

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, April 24, 2023

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. on this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Mayor Stevenson presided with Mayor Pro Tem Cochran, and Commissioners Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins, and McDaniel present. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – April 10, 2023

The Minutes of the April 10, 2023, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Georgia Cities Week

Commissioner Doss presented a proclamation proclaiming the week of April 21 – 28 as Georgia Cities Week in Rome. This proclamation was presented to City of Rome's Kristie Kent and Hannah Bagley.

Ms. Kent spoke and outlined the various events that are scheduled in Rome for the observance of Georgia Cities Week.

Child Abuse Prevention Month

Commissioner Askew presented a joint City/County proclamation proclaiming May 2023 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in our community. This proclamation was presented to Mr. Allen Babcock of the Harbor House. Mr. Babcock addressed the commission, thanking them for this recognition and spoke of the groups that are involved supporting the Harbor House's mission. On Friday, April 28th there will be a walk in downtown Rome for a Harbor House event.

Crime Victims' Rights Week

Commissioner Beeman presented a joint City/County proclamation proclaiming April 23 – 29 as Crime Victims' Rights Week in our community. This proclamation was presented to District Attorney Leigh Patterson, Sandy Kunneman, Victim's Witness Assistance Program Director, and Julie Tomlin, Victim's Compensation Advocate.

Lee Bagley and Tom Sipp

Mr. Lee Bagley and Mr. Tom Sipp addressed the City Commission on behalf of Commissioner Mark Cochran. There is currently an investigation ongoing regarding an ethics complaint directed at Commissioner Cochran. Mr. Bagley stated that Mr. Cochran is allowed to speak his mind as all City Commissioners can and should do and indicated that their comments should not be scrutinized. Mr. Bagley was also critical of the City of Rome spending funds for this ethics investigation, which he characterized as a witch hunt.

Mr. Sipp stated that Mr. Cochran is representing his constituents and doing his job to make Rome a better place. Mr. Sipp stated that all City Commissioners should be able to ask questions they feel are necessary for the effective operation of the City of Rome and the City departments.

Broad Band Ordinance – First Reading

Secretary Smith reported that the Broadband Ordinance, as recommended by the General Administration Committee, was being placed on first reading. This item will be scheduled for a second reading and vote at the May 8th City Commission meeting.

Taylor McMichael – Alcohol Control Commission Nominee

Commissioner Collins stated that on behalf of the Committee on Committees, Ms. Taylor McMichael is being nominated for service on the Alcohol Control Commission. A vote on Ms. McMichael’s nomination is scheduled for the May 8th City Commission Meeting.

Z23-04-01 Rezone 5 West Callahan Street

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-04-01 the request to rezone property located at 5 West Callahan Street, identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel J13I – 294 from High Density Traditional Residential to Community Commercial.

Rome/Floyd Planner Artagus Newell reviewed this file, displaying maps of the subject and surrounding property. Mr. Newell stated that this property has been used for an auto service business and the applicant wishes to rezone to match the current use. The Planning Commission has recommended approval of this request with the conditions that a landscape strip and buffer will be installed along the West Forsyth Street to provide buffering for the adjacent residential structures, all storage will be moved inside the enclosed structure, all variances needed will be acquired.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Tony Mejia, owner of the property. Mr. Mejia stated that he has been at this location for approximately 20 years and has only recently realized that the property is zoned residential and that is the reason for his rezoning request. There was no one else to speak regarding the matter and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request from High Density Traditional Residential to Community Commercial with the conditions recommended by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z/SUP23-04-03 118 Holder Street

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning and SUP file Z/SUP23-04-03 the request to rezone property located at 118 Holder Street, identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel J14N – 331 from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential and issue a special use permit for a duplex.

Rome/Floyd Planner Artagus Newell reviewed this file, displaying maps of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Newell stated that the owner would like to rezone the property and construct a duplex. The Planning Commission has recommended approval subject to the condition that all needed variances be acquired.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the request. Speaking in favor of the request was Mr. Avendono, 13 Glenmore Road. Mr. Avendono stated he would like to rezone the property to residential and construct a duplex. There was no one else to speak in favor or opposition to the request and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning and SUP request as submitted subject to the Planning Commission's conditions. Commissioner Askew seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

When questioned, Mr. Newell stated that this property was large enough for the construction of the intended duplex.

