

**Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
August 2, 2021**

Call to Order

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Hewett gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Julius Stroud, Chris Hewett, Mike Dodd, and Melvin Lawrence. Also in attendance for the meeting was City Manager, Janice Hall; City Attorney, Bobby Melton and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. Four members of council were in attendance for the meeting therefore all unanimous votes will be four votes (Stroud, Lawrence, Dodd, and Hewett).

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from the July 19, 2021, Council Meeting

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Public hearing to consider a zoning variance request application of Jennie Caldwell of Bryant Engineering

Mr. Melton stated the zoning variance request seeks allowance for gas pumps in front of a travel center; tax parcel F44 017. The current zoning is HB (highway business); zoning will remain unchanged. Planning & Zoning recommended approval at their June 28, 2021, meeting. The public hearing notice was published in the July 14, July 21, and July 28, 2021, issues of the Monroe Reporter.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition of the proposed variance request. Mr. Patel from Super 8 in Forsyth stated a convenience store with 3 retail spaces will be at that location which can be used as restaurant spaces also. All advice from Planning & Zoning has been followed.

Ms. Hall stated the request has been submitted due to the location being in the corridor overlay. Section 7.22.2 Corridor Overlay requires that gas pumps are in the back and obstructed from view from the corridor; this will be in the front and no obstruction from the corridor. There being no further comments in favor of or opposition of the proposed variance request Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the variance request as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Public hearing to consider a conditional use request of Kristen Morgan

Mr. Melton stated the application is for a conditional use for 93 E. Main Street; tax parcel F35 077. Applicant seeks allowance for a professional mortgage branch office on the property. The current zoning is Traditional Neighborhood District (TND); zoning would remain unchanged. The public hearing notice was published in the Monroe Reporter on July 14, July 21, and July 28, 2021. Planning and Zoning approved with 3 votes in favor, 1 abstention with conditions of approval; no more than five employees and conditional use approval is not transferrable.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition to the proposed conditional use request. Ms. Hall briefly reviewed traditional neighborhoods; the office or other adaptive uses are all conditional. There being no comments in favor of or opposition of the conditional use application Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing. Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the variance request. Seconded by Mr. Hewett. Mr. Stroud inquired about the opposition email received. Ms. Hall read the email she received from Carmen Davey in opposition of the conditional use request at 93 E. Main Street.

As a member of the community, I ask that you PLEASE consider our current housing situation before making a decision. We are in a nationwide housing crisis and the city of Forsyth is no exception. There are several commercial spaces downtown that have been vacant for years, which makes it especially heartbreaking to see another historic home converted to a business. For a strong and healthy community its vital that people actually live downtown. Every home that's converted to a business is contributing to the current housing crisis (especially since there are several commercial spaces already available). The few downtown homes we do have left... PLEASE, lets keep them HOMES!

Mr. Stroud withdrew his original motion. Mr. Stroud offered a motion to table until further information could be provided. Mayor Wilson stated that the motion to table the matter would supersede the original motion; there's no need to withdraw the original motion. Mr. Hewett seconded the motion to table; the motion carried unanimously.

Public hearing to consider a conditional use request of Jesse Schwartz

Mr. Melton stated the application is for a conditional use on property at 173 and 183 MLK Jr. Drive; tax parcel F17007 and F17 008. The applicant seeks allowance for an automotive conditional use with parking restrictions as to the number of vehicles allowed to park on the property, no outside vehicle storage allowed and no vehicle parking more than 72 hours. The current zoning is Neighborhood Shopping (NS); zoning would remain unchanged. The public hearing notices were published in the Monroe Reporter on July 14, July 21, and July 28, 2021. Planning and Zoning approved with 3 votes in favor, and one abstention with conditions.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition to the conditional use request.

Mr. Jesse Schwartz at 5097 SW 89th Ave Cooper City, FL spoke in favor of the conditional use request. He stated he is seeking approval of the request prior to purchasing the property. Ms. Hall stated Mr. Freeman currently owns the property. It has had an automotive repair at that location previously. Due to the current zoning of neighborhood shopping the conditional use request is necessary. There being no further comments for or against the conditional use request Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the conditional use request as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence.

After some clarification regarding the parking requirements suggestions by Planning and Zoning Mr. Hewett amended his original motion to include the parking requirements set forth by Planning & Zoning. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the original motion; to approve the conditional use request as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of resolution authorizing the execution of the power purchase agreement between the solar participant and MEAG.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of resolution providing for the closing of Mays Road.

Ms. Hall stated the portion of Mays Road to be closed borders land on both sides that is City property. There's a small section at the north corner that's owned by Rocky Creek church that will not be closed.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the resolution to close Mays Road. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of lease/purchase agreement with Altec Capital.

Ms. Hall reviewed the lease purchase agreement with Altec Capital, purchase of a bucket truck. The total cost will be \$168,162, at \$28,027.00 a year for six years at 3.99% interest.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the lease/purchase agreement with Altec Capital. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of maintenance and master lease agreements for Ricoh.

