

**HAHIRA CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**MARCH 1, 2018**

**6:00 P.M.**

**COURTHOUSE**

The Mayor and Council met for a Council meeting March 1, 2018 with Mayor Bruce Cain presiding.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Bruce Cain, Councils: Patrick Warren and Terry Benjamin and Mayor Pro Tem Mason Barfield. City Manager Jonathan Sumner, City Clerk Lisa Mashburn, Fire Chief Dwight Bennett, Police Chief Terry Davis, PWD Donnie Warren and Attorney Rob Plumb present. Councilman Kenneth Davis was not present.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**ESTABLISH QUORUM:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Bruce Cain

**INVOCATION:** Pastor Mike Wells

**REVIEW/CORRECTION OF MINUTES:**

- A. JANUARY 30, 2018 WORK SESSION**
- B. FEBRUARY 1, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any corrections or questions regarding the minutes. None noted.

**Councilman Benjamin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Barfield. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A. LAWSON STREET RAILROAD CROSSING CLOSURE**

The Mayor stated that we will go into Public Hearing to discuss the Lawson Street Railroad Crossing closure. City Manager Sumner said that this is a request from Norfolk Southern Railroad, this has been discussed over many years from time to time. We have an un-signalized crossing one block North of Main Street that is currently closed and the Railroad would like to close it permanently. They have offered a \$40,000 incentive to close the crossing. If we vote to not close the Railroad or table the item the offer will be off the table and the railroad will petition the DOT to close it. We have been told many factors that lets us know the Railroad is confident the DOT would decide to close the crossing. All we have now is a request, the Public hearing is not required but the Mayor would like to have public input and then vote. Sumner then asked if anyone had any questions. Councilman Benjamin asked about closure of crossings in other areas, the Lenox crossing just closed, it was closed against the wishes of the City and they did not get the incentive to close. Councilman

Warren said yes that City Manager Sumner talked to the DOT representative. Can we request a sit down with Tim Golden? Sumner stated yes but there are no guarantees, the Railroad is confident and the rest is speculation. Councilman Warren said that he felt the recent fatality would play a part in the closure and yes all previous incidents, I think regardless they will petition, we had 4 deaths in 36 years. They are all a danger but the goal of the Railroad is to reduce the risk. If you signalize that crossing it could cost \$300,000.00. Sumner stated that DOT has not indicated they will signalize that crossing. Councilman Warren said that Adel has closed 5 in the last few years. The Mayor stated that is one death every 10 years and I think that is high due to the low traffic on Lawson Street. The Railroad does not think that the traffic on Lawson Street is enough to signalize the crossing.

The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition of the closing of the Lawson Street crossing.

Tim Coombs of 307 W Lawson Street said that he thinks Hahira is making a big mistake. We are growing and we have more traffic, we use Lawson Street daily and I am the only business down that way. After talking to the Railroad officials I have gotten different information. They indicated to me that there are different options. I also think the Stanfill crossing needs to have a 4 to 5 inch grade, I do not believe a truck could go over it and I do not think the fire truck could go over it. I think we are closing the wrong crossing, I think we should put gates there, this will be a terrible mistake for the traffic in Hahira.

Karen Camion of 405 W Stanfill Street stated that she comes in and out that way all the time and this is a terrible inconvenience to me. All of the railroad tracks are dangerous. There is an issue getting out of Hall Street and closing this crossing will cause more issues. I speak on the behalf of my neighbors, I ask that you do not close the crossing.

Wyetta Lane of 210 Randall Street stated that she does not want it closed. The guy would not have been killed if there was a crossing there and the railroad has the money to do it. I do not want it closed, it is a part of Hahira. Please do not close it or there will be a March in Hahira.

Cindy Lampert of 550 W Stanfill said that it is very dangerous and that she feels it should be open. If we have a chemical spill do we have a safety plan, we need to keep Lawson Street open.

The Mayor asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of closing the Lawson Street crossing.

Karen Boggs of 104 W Lawson stated we do not use it, it does not matter to me one way or the other. There is bad vision and I think this is why they want to close it. I think we should close W Stanfill instead of W. Lawson Street.

Wilmon Stanley of 308 Washington Street said that he is neutral about the issues. Tim Coombs is saying the Mayor and Council have options so look at all the options. People will run stop signs, if we leave it open we need crossing arms there.

The Mayor turned the questions back over to the Council. Councilman Benjamin said he would like to explore what Mr. Coombs is saying the Railroad/DOT has to offer, see if the options are there. Mayor Pro Tem Barfield said that he is not for closing it, we need to check our options, I was told it is not our decision. We need to make sure if they close Lawson Street crossing what they intend to do with W. Stanfill Street crossing. We need to be sure that big trucks and the firetrucks can go over it.

I was ready to close it, if we do not have any options, I would like to take advantage of them and work with the railroad. City Manager Sumner said they stated they would be here next month. Mayor Pro Tem Barfield said he would like to have them come and tell us they are going to close it. The Mayor stated they told us they would have a petition to close it here next month. Councilman Warren said they will focus on the best interest of the Railroad not our best interest, this is a difficult decision. If it is unsafe then close it. Attorney Plumb stated that it is the interest of the railroad to get rid of the one unsignaled crossing in Hahira, the end results is the same for the railroad. Mayor Pro Tem Barfield said we need to pose that question to the railroad. Plumb stated they have closed that crossing and it is not coming back. They have closed several crossing in Lowndes County and probably 1,000 in the state. Mayor Pro Tem Barfield said we want to keep our citizens safe and explore the options on the table, maybe contact DOT representatives. **Mayor Pro Tem Barfield made a motion to the closing of the W. Lawson Street crossing which was seconded by Councilman Benjamin. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

#### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

Pastor Mike Wells of Northbridge Church at 111 S Church Street stated that the church would like to assess the community needs along with medical assessments. We would have a group of 7 and they would compile the questions. We would then get with City Manager Sumner and get this approved. We have a large 31632 rural area, we need to find the easiest way. Pastor Wells then gave an overview of how it might work. The Mayor stated they just need to email it all to Jonathan for review and then it can be on the next month agenda.

