

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
May 6, 2024**

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, May 6, 2024, 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 Shannon Davis, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, Fire Chief Kristen Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, IT Director Mike Bauer, Library Director Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Police Chief George Staudinger, Public Safety Director Ray Smith, and Utilities Director John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Day led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Brady Benton to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Benton stated that his purpose to address Council was in regards to the Rezone for Riverchase Drive. Mr. Benton apologized to the Council for not attending the Planning Commission Meeting to present their information to the Board prior to requesting to address Council on this matter. Mr. Benton reviewed the traffic count information for Riverchase Drive. Mr. Benton stated that he had a letter that has been signed by residents that states they would like to see the area rezoned to an R3 instead of commercial. Mr. Benton read a letter from Chris Rogers on the proposed development of 69 Duplex Units and Town Homes. Mr. Benton also read a letter from Spud Warr owner of Warr Grading and current owner of the property that stated his approval for the Residential Rezoning of the property from a C3 to an R3 and that the traffic would significantly increase with the commercial rezone and that the residents have stated that they do not want to see an increase in traffic. Mr. Benton provided a packet of information for Council to review. Mr. Benton stated that there may have been some confusion on what their plans were for the property and that they are planning to build the homes as high level assisted living homes with resources available for part-time in home care. Mr. Benton thanked Council for allowing him time to present. Councilmember Bailey stated that they had set a precedence that they would not allow additional development for commercial on Summerville Road therefore, Riverchase Drive was put in for commercial development. Councilmember Bailey also stated that if they do not allow commercial development on Riverchase Drive, it would be pushed to Summerville Road and that there are a lot of residents on Summerville Road that have had their homes for up to 70 years and unable to move. Councilmember Bailey further stated that he has been transparent with the Citizens regarding his opinion to leave the property zoned in an R1 because an R3 zone would open up to more speculation and that there are already a high number of apartments on Riverchase Drive with the road only being up to a mile and a half and that he does not see the need for the additional housing on that road. Councilmember Bailey stated that with progress there is going to be more traffic no matter what is developed and he will never complain if the roads are no longer supporting the traffic, because that is growth. Councilmember Bailey also stated that large businesses will decide to develop in areas where other commercial business is going and that residential areas will be developed based on that growth. Mr. Benton thanked Councilmember Bailey for his

comments. Mr. Benton stated that he was not an expert in the development and that is why he relies on Spud Warr as the expert and that Mr. Warr had stated that the cost would be extremely high to develop the property for commercial with having to raise up the land in order for the commercial property to be visible to the consumer. Councilmember Bailey provided an example of the current development of highway 280 property that is under development and that they had to also raise up the property to build the commercial properties and that it takes the right developer to see the benefits of the location and invest to get it done and therefore it can happen. Councilmember Bailey stated that he wants to see growth and development in all areas of the City but the Riverchase Drive exit is going to attract a lot of travelers coming in from and heading to areas like Atlanta Georgia and Florida and will be willing to spend the money on the commercial businesses. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated that he appreciates the professionalism and hard work of Mr. Benton while working with his team and he wants Mr. Benton to understand that he can have multiple people attend and speak if necessary at the Public Hearing that will be held at the May 7, 2024 Council Meeting. Mr. Benton replied that he was under the impression that they could not speak at all during the meeting and Mayor Lowe clarified for him it is a Public Hearing and that the Public is allowed to attend and speak their concerns. Mayor Lowe stated that it is considered a public forum and they have opened it up with a Public Hearing to allow people to speak. Mayor Lowe also stated for a regular Council Meeting with no Public Hearing people are asked not to speak. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Benton for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Engineer Angel Moore, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their April 23, 2024 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Shannon Davis who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold the Breakfast and Business Meeting on Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 7:00 a.m.
3. Advised Council that the Phenix City / Russell County Library Board will meet on Thursday May 9, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
4. Informed Council that Fort Moore will hold the Chattahoochee Valley Region Reception on Friday, May 10, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
5. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
6. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2024 Convention will be held May 15, 2024 through May 18, 2024 in Huntsville, Alabama.
7. Informed Council that the Central High School Graduation will be held on Saturday, May 19, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, May 20, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
10. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Monday, May 27, 2024 in observance of Memorial Day Holiday.
11. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold an After Hours Meeting on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
12. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.

13. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, June 3, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
15. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
16. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold the Breakfast and Business Meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 7:00 a.m.
17. Informed Council that Parks and Recreation Department will hold a Fishing Rodeo on Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
18. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, June 17, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
19. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Activity Center.
20. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 in observance of Juneteenth/Freedom Day Holiday.
21. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals meeting will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
22. Advised that the Mayor's Ball will be held on June 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
23. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
24. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold an After Hours Meeting on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
25. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Carter stated that the citizens have communicated that they appreciate the City's actions taken to clean up the wall at the City Cemetery. Councilmember Carter inquired if most of the City's Cemeteries are in the Second District. Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble confirmed that a large portion of the City owned cemeteries are located in the Second District. Councilmember Carter inquired if any property is available to add future cemeteries. Mayor Lowe stated that the need for additional land has been discussed. Mayor Lowe also stated that the reason the majority of City owned cemeteries are located in the Second District is due to that district being the oldest in the City. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated that they have been looking for additional properties for new cemeteries but that it has not been easy to find property for this kind of development.

Councilmember Carter stated that several citizens asked her about the Parks and Recreation event for Cinco de-Mayo that was held on Thursday May 2, 2024 and how it went. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that the event was held at the Roy Martin Center and it was a success.

Councilmember Carter inquired about open registration that may still be available for the City's Summer Camp Programs and if so, what is the process for people to enroll. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that there are slots available for the Youth Center and they can call the Parks and Recreation Department to receive an application.

Councilmember Carter stated that she has spoken to some of the citizens that are utilizing one of the City's newest parks, Popular Springs Park and that the parents have inquired about additional City events for the youth. Councilmember Carter also stated that she always directs citizens to contact Parks and Recreation for additional information on upcoming programs and events.

Councilmember Gordy stated that on Summerville Road there is construction going on and he inquired if anyone knew what was being built. Mr. Brady Benton stated that there is a Heating and Air business, a yoga studio and an apparel shop that are being built in that location.

Councilmember Day stated that he wanted to thank the entire team and the construction vendor that worked on the Seal Road Bridge update. Councilmember Day also stated that he has received a lot of positive feedback on how good it looks and the work that was completed.

Councilmember Day inquired about the status of the issues at Meadow Lane Park. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that the restrooms are still closed while they have them updated. Councilmember Day inquired about the timeline to have them reopened. Mr. Hughes stated that they are open on the weekends when the pavilion is being used, scheduled or a game is being played but closed all other times. Councilmember Day inquired about the aluminum tables that were taken from Arthur Sumbry Park. Mr. Hughes stated that they have been returned.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Circle K Store at Riverchase Drive development timeline for completion. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that the Circle K is now open and that the Subway has been cleared to open as well. Councilmember Day inquired about the ribbon cutting ceremony. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated that the Chamber of Commerce is responsible for setting up the Ribbon Cutting ceremony with the new businesses.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update to the American Legend Building on Seale Road and that there is so much history with that building. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that the owners are still trying to get funding and have not moved forward at this point.

Councilmember Day stated that he visited a citizen that had some trees that needed to be removed from her property. Mayor Lowe stated that the citizen has already had the trees removed herself and that the Engineering Department has communicated with the citizen and provided them with the information on the current owners. Councilmember Day stated that he explained to the citizen the City's guidelines concerning private property.

Mayor Lowe stated that he wanted to take this opportunity to discuss the recent social media posts where lies were stated against the City Manager, and the City Council. Mayor Lowe also stated that the City Manager and the Council are consistently transparent in what they say and do as leaders. Mayor Lowe further stated that he has zero tolerance for those kinds of things because at the end of the day all he has and this Council has is their creditability and their good name. Mayor Lowe stated that he will read the message and is adding a disclaimer because it was a defamation to the character of the Council and City Manager and that the Council performs their responsibilities with creditability and transparencies. Mayor Lowe also stated that with their job, if they are doing the job in a way to keep the job then they are not doing the job in the right way. Mayor Lowe further stated that they are going to do the job and that they will not allow people to attack their creditability and character.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed the claims on the agenda with Council.

Mayor Lowe asked to go into Executive Session to discuss Potential Litigation for thirty minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn. Councilmember Day moved to go into Executive Session, which motion was seconded by Councilmember Gordy. All were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session at 4:45 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 5:05 p.m.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 20, 2024.