

The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for a combined Work Session and Regular Council Meeting on Thursday, May 23, 2024, at the Public Safety Building at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Roxanne Whitaker presiding.

Present: COUNCIL: Mayor Roxanne Whitaker, Councilmember Daniel Bellavance, Councilmember Al Reeves, and Councilmember John Thigpen; STAFF: City Manager Debra Moore, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Adam Nelson; ABSENT: Mayor Pro tem Gregg Stokes.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m.

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

Approval of the Agenda: Councilmember Thigpen made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. City Manager Moore asked to add Signage under New Business - Other. Councilmember Thigpen made a motion to amend his motion and with a motion to approve the addition of Signage under New Business – Other; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Councilmember Thigpen made a motion to approve the following Minutes as written:

- Work Session; Thursday, April 18, 2024
- Regular Council Meeting; Monday, April 22, 2024

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Consider Ordinance 2402 for the Annexation of Property; Unopened Western Terminus of W. Forrest Street – 2nd Reading & Action: Councilmember Bellavance recused himself from the Council area and moved to the citizen area. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2402, an ordinance for the annexation of property, the unopened western terminus of W. Forrest Street; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Other:

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Rezoning Application RZ-2024-05-01 to Rezone the Undeveloped Portion of the Western Terminus of W. Forrest Street: Councilmember Bellavance recused himself from the Council area. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the rezoning application RZ-2024-05-01 to rezone the undeveloped portion of the western terminus of W. Forrest Street; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. DISCUSSION: City Manager Moore explained this ordinance went before the Planning Commission for a recommendation; the recommendation is for approval with the rezoning to R-1A. The motion carried with

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Rezoning Application RZ-2024-05-01 to Rezone the Undeveloped Portion of the Western Terminus of W. Forrest Street (cont'd): Councilmembers Reeves and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Councilmember Bellavance returned to the Council area.

Consider Proclamation – Recognition of the Week of June 10 – 14, 2024 as Municipal Court Clerks Week: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the Proclamation recognizing the week of June 10 – 14, 2024 as Municipal Court Clerk Week; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. DISCUSSION: City Manager Moore explained Governor Brian Kemp has proclaimed June 10-14, 2024, as Municipal Court Clerks Week for the state of Georgia and the city would like to recognize Ms. Deborah James, City of Harlem's Municipal Court Clerk. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Mayor Whitaker presented Municipal Court Clerk Deborah James the Proclamation.

Consider Resolution 2024-07 for the Surplus of City Property – 375 N. Louisville Street: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2024-07 for the surplus of city property at 375 N. Louisville Street; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. DISCUSSION: City Manager Moore explained this is for the surplus of the Harlem Civic Center property located at 375 N. Louisville Street. Ms. Moore asked for consideration to use the proceeds from the sale of the property to be designated as funding for the operational needs for the Park Department. The sale of the property will go through the city's bid process. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Appointment(s) to the Historic Preservation Commission: Mayor Whitaker submitted Ms. Leslie Perdue's name for consideration of appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission. There are also two re-appointments for Position 1, Mr. Brett Rogers, and Position 2, Ms. Lynda Morris. Their terms will expire in June 2024. With the current change made regarding terms of office for the Commissioners, they would be re-appointed to serve a six-month term that will end in December 2024. If they are willing to continue to serve on the Commission, they would be re-appointed at that time to serve a one-year term (January 2025-December 2025). Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to appoint Leslie Perdue and to re-appoint Brett Rogers and Lynda Morris to the Historic Preservation Commission; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Ordinance 2403 – An Ordinance for the Amendment and Restatement of the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan for the Employees of the City of Harlem and Addendum to the Adoption Agreement – 1st Reading & Action: City Manager Moore explained Ordinance 2403 is an ordinance for amendments and restatement of the defined benefit retirement plan for the employees. Ms. Moore stated there are some changes to the Master Plan Document and clarification of the process for locating an individual for owed benefits. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2403, an Ordinance for the Amendment and Restatement of the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan for the Employees of the City of Harlem and Addendum to the Adoption Agreement; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Public Comment: None.

Reports:

- **Council Reports:** Councilmember Reeves reported the community came together to support and help the Harlem Baseball team. Councilmember Reeves commented it was amazing to see the support.
- **Mayor Report:** Mayor Whitaker reported the Harlem Library has been selected to participate in the Georgia Cities Solution Mayor’s Masterpiece Reading Program. On June 5th, a group from the Georgia Cities Solution will be at the library leading an art project to go along with the book *Georgia Caroline Visits our Hometown Heros*. Mayor Whitaker reported we have been selected as a potential finalist for the Georgia City Solution Impact Award for our Story Walk and Harlem’s Librarian Amanda Ham will be interviewed for one of the finalists. They are talking about incorporating math with the Story Walk. Mayor Whitaker reported there was a recent meeting with Johnson, Laschober & Associates on the Harlem City Park for review of the concept they have been working on. The Council Quarterly Meeting will be on June 7th.
- **Department Reports:** City Manager Moore reported she is working on RFP’s (Request for Proposal) for the Civic Center and for the waste disposal contract. Ms. Moore stated for the RFP she will ask for a proposal on garbage and an addendum with garbage and recycling.

Announcements:

May 27	City Offices Closed – Memorial Day
June 4	Planning & Zoning Meeting; 6:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
June 7	City Council Quarterly Work Session; 8:30 a.m.; City Hall
June 12	Urban Redevelopment Agency Meeting; 9:00 a.m.; City Hall
June 13	Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Public Safety Building
June 19	City Offices Closed – Juneteenth Holiday
June 21-25	GMA Annual Convention; Savannah
June 24	Work Session & Regular Council Meeting; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building

Other:

Signage: Councilmember Reeves commented he would like to see about placement of GDOT (Georgia Department of Transportation) signs honoring the Harlem’s Baseball team championships over the years as well as other athletic championships, and the Home of Oliver Hardy. The signs would be placed at the entrance ways in Harlem. Councilmember Reeves stated a letter would need to be written by the Mayor and presented to Senator Lee Anderson, State Representative Gary Richardson, and the Department of Transportation on placing GDOT signs in Harlem. Mayor Whitaker recommended further discussion at the Council Quarterly Meeting on June 7th.

Executive Session: N/A

With there being nothing further for discussion, Councilmember Bellavance made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk