

Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2018

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners met in their regular monthly meeting on Monday, April 2, 2018 at 5 pm at City Hall.

Mayor Lowe opened the meeting, with Commissioner Stockton leading an invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chief Eddie Byrum led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners present included Lamar Hughes, Sam Moser, Edward Lee, Billy G. West, and Bill W. Stockton.

Commissioner Moser moved to approve the minutes from the monthly meeting of March 5, 2018 and the workshop of March 26, 2018. Commissioner Stockton seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed. The motion was carried.

After the Recorder's Report, Commissioner West moved to approve the distributions for the month of March, 2018. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed. The motion was carried.

A Public Hearing was opened to take comment on three ordinances. First, was Ordinance No. 959 to rezone a portion of parcels 102.02 and 102.00 of Monroe County Tax Map 033 from R-1 and R-2 to C-3 (the Velta Hall estate property). Ms. Patricia Richesin stood to speak at the hearing. She stated that her concern was a lack of transparency in the government of this commission. She described positive previous experiences involving Commissioner Stockton who helped provide a sidewalk enhancement on Old Athens Pike, which made a great difference in the neighborhood. She also commended the statements by Commissioner West in the workshop describing the funding for the parking lot downtown, saying his comments were transparent. She said she was puzzled by the recent zoning code proposal. Hers was the first house built in the pasture, and they are still living there. She quoted lines from the Willow Creek development- "People want to live in neighborhoods that have a strong residential feature with room to grow and live such as quality homes, mature residential landscaping, sidewalks, and reduced traffic. Sites that have commercial or industrial ambience will tend to detract from the customer appeal." She went on to say that if this particular rezoning conflicts with what an independent zoning expert says is acceptable, then it is not acceptable to us. She stated that zoning provides protection to their neighborhood. She says for 57 years she has looked to us as public servants, following the zoning code as rules for our protection. "This is not happening in this case. We have been blindsided by this rezoning code proposal. We have been kept in the dark by those in power. We have been hoodwinked. We have learned accidentally that a rezoning change was a "done deal". There's no use coming to the meeting. This was voiced by this committee before even the planning commission knew about it. We know that now. This is not the way the city should be done." She mentioned the colonists that started the Revolutionary War and King Louie's beheading during the French Revolution were caused by people who got fed up and rebelled. She continued to say Salt & Light Studios have enriched the community. She would not be opposed to only her use but the gate would be open to become a thoroughfare. She wanted to know who would pay to widen Old Athens Pike to accommodate the

traffic. She stated she was speaking on behalf of the 30 plus families who were working or homebound and couldn't attend the meeting. She also mentioned those who feared retaliation from the city. She asked if the board had read the zoning code. The Mayor responded they had and asked her to conclude her comments. She asked that the board vote against this rezoning and implement a program for transparency. She says every resident should be properly notified when their neighborhood is being rezoned.

Ms. April St. Hilaire stood and stated that she was a parent of a child who attends Salt & Light Studios, (who is the prospective buyer of the property), that the community needed the facility. She knew they had searched for property several times and she would hate to see this facility leave the community.

Ms. Sara Jennings stood and stated her son had attended Salt & Light for several years and now helps teach classes. There is not a lot for youth to do in Sweetwater and this is a great outlet where he spends much of his after-school time. They are loving, kind, and great teachers, acting as a second family. I think anything that improves our town- there is not a negative. There is already a lot of traffic on that road.

Ms. Gaye Cozart stood, stating she has been in the community for years, teaching at Sweetwater High School. She stated she knew we needed to keep activities that keep our kids involved. She had seen the studio increase in growth and positive for Sweetwater.

Ms. Jamie Cunningham stood and said this business was giving back to the community on a regular basis. She stated there was already a large metal structure on the property that should have already upset them.

Commissioner West spoke and said he wanted to set the "transparency" issue straight. He said Jane McGuire presented him a letter to compliment the street department several weeks ago. He thanked her for the letter and stated it would probably be the last letter he got, as he would be voting for the rezoning. She said "so you've already made up your mind?" He responded that if the planning commission recommends it, he would vote for it. He also noted that Old Athens Pike is 23 ft wide between curbs and Sweetwater-Vonore Rd, with ten times as much traffic is 24 ft wide in front of the studio's current location. He said he was here to vote and he would vote what he thought was best for the community. "I do not appreciate anyone accusing me of being close-minded or not being transparent. My reputation since I've been in this town is I tell it like it is."

Ms. Jane McGuire stood and stated that the neighborhood did not know about the request. And that transparency needs to begin before the planning commission so the neighborhood knew. It was by accident that we found out. The Mayor stated it was in the paper. Jane responded not before planning commission and she had not seen anything except for articles, no public notice until after the process started. She said Salt & Light Studios should find a different location that was better-suited, but agreed they did a lot for the community. She praised the Street department again for their work, especially in the Main Street district.

Commissioner Moser stated the procedure for rezonings were followed and he said Ruth Hawk, County Planner is very good at following procedures and recommended any questions be directed

to her. He stated he was offended at the accusation that something has been hidden, with nothing was done outside of the set procedure.

A public hearing was opened to take comment on Ordinance No. 960 to rezone parcel 20.00 and a portion of parcel 004.00 of Monroe County Tax Map 023 from R-3 and C-3 to A-1 Agricultural. No written or oral comments were given. The public hearing was closed.

A public hearing was opened to take comment on Ordinance No. 961 to amend Title 13 of the Sweetwater Municipal Code. No written or oral comments were given. The public hearing was closed.

The public hearings were closed at 5:30 p.m.

In Old Business, Commissioner Hughes moved to approve Ordinance No. 959 to rezone a portion of parcels 102.02 and 102.00 of Monroe County Tax Map 033 from R-1 and R-2 to C-3 on second and final reading. Commissioner Stockton seconded the motion. Commissioner Moser disclosed he had spoken with the Kirkland family of Salt & Light Studios about doing architectural work for the proposed site and would therefore recuse himself from voting. Upon Roll Call Voting, the Ayes were as follows: Commissioners Hughes, Billy G. West, and Bill W. Stockton. Commissioner Edward Lee passed on voting. Nays being none. The motion was carried.

Commissioner Moser moved to approve Ordinance No. 960 to rezone parcel 20.00 and a portion of parcel 004.00 of Monroe County Tax Map 023 from R-3 and C-3 to A-1 Agricultural on second and final reading. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion. Upon Roll Call Voting, the Ayes were as follows: Commissioner Hughes, Moser, Lee, West, and Stockton. Nays being none. The motion was carried.

Commissioner Moser moved to approve Ordinance No. 961 to amend Title 13 of the Sweetwater Municipal Code on second and final reading. Commissioner West seconded the motion. Upon Roll Call Voting, the Ayes were as follows: Commissioner Hughes, Moser, Lee, West, and Stockton. Nays being none. The motion was carried.

City Planner Scott Wilson requested permission to clarify several points. He stated he had not been in the planning commission meeting where his integrity and character were attacked. He said that since Willow Creek had been brought up as an ideal, he provided a map showing that even the back side of Willow Creek is actually closer to the proposed rezoning than these residents were. He stated Jane McGuire and the Richesin homes were closer to the nursing home, church, and Wal-Mart than they are to this property. Cleveland Manufacturing is within 400 ft of the Richesin Home. He stated he thought this was a good step for the Kirkland's business and made them closer to the Highway 68 commercial corridor. He also stated that Willow Creek, even with the closer proximity to this newly rezoned property and the close proximity to the Plaza 68 commercial property, currently has the highest per square foot value on resale of any homes in the city. He appreciated the board allowing him time to provide clarification.

In New Business, Ordinance No. 962 entitled The Budget Ordinance was tabled. A budget workshop was scheduled for April 18 at noon.

Commissioner Hughes moved to approve Ordinance No. 963 entitled An Ordinance to rezone Parcel 3.0 of tax map 023C Group E from C-3 to R-1 on first reading. Commissioner West seconded the motion. Upon Roll Call Voting, the Ayes were as follows: Commissioner Hughes, Moser, Lee, West, and Stockton. Nays being none. The motion was carried.

Commissioner West moved to approve a higher TCRS rate at 7.1%, with Commissioner Moser seconding the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed. The motion was carried.

Commissioner Hughes moved to accept the qualifications from Barge Cauthen & Associates to serve as the hired consultant and inspector for the CDBG Home Grant. Commissioner Moser seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed. The motion was carried.

Commissioner Moser moved to approve the adoption of policies and procedures for the CDBG Home Grant. Commissioner Hughes seconded the motion. All voted in favor, with none opposed. The motion was carried.

Mayor Lowe invited the public to attend an Opioid summit on April 19th at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall featuring Steve Crump.

No further action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

This the 2nd day of April, 2018.