

Council Meeting
March 4, 1999

The City Council of the City of Hahira met in regular session on Thursday March 4, 1999, at 7:30 P. M. at the Courthouse.

PRESENT: Mayor John Adams; Councils Bob Harris, Jesse Griffin, Arnold Williams and Beverly Martin; City Manager, Susan Doner; Clerk, Marilyn Brady; Public Utilities Director, John Thursby; Police Chief, Woodrow W. Blue.

Mayor Adams called the meeting to order then led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was given by Council Harris.

Visitors were welcomed and a quorum was established.

Mayor Adams called for a motion to approve the February 1999 council meeting minutes.

Council Harris made a motion to approve the regular Council Meeting on February 4, 1999, seconded by Council Williams. Vote was unanimous.

Mayor Adams called for a motion to approve payment of the cities February 1999 bills.

Council Williams made a motion to approve payment of the bills, seconded by Council Griffin. Vote was unanimous.

Public Hearing

Mayor Adams stated there would be three Public hearings tonight, concerning:

- 1) The City's plans to purchase property for the purpose of upgrading the waste water treatment plant to comply with EPD requirements.
- 2) A request from the Lowndes County Board of Education to close a portion of South College St. between GA highway 122 and Grace Street for the purpose of constructing a new middle school facility.
- 3) A variance request from Hilda and Karl Alderman to the Hahira Zoning Ordinance, specifically the front yard setback.

Mayor Adams stated he was glad to see each citizen present and hoped to be able to answer any and all questions asked concerning these issues.

Those available to answer questions consisted of, councilmembers , the city manager, Mr. Ken Hatcher of Stevenson and Palmer, the City Engineers and representatives of the Lowndes County Board of Education consisting of Mr. Lee Corbitt, Mr. Ricketts, Architect for the project and Dr. Sanchez, Hahira Middle School Principal.

First Mayor Adams asked for agreement on ground rules for this meeting as follows:

- (1) Give everyone that has a question an opportunity to ask it.
- (2) In order for everyone to have an opportunity to ask their questions he requested all those with questions to raise their hand, and he would recognize them as soon possible.
- (3) When recognized please stand, state name and address for the record and speak loud and clear in order that all may hear.
- (4) Please confine questions to the purpose of the meeting.
- (5) If there is more than one question, please ask them one at a time.
- (6) Please limit questions to two in number until everyone has an opportunity to be recognized, then if all your questions are not answered you get another chance.
- (7) When a question is being answered, please let it be answered without interruption.
- (8) Finally, be courteous. If we're courteous and refrain from interrupting, this will be a good meeting, and we'll not be here longer than necessary.

Public Hearing #1

Mr. Hatcher, City Engineer. Mr. Hatcher explained that currently the city is under a consent order from the EPD. The existing system is in operation now. Overflow is being discharged into Frank's Creek. An 8 acre site has been purchased to build four holding ponds.

The engineering report was submitted and approved and application has been submitted. Within two weeks we should have answer on grant-loan funding.

Ms. Betty Scruggs, 310 N. Lowndes St., asked if this would be the only hearing. Mayor Adams stated yes.

Public Hearing #2

Dr. Sanchez, Hahira Middle School principal, reported that for 25 years children have had to cross highway 122, which is not safe, and the school has grown in the last 10 years about 1 teacher every year. He asked the council to consider closing a portion of South College Street from Highway 122 to East Grace Street to make it safer for children and provide better facilities for the community and children.

Mr. Lee Corbett of the School Board explained plans for the new construction using an aerial map and stated that this was part of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax program.

Mr. Ricketts explained the drop-off areas, bus areas, location of offices and cafeteria, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade areas, football field and plans for a full size track around the football field and parking areas.

Mr. Hagler, Superintendent of Lowndes County Schools, stated that this was a very important project for the children and the community. Because of the nature trail, the football field will have to be turned another direction.

Mayor Adams called on citizens who wanted to ask questions.

Ms. Mamie Sorrell, 203 E Grace St, asked what would happen to the old school building? Mr. Hagler stated that the school board had made no decision yet whether to sell the building or tear it down. He didn't know what would happen to it.

Ms. Harriett Crum, property owner at 407 E Lawson, asked if they were proposing to close all traffic on College Street from Highway 122 to E Grace Street, except for buses? Mr. Hagler stated yes.

Ms. Carol Jacobs, 402 E. Stanfill St, wanted to know what would happen to the north side of Highway 122 on College Street. School official stated that it would stay closed for safety reasons.

Councilman Harris stated that it looked like a good plan.

Mayor Adams stated that the track was of interest to many in the community and it was needed by many citizens for walking exercise including him.

Ms. Betty Scruggs stated that she had talked to school officials and they said it would be 3-5 years before the track could be built and she would like to see something done before that time.

Council Harris asked about the wetland area and wanted to know if there would be any fish in the pond. School official stated that this would be a fenced area due to safety reasons and there would be some kinds of minnows, etc in the pond.

Mayor Adams asked when the construction would start. School officials stated August or September.

Mayor Adams asked the reason for the track not being built before 3-5 years, was it funding?

School officials stated yes.

Mr. Scott Doner, 222 N Hagan Bridge Road, asked about who would be responsible for the empty buildings across the street. He was concerned about safety for the children. Mr. Hagler stated that the Lowndes County School system would be responsible except down the road a decision will have to be made.

No other questions were asked. Mayor Adams called on a motion from council. Council Martin made a motion to close College Street per the request of the school board, seconded by Council Griffin. Vote was unanimous.

Public Hearing #3

Mayor Adams reported that this was a variance request from Karl and Hilda Alderman, 603 W Park Street. He called on Mr. Leonard Jacobs, Chairman of the Zoning Board. Mr. Jacobs stated that the board recommended approval of the request.

Mayor Adams called on anyone wanting to speak on approval of the request. Mr. Freeman Rivers, 204 S Hall Street, stated that he had talked to Ms. Clymenteen Livingston, whose property adjoins the Alderman's and she had no problem with it.

Mayor Adams called on anyone wanting to speak in opposition to the request. There were none.

Council Harris made a motion to approve Karl and Hilda Alderman's request for variance, seconded by Council Martin. Vote was unanimous.

End of public hearings.

There was no old business to discuss.

New business:

(A) Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Contract Acceptance Approval: Mayor Adams reported that Chief Blue had applied for a \$10,000 grant and it was approved and he asked council to approve his signing the contract. Chief Blue stated that it would be used to purchase two in-car cameras. Council Griffin made a motion to let Mayor sign contract, seconded by Council Williams. Vote was unanimous.

(B) LARP contract acceptance approval: Mayor Adams reported there were six streets on the list for repaving and he needed approval from council to sign the contract. Council Williams made a motion to let Mayor sign the contract, seconded by Council Harris. Vote was unanimous.

(C) Request to spend approximately \$2500.00 for tree purchases and supplies for City Beautification Program: Mayor Adams stated that this was a budgeted item. Council Williams made a motion to purchase the trees, seconded by Council Harris. Discussion followed. Vote was unanimous.

(D) Ms. Adeline Landrum, Hahira Honeybee Committee business: Ms. Landrum asked for approval to use the sidewalks and city's help during the next Honeybee festival. Council Harris made a motion to grant Ms. Landrum's request, seconded by Council Williams. Vote was unanimous.

(E) Designation of Saturday, April 24, 1999 as Keep Hahira Clean and Beautiful day:

Mayor Adams stated that he would have a proclamation at next month's meeting on this. He designated Saturday, April 24, 1999 as Keep Hahira Clean and Beautiful day and asked for council's approval. Council Griffin made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Williams. Discussion followed. Vote was unanimous.

(F) Appointment of Ms. Barbara Jean McDonald to Keep Lowndes Beautiful Commission:

Mayor Adams stated that there was a vacancy on The Keep Lowndes Beautiful Commission as the Hahira representative had resigned. He has asked Ms. Barbara Jean McDonald if she would serve on this commission. She has agreed to serve. He asked for a motion for her appointment. Council Griffin made a motion of appointment, seconded by Council Williams. Vote was unanimous.

(G) Hahira Middle School Hoops for Heart week March 29th-April 2nd, 1999: Mayor Adams reported that the event would be on Wednesday, March 31 at 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. There would be several teams from the city to participate.

Council Martin had no report.

Council Williams had no report.

Council Griffin had no report.

Council Harris stated that he was happy with the Public Hearings tonight.

City Manager, Susan Doner, reported that she had already put one ladies team together for the Hoops for Hearts at the Middle School on Wednesday, March 31..

Mayor Adams reported on a Habitat for Humanity Project initiative to eliminate sub-standard housing in Lowndes County and asked for participation from the City of Hahira and its citizens.

Mayor Adams also spoke about Smith Hospitals plan to move from Hahira to North Valdosta Road and urged citizens to write letters to the State Health Planning Agency requesting the agency to deny the hospitals request to relocate from Hahira.

Mayor Adams reported on the county's plans to privatize the EMS units in the county. This would include Hahira's EMS unit. He encouraged citizens to contact the County Commissioners and voice their concern.

There being no further business to discuss, meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

John F. Adams, Mayor
Brady, City Clerk

Marilyn