

**Minutes**  
**Forsyth City Council Meeting**  
**July 20, 2020**

**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. Howard gave the invocation. Present for the meeting either in person or via zoom was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers John Howard, Melvin Lawrence, Chris Hewett, Julius Stroud, Greg Goolsby, and Mike Dodd. Also present for the meeting was City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Manager, Janice Hall and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. All members of council were present for the meeting therefore all unanimous votes will be six (6) votes (Goolsby, Stroud, Dodd, Howard, Hewett and Lawrence).

**Approval of the Agenda**

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

**Approval of the Minutes from the July 7, 2020 Council Meeting**

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

**Public Hearing – Proposed ordinance providing for the alteration and amendment of the corporate boundaries of the City of Forsyth through annexation, and for the alteration and amendment of the zoning district and zoning map.**

Mr. Melton stated the public hearing is for annexation and zoning for the property owned by H& Timberlands; an aggregate total of 1036+ acres. First came before Council on July 7, 2020; and has been to Planning & Zoning. It was advertised in the Monroe Reporter on July 1, July 8, and July 15, 2020. The zoning request if approved would be "A, Agricultural Rural" for the City; currently zoned in the County as Agricultural Rural. Monroe County Board of Commission on July 17, 2020 voted to object to the annexation; which triggered a state law for arbitration of the issue. Mr. Melton stated Council will conduct a public hearing tonight for the zoning and annexation of the property; and further stated that City Code allows a final vote up to sixty-five days after the public hearing has been held; within that time he recommended final action be deferred until at least September 21, 2020; it could be earlier or later if it needs to be reset for arbitration.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition of the proposed zoning and annexation of the property. Mr. Tye Hanna with H&H Timberlands was recognized by Mayor Wilson to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Tye Hanna at 4268 Riverview Drive Peachtree Corners, GA stated after some discussion on his part with City and County officials it was determined that annexation into the City would allow for him to have sewerage on the property.

Mr. Tracy Buff at 2872 Old Atlanta Highway stated that area is beautiful section of the County; best used for residential; delightful place for families to move to Monroe County. If annexed into the City with industrial uses it would discourage families from coming to that area. Mr. Buff further stated he doesn't feel that is a good location for industry within the County.

Mr. Brandon Bowen, Attorney with Monroe County stated the County voted to object the annexation which triggers a negotiated arbitration process. The County is not opposed to development of the property; they do want to see reasonable and responsible development in long term planning. In the 2017 joint comprehensive plan that was entered into with the County; that plan shows the whole property to be developed for more residential uses. The annexation and rezoning would not be consistent with that plan. The service delivery strategy with the County provides that the County is to provide most of the services in that area; roads, water, sewer and others. If the property were annexed into the City

Smith Road would remain a County Road; anticipated cost to improve Smith road would be in excess of two million dollars per County Engineer. Mr. Bowen further stated that the County is concerned that rezoning for industrial purposes is not going to reflect responsible planning. Another concern of the County is that whole area is surrounded by residences that do not live in the City but in the County; if the property is annexed into the City and the development decisions are made by the City those residents will not have representation. The County is looking forward to the arbitration process and working out a compromise that serves everybody in the County.

Mr. Tim Holland at 346 Smith Road stated he lives directly across from the proposed property. He doesn't feel this is a very responsible use of the land.

Mr. Firmor Sakir at 280 Orchard Ridge Drive stated he would like to see development; proper development within the County. He's concerned about the increased traffic, heavy trucks in the area. He doesn't feel commercial development is right for that location.

Mr. Scott Tankard at 125 Orchard Ridge Drive stated he's concerned about the traffic on 41 and noise in the area.

Mr. Robert Perry at 2298 Smith Road is concerned about the expansion of other large tracts near High Falls being annexed into the City; traffic and the cost of road repairs.

Mr. Mac McGraw at 186 Orchard Ridge Drive questioned why it's necessary to annex the property to the City to have sewer at that property. Mr. McGraw stated he knows that the neighborhood is very much opposed to the annexation. It will be a tremendous change of life for people that live at the north end of the County.

Dr. Dawn Sherry at 270 Orchard Ridge Drive stated the subdivision is a wonderful place to raise a child; good schools in the County, the area is quiet; with the annexation it increases the risk to our kids with an industrial complex across the road.

Mr. Carl Schmidt at 270 Orchard Ridge Drive stated City is playing games because they won't run sewage to the property; not that they can't. The area is surrounded by residential areas in the North, South and West.

Mr. Tye Hanna stated he's willing to address any and all concerns residents may have; he will be open and honest.

There being no further comments for or against the zoning and annexation of the property Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Melton recommended that Council offer a motion to table the final decision on or about September 21, 2020 Council Meeting.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to postpone a final vote on the annexation until on or about September 21, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Approval to reopen City facilities – tabled from June 15 and July 7, 2020 Council Meetings**

Ms. Hall reviewed the cleaning costs for the various rentable facilities; cost exceeds what's currently being charged for use of the facilities. Ms. Hall recommended those facilities remain closed. Splashpad restrooms, Aldermen Hall, City Hall, Squad Room at the Police Department and Welcome Center will be cleaned.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion for City facilities to remain closed. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

#### **Discussion regarding Night Market Series**

Ms. Hall stated a thirty day notice is required for the Night Market Series if cancellation is to occur due to the pandemic. At this time a concert and a yard sale is scheduled for September 5, 2020.

Mr. Howard stated that no one may feel comfortable attending the event in September; he's not saying to move forward with any of it. Mr. Hewett agreed with Mr. Howard.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to cancel the events scheduled for September 5, 2020, the Night Market Concert and yard sale. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

### **City Manager's Report**

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- G-DOT has surveyed from Morse to Adams looking at the possibility of crosswalk in the area; most likely will not approve installing crosswalk at Lee/Adams intersection due to parallel parking configurations but will know more in a couple weeks as they will have someone sitting watching pedestrian traffic at several different locations and times of day and week. Surveyors in town by interstate as well so hopeful to hear something about area soon.
- Had a conference call on July 8 with John Hewitt and all cities participating in the Blockstream Project and everyone approved amendment #2 with City of Adel for Blockstream to allow Blockstream to reduce electric needs rather than a complete shutdown while they replace all the computer equipment?
- Will be advertising for a finance clerk; this position will do those things that Geri Proctor was doing as part time employee plus serving as the backup for payments, assisting Regina as needed with bank statements; plenty of work for this person to do and Regina needs another person since she is the city clerk and bookkeeper and those were previously 2 separate positions held by 2 people
- We have begun the 2021 budget process; in the upcoming budget we will be looking to increase the number of police officers on the road per shift
- Department heads have worked on what we are calling an "after incident review" for the shutdown even though we are still working through changes daily; some elected officials had expressed an interest in hearing what went right and wrong during the shutdown. I discussed this with the department heads and we would like to invite council to a department head meeting to hold a roundtable discussion to review what went right, what needs to be corrected IF we have to shut down again, and what we learned from the experience. If council is interested, we will schedule this in the next couple weeks.
- P&Z should review the changes to the zoning ordinance for parking spaces and Neighborhood Shopping businesses allowed table and submit recommendation to council for consideration.
- Had meeting last week with RC to review changes to the Urban Redevelopment Plan; this will be a complete overhaul of the existing plan; the URP provides a blueprint for guiding the redevelopment of blighted and underserved areas in the city; (6 areas – Main down MLK to Blount St; Chapman Subd; E Main from Agnes to Vaughn Lumber; Milledge Circle area; James/College Street to include old Tradewinds & old Anns Deli prop; and downtown approx. 3 blocks around square) once the RC makes a couple changes to the Plan, they will send a draft copy to me which I will forward to you for review before we begin meetings with the RC to discuss and amend the Plan
- LMIG (local maintenance & improvement grant) for W. Johnston, Phelps and Pinkney Circle should begin August 24 and CDBG for Blount St. area waterlines should begin August 3.
- Requests for TA have been submitted to the RC for assistance with rewriting the City Personnel Manual, creating a personnel manual for the CVB and assistance with locating and applying for grants for the Park Plan
- HB779 passed which will reallocate the title ad valorem tax (TAVT) providing cities 28% of the tax which is less than we previously received but more than what we received last year when the law was changed.
- Georgia Technology Authority is working on a Broadband Deployment Initiative which is a state effort to assess connectivity options statewide. I will be sharing a document from GTA which provides instructions on providing them with a Speed test. This document can be shared with as many as you would like – the more information GTA receives the better their research will be.
- Everyone should have received an email from G-DOT regarding the Commercial Vehicle Lane Project that included a video and website for additional information. If you did not receive this, please let me know so I can send it to you individually. This information has been emailed to all elected officials in the project area along with stakeholders and property owners that could potentially be impacted by the project.
- Received information from DCA regarding process with them regarding the objection from Monroe County to the annexation of the H&H Timberland properties. I will serve as the POC for the City with DCA.

- Just as a reminder, council approved resuming disconnects for nonpayment's for those that have not paid or made arrangements prior to the disconnect date.
- Public hearing Aug 3 (next council meeting) for BMK Group for beer, wine and liquor pouring license for 12 W Main Street (old Bluetick building)
- I am on vacation this week – more of a working staycation, but please feel free to contact me with any need that arises.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Melton had no further business to report.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Wilson stated he is currently recovering from Covid19.

**Additional Business**

No additional business was brought forward.

**Public Comments**

No one came forward for public comments.

**Executive Session**

No executive session was held.

**Adjourn**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.