

City of Thomasville Council Meeting, October 26, 2020

The Council of the City of Thomasville met in a regular session with Mayor Greg Hobbs presiding and the following Councilmembers present: Mayor Pro Tem David Hufstetler; and Councilmembers Jay Flowers, Todd Mobley and Wanda Warren. Also present were the City Manager, J. Alan Carson; City Attorney, Tim Sanders; other staff and members of the media. The meeting was held in Council Chambers at City Hall, located at 144 East, Jackson Street, Thomasville, Georgia.

This meeting was held in a manner that observed active Executive Orders and Health Advisories provided by Georgia Governor Kemp, Centers for Disease Control, Department of Health, and local health officials in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Seating was limited and additional safety measures were required such as, but not limited to, social distancing and wearing of facial coverings to ensure the health and safety of meeting participants and the citizens of Thomasville. Simultaneous access to the meeting was provided to those members of the press and citizens not present via the City of Thomasville's online live stream feed located at www.thomasville.org.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greg Hobbs called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION

Councilmember Flowers led the Invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Mobley motioned to approve the Council Meeting Minutes of October 12, 2020 as presented, with no exceptions. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mayor Hobbs acknowledged the following Citizens to be Heard, as listed on the sign in sheet:

1. Lucinda Brown, 103 Halcyon Way, Thomasville, Georgia, requested that Council to table Agenda Item C relating to the revised utility delinquency services fees. She voiced concerns for those in the community who may not have the financial means to pay the fees as revised and requested Council not take action on this item until next year.
2. Terry Scott, 106 Pinecrest Boulevard, Thomasville, Georgia also addressed Council with concerns regarding community members who could not pay the service fees and noted now is not the time to revise the delinquency services fees.
3. Keith Thomas, 432 Wood Gate Lane, Thomasville, Georgia commended the City Manager for doing a great job. He commented on future Council elections and their potential to change the dynamics for the community.

ADOPT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler indicated he was not in favor of Council's consideration of Item C; to approve the revised utility delinquency service fees. A brief discussion ensued regarding the process taken to come up proposed revisions, the proposed effective date; as well as the current procedures in place and proposed procedures for delinquent fees for disconnects and reconnects of utilities. It was noted that proposed fee schedule revised the fee schedule in a manner that would be fair for both commercial and residential customers.

Mayor Pro Tem motioned to table Item C “Motion to approve revised utility delinquency service fees.” for further discussion. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Councilmember Mobley motioned to adopt the agenda as presented, with no exceptions. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

OLD BUSINESS

Second reading of an ordinance to rezone 209 West Remington Avenue from M, Manufacturing, to C-2, Commercial.

City Planner, Kenny Thompson, reported there were no revisions to the ordinance following its first reading on October 12, 2020. Thompson further reported the applicant is requesting 209 West Remington Avenue to be rezoned from M-Manufacturing to C-2, Commercial. The site consists of a downtown commercial building that has been converted into an arts studio and commercial building space. The rezoning proposal will permit a use that is suitable in view of the use and development of the adjacent and nearby property. The property in question is zoned M-Manufacturing, but is surrounded by commercial and residential uses.

Councilmember Mobley motioned to order the ordinance to rezone 209 West Remington Avenue from M, Manufacturing, to C-2, Commercial as read for the second time, passed and adopted, as presented. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

The ordinance ordered read for the second time, passed and adopted follows:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA, OF 1971, AS AMENDED WHICH IS SET FORTH IN THE CODE OF THE CITY OF THOMASVILLE AS CHAPTER 22, CAPTIONED “ZONING”, BY EXCLUDING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND FROM PARCEL 3 OF SECTION 22-81 CAPTIONED “M, MANUFACTURING”, TO DESCRIBE SAID EXCLUDED TRACT AND TO DESIGNATE THE SAID SAME TRACT AS PARCEL 62 OF SECTION 22-81 CAPTIONED “C-2, COMMERCIAL”. TO ESTABLISH THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDINANCE; TO REPEAL ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

SECTION I

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Thomasville and it is hereby ordained by the authority of the same, that the Code of the City of Thomasville is amended by excluding a certain Parcel 3 from Section 22-81 captioned “M, Manufacturing” and to designate the said same tract as Parcel 62 of Section 22-81 captioned “C-2, Commercial” and more particularly described as follows:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in the City of Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the northwesterly intersection of the right of way of Remington Avenue and Stevens Street and run thence north 41 degrees 20 minutes 30 seconds west along the northerly right of way of Stevens Street a distance of 134.12 feet to a point; run thence north 49 degrees 42 minutes 06 seconds east a distance of 193.55 feet to a point; run thence south 39 degrees 49 minutes 08 seconds east a distance of 135.12 feet to a point on the westerly right of way or Remington Avenue; run thence south 50 degrees 00 minutes 20 seconds west along the westerly right of way of Remington Avenue a distance of 189.98 feet to the point of beginning. Containing 25,811 square feet.

SECTION II

BE IT ORDAINED that all ordinances of the City of Thomasville in conflict herewith be the same are hereby repealed for purposes of this ordinance only.

SECTION III

BE IT FUTHER ORDAINED that the provisions of this ordinance shall not be made a part of the official codified ordinances of the City of Thomasville.

SECTION IV

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that if any part of this ordinance is declared void it is the intent and the purpose hereof that all other provisions not declared void shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION V

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the effective date of the foregoing ordinance is the date of its final reading and passage.

SECTION VI

This ordinance was introduced and read for the first time in a lawful meeting of the City Council held on October 12, 2020 and passed and adopted on the second reading of the ordinance at a lawful meeting of the City Council held on October 26, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

Bids and award for purchase of a construction contract for Weston Park improvements.

Manager-Parks/Recreation & Golf, Mike Owens, reported bids were received for improvements at Weston Park. These improvements include paved parking, new sidewalk and walking trail, refurbishment of the existing basketball court, lighting of walkways and pavilions, new electrical receptacles at pavilions, new electric doors on the restrooms, new landscaping, and site furniture to include picnic tables, benches, and trash receptacles. City Manager Carson noted that this improvement project does not include the Property owned by Douglass Alumni; this will be discussed at a later time. This project will be funded utilizing budgeted SPLOST funds. A summary of bids follows.

<u>BIDDER</u>	<u>BID AMOUNT</u>
CCH Construction, Inc., Thomasville, Georgia	\$525,053.84
Tip Top Construction, Inc. Havana, Florida	\$528,011.24
Kellerman Construction, Valdosta, Georgia	\$440,092.36

Councilmember Flowers motioned to award the bid for Weston Park improvements to Kellerman Construction, in the amount of \$440,092.36, as being qualified to perform the services and as the lowest bidder; and, to authorize the Mayor to execute the contract on behalf of the City, as presented. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

Resolution to apply for Regional Water Plan Seed Grant.

Executive Director of Public Utilities, Chris White, reported Flooding issues have plagued the City for a number of years. Attempts to address issues on a site by site basis have been ongoing. Stormwater infrastructure maintenance and repairs can be extremely expensive and solely funded with SPLOST dollars. In an effort to holistically address

storm water issues within our community in a fiscally responsible manner, the engineering department needs to gather data on the existing conditions of each watershed within the city limits to assess current conditions. Data gathering will include identification of land use in the sub-watershed, water quality monitoring, mapping of documented flooding within the city limits, documentation of significant field observations and related problem areas and public input from each sub-watershed. A public education program will also be established. Data gathered will be used to develop a Stormwater Master Plan to effectively and efficiently address flooding issues and water-based regulatory issues. The development of a Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) is a combined approach for addressing the current and near-term stormwater needs of the City, improving ambient water quality, and generating necessary funding. By going through this process with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) the City will be more competitive for other grants to address stormwater issues in our community; the Seed Grant develops partnerships with agencies who determine how funds will be allocated. This project will include stormwater education in the 4th and 6th grade classes, stormwater drain markers for public awareness, and education at annual Rivers Alive clean up events. This is also an essential first step before implementing rehabilitation of the streambed at MacIntyre Park. White noted the grant requires matching funds of \$30,000 are required; the maximum grant award is \$75,000. An additional \$25,000 in-kind services will be provided by the city; supplying existing data to consultants, establishing water quality monitoring stations, monthly water sampling, and contributions to public education.

Councilmember Mobley motioned to adopt a resolution approving the submission of a grant application to Georgia EPD for assistance for data collection to develop a Master Storm Water plan and authorize the Mayor to sign all necessary and related documents, as presented. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

The approved resolution follows.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires that data shall be gathered to determine the stormwater management needs for the development of a Stormwater Master Plan for the City; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires that an application be submitted to the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (EPD) for funding under the Regional Water Plan Seed (RWSP) Grant in the amount of up to seventy-five thousand (\$75,000.00) dollars; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to authorize an expenditure, in an amount not to exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00), so as to provide the matching funds as a requirement of the RWPS Grant application; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to authorize the Mayor to sign all necessary and related documents as shall be necessary in relation to the RWPS Grant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, hereby authorizes the submittal of the Regional Water Plan Seed (RWPS) Grant in the amount of up to seventy-five thousand (\$75,000.00) dollars to the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (EPD) to provide assistance for data collection to develop a Stormwater Master Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, further authorizes an expenditure, in an amount not to exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000.00), so as to provide the matching funds as a requirement of the RWPS Grant application; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, further authorizes the Mayor of the City of Thomasville, or his/her successor, as the signatory on all necessary and related documents as shall be necessary in relation to the RWPS Grant application.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, on this, the 26th day of October 2020.

Motion to approve revised utility delinquency service fees.

Executive Director of Public Utilities, Chris White, reported The City of Thomasville averages 600 to 700 utility accounts that reach delinquency status each month. Of these, 200 to 300 are disconnected for non-payment of services. This creates a monthly past due balance of approximately \$300,000 with historic annual bad debt write-offs that have exceeded \$750,000. In recent years, Thomasville Customer Relations staff have made significant strides in reducing our annual bad debt write offs with 2019 at \$359,000. Currently our delinquent fees are set at \$20.00 for all utilities, regardless of past due amount. CNSNext service is \$5.00. These service charges are applied 3 days after due date, which is 22 days after customer receives monthly bill. Under our existing policy, when customers are cut-out due to non-payment, there are no service charges incurred for reconnection during normal business hours. After hours service charges are set at \$12.00.

White noted as presented at the Utilities Commission meeting on October 7th 2020 with a general consensus of approval, staff recommends amending current delinquency fees and service charges in an effort to better recover operational cost. The recommended late fee charge is 7% of total past due balance, that applied at 22 days after the customer receives bill. This charge will be capped at \$500 with a minimum of \$10.00. Additionally, staff recommends a \$50.00 delinquent reconnect fee during normal business hours and a \$75.00 reconnect fee for after hours and weekend service. These recommended fees are not anticipated to generate additional revenue, only to recover administrative and operational expenses incurred providing these services.

Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler voiced concerns of the impact this may have on those without means to pay the fees and was not in favor of the revised fees as presented. It was noted that late fees are only assessed if a customer has made no contact with the City regarding their potential to be late with payment. White noted that current procedures are in place to provide no late fees to be asses to any customer who notifies City staff that they anticipated being late in payment. If there is no contact initiated by customers prior to their bill's due date, late fees will be assessed. It was noted that his revision was not created to be a new revenue source. The revisions were created to address current fees charged in a fair manner for both residential and commercial customers. White noted there were approximately 600-700 accounts that are assessed recurring late fees. Mayor Hobbs and Councilmembers Warren, Flowers, and Mobley were in favor of the fee structure as presented; however, there were concerns voiced regarding the proposed effective date of January 2021. Discussion ensued regarding the coronavirus pandemic, customers who have experienced hardships and hard costs that are involved with disconnects and reconnects of utilities. City Manager Carson noted the proposed effective date could be pushed back to later in the year, thus allowing additional marketing and assistance programs education for customers. Mayor Hobbs noted that if the effective date is amended, that Council revisit and asses these matters closer to the effective date and revise if necessary.

Councilmember Mobley motioned to approve the proposed utility delinquency service fees as presented, with exception of amending the effective date to reflect an effective date of April 1, 2021. Councilmember Warren seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 4-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

NAY: Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler.

Approved Delinquency Service Fees follows.

1. A late fee shall be calculated as 7% of overdue billed balance, applied at 22 days after the customer receives the bill. This charge shall be capped at \$500 with a minimum of \$10.00;
2. \$50.00 delinquent reconnect fee during normal business hours; and,
3. A \$75.00 reconnect fee for after hours and weekend service.

Motion to approve Alcohol License for Retail Package and Consumption of Beer, Wine and Liquor for Southern Lodging, LLC.

Event Facilities, Business & Tax Licensing Administrator, Melissa Creel, reported Southern Lodging, LLC has completed application for a license to engage in the business of selling Retail Package and Consumption of Beer, Wine and Liquor Pouring for 207 South Dawson Street, Thomasville, Georgia. The license issued by the City is contingent upon the applicant receiving a like permit from the Georgia Department of Revenue, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax unit. There were no issues revealed in the background check of the applicant, Southern Lodging, LLC, Robert Emmett.

Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler motioned to approve the Alcohol License for Retail Package and Consumption of Beer, Wine and Liquor Pouring for Southern Lodging, LLC, as presented. Councilmember Flowers seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

Upon approval of the applicant's licenses as presented, Mayor Hobbs read the following statement to the license holder:

It is important that you and your staff strictly adhere to the City of Thomasville's Alcoholic Beverage Sales ordinances and required employee training programs. It is important that you have a training program for your employees regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to underage persons, and it is important that you have written proof that your employees have participated in the required training program.

As a reminder, the Thomasville Police Department routinely conducts a "Mystery Shopper Program" so as to monitor the enforcement of the prohibition of sales of alcohol to underage persons. If you or one of your employees sells alcoholic beverages to an underage person through the Mystery Shopper Program, you will be required to appear before the City Council and show written proof that your employees have participated in the required training program. Please understand that the penalties for the sale of alcoholic beverages to underage person are significantly greater if you don't have written proof that your employees have participated in the required training program.

We are providing you a copy of Thomasville Municipal Code Chapter 3, "Alcoholic Beverages", with the added Article V ordinance amendment for "Sale Off-Premises for Catered Functions". Please familiarize yourself with the code and the requirements associated with your alcoholic beverage license.

Bids and award for purchase of Cemetery Mowing Contract.

Executive Director of Public Utilities, Chris White reported that maintenance of the cemeteries are held to the highest standards by loved ones. Public Works is very committed to providing these expected standards to the loved ones within all five cemeteries: Laurel Hill, Peaceful Rest, Magnolia, Flipper and The Old Cemetery. In order to provide the services, a contractor is needed that is committed to the same standards to enable the City to exceed customer expectations. The proposed contract is for one year, with four 4 years of consecutive renewals; for a total of five years. It was noted that the contract start date is January 1, 2021. A summary of bids follows.

<u>BIDDER</u>	<u>BID AMOUNT</u>
Angry Lawn Care, Thomasville, Georgia	\$ 190,000
Boles Lawn Care, Cairo, Georgia	\$ 220,000
Johnson Lawn Care, Thomasville, Georgia	\$ 238,500
Allen Turf & Lawn, Thomasville, Georgia	\$ 239,875
Pristine Maid & Janitorial Service, Amarillo, Texas	\$ 424,600
Monleth Perkins Landscaping & Maintenance, Thomasville, Georgia	\$ 776,820

Councilmember Mobley motioned to approve the award of bid to Angry Lawn Care, in the amount of \$190,000.00, as presented. Councilmember Flowers seconded. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

Resolution approving submittal of a pre-application for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant for Paradise Park improvements.

Manager-Parks/Recreation & Golf, Mike Owens, reported the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal program to develop and/or renovate outdoor recreation areas. The Georgia DNR distributes these grants in Georgia. These LWCF grants are a 50/50 match and the application process is in (2) year cycles. This grant has funded many projects for the City of Thomasville over the years including Country Oaks, Remington Park, Cherokee Lake, and Cassidy Road Pond. This grant will not be awarded until October of 2021; however, the pre-application is due by October 30, 2020. In May of 2021, the City will be notified if we can proceed with the actual application.

The Planning Department held a planning charrette to gather public input for Paradise Park in November of 2018. Using that input, a high level master plan was formulated that included enhanced parking areas and park entrance, ¾ mile historic walking trail, connection of the walk/bike trail from Broad to Hansell, updated benches, picnic areas, and playground equipment, renovation of the historic bandstand, updated overhead lighting, and carriageway restoration.

Councilmember Flowers motioned to approve the resolution approving the submittal of a pre-application for a LWCF Grant for a Paradise Park improvements; to commit required matching funding utilizing SPLOST funds in the FY2022 budget; and, to authorize the Mayor to sign all necessary and related documents for the LWCF Grant, as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler seconded. The motion passed 5-0, with the following votes recorded:

AYES: Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro Tem Hufstetler, and Councilmembers Flowers, Mobley and Warren.

The approved resolution follows.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant is a federal program to develop and/or renovate outdoor recreations areas that is distributed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR); and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to enhance public park areas for the greater good of the community; and,

WHEREAS, a planning charrette was held November of 2018 to gather public input for Paradise Park improvements; from which, that input resulted in the formulation of various needed improvements within the Park; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to submit a Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant pre-application so as to obtain funding assistance for improvements to Paradise Park; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to commit funding of SPLOST funds in the FY2022 Budget to provide for the provision of the matching funds as a requirement of the LWCF Grant pre-application; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, desires to authorize the Mayor to sign all necessary and related documents, as shall be necessary in relation to the LWCF Grant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, hereby authorizes the submittal of a pre-application for the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant on, or before, the pre-application's deadline of October 30, 2020 to obtain assistance for Paradise Park Improvements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, further authorizes the provision of commitment of SPLOST funds in the FY2022 Budget so as to provide the matching funds as a required in the LWCF Grant pre-application; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, further authorizes the Mayor of the City of Thomasville, or his/her successor, as the signatory on all necessary and related documents as shall be necessary in relation to the LWCF pre-application.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, on this, the 26th day of October 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items listed for consideration on the Consent Agenda at this meeting.

REPORTS

Councilmembers collectively commended staff for their efforts of coordinating the community meet and greet with the Police Chief Candidates prior to this Council Meeting. It was noted there were three highly qualified candidates; and the community meet and greet was successful. City Manager Carson noted he anticipated naming a new Police Chief in the coming week.

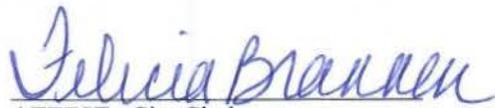
Councilmember Flowers reported the Thomasville Rotary Club will be purchasing 15 large oak trees to be placed in Paradise Park along Broad Street in celebratory recognition of Rotary Club.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business to discuss, the City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM.



Mayor, Greg Hobbs



ATTEST: City Clerk