Tim Coombs of 307 W Lawson Street said he would like to thank the Hahira PD, they had an incident on i-75 where a person was abducted and the Hahira PD did a great job.

Cindy Lampert of 550 W Stanfill Street stated that West Stanfill needs a lot of work, it is in rough shape and she hopes in the future that they will make it wider and have curbing. I would also like to see W. Stanfill crossing have a longer grade.

#### **REVIEW OF BILLS/BUDGET OVERAGES:**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding the bills. None noted. **Councilman Warren made a motion to pay the bills as presented which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Barfield. Councilman Warren, Councilmen Benjamin and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

#### **DISCUSSIONS:**

- A. DEVELOPER REQUEST FOR PROPOSED SOUTH HALL STREET-BROOKRIDGE DRIVE DEVELOPMENT (BEN HOUSE)**

Ben House with Real Living Real Estate said he has purchased the property 6670 Brookridge in the County. The current zoning is R-21 in the County but he would like to see it annexed into the City and develop subdivision with 107 lots that would be R-15. There is approximately .42 miles between the City and the County road that would need to be paved and he would like to have the City pave that part of the road at an estimated cost of \$300,000.00. This would be built in 2-4 years with a total of 107 homes. Sumner asked what the total tax value would be. House stated the cost of the home would be around \$219,500 to \$224,900. Councilman Warren asked if they have alternate plan if the City does not pave the road. House stated yes then it would be divided into 5 acre tracks. Councilman Warren said he thanks him for recognizing development potential but hat road is very busy, do you think you can get that much traffic in and out of the south side of that considering the traffic? And \$300,000.00 for the road, which is not in our budget or it has not been on our radar. We have a job to prioritize the City needs. Mayor Pro Tem Barfield stated yes we need to look at the financial dynamics long term. The Mayor agreed, I like the neighborhood, very nice neighborhood, we would like to help but it is more than what we thought. **Councilman Warren made a motion to deny the \$300,000.00 for the road until a later date and get more financial figures for this project which was seconded by Councilman Benjamin. Councilman Warren, Councilman Benjamin and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**B. LOW BID RECOMMENDATION FOR EAST MAIN STREET SIDEWALK-TE PROJECT-TE FUNDS (CITY MANAGER)**

The Mayor stated this item has been moved.

**C. RESOLUTION FOR SUNDAY ALCOHOL PACKAGE SALES REFERENDUM (CITY MANAGER)**

City Manager Sumner stated that this is to authorize Sunday package sale referendum. If called will put it on the May General Election date. This is just to adopt the resolution and it will be by yes or no vote. We do not have licensing regulations, we will give the will of this to the people and set regulations at a later date. **Councilman Benjamin made a motion to approve the Resolution which was seconded by Councilman Warren. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. 2 POLICE VEHICLE PURCHASES-SPLOST VII**
- B. LIFT STATION SEWER PUMP-SPLOST VII**
- C. CITY HALL HVAC UNIT-SPLOST VII**
- D. APRIL AGENDA DEADLINE & PACKET DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE**
- E. HONEYBEE FESTIVAL**
- F. ZONING ORDINANCE FOOD TRUCK TEXT AMENDMENT-SUBMISSION TO THE GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION**
- G. BEER AND WINE SERVICE PERMISSION AT THE DEPOT**

The Mayor asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Consent agenda. None noted. **Mayor Pro Tem Barfield made a motion to approve the consent agenda which was seconded by Councilman Benjamin. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

## **REPORTS:**

Councilman Warren thanked everyone for their patience, it is difficult to make decisions and the Railroad is a difficult enemy. This is all very interesting and I thank you all for coming out tonight. I will be sure to let Councilman Davis know he missed an interesting meeting.

Councilman Benjamin thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve District 1. Thank you to everyone for their interest, thank you for showing up every month and letting us know what is on your mind.

Mayor Pro Tem Barfield thanked everyone for being here tonight. You see the challenges the face here in Hahira, we are growing. We have many decisions to be made and we want it to be a nice environment for the citizens. When you sit in this chair you will think another way. If they close the W. Lawson Street crossing the decision will be made by the Railroad and the DOT, it is not our decision. We have to live with the decisions that we make. Thank you to everyone.

City Manager Sumner thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve. Thank you to the department heads, the front office staff, the Council and Mayor. Thank you to the Police department, they operated the way we thought they would.

The Mayor stated that he concurred with what has been said and he appreciates the opinions of the Council. We have a lot to deal with and we will. Thank you to the department heads and thank you to Chief Davis for the work of the Police department. Thank you to Chairman Slaughter for being here tonight.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Barfield to enter into executive session to discuss legal matters which was seconded by Councilman Warren. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**A motion was made to exit the Executive session by Councilman Benjamin where legal matters only were discussed and this was seconded by Councilman Warren. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**A motion was made to accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest bid for the TE project which was Standard Contractors, by Councilman Warren which was seconded by Councilman Benjamin. Councilman Warren, Councilman Benjamin and Mayor Pro Tem Barfield all voted in favor of the motion.**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Barfield to adjourn which was seconded by Councilman Warren. Councilman Benjamin, Councilman Warren and Mayor Pro Tem Benjamin all voted in favor of the motion.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**

**ADJOURN.**

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**MAYOR BRUCE CAIN**

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**CITY CLERK LISA MASHBURN**