

Reidsville City Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday December 11, 2023 at 5:00pm  
Reidsville City Hall

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, and led the audience in a word of prayer. The audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance in unison. The Mayor opened the meeting business by calling for a motion to adopt the last month's meeting minutes. Councilwoman Blackshear makes a motion to adopt the last month's minutes.

Motion by: C. Blackshear

2<sup>nd</sup> by: V. Williams

Motion: Carries unanimously

Mayor Colwell is calling Dept Heads for departmental updates. Jimmy Brown is present, giving updates for the fire department. No discrepancies noted. The Chief of Police, Trey Neesmith is present giving the report for the police department. It was reported during the planning session that the Police Department headquarters has endured a fire. As of the current date, the City was awaiting an adjuster. The office staff is using portable heaters to stay warm during the working hours on cold days because the HVAC unit was rendered inoperable. Electricians and HVAC specialists have been out to do inspections and give estimates. Verdie Williams, Councilwoman is giving the update for Water/Sewer and Street/Lanes. Williams reports that a terrible viral illness was going around and Rodney Deloach and James Hester were both out sick with this illness. Williams provided the monthly statistics for the departments, no discrepancies noted. Nivea Jackson gave the statistics for the administration department. Jackson says that administration is providing the audit team with supporting documents for the 2022 audit. Jackson also reported that City hall has just learned that citizens have not received their water bills due December 10<sup>th</sup>, that were mailed on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Jackson and Mayor-elect Nail met with the Reidsville postmaster on Monday December 11<sup>th</sup>. The postmaster was herself unclear on what happened but offered several solutions that can be met at the local level to deter future delays of water bill deliveries. The meters were due to be read in the coming week. Customers who are on direct draft, will not be affected. The new month's bills would be ready to mail out prior to the Christmas holiday. The Council expressed its desire to suspend late fees for customers because of the notification issue. Jackson reports taxes would be mailed at the end of the current week. Earnest Armstrong was next reporting for Surrency Playground. Armstrong is trying to get estimates and design for Surrency Playground. Armstrong wants to

get new equipment for the park. Williams reports that the Regional Commission is assisting in looking for grants for the park. The Ethics committee has no new reports.

On to old business, Duann Davis is updating the Mayor and Council on dilapidated property. Davis is asking the Council how they want to proceed with proceedings against Jimmy Burns. The Council will have to direct Davis on their expectations for Burns' property and the consequences for his failure to comply. Davis is suggesting that Burns be required to update the building to include a roof and floors or demolish the structure.

Old City Shop is next on the agenda. The Mayor is following up with Councilman Prestage. The Councilman is reporting that no new bids have been secured for inspection on the old National Guard Armory aka the "Old City shop" and Devin Jarriel has not returned with a new and final (third) bid. Prestage is asking the Council to review the bids and be ready to vote at the next meeting.

Easements at the GSP building site is next on the agenda. Williams is reporting that the previous arrangement to supply the business water has changed. The homeowner has rescinded his permission. Williams is reporting that a water source was available behind the jail in front of the barracks. Right-of-way easements are in the works and a quote from L and L Utilities had been secured. The job would require 950 feet of 6 in wet tap of water main through the Sheriff campus. The estimate is for \$29,500. This bid was a verbal bid. Also, the Council will need to organize the financial responsibility to fund the project. Councilman Doug Williams says that he would step in and help negotiations.

Brandon Parker build site was next on the agenda. Mrs. Evelyn Costen, a citizen is asking for information on the build site. She is concerned that the proposed subdivision would bring her and her neighbors' current property values down. Brandon Parker, builder/developer, is seeking a cost share of funding from the City to provide water and sewer lines to his 14 acre build site. Parker aspires to build 1200-1700 sq ft homes on the vacant acreage. Parker says his plan is to start with Esther Street and build 13 homes in the beginning phase. Homes will range from \$175-200k sales price. Parker wants the homes to look similar to what's already in place. Lot sizes would be 11-12k sq ft. Parker informs the audience, that homes inside the City limits, aren't designed to be built on large lots. Glennville subdivisions are similar in size. 4 acres would be left out for future commercial development. Parker assures there would be no multi family structures there. City plumbing only extends to the Jehovah Witness church and would need to be extended to the open lot. The City would provide the labor to run the plumbing there. Costen is requesting that the taxpayers have the say so whether the tax dollars should be spent for homes that the neighboring homes may not even want. Brian Nerzig, a citizen is asking if the City's zoning board has reviewed the plans. Earnest Armstrong is asking citizen of the audience, "do you want change? I mean if he is building houses that is growth." Costen says, "we just don't want our neighborhood to turn into the ghetto." Armstrong responds that the current homes in the neighborhood have been there for some time and may cause the new home values to drop with their age. Williams is reviewing what the Council is voting on. Parker will buy all of the materials and the City will lay 1000ft of water main, 13 taps, and 2 fire hydrants, and 3 manholes. Davis, City attorney advises that the subdivision plans would still need to be vetted through the City's zoning board. Councilman Prestage is asking Parker if the number of homes

