



City of Charleston, MO
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Charleston City Council
June 13th, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem, Jackie Whiteside, at 6:30PM. Also in attendance were Councilman Rick Toon, Councilman Clark Dugan, Councilwoman Monica Goodin, City Manager Philip Halter, City Attorney Tabatha Graham, City Clerk Ali Morris, Chief of the Department of Public Safety Robert Hearnest Jr., Public Safety Officer Mark Higgins, Public Works Director David Harris, Code Enforcement Officer, Ken Stevenson, and Steve Myers of the local newspaper. Mayor, Patrick Farmer was not present.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Councilman Toon to approve the minutes from the May 9th, 2023, meeting. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried, and the minutes were approved.

Report of City Business: City Manager, Philip Halter began by saying that people have probably noticed while driving around town that some of the streets have been grounded down. This is in preparation for re-asphalting those streets and sealing them.

During a storm in the month of May, a few large trees fell and caused some damage. Those that fell within city easements were cleaned up by the city.

Several discussions were had during the month, regarding the "P Lounge". Mr. Halter explained that the issue has been resolved and that the Lounge will not be in business as they intended to sell alcohol, which was not allowed at this location. The owner of the establishment has been issued a business license to host events and has provided a list of stipulations that will be abided by. No alcohol will be sold. Councilman Whiteside asked if this was the old Gas-A-Mat location. Mr. Halter said yes, and it has been operating as a hair care merchant up until re-issuing the business license as a gross merchant for events.

Next, the collapsed culvert on Naomi Street was addressed. The new culvert is still not in. Once it is replaced, the County will address issues further North, to Helena Street where they may install a sleeve on that culvert.

We were notified that we unfortunately did not receive the storm sewer grant we applied for.

At this time Mr. Halter mentioned that the fishpond behind City Hall has been cleaned out, repainted, and restocked with goldfish and plants. It is working out well so far.

The concrete work has been completed at Charles Williams Park. The only item left uncompleted regarding the park project is to asphalt the parking lot at AD Simpson Park. This should be done by the end of the month.

Mr. Halter explained that he attended the Chamber of Commerce meeting in May to discuss the costs of having city employees work during the Dogwood Azalea Festival and also requested accounting numbers in order to determine where the tourism funds are going. He also encouraged the Chamber to get more involved in other city activities and events.

There was some damage done at Charles Williams Park. The new restroom facility was vandalized with spray paint and has since been repainted. A local lady has volunteered to keep an eye on the park and help prevent things of this nature from happening and we appreciate that very much. Councilman Whiteside asked if we could install some cameras. Mr. Halter said they are looking into both cameras and more lights. He said they have contacted Cape Electrical but have not yet determined where to put poles. There is already an existing light on the restroom building itself.

Councilwoman Goodin asked if the restrooms are locked at night. Mr. Halter said yes, they remain locked the majority of the time unless someone reserves the park for an event or activity. The procedure is the same for all the city parks.

MODOT began work on Exit 12. Mr. Halter explained that when the traffic is only open to one lane, traffic backs up significantly. It appears they intend on using the extra asphalt they are laying on the shoulder as a temporary lane so that two lanes can be open at all times. The guard rails went up today.

To conclude his report, Mr. Halter noted that the Public Works Department began their summer hours after Memorial Day. They work from 6AM-3PM to avoid some of the heat.

As for the financials, Mr. Halter mentioned as May was the first month of the new fiscal year, it is difficult to determine where exactly they are as far as the budget goes.

The Public Works Department report was referred to. The roof on the water plant is going on and should be completed within 2-3 weeks. We are still waiting for some valves to come in, which should be in within the next month and those will complete the water plant upgrades.

Mr. Halter referred to the Code Enforcement Officer's report and told everyone that Mr. Ken Stevenson is working on developing a list of lots with overgrown grass, finding out who owns them, and sending letters to them. As we are not allowed to go onto private property, we hope the owners will make arrangements to have the lots mowed and cleaned up. In one day, Mr. Stevenson made a list of 12 properties. Most of them are vacant lots.

The Department of Public Safety report was referenced and nothing significant was worth mentioning.

Councilman Whiteside asked Mr. Stevenson about 200-206 W Marshall Street. Mr. Stevenson said he contacted the owner, who is no longer local, and he apparently plans on returning back to Charleston at some point and wanted to redo the building and wants to open it up as a store. In Mr. Stevenson's opinion, the structure needs to be condemned. There are obvious signs of water damage and holes in the roof.

Councilman Whiteside commended Mr. Stevenson on his efforts.

Councilwoman Goodin addressed the seven dogs listed as taken into custody on the DPS report. Mr. Halter said often times the dogs are taken to the pound and the owners show up, pay to get them out and then continue to let them run loose. Councilwoman Goodin mentioned that the local veterinary office will soon be back operating with a part-time Veterinarian, and he suggested charging a fee to dog owners, which would be collected through their office. Goodin said this sounded like a good solution to our problem.

Chief Hearnese said that the veterinary office offered to do that a long time ago as well, but the council refused it.

Mr. Halter mentioned that he asked the veterinary office if they would be willing to house some dogs as our pound gets full, and they said no.

New Business: Councilman Whiteside moved onto the first item on the agenda under "New Business"- Consideration of **Bill NO. 3930/Ordinance NO. 3071**: An Ordinance Accepting Proposals to Fulfill Budgeted Upgrades to Lift Stations. Mr. Halter said he was going to divert this to the Public Works Director, David Harris. David explained that the need for upgrades was found during their yearly inspection. Some valves, a control panel, and pumps need to be replaced. Mr. Halter explained that we would keep the old pumps to have on standby. These upgrades were all budgeted items as regular maintenance has to be done on lift stations. Councilman Toon asked if Vandevanter does the work or if Public Works does. Mr. Halter said Vandevanter would perform all the necessary work and we have used them many times in the past. David said they have 19 lift stations they check on daily and they obviously have to maintain them.

Councilman Toon made a motion to approve Bill No. 3930/Ordinance NO. 3071. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried and Bill NO. 390/Ordinance NO. 3071 was approved.

Next on the agenda was consideration of floodplain development permit/application. Most of the city of Charleston is outside of the flood plain. However, Whipple Park is inside the flood plain and there has been a pavilion there since possibly the 1970s. We apparently never reported that the structure was there and now they are asking us to fill out the permit application, acknowledging that it is within the floodplain. Councilwoman Goodin made a motion to approve signing the floodplain permit application. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

Mr. Halter explained that we have an existing floodplain ordinance, but we may need to update it and get it back to the state by December.

Next on the agenda was consideration of **Resolution NO. 1108**: A Resolution Approving "The Land and Lot Delinquent List" and Directing the City Collector and Mississippi County Collector to Proceed Collection of Delinquent Real Estate Taxes According to Law". Mr. Halter explained this is something we do annually. He said he and the City Clerk both inspected the list and only found one, part-time city employee on the list and the issue was addressed. Councilman Toon asked Mr. Halter to fill him in on what exactly we do with the list. Mr. Halter explained that we are given the list once a year and once we look over and "approve it", we return it back to the Mississippi County Collector and she will proceed with attempting to collect the taxes. Once a property has been on the list consecutively for four years, the property goes up for auction. The city is given a list of those properties as well to see if we have any liens against those properties. A motion was made by Councilman Toon to approve Resolution NO. 1108. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried and Resolution NO. 1108 was approved.

Discuss business license for 810 W Marshall was next on the agenda. This was already addressed within the City Manager's report. Mayor Pro Tem, Jackie Whiteside then moved on to the next order of business.

Consideration of Liquor License Renewals was next on the agenda. The liquor license renewal applications were all passed to each council member to review and initial. There were no new applications. All of the applications were for existing businesses. Chief Hearnese confirmed that he ran the reports for each establishment and there were no reports made to raise issues with renewing any of the applications. Mr. Halter noted that we were still missing Las Brisas, and Councilman Whiteside mentioned that they are historically late turning in their application. City Attorney, Tabatha Graham advised for the council to go ahead and give their approval to renew Las Brisas' application if they turn it in before the next meeting so that their license may be issued. They all agreed to do so.

We had one mobile home permit renewal. There is only one mobile home left here in town, which is on Lafayette Street. Mike McIlroy inspected the property, and it passed inspection. The homeowner paid his \$6.00 annual fee. Mr. Halter explained that although mobile homes are no longer allowed in Charleston, manufactured homes are allowed, as long as they are placed on a concrete foundation. Councilwoman Goodin made a motion to approve the mobile home permit. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. All were in favor and the permit was approved.

Next on the agenda was to discuss the renewal of MOPERM liability insurance. The quote was included in the council packets. Mr. Halter explained that we searched to see if an ordinance was needed to approve the liability insurance costs and we were unable to find one. City Attorney, Tabatha Graham had to leave at this point of the meeting but said if an ordinance was needed to approve the insurance costs, it could be done. This year is actually cheaper than last year. A motion was made by Councilman Toon to approve the purchase of MOPERM liability insurance. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried.

Discuss declaring Juneteenth a paid holiday for City employees was next on the agenda. Mr. Halter explained that Juneteenth is now a Federal and State holiday and the banks, post office, and Courthouse would all be closed. Councilman Toon made a motion to approve the holiday.

Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. All were in favor. Juneteenth will now be a paid holiday for City employees and will be in the handbook as such.

Review of the agreement between the City of Charleston and the Charleston R-1 School District for Services of School Resource Officer. Mr. Halter explained that the current agreement expires July 1st and that nothing has changed since last year. Councilman Toon made a motion to accept the agreement. Councilman Dugan seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the agreement was approved.

Lastly on the agenda was Talisha Mays to discuss city concerns. Talisha had sent a list of questions/concerns she emailed to the City Clerk on the Friday prior to the council meeting, along with some photos she took of some of the concerns. These were all included in the council packets.

Firstly, Mays asked if there would be any summer jobs posted or available. Mr. Halter explained that the Public Works Department does not hire for "summer" positions but does seasonal positions from April through September or even November. He said that people are more than welcome to put in their applications just in case something opens up. Mays asked what the age range would be. Mr. Halter said they would require having a driver's license. Mays asked where open positions would be posted if there ever are any. Mr. Halter said we put them on the city's Facebook page and in the newspaper.

Next, Ms. Mays asked what could be done about trash dumped on city properties. Mr. Halter explained that we are not allowed to go onto private property. If trash is on private property, it is that persons' trash. He then mentioned the two times a year that the city provides dumpsters behind City Hall for people to dump these types of items, and there are trash cans all over town for trash. Mr. Halter then referred back to the unkept lots around town that he had asked the Code Enforcement Officer to make a list of and send letters to the landowners. Ms. Mays said that she has personally probably already "knocked out" mowing six of those twelve lots that needed attention. She said it's called "civic pride" and asked who they need to bring awareness to on the states of the lots. Mr. Halter suggested she report to the Code Enforcement Officer, Mr. Ken Stevenson. He also told Ms. Mays he hopes that she is getting the landowners' permission to go onto the lots to mow them.

Next, Ms. Mays noted that people are no longer obeying the one-way streets on the West side of town. She asked if there is any way they can get them changed to two-way streets. Mr. Halter said there are three of the one-way streets in total, and they are all within the Housing Authority area. The Housing Authority Director, Paul Page, was in the office recently and explained that when the streets were changed to one-way, it was due to so many people stopping in the middle of the street in their vehicles to talk. They would sit and talk for a long time without moving.

Ms. Mays then mentioned that they would like to see some speed bumps installed. Mr. Halter explained that the Public Works Department does not like speed bumps because then they cannot plow snow in those areas. He then said they would consider it and look into installing some.

Lastly, Ms. Mays addressed the homeless person issue at the old Family Dollar location. She said the homeless person issue is huge. They are hanging their stuff up everywhere like they

have moved in, and that is private property. Mr. Halter said that Mr. Stevenson is in the process of finding the owners of the property as it is not Family Dollar. Ms. Mays suggested a "no loitering" sign, because then there is at least one reason to ask them to leave or move. Mr. Halter explained that we have moved them out of multiple locations, taken and disposed of their belongings, and they continue to move around and accumulate more stuff.

At this time, Councilwoman Goodin spoke up and said she wanted to applaud the kids for coming with Ms. Mays and learning about the community. Mr. Toon added that he recognized some of them from helping paint the pink arrows on the streets for the Dogwood Azalea Festival.

Recognition of Visitors: Talisha Mays, Hudson Byrd, Sheila Shankle, Jayne Ellen Ray, Ann Riggins, Barry Morgan, Quenita Jenae Goodin, Quender Jackson, Lester Gillespie, Rodney Jones, and Ms. Ivie (?) were present. Talisha Mays also brought eleven teenagers from the community with her as well. We will not list their names because they are minors.

When Mayor Pro Tem, Jackie Whiteside asked the visitors if any of them wanted to address the council, Quenita Jenae Goodin spoke up and began by saying that she sees the Code Enforcement Officer, Mr. Ken Stevenson out and about all the time and she said he is her former teacher and just wanted to say he is doing a great job and thanked him. She then expressed her concerns for the homeless people who are housed up behind the old Family Dollar building. Goodin said her mother lives nearby and often walks to McClains. She is now fearful of doing so because of the homeless peoples' dogs who are loose and have been known to be aggressive. Goodin said she understands that we say we are "taking care of it", but wanted to know what could be done and asked about fines. Chief Hearnese said they have picked their dogs up, they have either broken into the pound and gotten them out, or people pay to help get them out. Chief Hearnese added that the fine amounts are set by the judge, and they have no control over that. Also, if they take their dogs, they find different ones. He also said more dogs continue to show up in town.

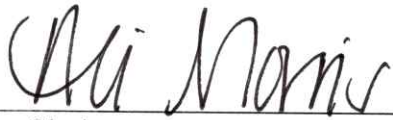
Councilman Toon noted that his daughter is a vet tech and that he would ask her if there is any type of spray that can be used on dogs.

Goodin added that she talked to the guy who owns the 'Make Em Beg' food truck who used to set up at the old family dollar and he said that he was told by the owners that he no longer has permission to set up there.

Before closing the meeting, Councilman Whiteside thanked all of the young kids for being so well behaved and attending the meeting. Ms. Mays said that she challenged the youths to get involved and learn about the steps it takes to get involved and to get things done. She said she is going to treat them to a pizza and pool party for making the effort to get involved and learn about the community and how things operate.

Adjourn: Mayor Pro Tem, Jackie Whiteside asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Councilman Toon to adjourn the regular session meeting. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried and the regular session was adjourned at 7:28PM.

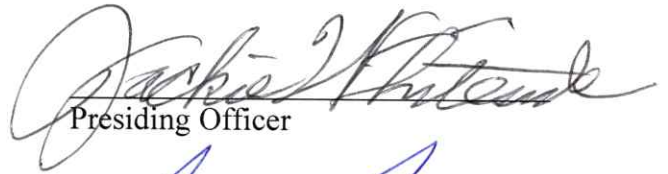
ATTEST:



City Clerk



City Clerk



Presiding Officer



Mayor