

The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their monthly Work Session on Thursday, April 18, 2024, 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 Adam Nelson.

The Work Session was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m.

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

PRESENTATIONS:

Special Presentation – North Harlem Elementary School Greenpower Team: Mayor Whitaker stated a special presentation will be presented to the North Harlem Elementary School Greenpower Team at the Regular Council meeting on Monday, April 22, 2024.

John McClellan, G. Ben Turnipseed Engineers – Project Updates: City Engineer John McClellan of G. Ben Turnipseed Engineers reported on the following city project updates:

1. New Public Works Building – Mr. McClellan reported the plans for the new public works building should be finished in approximately two weeks. Advertising of bids are planned to start in June, waiting for the soil and erosion review.
2. Verdery Street Drainage Project – The Verdery Street drainage project should start in May.
3. Multi-purpose Park (formerly the North Harlem Elementary School property) – The survey has been completed for the multi-purpose park and the project is on track. A meeting will be set up within the next 30-45 days to discuss the concept plan with the amenities for the multi-purpose park with the Mayor, Council, and staff. Mr. McClellan stated advertising is anticipated to start in October 2024, to proceed in November 2024 and completion of the multi-purpose park by June 2025.
4. Peachtree Street paving project – Advertising is scheduled to start in June 2024 for the Peachtree Street paving project with the bid opening, award, and preconstruction in July 2024 and work to start in August 2024. Mayor Pro tem Stokes asked Mr. McClellan if there are provisions for improvement for the drainage issue at the entrance of Peachtree Street; Mr. McClellan replied to the entrance of Peachtree Street is tied into the right of way of the state route and they would need to speak with the Department of Transportation (DOT) about the drainage issue. Mr. McClellan stated they could look at the entrance and see if the asphalt could be worked a different way.

Mayor Whitaker asked Mr. McClellan to attend the Council quarterly meeting in June to discuss the concept plan for the Multi-purpose park.

Harlem Memorial Cemetery Committee Members – Cemetery/City Park Connectivity: Cemetery Committee Members Robert Culpepper and Steve Camp addressed Council on the connectivity of the cemetery and the city park. Mr. Culpepper explained when he was in office as Mayor there was a discussion

PRESENTATIONS (cont'd):

Harlem Memorial Cemetery Committee Members – Cemetery/City Park Connectivity (cont'd): with prior City Manager Brett Cook and the city's Community Development Director Wanda Moore on the connectivity of the cemetery and the city park. Mr. Culpepper stated at the time Columbia County was maintaining the park, and the cemetery committee reached out to the county about the possibility of connecting the cemetery and the city park. The cemetery committee hired a landscape architect to do a study on connectivity. The study showed that the roads could come all the way through the cemetery to the park. Mr. Culpepper stated the cemetery committee talked with City Manager Cook on the connectivity and the City Manager Cook agreed for the city to supply the drainage pipe for the access points from the cemetery to the city park. Councilmember Bellavance asked who gave the cemetery committee permission to install the access points; Mr. Culpepper replied City Manager Cook gave permission, and the committee was in the understanding the City Manager Cook made Council aware of this.

Mr. Camp stated the cemetery committee would like to work with the city on the best options of leaving the access points open from the cemetery to the park. Mr. Camp explained if there is a funeral at the cemetery there are times where people cannot leave until the hearse has left because of the narrow streets in the cemetery, the access points would allow people to leave the cemetery. Mr. Camp stated the cemetery has some land close to the park and the committee would like to see if there is an option for the city to build additional parking that would benefit the city and the cemetery. Mr. Camp stated if the lot needs to be paved, installation of speed bumps and no parking signs installed the committee is open to working with the city.

Councilmember Thigpen stated he has received complaints about cars speeding when they come off of South Hatcher Street and going through the cemetery to get to the park. He has concerns about cars coming into the park from the cemetery because there are children playing. Councilmember Thigpen stated people are using the third access point and they are driving over the walking trail and the trail is getting damaged. Mayor Pro tem Stokes asked what happens when a car, or golf cart runs over the coping around the graves; Mr. Culpepper stated the cemetery committee would try to make the repairs.

Mr. Camp stated he does not know what the city has planned for the city park, but the cemetery committee would like to work with the city to figure out what the best option is for the cemetery and the park. Mr. Camp commented if they need to put in pavement, speed bumps, signage, and bollards this would be a possibility.

Mayor Pro tem Stokes asked City Manager Moore to add discussion of the cemetery and park connectivity to the Council Quarterly Meeting in June.

Before the New Business started Councilmember Bellavance stated Mr. Tripp Lonergan had called in to request to speak about the connectivity from the cemetery to the city park and he would like to allow Mr. Lonergan to speak. Mr. Lonergan stated he appreciates everything the cemetery committee does, but he feels like the streets in the cemetery do not need to be open to the city park; the streets in the cemetery are not wide enough to be a public street and who will keep up the streets in the cemetery since this is private property.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Consider Garbage Contract Extension Proposal with Coastal Waste & Recycling: City Manager Moore stated the following information is the updated proposal from Coastal Waste & Recycling:

1. Residential Service: They will provide residential garbage and bulk pickup for the rate of \$21.45 per month. The recycling service would be eliminated altogether. Service would be limited to what is in the cart. Only bulk will be collected outside the cart. Extra bags/boxes outside of the cart are not considered bulk items.
2. Recycle Carts: Will be picked up unless a resident chooses to keep it for extra garbage; it will be billed as a second cart though.
3. Service Days: Service days will remain Thursday and Friday as it is now.