Ms. Hall stated the agreement is for the renewal of a copier and an additional copier for the new City Hall building. Total cost of \$266.42 per month for both copiers.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the maintenance and lease agreements with Ricoh. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of agreement with American Craftsman Homes.

Councilmember Greg Goolsby arrived for the meeting at 6:30 p.m. At this time there are five members of council in attendance for the meeting so all unanimous votes will be five votes (Goolsby, Hewett, Dodd, Stroud, and Lawrence).

Ms. Hall presented to Council a proposal for an agreement with American Craftsman Homes requesting 800 linear feet of 12" water line installed on Railroad Avenue. The developer needs 600 linear feet of 6" water line for the project currently under construction. Ms. Hall reviewed the current estimate of the project as well as the various needs of the project; she further reviewed that the city would reimburse the developer for certain costs associated with the installation of the water lines. Ms. Hall recommended approval of actual cost after her review of pricing received; she suggested that the motion include a not to exceed amount of \$50,000.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the agreement with American Craftsman Homes. Seconded by Mr. Hewett. After some discussion regarding the costs of the project Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the motion by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of bid for the Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant for 2021.

Ms. Hall stated the contract will include the parking lot at the new building plus Kimball Street, E. Chambers St, and Harris Street. We've received our grant funds; the City will cover the cost over that amount received as per usual process.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the bid as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously with five votes (Goolsby, Stroud, Lawrence, Hewett, and Dodd).

Discussion relating to masks in City Buildings.

Ms. Hall reviewed the motion from the May 17, 2021 Council Meeting regarding wearing masks in City buildings.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to reduce the mask ordinance in city buildings to those that are not fully vaccinated. Seconded by Mr. Stroud.

Mr. Stroud amended the original motion; to reduce the mask ordinance in city buildings to those that are not fully vaccinated and to follow the CDC guidelines at Ms. Hall's discretion. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

After some discussion no further action was taken.

Approval of Requisitions Greater than \$5,000**Altec Capital – Inception Payment \$28,027.00**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the requisition as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried with four votes (Goolsby, Stroud, Dodd, and Hewett). Mr. Lawrence stepped out of the room.

City Manager's Report

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- Plans & Specifications for Air Lines and Filter replacements have been submitted to EPD and USDA for their review and approval prior to sending out for bids. There are the 2 projects deemed as emergency in the plant upgrade projects. We have received approval from EPD, just waiting on final review and approval from USDA. This will go out for bid as soon as we have that approval.
- ARPA funds – we received a deposit of \$771,146; these funds have been moved to a separate bank account from our general operating account to better facilitate record keeping and providing documentation as required for audit purposes. The additional funding should be received about the same time next year, with a total when all received

of \$1,542,292. Still waiting on full guidelines for how funds can be expended; discussion have been submitted to GMA to provide additional meetings to review.

- Along with the new visitor's guide, the CVB has filmed some commercials for Forsyth and Monroe County. Hopefully we will be able to present those when Gilda comes to make her quarterly report. The one that I have seen is very good.
- Have a vacancy on P&Z board that needs to be filled. Please pass any names on to me that you would like considered.
- Have not received any comments back on the proposed list of items to submit to GDOT to consider in the CVL project. If no additional comments from council, we will move forward with submitting to GDOT
- Georgia Bob's has begun the process of obtaining a beer & wine pouring license. Will advertise as soon as I receive the full packet back from them.
- Have several positions being advertised for and have made several changes within departments as to replacing/creating positions.
- GDOT has finally made it to the city limits with the resurfacing project. Parking spaces are blocked off and traffic will be shifted during milling and resurfacing.
- Meeting with Waste Management last Friday. They reported they are back on schedule in Forsyth but did say this is a new driver and he is learning the routes so he will be a little slower until he gets familiar with the routes.
- County has provided a general information flyer regarding T-SPLOST and asked that we include in our utility bill mailings.
- City Hall building update – meetings almost daily last week to review different items/issues; most likely will be substantially complete with everything except council chambers on August 6. Couple of issues have come up last minute – catch basin in SW corner of property needs to be raised; platform area at side door on Kimball Street needs wall added; front drains had to be added; brick was cleaned this weekend and looks good; inspection for substantial completion is scheduled for August 9. Furniture move/delivery scheduled for August 11-13; computer and phone installations scheduled for week of August 16; files scheduled for move August 20 and 26; hoping to have everything complete and setup to be opened for business on September 7.

Public hearings –

- Will be advertising amendments to the Hotel/Motion tax ordinance to incorporate provisions of HB317
- Public hearing for variance request for

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton had no further business to report.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson had no further business to report.

Council Board Reports

Mr. Hewett stated Housing Authority will have a meeting on September 14th at 3:00 p.m. at Aldermen Hall.

Mr. Lawrence expressed his appreciation for the recent support and cards received.

Additional Business

Mr. Goolsby inquired about the possibility of increasing Wi-Fi capabilities within square area.

Public Comments

No one came forward for public comments.

Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Adjourn

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to adjourn the council meeting. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.