

**Minutes of the City Council Meeting  
Jennings City Hall  
February 27, 2017 - 7:00 pm**

The two thousand three hundred fifty eighth meeting of the Jennings City Council was held on Monday, February 27, 2017 at 7 p.m. at Jennings City Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem, Francine Dugger called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

***Special Recognition: Jennings Resident: Mary Bellamy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Recognition***

Mayor Dugger called Mrs. Mary Bellamy, a Jennings resident, to the center, along with her family, to be recognized by the City for celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 23, 2017.

Mayor Dugger presented Mary Bellamy with a Proclamation from the City proclaiming this day as Mother Mary E. Bellamy Day.

Mayor Dugger informed the public that they could contact the City if there are Jennings residents celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Francine Dugger  
Councilman Alan Stichnote  
Councilwoman Miranda Jones  
Councilwoman Yolanda Fortson

Councilwoman Phyllis Anderson  
Councilwoman Nicole Cook  
Councilman Rodney Epps  
Councilwoman Carol Epps

Also present: City Attorney Carla Allen and City Clerk Deletra Hudson

**Reports of Council:**

Councilwoman C. Epps – Councilwoman Epps wished Mary Bellamy happy birthday. She had no report

Councilwoman R. Epps – Thanked the Public Works Department and Mayor for cleaning vacant lots and properties in Ward 4. He stated that if the City is going to clean up the Wards, the City needs to start building homes. He stated that cleaning up the Wards is taking manpower from doing other things like paving streets and fixing potholes. Councilman R. Epps says the City has to knock down the condemned properties and replace them with homes. He explained that this is the same problem that other municipalities like Kinloch and St. Louis City is having. Councilman Epps said when you build homes, you turn Wards back into neighborhoods. He explained that in neighborhoods, people will stop people from dumping and start calling to report it.

He informed the public that the City has 50 homes scheduled to be built this spring. Councilman Epps explained to the public that Phase 1 of the project is being developed by Mr. McKinney. He was given lots for over 30 home and he cleaned up the title for the lots and is ready to build on the lots. He continued to state that there are some vacant lots that the City is taking care of that we need to work with the developer to get the buildings knocked down so the developer can build on the lots.

Councilman Epps said the 50 homes have been coming to the Council for development for the past two years. The development hasn't started because the developer can't get contiguous lots. He stated that the City needs to help the developer with getting the lots that he needs to acquire to go with the lots that he already owns to help build up neighborhoods. He stressed the importance of having lots next to each other, when building, is due to the utilities going underground (water, sewer, electric). He stated the City needs to help the developer to get the contiguous lots. Councilman Epps reported that the developer is keeping the lots that he has cleaned. He has done great work in the community. Councilman Epps informed the public that

the developer built a senior citizen building on Lalite and Wilborn. He has also built homes in Alexandria Place. Councilman Epps stated that the City should not let the neighborhoods be overrun by condemnation. He explained that one of the job of the councilmembers is the keep the balance of condemnation and people living. If that is not done, the City will die. He stated that the clean lots look nice for two weeks, then people start to dump on the lots again.

Councilman Epps stated that Ward 4 is the oldest Ward and has the most condemnation. He said the City has lost almost 3,000 people over the past 3-4 years. There was previously 15,000 people in the City. He said the loss was directly associated with homes. Councilman Epps stated that it is not the City's job to keep cleaning lots. If the City does that, it cannot do what it needs to do. He asked the council to think about the Phase 2 development with Mr. McKinney. He said cleaning up the mess is not going to be the longevity or survival of the City. People can't live in condemned buildings and on vacant lots.

Councilwoman Jones – announced a Ward 1 Meeting Thursday 3/2 at 6:30 pm in City Hall. She requested a representative from the police department to attend the meeting to give the community the opportunity to ask questions about what is going on in the neighborhoods. Councilwoman Jones said the Ward 1 typically has a meeting in the Spring and in the Winter. This meeting will be the Spring Meeting. At the meeting, there will also be a discussion about a cleanup on March 25. She stated that every Ward was given dumpsters to use to get rid of big items during cleanups. She reported that the Ward 1 dumpsters will be strategically placed for the cleanup. She said that she hope those who can attend the Ward meeting will help plan the cleanup.