City Manager Moore stated Council will need to either consider the proposal from Coastal Waste & Recycling or decline the proposal; if the proposal is turned down a Request For Proposal (RFP) would be done to go out for bid. Councilmember Bellavance stated he would like for the garbage contract to go out for bid.

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Proclamation – Recognition of the Week of May 5 -11, 2024 as the 55th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Weeks: Mayor Whitaker stated the week of May 5-11, 2024 is the 55th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week.

Consider GMA's District 7 Officers for 2024-2025: This is for the election of the GMA's District 7 Officers for 2024-2025. The proposed ballot is for the following nominated Officer's:

- President Danny Brown, Councilmember, Sandersville
- First Vice President Catherine Harris McKnight, Commissioner, Augusta
- Second Vice President Alan Haywood, Mayor, Sparta
- Third Vice President "Chick" Jones, Mayor, Waynesboro

At the Regular Council Meeting on Monday, April 22nd Council will need to vote for the District 7's Officers.

Consider Temporary Alcohol Permit for Harlem Merchant's Association Event; Mimosa's on Main, Saturday May 11, 2024: City Manager Moore explained the Harlem Merchant's Association (HMA) has applied for a temporary alcohol permit for Mimosa's on Main to be held Saturday, May 11, 2024. The event will be located on the Library Lawn with craft vendors and the businesses downtown will participate at their store fronts. There has been no issue in the previous HMA events.

Consider Variance Application VAR-2024-04-01 for Map & Parcel H03 139; 370 W. Milledgeville Road for a Reduction in the Side Landscape Buffer: Community Development Director Robert Fields stated a variance request for a reduction in the side landscape buffer went before the Planning Commission on April 3rd. The request is to reduce the side landscape buffer from 25-feet to 5-feet for the proposed O'Reilly Auto Parts to be located at 370 W. Milledgeville Road. The Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Variance Application VAR-2024-04-01 for Map & Parcel H03 139; 370 W. Milledgeville Road for a Reduction in the Side Landscape Buffer (cont'd): approval of variance application VAR-2024-04-01 contingent upon the Harlem Preservation Commissions decision on the Certificate of Appropriateness application submitted for demolition of the structure on the property. Mr. Fields explained the HPC Commissioners would like to do a walk-through of the structure on April 23rd. Mr. Fields stated he has reached out to the Architect for O'Reilly Auto Parts to schedule the walk-through with the owner; he has not heard anything back.

Consider Ordinance 2402 for the Annexation of Property; Unopened Western Terminus of W. Forrest Street – 1st Reading: Councilmember Bellavance recused himself from discussion to consider Ordinance 2402 an Ordinance to annex property at the unopened western terminus of W. Forrest Street; Councilmember Bellavance left the Council area and moved to the citizen area. Director Fields explained this is an ordinance for the annexation of the undeveloped portion of the western terminus of W. Forrest Street. Notification has been submitted to Columbia County Board of Commissioners with the intent to annex the property; no comments have been received by Columbia County. The zoning on the property to be annexed is proposed to be R-1A Residential. The rezoning request will go before the Planning Commission on May 7th. City Manager Moore explained this is the first reading for Ordinance 2402, this will come back to Council in June for the second reading. If the Planning Commission makes a recommendation for rezoning it will come back to Council in June as well. After no further discussion, Councilmember Bellavance returned to the Council area.

Consider Rezoning Application RZ-2024-04-01 to Rezone Map & Parcel H02 036; 375 N. Louisville Street; .42 acres; Rezone from R-1A Residential to B-1 Downtown Business District: Mr. Fields explained the applicant is the City of Harlem for a rezoning of the property located at 375 N. Louisville Street, Harlem Civic Center. The request is to change the zoning from R-1A Residential to B-1 Downtown Business District. The rezoning application went before the Planning Commission on April 2nd for a recommendation; the recommendation was for approval.

Consider Designation and Approval of Local Road Assistance Administration Funds Project – Sidewalk Improvements: City Manager Moore explained the Department of Transportation started accepting applications for Local Road Assistance Administration funds (LRA). The LRA funds will be administered and distributed using Local Maintenance and Improvement Grants (LMIG). The LRA funds require no match. City Manager Moore is proposing to use the funds for sidewalk projects to be in ADA compliance and replace damaged cement slabs in the sidewalks.

Consider Changes in Upcoming Meeting Dates; May Regular Meeting and June Work Session: City Manager Moore stated the Regular Council Meeting for the month of May will fall on Memorial Day, a holiday recognized by the City, offices will be closed. She is proposing to conduct the Regular Meeting on the same night as Work Session on Thursday, May 23rd. City Manager Moore explained the June Work Session falls on Thursday, June 20th, two Councilmembers and the City Clerk will be traveling to Savannah for the GMA Conference; the Mayor will be out of town that week as well. The proposal is to cancel the Work Session and have full discussion and action at the Regular meeting that is scheduled for Monday, June 24th.

Other: None.

With there being nothing further for discussion, Mayor Pro tem Stokes 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 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley