

The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their Regular Meeting on Monday, November 27, 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.

The Regular Council Meeting was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m.

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

Approval of the Agenda: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the Agenda as presented; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Mayor Pro tem Stokes made a motion to approve the following Minutes as written:

- Work Session; Thursday, October 19, 2023
- Budget Work Session & Executive Session; Friday, October 20, 2023
- Regular Council Meeting; Monday, October 23, 2023

The motion was 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

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 of Installation of Residences – 2nd Reading & Action: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2314 An Ordinance to Amend Sec. 108-3 Definitions to State the Inspection Process to be Utilized by the City for Construction of Installation of Residences; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. Discussion: City Manager Moore stated this ordinance went before the Planning and Zoning for a recommendation. The recommendation was for approval. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Request for Extension of Temporary Camping Permit; 6530 Bobcat Lane (Reference Sec. 108-131(f) – Action: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the request for an extension of temporary camping permit for 6530 Bobcat Lane up to 90-days, if another extension is needed Council will consider the extension; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Variance Request VAR-2023-11-01 for 651 N. Fairview Drive; Map & Parcel 031 246; for a Variance in the Side Setback – Action: Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve VAR-2023-11-01 for 651 N. Fairview Drive, Map & Parcel 031 246 for variance in the side setback; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. Discussion: Councilmember Thigpen asked for clarification from the homeowner, are the shingles on the roof going to be changed on the house to match the metal roof on the garage; the homeowner Mr. Ben Strickland answered yes. Councilmember Thigpen asked the homeowners if they understand the exterior materials on the garage itself have to be of like materials of the house, not metal siding; Mr. Strickland responded they understand. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution 2023-14 - Operating Policy Updates and Policy Adoptions for Non-Criminal Justice Criminal History Records/Appointment of Personnel – Action: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-14 Operating Policy Updates and Policy Adoptions for Non-Criminal Justice Criminal History Records/Appointment of Personnel; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. Discussion: City Manager Moore commented recently the city had a GCIC audit for the processing of alcohol, beer, and wine licensing. The policies are a requirement as well as the appointment of an officer, which would be the Community Development Director. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution 2023-15 – A Resolution to Adopt the Operating Budget FYE 12-31-2024 – Action: Mayor Whitaker praised and thanked City Manager Moore for the long hours, and hard work she put into preparing the budget. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-15 A Resolution to adopt the Operating Budget FYE 12-31-2024; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative; Councilmember Bellavance opposed.

Consider Proclamation Recognizing December 16, 2023 as Wreaths Across America Day in the City of Harlem – Action: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the Proclamation for Wreaths Across America Day in the City of Harlem on December 16, 2023; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Project Financing for Public Works Building Project and Multi-Purpose Park – Action: City Attorney Fleming explained at Monday's Work Session on November 20th, Andrew Tritt with Stifel Financial came before Council to discuss financing for the public works building and the multi-purpose park projects. Before Council tonight is Resolution 2023-16 to allow the Mayor to sign the documents to complete the process. City Attorney Fleming stated a Called Meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, December 5th to finalize the process. There is a possibility the Called Meeting could be canceled if everything is approved tonight.

Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-16 A Resolution requesting that the Columbia County Public Facilities Authority issue its revenue bond for the City of Harlem project, Series 2023, in the principal amount of \$4,000,000 for the purpose of providing funds to finance the cost of the

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Project Financing for Public Works Building Project and Multi-Purpose Park – Action (cont'd): renovation, construction, and equipping of improvements to park and recreational facilities, a new public works facility and demolition and construction of certain dilapidated properties; to authorize the execution of an intergovernmental contract between the city and the authority to secure payment of the series 2023 bond and for other purposes; 2nd by Councilmember Thigpen. Discussion: Councilmember Bellavance asked if this money can be used for any projects, not just the two projects listed; City Attorney Fleming replied you have to state an intention of what you are trying to use the money on, you can change later on if something comes up almost like a SPLOST issue. You have to have a good reason to change, once you state your purpose for doing it you want to move ahead with that unless something changes that you need to change. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Other: None.

Public Comment: None.

Reports:

- **Council:** Councilmember Thigpen reported he is going to take the opportunity to report at the legislative delegation meeting on how dangerous the intersection at N. Fairview Drive and Highway 221 is. There have been tragedies there in the past and he is worried there are going to be more tragedies there. Something needs to be done at the intersection, someone needs to get behind GDOT and try to get something moving and updates on the intersection. Mayor Whitaker commented that this is a county intersection, and the county is going to be the one that needs to push this. Councilmember Thigpen stated the cities County Commissioner has taken a lead on the issue. City Attorney Fleming stated the meeting for the legislative delegation is on December 7th if anyone would like to attend. GDOT Representative Greg Morris will be in attendance and City Attorney Fleming is hoping he can take Mr. Morris to the intersection and to an intersection in Grovetown that is having issues.
- **Mayor:** Mayor Whitaker reported Small Business Saturday was this past Saturday. It was a nice turnout and the businesses looked busy. Mayor Whitaker stated letters to Santa have started. The Santa mailbox is set up in front of the Museum. This year a Story Walk has started to help encourage reading and to help promote businesses. Mayor Whitaker commented that the Story Walk is where you visit a downtown business that is participating and read a page out of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.
- **Department Reports:** City Manager Moore reported public works has been working on putting up the Christmas lights. The county is going to decorate the Harlem Library Plaza with garlands and lights.

Announcements:

December 5	Planning Commission Meeting; 6:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
December 9	Christmas Festival, Christmas Twilight Parade & Christmas Movie; 11:00 a.m.

Announcements (cont'd):

December 13	Urban Redevelopment Agency Meeting; 9:00 a.m.; City Hall
December 14	Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Public Safety Building
December 16	Wreaths Across America; 12:00 p.m.; Harlem Cemetery
December 21	City Council Work Session & Regular Council Meeting; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
December 22	Christmas Employee Luncheon – City Offices Closed; 12:00 p.m.
December 25-26	City Offices Closed for Christmas

Executive Session: N/A

Mayor Whitaker requested City Manager Moore to reach out to John McClellan with G. Ben Turnipseed Engineering Office to attend the December meeting to give an update on projects for the city.

With there being nothing further for discussion, Councilmember Bellavance made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk