

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
February 14, 2022

Edward B. Pope Conference Center
6:00 PM

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Washington, Georgia, held their regular monthly meeting on Monday February 14, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. at the Edward B. Pope Conference Center.

Mayor William deGolian presided.

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation

Approval of Agenda unanimously approved.

Councilman Mahoney wanted to know about getting minutes approved for January and February meetings. City Administrator stated that the new City Clerk would transcribe the minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. Angela Booker talked about ARP money using the Executive Order 1395 of Advancing Racial Equity mindful of using funds appropriately to help maintain use for utilities.

ADMINISTRATOR TOPICS

- A. Recommended to secure the Retirement Plan Procedural Manual matter to continue with the same plan with no changes for the 401 A and 457 B with the requirement from GMA. Councilman Cullars motioned to adopt and was seconded. Councilman Mahoney inquired about other plans and the City Administrator stated that this plan has been with the city for years and changing the plan will affect all employees. Councilman Cullars wanted to review the verbiage of the old and new plan to see what has changed.
- B. Jimmy Toto addressed the proposed rezoning of the 28.3 acres donated to the city to be changed from C2 to R3 to allow residential dwellings to be built to allow for decent living in the city. C2 represents Highway & Commercial in whereas R3 represents High Density Residential. R3 would require minimal lot coverage for the property mentioned above. Jimmy Toto stated that changing the zoning would bring in developers. There is 1 potential developer interested in site plan once changed to R3 status. Recommendation to approve rezoning from C3 to R3 motioned by Councilman Cullars and seconded by Councilman Andy Anderson vote was unanimous.

MAYORS TOPICS

- A. Workshop of February 25th for City Council
- B. 240th anniversary celebration for Washington GA be held on July 2nd or 3rd.
- C. Stephanie Macchia addressed council on black history at the museum. Advisory meeting held to discuss how to highlight black history at the museum with the following in attendance: Councilman Hill, Councilman Wagner, Debra Denard, Jerry Debin, Councilman Andy Anderson,

Suzanne Johnson, Tom Philips, Robert Armour, Ed Anderson & Sam Jenkins-by phone (whole council was not invited due to Sunshine Law).

- a. Topics discussed:
 - i. Public forum
 - ii. Have individuals bring pictures for copies to be made
 - iii. Reaching out to churches
 - iv. Historic markers in certain areas
 - b. Cherry Grove donated original pulpit dated back to 1875.
 - c. Councilman Mahoney wants a whole floor dedicated to black history and wants to know once artifacts are brought to museum where it would be placed.
- D. Mayor recommendations of 4 to the URA board: John "JB" Barnett, Roxeanne Cobb, Bruce Bailey, Steve Albertson. Councilman Cullars nominated to leave board as is and nominate 2 people to replace Ed Crew and David Toburen. Councilman Hill had recommendations to reappoint Roxeanne Cobb and Lakia Cullars; replace Ed Crew with Cynthia Walker; Councilman Mahoney asked mayor to share recommendations before the meetings. Mayor asked for a motion and was motioned by Councilman Andy Anderson and seconded by Councilman Wagner; 3 in favor Denard, Wagner, Anderson and 3 opposed Hill, Mahoney, Cullars with Mayor breaking tie the recommendations would go forth as stated above.

COUNCIL ACTION TOPICS

A. Councilman Cullars

- a. Councilman Cullars motioned to start having televised council meeting through Comcast starting in March and seconded by Councilman Mahoney. Councilman Anderson and Mayor questioned on cost to the city. Councilman Cullars stated that previously it was \$300. Councilman Denard stated the only way for him to vote would be if he knew the cost. Councilman Mahoney stated to get bids on costs. Councilman Cullars rephrased his motion that City Administrator would find the lowest bid in order to air televised council meeting: 4 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstained
- b. Training of elected officials and newly elected officials based on training hours should have a pay incentive in the following increments:
 - i. 42 hours-\$100
 - ii. 72 hours-\$200
 - iii. 120 hours-\$300
 - iv. 204 hours-\$400
 - v. 276 hours-\$500

Councilman Anderson questioned would this be a one time or monthly and Councilman Cullars stated it would be a definite increase monthly. Mayor stated he had a problem with the monetary factor and was not in favor. Councilman Cullars motioned to have the training increments and was seconded: 3 in favor, 3 opposed, Mayor broke tie making 3 in favor and 4 opposed.

- c. Motion to change name of Lexington Avenue to MLK with having a forum on February 23, 2022 @ 6pm open to the public either for or against the name change. City Attorney stated the DOT has the process to change names of highway. City Attorney advised to change the motion to direct the City Administrator to begin the process of the change of

Lexington Avenue to MLK in order to make sure the council is doing what is allowed by the DOT. Councilman Hill supported the motion and Councilman Anderson seconded and was agreed unanimously by council.

- d. Hiring of an Assistant City Administrator in order to know who is responsible or in charge while the City Administrator is out. Mayor stated the city did not need an Assistant City Administrator. Councilman Mahoney questioned those employees do not know who is in charge, employees doing jobs that are not in their job description, and no exit interviews for employees once an individual leaves the city. City Administrator stated that City Clerk is in charge if City Administrator is not available. Councilman Anderson suggested that a flow chart with chain of command in order to get clarity. Councilman Cullars motioned to hire Assistant City Administrator and was seconded by Councilman Hill. 3 in favor- Hill, Mahoney, Cullars; 3 opposed-Anderson, Denard, Wagner; Mayor broke tie making 3 in favor 4 opposed.
- e. Motion to have sewer fees \$500 for TAPP program paid by March 1, 2023, fees paid after the date would total \$10000. Councilman Hill suggested to notify all residents of the fees in the newsletters that come with electric bills. Motion was seconded and unanimously passed.
- f. Motioned of a 3% rollback to give customers relief of utility rates. Councilman Cullars stated that the City of Washington ranks 4th in Georgia with high utility rates. City Administrator stated that for the months of January and July proportion money based on kilo watt usage and any form of credit would move the city down statewide on electric rates. Councilman Wagner wanted City Administrator to run numbers on to get a clear understanding on how to complete correctly for the citizens. After discussion Councilman Cullars rephrased his motion that if it does not cost more than \$500,000 to role back utility rates for customers up to 3%. City Administrator stated that the budget would have to be amended in order to balance the budget. Councilman Cullars suggested that the City Administrator bring scenarios back to the March meeting on how to go forward with the 3% rollback.

Mayor asked for a motion to adjourn and go to executive session for two personnel matters. Councilman Cullars motioned to go into executive session was seconded by Councilman Hill was approved by the rest of council to go into executive session for a real estate matter.

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor and council returned from executive session and motion to adjourn was presented by Councilman Cullars and seconded by Councilman Denard. All agreed unanimous.

_____ Mayor

Transcribed by new City Clerk Catrina Cofer