

REGULAR MEETING – CAIRO MAYOR & COUNCIL – FEBRUARY 22, 2021

The February 22, 2021 Regular Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Room at 101-B North Broad Street by Mayor Howard Thrower, III. Present were Jerry Cox, Sr., James H. Douglas, Robert L. Gwaltney and Lannis Thornton. Demario Byrden was absent from the meeting. Staff Members present were City Manager Chris Addleton, City Attorney Thomas L. Lehman, City Clerk Dana Barfield, and Marketing Director Alyssa Blakely. Also in attendance was Cairo Messenger Editor Randy Wind.

INVOCATION: The Invocation was given by Councilman Gwaltney.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve the agenda was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Gwaltney, and approved by all Council Members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 8, 2021 - Regular Meeting: Motion to approve minutes was made by Councilman Thornton, seconded by Councilman Cox, and approved by all Council Members present.

DELEGATIONS:

Richard Massa, Jr. B.S., M.S./Habitat for Humanity. – Richard Massa, Jr. explained to the Mayor and Council that Habitat for Humanity was an economic driver. Housing creates a tax base in your community, it creates jobs, community involvement and the ability to come in and do what a lot of developers do at an affordable price. Habitat can be strategically placed in a city or county in a positive direction. Habitat is not a hand out, we run this as a business. We are in the business of building homes and putting families in those homes, we have a physical responsibility to make sure the people we partner with, whether it is a city, a foundation or private donor to behave physically. In Cairo and other surrounding counties that have previously had Habitat for Humanity have closed their doors. They brought me in about a year ago to Thomas County and we will be expanding in southwest Georgia. We will be going from Albany straight down the Alabama line, down to Florida and across to Valdosta and then a triangular mark going up. We will take over the southwest region of Georgia with this new business model. We are an economic driver that partners with organizations within its community to be able to provide housing, jobs and a tax base that will help a city or county. We are the builder, bank and the mortgage servicer. Giving the ability to house all three of those under one roof we are able to provide a low income loan, we also partner with U. S. D. A. as a developer.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Introduction of Ordinance to Permit Certain Types of Murals in Certain Areas Within the City of Cairo. Councilman Cox asked if this would be just for the downtown development area. Marketing Director Blakely responded no, this ordinance would be city wide for public art. Councilman Thornton asked if each one would have to be approved before they were painted. Marketing Director Blakely responded yes, that they would have to go before the D.D.A. Board. City Manager Addleton stated that the question was, if the Council wanted the D.D.A. to have approval or if they wanted them to come before the Council. There is provision that if the D.D.A. turned someone down that they would be able to come before the Council with an appeal. Councilman Douglas stated that he felt he would like a recommendation from the D.D.A. because if there is not a recommendations and the applicant is turned down they would more than likely end up before the Council anyways. Marketing Director Blakely agreed that it should go to the D.D.A. for a recommendation and then to the Council for an approval. Councilman Cox stated that if the mural was in noncompliance after it is approved and it goes up differently, then the building must be restored to its original condition.

Consider Renewal of DDA/Main Street Board Member Terms. Motion to approve reappointment of Mike Chastain and Renee Gee-Theophille to the D.D.A./Main Street Jurisdiction was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Cox, and approved by all Council Members present.

Considered Extending D.D.A./ Main Street Jurisdiction. Marketing Director Blakely explained that the D.D.A./Main Street Board Members are requesting the Downton Development Authority/Main Street Jurisdiction to be extended. The extension would include several existing retail outlets and potential sites that could take advantage of the resources offered by the program. The Main Street/D.D.A. Jurisdiction would like to extend to include the two blocks of 4th Street SE and 3rd Avenue SE. Motion to approve extending D.D.A./Main Street Jurisdiction was made by Councilman Cox, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and approved by all Council Members present.

Considered Archway Economic Development Opportunity Presented by Archway Professional Whitney Brannen. Whitney Brannen explained that the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development has announced a nation-wide program to assist rural communities. The University of Georgia, Public Service and Out Reach want to apply for this grant by submitting one application. They are wanting to support six communities in Georgia and they have identified the six communities that they want to support and three of those are Archway Communities, one of those being Grady County. The program will be facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute and Archway. There will be a strategic core planning team that will consist of five to seven people from Grady County. The only commitment that we would have to make would be signing an assurance agreement and time commitment, there is no monetary commitment. Motion to approve the Economic Development Opportunity Presented and Sign the Assurance Agreement was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Gwaltney, and approved by all Council Members present.

REPORTS:

1. **Considered Financial Reports for the Months of July – December 2020.** Motion to approve Financial Reports July – December 2020 was made by Councilman Douglas, seconded by Councilman Cox, and approved by all Council Members Present.
2. **Reports from City Manager:**
 - On March 8th Council Meeting, Nick Valenti is planned to present the Financial Audit Results.
3. **Reports from Mayor and Council:**
 - Councilman Thornton stated, that last week when we had a lot of rain water was flowing over the road on 4th Street NW and 6th Avenue NW going down to Smart St.
 - Councilman Douglas stated he had the same problem on Alton Hall Road, but he felt it was due to the edges of the road needing cut back.
 - Councilman Cox stated there was a tree on 11th Avenue NW and 4th Street NW that they thought to be a China Berry Tree in the power lines that needed to be cut back.

ADJOURN: At 6:52 pm motion was made by Councilman Douglas to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Thornton, and approved by all Council Members.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

HOWARD THROWER, III, MAYOR

DANA W. BARFIELD, CITY CLERK