

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
July 31, 2023

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time for the regularly scheduled Work Session on Monday, July 31, 2023, in the Council Chambers located within the Public Safety Building at 1111 Broad Street, Phenix City, Alabama 36867. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey F. Carter, Councilmember Steve Bailey, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble, City Clerk Melony Lee and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic City Planner Terry Curry, Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Library Director Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resource Generalist Eliza Phillips, Chief of Police George Staudinger, and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

Upon a quorum being established, Mayor Lowe called the meeting to order.

Councilmember Carter led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Larry Knox to address Council, as listed on the Agenda. Mr. Knox came forward to address Council. Mr. Knox stated that he is the President of Saddlebrook Subdivision Home Owners Association and that he is here to speak to Council regarding the overgrown grass. Mr. Knox also stated that the City has cut the grass before but currently the grass is around 15" high and a lot of weeds have grown up. Mr. Knox further stated that in the past, a resident paid for the grass to be cut and most recently one of the neighbor's son cut the grass on the lot. Mr. Knox stated that he is asking the City to cut the grass once or twice a month. Mr. Knox also stated that the majority of the homeowners in the subdivision take pride in their priority and keep it cut and he would like for the City to maintain the lot with pride. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Knox for coming to address Council and bringing this issue to their attention. Mayor Lowe stated that it is no excuse, however the workforce in PubWorks is still extremely short staff and it will be placed on the list to be completed but the City cannot guarantee twice a month with the staff that is currently in place. Mayor Lowe also stated that right of ways are areas that must be considered a propriety most of the time due to safety. Mayor Lowe further stated that for future issues Mr. Knox should call in the issue so that it can be reported in through the proper process to be placed on the list. Mr. Knox stated that the Homeowners Association will be restructuring the front entrance to the subdivision by removing the older bushes and adding new ones with a possible extension of the break walls. Mr. Knox also stated that anything that the City can do to assist them with the grass would be very much appreciated. Mayor Lowe asked that Mr. Knox let the residents know that what is important to them is also important to the City. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the lot was cut today and that the Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan has a potential buyer and may want to add a road to the new subdivision. Mr. Knox stated that the residents would not approve a road extension. Mr. Hunter stated that the City is aware of it and will be addressing it as needed. Mr. Knox stated that the street sweeper comes through the neighborhood on Mondays and that is not a good day because the trash is also picked up on Monday. Mr. Hunter stated that the City is in the process of reviewing the schedule for the trash and clean up and may be adjusting the routes and days.

Mayor Lowe called upon State Representative Chris Blackshear to speak to Council in regards to the funding for the new Miracle Park that will be located at the Lakewood Park. Mr. Blackshear stated that the park will be designed for children with special needs. Mr. Blackshear

also stated that he was able to acquire \$500,000.00 from the State General Fund to go towards the project and to match the City's \$500,000.00. Mr. Blackshear further stated that with the \$1 million in project funds, they will now be able to make the announcement of the breaking ground on the project at tomorrow's Council Meeting. Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Hughes stated that they discussed plans to reach out to local citizens for additional funding.

Mayor Lowe called upon Terry Curry, City Planner, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their July 25, 2023 meeting,

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Melony Lee who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Informed Council of the Centennial Celebration Cocktail Party to be held on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at the Amphitheater at 5:00 p.m.
4. Informed Council of a Virtual Meeting on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 for Broadband with ADECA at 2:00 pm.
5. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, August 14, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
6. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
7. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, August 22, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
8. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Monday September 4, 2023 in observance of Labor Day Holiday.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on September 5, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building. This meeting will be held on a Tuesday afternoon due to the Labor Day Holiday.
10. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on September 6, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building. This meeting will be held on a Wednesday morning due to the Labor Day Holiday.
11. Informed Council that the third District Congressional Luncheon will be held on September 7, 2023 11:30 CST.
12. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
13. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, September 18, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the 5th Street South Youth Center.
15. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
16. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Carter inquired about the new lease for the old Dirt Cheap location and asked if the new business can be discussed at this time. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that at this time, we should not disclose this information and that Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan will provide an update to City Council when it becomes available.

Councilmember Carter stated that at one time there were sewing classes offered at the Library and inquired if they were still be offered. Director of the Library Tammy Henry stated that they do have sewing machines in the Library but do not currently have the classes. Ms. Henry also stated that they have sewing groups that meet in the library and that in September 2023 they will be going back to the Central Activity Center for their group meetings.

Councilmember Carter stated that the pot holes at the bottom of the back driveway of Applebee's have started opening back up. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the location of the pot holes is on private property and the City is not responsible. Councilmember Carter inquired if the City can contact the owner. Ms. Moore stated that they have contacted the contractor regarding the issue.

Councilmember Carter inquired about issues with graffiti being painted around the City and whether the Police Department was aware. Police Chief George Staudinger stated that he was only aware of some graffiti located in District One on South Stadium Drive. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he was aware of some graffiti that was located at 25th and 16th Court and that is being addressed by increasing patrols in the area. Councilmember Carter stated that there is graffiti located on 11th Street and asked that the area also be patrolled. Councilmember Carter also stated that when people in the community are doing this kind of damage and bring down our city, we should intervene as soon as possible.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about updates to the Bridgewater Sewer Project. Utilities Director Charles Woody stated that they are in the process of searching for alternative gravel and as soon as he receives an update, he will communicate that to the Council. Councilmember Bailey stated that he is not aware of any sewer problems for a couple of years now. Councilmember Bailey also stated that if they redo the bridge they can redirect at that point. Mr. Woody stated that the cost of the project has tripled since it was initiated. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that in the planning for the project, the funds were set aside however with the higher cost, additional funds would be needed.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the Streetscapes for 14th Street to Broad Street to 9th Avenue. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that a budget agreement has been approved and sent to ALDOT and that they are waiting on the Limiting Letter from ALDOT which gives them the time limit and funding requirements to complete the plan. Ms. Moore also stated that once they receive the approval from ALDOT, they will have to send a request to their contractor to request the amount of time it will take to complete the project which will also have to go to ALDOT for final approval.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about how the asphalt cuts are prioritized. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the heavily traveled areas are the priority and that if the patch is too large or they do not have the workforce, then they will contract out to Robinson Paving to have them complete the project. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City has to be made aware of the potholes in order to have them fixed. Councilmember Bailey stated that he reminds the Citizens when they call to report a problem when they see the problem. Councilmember Bailey thanked the PubWorks Department for all that they do for the City.

Councilmember Carter inquired about the asphalt cut that is located on Dillingham Street. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the cut is large and will need the contractor to fix it and she will get back to Council on the status.

Councilmember Gordy inquired about the issues with accidents on Summerville Road where St. Andrews subdivision is located. Councilmember Gordy stated that he is aware that the City has no passing signs and have done so much to prevent the accidents however, residents are still complaining about accidents occurring. Councilmember Gordy also stated that both neighborhoods in that area have the turn only lane and the accel-decel merging lane to veer into the flow of traffic. Councilmember Gordy asked if the City could remove the accel-decel lane which could prohibit drivers from passing. Councilmember Bailey inquired if the white poles that we have in other areas of the City can be used there that will prevent passing. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that she will investigate what can be done and follow-up with Council.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Old Seale Road Bridge Project. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that they have a pre-construction meeting on August 2, 2023 with ALDOT and the contractor that won the bid and at that time the contractor will provide a preliminary schedule as to when they will start the project. Ms. Moore also stated that the City's website has been updated with detour information and will update the dates when they are received so that Citizens will be able to see the information. Councilmember Day inquired about detour signs in the area. Ms. Moore stated ALDOT will not allow them to put the signs out. Ms. Moore also stated that the project will take 9 months or longer to complete and the cost is at 2.3 million dollars.

Councilmember Day inquired about the new 28th Avenue Apartments construction. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that contractors have to send a new plan and it has not been received.

Councilmember Day inquired about the new Race Trac gas station on Crosswinds Road construction. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that they have broken ground and are in the process of working on the project.

Councilmember Day inquired about how the cost is calculated for the seven (7) building permits for single home projects. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that they use a calculation based on the square footage and size of the house.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Entertainment District at the Riverwalk. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he is working with partners on this discussion and he will update the Council when he has more information.

Councilmember Day inquired about a status update on the installation of Red Light Cameras at the Walgreens and Applebee's intersection. Chief of Police George Staudinger stated that they have signed the MOU Agreement with ALDOT and they are waiting on them to confirm the dates of installation. Councilmember Day inquired if there are any other right of ways that are being considered for the cameras. Chief Staudinger stated that there is a plan for additional license plate readers and that they are discussing it with Russell County to help fund the cost to have them at every entrance to the City. Chief Staudinger also stated that the readers would help the Police Department to solve more crimes and detect stolen vehicles.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed the claims with Council.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, August 14, 2023.