planned could be reduced so lot sizes could increase? Prestage says that one of the complaints he is hearing is that the houses would be too close together. He is hopeful that it would keep to the current theme of the neighborhood in terms of distancing. Parker assures the plans are pleasant and keeps to the current culture but makes the most use of the land economically. Parker states, that most of the current homes in the neighborhood are on larger lots, because they are on septic tanks with no revenue to the City. Costen is also concerned how 27 more homes will cause traffic congestion and sewage backups. Mayor-elect Nail is instructing Brandon Parker to submit a subdivision application to the City and follow the process of taking the plans through the zoning board. City clerk, Nivea Jackson is asking the Council if they are clear on what they are voting on. The proposal on the table to the City Council is to run 1000ft of watermain, install fire hydrants, man holes, and water taps. The subdivision itself is not up for vote. Davis chimes in and states the actual subdivision plans would have to go before the zoning, but the vote was not for approval of the subdivision but to run plumbing. A written bid proposal for plumbing only is what is up for vote. The City will contribute labor to the project, and Parker will furnish materials and supplies. Parker will submit plans to the zoning board, says Davis. There will be a public hearing requirement and that is where the transparency will take place, states Davis. Parker states that he will not install a subdivision unless he knows the City will partner for installation. Parker says after that approval he can move into design with an engineer. The Mayor, Curtis Colwell, expressed that homes are needed in order for the City to grow. He feels like these homes are needed to increase growth. Colwell states, "people need an affordable place to live. Homes creates hometown people, and then restaurant and businesses will follow. A citizen from that neighborhood expressed, "we are not against the City growing. We are not against the construction. What we want to know is that the kids will be able to still play outside without increased traffic, property values not decreasing because of small homes. We didn't have any information, so we came here to get it." Nivea Jackson also states that with the addition of possibly 20 new residences, the City's Police and Fire Dept are looking at what adjustments would need to be made to ensure public safety. The adding of personnel, fire hydrants, and ect.. were being discussed. The tax base increase would justify increasing City services. Verdie Williams is asking the City Attorney what the best route to take. Parker has been on the agenda for 3 months awaiting Council approval. Councilwoman Williams makes a motion to allow zoning to look over the plans and give suggestion to the Council. If approved the City would entertain the project. Careful consideration of the project would need to be done first.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Carolyn Blackshear

Vote: 1 opposed (D. Prestage) vote carries by majority vote

Councilwoman Blackshear weighs in on the subject. Blackshear suggests, Reidsville is going to have to grow. The young adults who are coming out of high school and going off to college, are not returning and choosing to go other places that has better, updated housing after they enter the workforce. There is growth going on all over, not in Reidsville. Glennville has newer housing and now businesses are growing there. On the Municipal and State level, the concentration is being placed on housing. Councilman Prestage is making the point that homeowners have been

having to pay for their own tap fees. Councilwoman Blackshear adds that Reidsville needs higher census numbers for increased grant numbers. Housing would afford more people to come.

Hayes Hofstadter, City Engineer, is presenting to the Council engineering projects that are on hold due to pending audits. USDA, liftstations, and CDBG projects, and a GEFA water meter project are holding. The EPD is requiring the City to rehabilitate the WWTP. All of the pending projects are specifically water projects. EPD is also requiring all Georgia cities to inventory their water lines and identify copper. Inventory companies perform the inventories. Costs range up to \$30k.

The last guest speaker was Marjorie Smoot. Ms. Smoot is addressing concerns made to elections board. Ms. Smoot is challenging ballots and jurisdictional boundaries. Ms. Smoot was able to address elections concerns and was asked to follow up with the City clerk for charter clarification.

Earnest Armstrong is asking Council for consideration to host the MLK Day parade.

Motion: Donald Prestage

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Verdie Williams

Verdie Williams offers a motion to adjourn the meeting