

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – MARCH 11, 2019

The March 11, 2019 Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room at 101-B North Broad Street by Mayor Booker T. Gainor. Present were Mayor Pro tem Lannis Thornton, Council Members Jerry L. Cox, James H. Douglas, and Robert L. Gwaltney. Councilman Demario J. Byrden was absent from the meeting. Staff Members present were City Manager Chris Addleton, City Attorney Thomas L. Lehman, and City Clerk Carolyn Lee. Also in attendance were Cairo Messenger Editor, Randy Wind, and Times Enterprise Reporter, Erik Yabor.

INVOCATION: The Invocation was given by Mayor Gainor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve the agenda was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Cox and approved unanimously by all Council Members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1.) February 25, 2019 Regular Meeting: Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Gwaltney, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and approved unanimously by all Council Members present.

2.) February 25, 2019 Workshop Meeting: Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Gwaltney, and approved unanimously by all Council Members present.

DELEGATIONS:

Joshua Bell, Cairo Municipal Court Judge. Judge Bell reported on the status of the Court and the legislative actions taken over the past three years affecting law enforcement, probation, and the courts. Council Members asked questions regarding community service and the possible need for a solicitor. In closing, Judge Bell welcomed Council Members to sit in and observe a court session.

Janet Dekle Wynne. Mrs. Wynne expressed her desire to identify and help uninsured persons affected by tornado damage to rebuild and offered her telephone number (478-955-6478) to the public. Mayor Gainor advised that a panel made up of local insurance agents, real estate agents, claims adjustors and others had been set up to answer frequently asked questions from tornado victims and would meet on March 19th at 6:00 p.m. at Mount Calvary Church. Mrs. Wynne stated that she had learned from the Thomasville Habitat for Humanity that partial grants and low-interest loans were available for certain age groups, but she was not sure if a Habitat for Humanity would have to be re-established in Cairo for citizens to be eligible for benefits.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Special Event Permit for the “Great Works in the Community” to be held on March 30, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at Holder Park - Sheila Pate, Applicant. Ms. Reesa Ray was present representing the group that was planning to cook and donate clothes in the community. After review, motion to approve the event permit was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Cox, and approved unanimously by all Council Members present.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – MARCH 11, 2019

Public Hearing – Rezoning Request from R-1A (Single-Family Residential District) to R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential District) for multiple parcels, located on 2nd St., NW; identified as County Tax Map C12, Parcel 84, Parcel 85 and Tax Map C21 Parcel 66.

Applicants: Ethan Jackson Investments, LLC; Rebecca Ann Bond; and Helen Thorsby.

(Councilman Douglas left the dais at this time and abstained from taking part in discussion and voting on this matter due to a conflict). Mr. Jeremiah Horne presented information on his proposed project, as well as a sketch of a building made up of four one-bedroom units that he described as looking like a single family residence on the exterior, and a drawing of the division of the lots. He stated that he wanted to divide the land into four tracts with four buildings to house single people; adding that most apartments were government subsidized, and it was hard to find those that were not. He noted that it was a nice site, close to shopping, and was the “fault line” for property values; therefore, the project should increase area property values. If zoning was denied, his alternative would be to build four 3-bedroom houses to rent for \$900 a month or to sell for around \$119,000. He asked that the Council not take the Planning Commission’s recommendation to deny rezoning, noting that he did not do the best in presenting his plan to them. He added that he knew it was hard to ignore the passion of the crowd at the hearing and gave his response to some of their concerns including a lack of control of neighbors, what would happen if the property was sold, erosion of property values, and traffic and safety concerns. Mr. Horne noted some of those issues could happen on any property even if his rezoning request was denied. In closing, Mr. Horne noted that some opponents to rezoning had asked for protection in zoning, and he requested that the Council consider rezoning with a “limited use” of his proposed project.

Ms. Helen Thorsby, Flowery Branch, Ga. and one of the applicants for rezoning, was present and gave the history of how she had acquired the vacant lot and the vandalism of it over the years. She urged the Council to consider approval of rezoning to get the area cleaned up to give people a decent place to live.

Mrs. Sally Whitfield, 127 7th Ave., NW, stated that the current zoning was a protection for homes in the established neighborhood. She presented a petition with signatures of over 60 concerned citizens who opposed rezoning. She noted that there was a high level of foot traffic in the area around the First Baptist Church buildings and was also concerned that the R-3 zone could open the door for mobile homes, personal care homes, and other uses.

Ms. Alicia Byrden, 118 7th Ave., NW, requested members of the audience who opposed rezoning to stand, with the greater majority doing so. She stated that property values had already gone down and did not need to go down even more. She was concerned with safety, noting that she trusted her current neighbors, and she didn’t have the money to relocate after 13 years.

Mr. Randy Johnson, 200 7th Ave., NW, stated that Mr. Horne could not be made to rent only to elderly tenants, adding that the Thorsby lot was the worst in the neighborhood.

Mr. Jon Mizell stated that he had been here for ten years and loved his neighborhood, adding that he was not afraid of change but was worried about the effect on property values if the zoning changed. In closing, he noted that the voting public did not want a change in zoning.

Mr. Chris Thompson, 25 7th Ave., NW, stated that he could not afford to lose value on his property owned for ten years and believed there were other places to build apartments. After comments, the hearing was closed.

Rezoning Request from R-1A (Single-Family Residential District) to R-3 (Multiple-Family Residential District) for multiple parcels, located on 2nd Street NW; identified as County Tax Map C12, Parcel 84, Parcel 85 and Tax Map C21 Parcel 66. Applicants: Ethan Jackson Investments, LLC, Rebecca Ann Bond, and Helen Thorsby. Both the Cairo Planning Commission and the SWGRC recommended denial of the rezoning application based on zoning criteria. Councilman Thornton expressed his belief that there was a need for housing but not in this neighborhood and made motion to deny the rezoning. Motion was seconded by Councilman

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – MARCH 11, 2019

Gwaltney and passed with Council Members Thornton, Gwaltney, and Cox voting in favor of the motion to deny. Councilman Douglas had abstained and did not vote but returned to the dais at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS: Reports:

1.) Reports from City Manager.

- Gave an update on the tornado cleanup. The Governor had extended the emergency declaration until March 15, allowing the DOT to help longer with debris removal, with over 800 tons going into the Landfill already and more left to go. Taylor Waste also had contractors helping him. Sixty-seven customers were still without power and several homes had been totally demolished. He thanked the City employees, sister cities, Grady EMC, and volunteers for all their help. He recommended drawing \$500,000 out of the MEAG Competitive Trust Fund to help with tornado expenses, as he was not sure that any of the costs would be reimbursable. Council discussed and approved withdrawing up to \$750,000 as needed upon motion by Councilman Douglas and second by Councilman Cox.

2.) Reports from Mayor and Council:

- Councilman Douglas expressed his thankfulness that there were no deaths or injuries from the tornado.
- Councilman Thornton reported a pothole at 4th St. and 3rd Ave., NW. He also reported that Sanford Bishop had toured the areas affected by the tornado over the weekend.
- Councilman Gwaltney reiterated Councilman Douglas's remarks, adding that the community had come together well, as did Councilman Cox who had close family affected by the destruction and recognized some of the businesses and organizations providing assistance to victims. He added that if this should ever happen again, arrests should be made for people going around barricades while crews were working.
- Mayor Gainor echoed the comments made and reported that supplies had been received that would be given out at 6:30 on Thursday afternoon at the Heritage Industrial Complex. He also requested to use the Airport property for an Easter celebration again this year, reporting that Stephen Bible would be chairing the planning committee that would also include Nola Daughtry.

ADJOURN: Motion was made by Councilman Cox to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Douglas, and unanimously approved by all Council Members present.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

CAROLYN B. LEE, CITY CLERK

BOOKER T. GAINOR, MAYOR