

JENNINGS CITY COUNCIL MEETING – JUNE 27, 2016

The two thousand three hundred thirty ninth meeting of the Jennings City Council was held on Monday, June 27, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Francine Dugger, and councilmembers Allan Stichnote, Miranda Jones, Yolonda Fortson, Phyllis Anderson, Nicole Cook, Rodney Epps and Carol Epps. Also present were City Attorney Carla Allen and City Clerk Cheryl Balke.

The meeting began with a public hearing, called to hear comments in favor of, or opposed to, a request by Eid Hassan for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a convenience store inside the premises of his restaurant, Hawaiian Grill, located at 7365 W. Florissant. Mr. Hassan and his brother spoke in favor of the request, stating that he wished to operate a carry out kitchen and convenience store and stating that other Hawaiian Grill locations are set up this way. Deputy Building Commissioner Henry Johnson stated that the Plan Commission had stated that they wanted to see the restaurant part of the business completed first, as it had already been approved and they were concerned about the amount of space that would remain inside the building after the restaurant was finished. He also stated that the set up was not compatible for both uses and that parking may be an issue. The Plan Commission recommended denial of the request for a Conditional Use Permit for a convenience store as it would not comply with the zoning requirements for square footage for a convenience store, with a potential for adverse impact. Mr. Hassan stated that he wanted to set up both uses at the same time; Councilman Epps asked if he would be ok with just a restaurant to begin with. Mr. Hassan's brother stated that, if the convenience store worked out, they would expand the building by 20 feet. No one else spoke in favor of, or opposed to, the request.

The public hearing was closed and the regular meeting called to order. The agenda was approved on a motion by Councilwoman Cook, second by Councilwoman Jones. The minutes of the meetings of May 5th, May 23rd and June 6th were approved on a motion by Councilman Epps, second by Councilwoman Jones.

The meeting was then opened to the public. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger introduce two new department heads, Recreation Director Nicole Gregory and Director of Housing and Economic Development Kimberly Smith. Ms. Smith stated that she was excited to be here and looking forward to improving the quality of life in Jennings. Also introduced was the city's new prosecuting attorney, Sam Alton, who stated that he would treat everyone fairly and with respect while enforcing the laws for a safe city.

Marietta Beck of Hodiament thanked Councilman Epps for going above and beyond to respond to her complaints. She also stated a concern about the use of large fireworks on July 4th that are not appropriate for a residential area, asking what police would do. Capt. Cox responded that the police would respond to any such complaints. Ms. Beck wished stated that our government was "by the people" and wished everyone a happy and safe holiday.

Allen McDonnell of 9314 Scottdale thanked Capt. Cox for the extra security at the meeting. He spoke about several homes on High Ridge and Huiskamp with grass, trash and vehicle violations that have been that way for a long time, and asked why nothing had been done. He also stated that he had heard rumors of the city trying to get rid of employees, and suggested that they use their energy in another direction.

Robert Cotton of 7119 Garesche thanked the police department and the volunteers for the cleanup in Ward 4 and said that he wished more residents had been involved.

Harold Sistrunk, a 22 year resident of Ward 1, spoke about receiving a false alarm notice and bill, and asked about the process for challenging it. City Attorney Carla Allen stated that if a resident does not pay the violation fee and the matter is turned over to the court, the resident will have an opportunity to challenge it at that time.

Harvey Brown of Lena spoke about the vacant house next door to him that has tall grass and needs to be boarded up and demolished. He also noted that on Lean there is no place for kids to walk safely on the way home from school and that he would like to see "no parking" on the street during those hours. Councilman Epps asked the Building Department to look into his complaint.

Wayne Wuesthoff also complained about the condition of many pieces of property in Jennings and asked what the city planned to do. Henry Johnson replied that the city budgeted to demolish ten to fifteen derelict houses each year. Mr. Wuesthoff asked if there was a time limit for rehabbing property, Mr. Johnson replied that any building permits expire after six months. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger asked if residents could come to the Building Department and see what had been done to address problems at specific properties, and it was noted that they can. Mr.

Johnson also noted that the city does not always know if someone moves in without an inspection and occupancy permit.

Frank Smith and Carla Brasselman of Midland State Bank spoke about the bank's home improvement loan program.

Percillia Jones of 5516 Janet thanked the council for renewing the police contract but asked why it took so long and why elected officials who did not support the St. Louis County Police were sent to negotiate the contract. She encouraged councilmembers to ask more questions for a better understanding of what is going on.

Next were councilmen's reports. Councilwoman Dugger thanked Ward 2 for their support and said that her door was open. She spoke about the success of the Kiwanis Fishing Derby. A number of trophies were awarded and the Kiwanis would like to make it an annual event. She thanked Councilman Stichnote for bringing his golf cart and Steve Pokorny for flying his remote control plane over the lake.

Councilwoman Fortson stated that she enjoyed attending the fishing derby, two concerts in the park and Neighborhood Watch. She also attended the ribbon cutting at Midland Bank, the Ward Four cleanup and a picnic in Normandy. She spoke about complaints regarding parking problems on Murvale and nearby streets during the hours of the food pantry at Good News Baptist Church. She has petitions signed by residents asking that something be done about the parking issues. Capt. Cox will meet with her to discuss possible solutions. She asked to hold a public meeting concerning help for children who are exposed to traumatic events. She also noted receiving compliments on employees Iris Hunter and Corey Reed.

Councilwoman Cook thanked the Building Department for responding to her complaints and said that she was glad that the council was getting along smoothly. She noted receiving a letter from residents about problem properties and thanked the Building and Public Works departments. She also said that she was researching web site developers for the city.

Councilwoman Anderson reported that attended her first Neighborhood Watch meeting in June and that the speaker spoke about the police building a relationship with the youth in Jennings. She also attended a cleanup on Idlewild and held a meeting to speak with Ward 3 residents about their concerns about property maintenance and other issues. She also mentioned the need for stop signs on Xograph and Hord and on Xograph and McLaran and stated that she would ride along with a police officer in that area.

Councilman Epps thanked Robert Cotton, Lorraine Clower and Sgt. Naughton for their help with the Ward 4 cleanup, and stated that it was a shame that the city and volunteers had to clean-up after other people who would not do so and that the city could do so many other things such as more street repair if they did not have to take care of the property of others who are irresponsible. He thanked those in attendance and noted that people who attend the council meetings are there because they care about what goes on in the city. He encouraged residents to call the police as soon as they see illegal action and he thanked the police for going above and beyond.

Councilwoman Epps thanked the police department, Mrs. Clower and Robert Cotton for their help with the cleanup.

Councilwoman Jones thanked those in attendance and said she was glad for improved camaraderie on the council. She gave kudos to the Kiwanis for the fishing derby and noted receiving compliments on the park from non-residents. She also apologized to residents who may have been unable to reach her by phone or email. She reminded residents of the Juneteenth holiday, and spoke about Target closing, stating that it should not be replaced by another dollar store.

Councilman Stichnote stated that he had heard rumors that Schnucks would be closing but that it was not true. He also reported meeting the new manager at Dollar Tree, who told him that shoplifting was a problem there. He reported that Waste Management would provide a smaller 70 gallon tote free of charge to any resident over age 62. He also stated that residents had asked him why the pictures of the former Mayors had been removed from City Hall, and made a motion to have them put back up; the motion was seconded by Councilwoman Epps. Councilwoman Jones asked why the pictures had been removed, Mayor Pro Tem Dugger stated that she had done some cleaning inside the building and in the landscaped areas. She said she not remove them from any ill intent but to clear things out, that it was not necessary that it go to the council for a vote, and that Linda Schmerber of the Historical Society had

agreed with removing them. Councilman Stichnote noted that he was the President of the Historical Society. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger stated that she would think about how to have them out back up in a more uniform size. Councilman Epps stated that the pictures represented the city's history and should remain at City Hall, and that Mayor Pro Tem Dugger should have asked the council what they thought before removing them. Councilwoman Jones asked if the council was willing to have them resized to be uniform and then hung back up; this was approved on a motion by Councilman Stichnote, second by Councilwoman Epps. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger asked if the Historical Society would pay for the copies; Councilman Stichnote said no, that the city would be responsible for the cost. Councilwoman Epps said that if the cost was too much, the pictures should be put back the way they were.

Monthly departmental reports were approved on a motion by Councilwoman Jones, second by Councilwoman Cook.

Reporting for their committees, Mayor Pro Tem Dugger reported that the Ways and Means Committee met earlier in the evening with a representative from our auditors to go over and understand the financial reports. She also stated that they discussed ways to remedy the grass cutting problem.

For the Public Works Committee, Councilwoman Fortson called a meeting for July 11th at 6:30 p.m.

For the Building Committee, Councilwoman Cook said that no meeting had been held but that a meeting was needed and would be held on Wednesday, July 6th at 11:00 a.m.

For the Park Committee, Councilwoman Jones announced that the park improvements being done under the grant were on track and that a meeting would be called at a later date.

For the Municipal League, Councilwoman Fortson noted attending the elected officials training in Columbia, Missouri, that Mayor Pro Tem Dugger attended and that it was very informative. One thing discussed was that motions should be specific, and that "tabling" and agenda item is not the same as "postponing" the item.

For the Solid Waste Committee, Councilwoman Epps reported that a 40 yard dumpster had been donated for the cleanup. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger reminded everyone to talk to employee Margie Brown if there were problems with trash pickup services.

For the Plan Commission, Mayor Pro Tem Dugger reported that the developer at River Roads had agreed that the Boatmen's' building would be demolished before an occupancy permit would be issued for the new buildings at River Roads Manor.

Under legal business, bill #2460, authorizing a Conditional Use Permit for a convenience store at 7365 W. Florissant was given its first reading on a motion by Councilwoman Fortson, second by Councilwoman Jones. The second reading was done on a motion by Councilman Epps, second by Councilwoman Jones. The bill failed to pass by the following roll call vote: no one voting in favor; Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Anderson, Cook, R. Epps and C. Epps voting against; no one abstaining.

Under unfinished business, the council considered again a request to forgive approximately \$2,000 in special tax bills/liens for grass cutting for the property at 5608 Albia Terrace, being purchased and rehabbed by Darron Moorehead. Councilman Epps suggested forgiving half of the lien amount. Councilwoman Jones asked why the new owner was responsible for any of it; it was noted that the work had been done with taxpayer's money and that it is customary for unsatisfied liens to be passed on to the next owner. Councilwoman Cook stated that it would be better to help someone move into the property so it would no longer be vacant. City attorney Carla Allen recommended that the city have a policy about forgiving liens before taking action to do so. It was noted that other cities were contacted and none of the cities contacted had a policy. Mr. Moorehead agreed to wait until a policy could be approved. The matter was postponed on a motion by Councilwoman Fortson, second by Councilman Epps.

Under new business, renewal of worker's compensation insurance with Missouri Employer's Mutual, in the amount of \$92,805 for one year, was approved on a motion by Councilwoman Jones, second by Councilman Epps.

On a motion by Councilwoman Jones, second by Councilwoman Epps, the council approved the purchase by the Public Works Department of a bobcat (Capital improvement fund, \$47,838.60, from

Bobcat of St. Louis, state bid price) and an ATV (Park fund, \$12,666, Art’s lawn mower); the purchase of both items had been budgeted.

On a motion by Councilman Epps, second by Councilman Stichnote, Ken Dick was appointed as a member of the Police & Firemen’s Pension Board.

Next discussed was approval of bills for payment. Mayor Pro Tem Dugger stated that the Ways and Means Committee had not had time to go over the bills in their meeting. On a motion by Councilwoman Jones, second by Councilman Epps, the council approved the payment of bills as submitted after they are reviewed by Mayor Pro Tem Dugger.

For the Mayor’s report, Mayor Pro Tem Dugger thanked the council and stated that they were there to improve the quality of life in the city. She said she appreciated the cooperation of the employees during the last month and stated that the ship has turned. She asked councilmembers to talk to her before the meeting about any concerns.

A closed session for legal and personnel matters (RSMO 610:021, 1 & 3) was called on a motion by Councilman Epps, second by Councilwoman Jones, and approved by the following roll call vote: voting in favor were Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Anderson, Cook, R. Epps and C. Epps; no one voting against or abstaining.

After a brief recess, the council met in closed session. First discussed was a personnel matter in the jail.

On a motion by Councilman Epps, second by Councilwoman Jones, correctional officer John Geasley will return to full time employment from part time employment; this was approved by the following roll call vote: voting in favor were Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Anderson, Cook, R. Epps and C. Epps; no one voting against or abstaining.

Next discussed was the payment arrangement for prosecutor Sam Alton. Mr. Alton requested \$200 per hour for handling certified cases (in addition to his \$11,000 annual salary.) This was approved, along with payment of the bill submitted by him, by the following roll call vote: , voting in favor were Councilmembers Stichnote, Jones, Dugger, Fortson, Cook, R. Epps and C. Epps; Councilwoman Anderson voting against, no one abstaining.

Next a legal matter was discussed with attorney Keith Henson.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Councilwoman Epps, second by Councilman Stichnote.

Mayor Pro Tem Francine Dugger

Attest:

City Clerk