Councilwoman Jones announced the Friends of Jennings Gala is on April 7<sup>th</sup>. She announced that she has been on the Board for 13 years. Councilwoman Jones commended the work of the School District to improve its status. She acknowledged the presence of other school board members present, Terry Wilson. She stated that the board members worked really hard learning their jobs, which is not day to day operation of the district. The Board's job is governance and doing what needs to be done to support the leadership. The Board has turned things around because of their cohesiveness as a group. She stated that she hopes that as the City Council works together, the Council can also learn to be cohesive and work together. She said Jennings is such a strategically located community with many resources, including location. Councilwoman Jones said the Council needs to get out of its own way and figure out how to make some things happen. She referenced Councilman Epps comments on finding the balance between fixing the things that need to be fixed and moving forward to attract new families and things needed in the community to keep young growing families in the community. She said this is a beautiful community. But the community does need resources to have a good place to shop, fresh fruits and vegetables. She encouraged the public who lived in Ward 1 to come to the Ward 1 meeting.

Councilman Stichnote – Reported that he noticed lots of blue tarps on roofs as he drives through the city. He stated that the City does not have an ordinance against having the tarps on the roofs. He recommended that the Council create an ordinance that limits the amount of time the tarps can stay on rooftops. His recommendation is the limit the tarps to no longer than 30 days. Council R. Epps stated that when he sees a tarp, he is thinking that it is work in progress. Councilman Stichnote responded that he has a house in his ward that has had the tarp on the roof top for almost a year. Councilman Stichnote recommended that this issue goes to the policy committee.

He also announced to the public that leaves should not be blown into the streets and left, because the City's street sweeper will get stopped up and the motors will get burned. He urged the public to pick up their leaves.

Councilman Stichonote reported that on February 25<sup>th</sup>, he attended Coffee with the Commander. He stated that there were 19 residents present. There was a report that crime was down 2% for the month of January. Councilman Stichnote thanked the Captain.

Councilman Stichnote requested a copy of the Public Relations Contractor bills to see what he is billing the City for.

Councilwoman Anderson – Thanked Capt. Cox for putting officers on a situation. She informed the public that the police presence and the arrest being made is making a difference. She also reported that she created a paper flyer with the job opportunities of various businesses in the community. She asked the public take a flyer and feel free to call her with any questions.

Councilwoman Cook – no report

Councilwoman Fortson – reported that she attended the Clergy Coalition on February 16<sup>th</sup>. There was also a Ward 2 meeting on February 16 at 7:30 pm. She reported that there were a several presenters at the Ward meeting, including Alice Logan (Director of Star Residences) at Lillian and Garesche. Councilwoman Fortson thanked Mr. McKinney for allowing Ms. Logan to come to the meeting to provide information to the seniors about Star Residences. There was also a presenter from the Community Action Agency. The agency provided information to the seniors about services, which included first time homebuyers, home winterization, and other housing services. The third presenters were Dr. Brune and Dr. Josh Adams from Corpus Christi, the new senior location off of Switzer.

She thanked all of the residents of Ward 2 who attended the meeting and shared some of the issues that exist in the neighborhood. She also thanked Capt. Cox and his officers for attending the meeting.

Councilwoman Jones asked Mayor Dugger for the floor to recognize school board member, John Schlereth, who was in attendance.

Mayor Dugger combined her Council report with her Mayor's report. She first reported that she attended the Municipal League conference on February 14-15, 2017 in Jefferson City, MO. She shared with the public that she attended the Mayor's Meeting where the Senate Bills were being discussed. The Mayor reported on Senate Bill 37 and House Bill 151 to allow the Department of Revenue to issue the Real ID Compliant Drivers Licenses and Identification Cards. She reported that 44 states are now in compliance. Missouri has until January 2018 to either request an extension or opt out. If the State of Missouri doesn't adopt the new Federal Identification Guidelines, residents will need to have a passport to fly domestically, enter federal buildings or enter military facilities. The public is being asked to call the legislators about these bills. The Mayor stated that there will be later discussions on how to contact legislators and voice opinions about the bills.

Mayor Dugger reported another bill discussed in the Mayor's Meeting was Bill 226 and Senate Bill 285, which will reduce the cap by 90 million and limit total projects by 450 million annually. The Mayors felt the State was unaware as to how valuable the tools are deeply affecting Cities. The President for the State's Municipal League opposes the bills, but wants the public to know that they have to get involved, including nonprofits and board members from influential corporations to contact their legislators about opposing the bills.

She reported there were also discussions about transportation and infrastructure, as well as the police issues that exist. The Mayor encouraged the public to make sure the police feel valued.

The Mayor invited the public to contact her, or any councilmembers, if they are interested in information on where the laws are made in Jefferson City. She said they all can pull up (via internet) the information on any of the Senate or House Bills.

The Mayor stated that the mayors met with Senator Dixon. They discussed the amendment of Senate Bill 5 and Senate Bill 572. She explained that cities and towns in rural areas felt they were lumped into the process and being punished due to the Ferguson incident. The Mayors wanted to meet with the Senator. There were discussions about the things they wanted to have

amended. She expressed concern about whether time was taken to figure out what needed to be done.

The Mayor said she was invited by the Senator from Popular Bluff to sit on the Senate Floor. She said it was interesting to witness the work that happens on the Senate Floor where our laws are made. Mayor Dugger explained to the public that the Council is in place to follow what the State is requiring them to do.

Mayor Dugger talked about the Focus on Four Initiative. The team has met for three weeks. The councilmembers of Ward 4 have been invited to attend. She explained that the Focus on Four Initiative is not just a cleanup. The City is not interested in it being a cleanup. Mayor Dugger called Henry Johnson, Deputy Building Commissioner, to make comments on the initiative. Mr. Johnson reported that the initiative is for cleanup of the area in preparation for development. Mayor Dugger informed the public that Mr. Johnson named the initiative, Focus on Four. She named the team that is involved with Focus on Four: Public Works, St. Louis County Police, Court System, Finance Department, Building Department & Housing and Economic Development. She announced that the team has been meeting every Friday at 10 am. She stated that the team has come up with a plan for not only what the City will do, but also what the residents will do. The Focus on Four efforts will be done as a community. If the property owners are not taking care of their properties, you may see the building inspectors coming through the area issuing notices. The notices will mean that you will have seven days to comply. Mayor Dugger said, the City will do its part, but wants the residents to do their part as well.

Mayor Dugger informed the public that the City is looking at Lowes and Home Depot to pursue grants to assist with helping the residents find resources to help take care of their properties. Mayor Dugger committed to finding the grants to see if the City could use it to get the paint for the residents. She stated that the team has issued over 300 notices of violations. These efforts are things the City hasn't been doing for a while. Mayor Dugger informed the public that the City hears the complaints and is addressing the issues. The City is asking the residents to meet the City half way by doing their part in the community. Since the initiative has started, the City has received calls of the congratulations and thank you. People have noticed and are appreciating the efforts. The Mayor expressed hope that someone will stop dumping trash or at least sweep in front of their own property or paint their own property. She stated that the Council can't legislate behaviors but they can address actions. She explained that the initiative is about future economic development because developers are looking at the City. Mayor Dugger stated that the City is ready to do what they can to help developers who are interested in the City.

Mayor Dugger shared with the public that a few months ago a news reporter from NBC erroneously called a street located in South City, a Jennings street (in association with a negative report). Mayor Dugger reported that the Clergy Coalition has been started and they want to do a day of prayer on April 1<sup>st</sup> at 12 pm. The location will start at West Florissant and Jennings Station Road.

Mayor Dugger reported that the Kiwanis Club sponsors young people in the City who want to do community work. The Kiwanis Club brings young people into clubs according to their age. Mayor Dugger asked the public to contact her if they want more information about what the young people can do in the community. She stated that some of the churches are involved with the club. Mayor Dugger informed the people that the City of Jennings has a country club called the Norwood Hills Country Club. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Kiwanis Club will host a golf tournament at the Norwood Hills Country Club.

Mayor Dugger informed Councilwoman P. Anderson that the City can post the job information on the website. If she forwards the information to the City, it will go on the website. Mayor Dugger announced the Norwood Hills Country Club is hosting a Job Fair on March 7 for people 16 years old and older.

She announced that she met someone from the Fathers Support Center who has young men looking for jobs to help pay their child support. She referred the person to the website for job opportunities.

### Monthly Reports

The Mayor informed the Council that the monthly reports are attached to the packet.

### Reports of Committees:

Ways and Means - Mayor reported that the committee is still working on the budget. There are no recommendations yet.

Public Works – Councilwoman Fortson reported that the Public Works committee had a meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup> and the report was given at the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Items discussed at the meeting pertained to the grass cutting and cleaning the lots. Mayor Dugger recommended getting with Jim in Public Works regarding the purchases Public Works will be making.

Building Committee – Councilwoman Cook had no report

Park Committee – Councilwoman Jones stated that the committee met on February 1<sup>st</sup> and gave a report on February 13<sup>th</sup>. She stated there is a need for the committee to meet again to recommend a change to the policy pertaining to the rental of the parks pavilions. She proposed a meeting on Thursday March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm.

Municipal League – Councilwoman Fortson reported she attended the Municipal League Conference on February 14-15 in Jefferson City. She informed the Council that the request for information on the change to the Council terms was discussed. She reported that a 3 year term was up for legislation but had not been approved. She informed the Council that the legislation may not be approved for another year or two. The options are for terms to be two or four years. She also addressed whether a third class cities elections have to be held in April, the answer was no. The elections can be held in August or November, as long as there is a general election.

Planning Commission – Mayor Dugger reported that the commission has not met.

Policy Committee – Councilwoman Fortson reported that the last policy committee was February 7<sup>th</sup>. A meeting was scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Solid Waste Committee – Councilwoman C. Epps reported that a meeting is scheduled for March 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm

### Public comments:

#### *Comments by the Public:*

Allen McDonnell of 9314 Scottdale reported that as the City is cleaning up trash; trash is being dumped. He suggested that City check the bags for mail with names and addresses. Mr. McDonnell requested that the next newsletter has information about what is going on at the Neighborhood Watch meetings, including the progress being made with guest speakers from bomb and arson squad, homicide, but not many people attend. It is good information for the people in Jennings to know what is going on. Mr. McDonnell questioned why the public has been asked to leave the Council room when the Council has an executive session. He stated the room is the area where the public can talk. He asked why the Council doesn't go back into the Mayor's office for executive session opposed to forcing the public out. He also asked if the coordination of meeting times could be arranged in closed session oppose to the public. He invited the public to watch the Fox 2 New with Elliot Davis tonight at 9 pm to see how economic development was handled or mishandled in the City of Jennings.

Lewis McKinney of 6344 Garesche (Caring Plus Foundation) introduced himself as the Executive Director and Founder of the Caring Plus Foundation. He reported that the foundation was founded in 2014. The mission is to provide support services for the Jennings community and build senior and family affordable housing. He explained his purpose for being present at the meeting was to discuss with the Council the project he begun in 2015 with the City of Jennings. At that time, he presented a revitalization plan for the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. The Council agreed in October 2015 to convey 30 properties to the nonprofit. Mr. McKinney reported that only two thirds of the properties were claims because one third didn't have clear titles. He explained that the process of clearing title is difficult. Mr. McKinney continued his comments with requesting assistance from the City with acquiring contiguous properties in the area of the 30 properties previously conveyed.

Mr. McKinney's public comment time expired. Mayor Dugger invited him to contact City Hall and meet with Kim Smith (Building and Economic Development Director) to work through how the City could assist him. Mr. McKinney continued to address the Council. Mayor Dugger informed Mr. McKinney that the public has three minutes to speak under Public Comments. Mr. McKinney expressed his disappointment for the lack of cooperation from the Council. Mr. McKinney continued to address the Council as he left the podium.

Robert Cotton of 7119 Garesche asked the City Council to check out the heating situation in the Court Building. He explained that he was in court and the room was 90 degrees. He stated the heat was blowing, and all of the windows were open. He also stated that Sapphire Park in Ward 3 has been abandoned for the 23 years he has lived in Jennings. He asked the Council when the park will be cleaned up.

He announced that the Urban League gives away free fruit and vegetables (sometimes meat and milk) every Thursday between 2-4 pm. The only requirement is that you bring your own bag.

David Kuechenmeister of 2021 Hord Avenue said he suggested last month about having a Town Hall Meeting to meet the candidates. He said he was informed that it could not be discussed at City Hall. He later found out there will be one in Moline Acres being hosted by the Elks Club.

Josetta Chips of 2442 Sharidge asked how she can find out who is accountable for abandoned properties. She has a property next door that is abandoned. The original owner died several years ago. Ms. Chip is concerned that the abandoned property is bringing down the value of her property and others in the neighborhood. She asked if this issue was a part of Focus on Four. Mayor Dugger responded that it was not a part of Focus on Four. The Mayor invited Ms. Chip to talk with Kim Smith, supply her with the address and Kim could assist her. Councilman Stichnote responded that he was familiar with the property. He said the last time he checked, which was about six months ago, Chase Bank owned the property.

#### Legal Business – no legal business

#### New Business

##### *Approval of the bills for payment*

Mayor Dugger asked for a motion to approve the bills for payment. On the motion by Councilman R. Epps, second by Councilwoman N. Cook, the Council approved the payment of the bills.

#### Closing Remarks by Mayor

The Mayor reported she was met by Ken Frierson, Public Works employee who works with the parks. She said Ken expressed that he wants to do more for the City. She commended Ken for keeping the city parks looking good. The Mayor compared the parks upkeep to the Disney parks. She asked the public to show Ken appreciation for the work he does, by giving him the thumbs up.

She said she understand she will be on the news tonight under the Elliot Davis', You Paid For It segment. She said she spoke with the reporter about 2 hours on the River Roads project. She thinks that is what the segment will be about. The Mayor said she invited him to go see the area. The Mayor asked the residents from Jennings Place to stand. She explained to the public that the area has been developed. She wasn't sure what was going to be reported with Mr. Davis.

Mayor Dugger addressed Mr. McKinney by saying when the Council voted to accept the offer that was given to them. She explained that the City has the opportunity to buy and pay for the deeds of the properties for \$30 from St. Louis County. She believe that when they purchased them last year, the price was \$28 dollars. She informed the public that the City gets request all the time from the public to buy properties for them. She stated that the Council voted to convey that number of properties to Mr. McKinney because they were interested in Mr. McKinney developing the area and building houses. She said the City will not be interested in buying a property for \$30 and selling it to the public for \$30. Mayor Dugger explained that there are thousands of dollars of liens and taxes on properties. The City is interested in people building and developing. The City also has to do the work of clearing the title on properties before it can be demolished. The Mayor reiterated that the City is not in the business of not being interested with working with anyone (developers). That is not the message that the Mayor wants the public to have.

Mr. McKinney rebutted the Mayors remarks. The Mayor responded and informed Mr. McKinney that he was welcome to meet to discuss the situation. Mr. McKinney continued to address the Mayor. She informed him that he was out of order.

Mayor Dugger thank the public for coming to the meeting.


Motion for a closed session was made by Councilwoman M. Jones, second by Councilman R. Epps. The council approved holding a closed session for legal, real estate, personnel (RSMO 610:021-1,2,3) by the following roll call vote: Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Anderson, Cook, R. Epps, C. Epps; no one voting against or abstaining.

After a brief recess, the City Council met in closed session. On the motion made by Councilwoman Anderson, second by Councilwoman Y. Fortson, the City Council voted to rescind the motion approved on February 13, 2017 to hire the Eugene Bunn for the Recreation Specialist. The City will reopen and post the position. The Council voted to approve rescission by the following roll call vote: Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Anderson, Cook, R. Epps, C. Epps; no one voting against or abstaining.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm on a motion by Councilwoman Cook, second by Councilman R. Epps.

  
Mayor Pro Tem Francine Dugger

Attest:

  
City Clerk