Z23-04-04 Rezone 101 Rogers Drive NW

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-04-04 the request to rezone property located at 101 Rogers Drive NW, identified by Floyd County Tax Parcels H122 – 653 and H122 – 653B from Light Industrial to Suburban Residential. The Planning Commission has recommended approval of the request.

Rome/Floyd Planner Artagus Newell reviewed this file, displaying maps of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Newell stated this request involves two parcels and there is one home located on these parcels.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the rezoning request. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition of the request and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request from Light Industrial to Suburban Residential as requested. Commission Askew seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

There was some discussion regarding the availability of sewer for this property. Mr. Mike Hackett, Water and Sewer Director for the City of Rome, was in attendance, and stated that a development on this site will require connection with the City of Rome sewer system and a septic tank is not feasible.

Z23-04-06 Rezone 2021 Maple Road

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z23-04-06 the request to rezone property located at 2021 Maple Road and identified by Floyd Conty Tax Parcels I15X – 310 and I15X – 335 from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential.

Rome/Floyd Planner Artagus Newell reviewed this file, displaying maps of the subject and surrounding properties. Mr. Newell stated the Planning Commission has recommended approval of this rezoning subject to lot width variances.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the request. Speaking in favor of the request was Mr. Modina, 20 Saddlebrook Drive. Mr. Modina stated that he would like to rezone the property for residential use. There was no one else to speak in favor or opposition to the request, and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request as submitted from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential subject to the Planning Commission conditions. Commissioner Collins seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Artagus Newell Resignation

Rome/Floyd County Planning Director Artagus Newell informed the Commission that he his resigning his position with Rome and Floyd County and has taken a job in Atlanta with a private planning firm. Mr. Newell expressed his sincere appreciation to the City Commission for allowing him to serve in this role for the past several years and the City Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the job Mr. Newell has done for our community.

Rome Community Center Ribbon Cutting

Secretary Smith announced that, in conjunction with the 2023 Georgia Cities Week celebration, there will be a ribbon cutting at the Rome Community Center.

The Rome Community Center is the new name for the City's Senior Citizens Center located on Riverside Parkway. This ribbon cutting is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28th.

Verizon Contract Resolution

Commissioner Collins moved to adopt a resolution which would authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Verizon for improved service at the City of Rome's Water and Sewer Division facility. There will be no cost to the City of Rome for this improvement. Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Community Redevelopment Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Community Redevelopment Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 26th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee meeting scheduled for May 4th has been cancelled.

Earth Day Awareness

Commissioner Beeman announced there was a garden party event held recently as part of the 2023 Earth Day Awareness program.

Community Development Oversight Committee

Commissioner Doss announced that the Community Development Oversight Committee will meet on Tuesday, May 2nd at 10:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

River Safety

Commissioner Doss reminded everyone that our trails and rivers offer a lot of opportunities for exploration and recreation, however river safety should always be everyone's top priority. He encouraged all persons using our rivers, regardless of their ability to swim, to wear a life preserver.

Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, May 4th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Doug Phipps Alcohol Control Commission

Commissioner Collins moved to appoint Mr. Doug Phipps to serve on the Rome Alcohol Control Commission. Commissioner McDaniel seconded and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Myrtle Hill Cemetery – African American Section

Commissioner Collins thanked the Berry College interns who have been working on the improvement of records regarding the African American section of Myrtle Hill Cemetery. A presentation was made during the Caucus session prior to tonight’s meeting. These interns have been working under the direction of Ms. Brittany Griffin of the Planning Department.

Alcohol Control Commission

Commissioner McDaniel announced that there will be a called meeting of the Alcohol Control Commission on Monday, May 1st at 5:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers.

Tourism Committee

Commissioner McDaniel announced that the Tourism Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 26th at 11:45 a.m. at the Rome Area History Center.

Criminal Justice Foundation – BBQ

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Criminal Justice Foundation will hold their annual law enforcement appreciation luncheon at the Civic Center on Friday, April 28th. City Commissioners are invited to attend and encouraged to participate in the service of this luncheon.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk