projects. Manager Moore stated she is not in favor of the financing because of knowing what interest rate is being paid now and does not know how long the interest rate is going to last. She commented that the city has the money to pay for these projects and why we would want to pay extra interest. Ms. Moore stated she is very cautious. City Manager Moore clarified as of November 1st the interest earning on the city account now is 3% and is guaranteed to at least through the end of 2024. Councilmember Thigpen stated he is cautious as well, but feels they need to place the money where it will get the most interest.

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Project Financing for Public Works Building Project and Multi-Purpose Park – Action (cont'd):
City Attorney Fleming asked the council if they would like him to proceed with the financing for the projects; the consensus of council is to proceed. City Attorney Fleming will proceed with the process for the project financing.

Other: None.

Mayor Whitaker wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and announced Small Business Saturday is this Saturday, November 25th. Mayor Whitaker asked the City Manager to contact Engineer John McClellan to attend December's meeting to provide updates on the city projects.

With there being nothing further for discussion, Mayor Whitaker closed the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk