

**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF SUGAR HILL  
5039 WEST BROAD STREET  
SUGAR HILL, GEORGIA  
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2020, 7:30 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Attendees included Mayor Steve Edwards, Council Members Taylor Anderson, Marc Cohen, Brandon Hembree, City Manager Paul Radford, Assistant City Manager Troy Besseche, City Clerk Jane Whittington, City Attorney Frank Hartley. Mayor Pro Tem Susie Walker was not present.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**INVOCATION** – given by Mayor Edwards.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – Council Member Anderson motioned to approve the agenda as submitted. Council Member Hembree seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Council Meeting July 13, 2020; Work Session July 6, 2020 – Council Member Cohen motioned to approve the minutes as written. Council Member Hembree seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**AWARDS/PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS**

**Proclamation Dr. Audrey Arona** – Council Member Hembree thanked Dr. Arona for her hard work and dedication during this pandemic. She is responsible for the health departments in Gwinnett, Rockdale and Newton. Dr. Arona could not make it this evening because she was called to an emergency elsewhere. Council Member Hembree read the proclamation and stated that he was honored to be a part of this group that has been working with Dr. Arona to help minimize the spread and severity of COVID.

**REPORTS**

**CITY ATTORNEY  
COUNCIL  
MAYOR  
CITY CLERK  
CITY MANAGER  
YOUTH COUNCIL**

**CITIZENS AND GUESTS COMMENTS** – there were no comments from citizens or guests.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Administrative Hearing for Appeal of Condemnation 4839 East Broad St.** – Mayor Edwards explained that this hearing will be to decide on the appeal of the action of condemning the structures located on the property at 4839 East Broad Street. The city will present their case first then the appealing party will present theirs. The Council will then render a decision on whether the buildings should be declared inhabitable and torn down or boarded up.

Mauricio Torres, Building Official for the city explained that the city responded to a complaint regarding the the condition of buildings A, B and C. He showed pictures of the buildings and the inside. Building A had collapsed, and a rubble of wood and other things were still there in its place. The pictures had captured a vagrant coming out of one of the buildings and a trail through the high vegetation to get to the buildings. There was graphetti on the inside and outside of the building of building B with trash and metal parts all over the floor. It had holes in the ceiling and the truss system is rotted. This building is uninhabitable and a hazard. Children could go inside the building playing and the structure collapse. Building C was in better shape but starting the fail with the roof trusses rotting.

Attorney Harry Camp represented the appealing party DonRob Investments, LP. Mr. Camp noted that there was no evidence presented regarding building C. His clients main concern was the notice. It was a two-page letter dropped out of the blue with no previous complaints on the property. Mr. Camp presented pictures of neighboring properties to the City Clerk for the record. His clients plan is to renovate the property and bring it back to good condition. HE stated that this is a three-acre tract of land. What is being condemned here is not clear. He also wanted to know what specific code section.

Council Member Cohen asked Mr. Camp is the property is boarded up? The letter sent by the Code enforcement states that it should be boarded up. Mr. Camp was not sure. He stated that there are dangerous conditions there and the owner should go out and look at the property.

The City Attorney Frank Hartley stated that the council makes the decision and it should be sent to the appealing party. The Council should address building A, B, and C separately.

Council Member Anderson motioned to deny the appeal for Buildings A and B identified on the presentation this evening with thirty days to provide a plan to the Planning Department to renovate and rehabilitate Building C and also secure building C so that it presents trespassing on the property. The City Attorney questioned time frame on the demolition of Building A and B. Council Member Anderson amended his motion to add that the appealing party has thirty days to file for a demolition permit for Building A and B with the city's Planning Department and upon issuance of a permit for Buildings A and B remove those buildings within thirty days. Council Member Cohen seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**Public Hearing #3, 2020 Property Tax Millage Rate** – City Manager Paul Radford presented a power point comparing the tax rate and revenue for the past thirteen years. It showed the recession years and how the city stayed consistent over those years not changing the millage rate. It also showed a comparison for the county bill and the city's portion of the tax bill. Gwinnett County collects the taxes for the City, and it is all on one bill. Staff is recommending keeping the millage rate at 3.8 mills as it has been for the past sixteen years. The public hearing was opened and Amber Chambers, 809 Whitehead Rd. spoke regarding the tax rate. She requested last week at the Work Session that the Council get with staff and figure out the budget to roll the millage rate back. She sent over some areas of the budget that could be cut to funds the rollback of the tax rate.

Curtis Northrup, 9405 Ponderosa Trail., Gainesville, stated that he is proud that during his tenure as a Council Member the tax rate was not increased. With the growth in population there is an increase in demand for services and on the roads and infrastructure.

There were no other comments, so the hearing was closed. Council Member Anderson stated that the widening of Highway 20 brought growth to the City. New growth stabilizes old growth and allows for maintaining the same rate. He motioned to maintain the millage rate at 3.8 mills. Council Member Hembree seconded. The City Manager stated that they would need to pass the

Resolution setting the millage and to forward such resolution to Gwinnett County. Council Member Anderson amended the motion to include the passage of the Resolution setting the millage rate at 3.8 mills and to forward the Resolution to Gwinnett County. Council Member Hembree's second stands. Approved 3-0.

**Special Election** – the City Clerk Jane Whittington explained that as the Election Superintendent she is requesting that the Mayor and Council call for a Special Election on November 3, 2020 to fill the unexpired term of City Council Post #4, vacant after Council Member Curtis Northrup resigned on July 30, 2020. The election will be held at the Sugar Hill City Hall, 5039 West Broad Street, Sugar Hill between the hours of 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Qualifying for this election will be held on Monday, August 24, 2020 until Wednesday, August 26, 2020 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The qualifying will take place in the office of the City Clerk and Election Superintendent at 5039 West Broad Street, Sugar Hill. The qualifying fee is \$108.00 and must be paid at the time of qualifying.

Council Member Cohen motioned to call for a Special Election to fill the seat of City Council Post #4 which term will expire December 31, 2021; to set the qualifying dates as Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> until Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> 2020 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day, and to set the qualifying fee at \$108.00. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

Council Member Hembree motioned to change the polling location for all Municipal Elections, including the November 3, 2020 Special Election and all subsequent Municipal Elections including (election day / absentee / early voting / runoff) to City Hall located at 5039 West Broad Street, Sugar Hill, Georgia 30518. Council Member Cohen seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**Approve Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Application - 2021 Roadway Repair & Resurfacing** – Assistant City Manager Besseche explained that the city plans to add the 2021 list of eleven streets to the 2020 list that currently has ten streets on that list. The recommendation for the annual program will be based on the type of repair, location and cost to determine the best composition of roads that need to be added to the list. The project is budgeted in the annual capital improvement budget. A portion will come from state funds and a portion from SPLOST funds. Council Member Cohen motioned to authorize the Mayor to sign and submit the application for the 2021 Georgia department of Transportation (GDOT) Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program for improvements to the proposed list provided in the staff memo. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**Resolution – Recognition of Juneteenth** – Mayor Edwards thanked the Youth Council for their hard work on this resolution. He asked Youth Council Member Mayor Pro Tem Lexi Decote to read the resolution. Council Member Hembree thanked the Youth Council for their wisdom on this matter and motioned to adopt the Resolution in Recognition of Juneteenth. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**Economic Recovery Task Force Update (ERTF)** –Mercy Montgomery, Economic Development Director; and Nadia Merritt, Downtown Development Coordinator explained the Preliminary Recommendations and priorities of the ERTF. They explained how the task force was created and the membership. They developed subcommittees to assure that all aspects of the community were represented. The ERTF may also transition over time to serve as a long-term advisory committee to inform economic development strategy in Sugar Hill. Council Member Hembree thanked the staff for their work in these special circumstances we have found ourselves in. A lot of this is not new but we may not have been focusing on it. Council Member Anderson echoed Council Members Hembree's comments and thanked the committee for all their hard work. Council Member Hembree motioned to formally adopt the Economic Recovery Task

Force's Preliminary Recommendations as presented tonight. Council Member Anderson seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: TO DISCUSS LEGAL, REAL ESTATE AND/OR PERSONNEL –**  
Council Member Cohen motioned to enter Executive Session. Council Member Hembree seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

**PUBLIC ACTION TAKEN OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION** - there was no action taken out of Executive session.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Council Member Hembree motioned to adjourn. Council Member Cohen seconded the motion. Approved 3-0.

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Steve Edwards, Mayor

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Jane Whittington, City Clerk