

Galax City Council

Minutes

March 13, 2017

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on March 13, 2017 at 7:30 pm.

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Councilman Helmick prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on February 27, 2017. Councilman Helmick seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date advertised for a public hearing which concerned amendments to City Code, Chapter 116 - Yard Sales. A draft ordinance was finalized by our City Attorney and presented to Council for review. Keith Barker spoke briefly regarding the new signage rules. Mayor Mitchell asked if there were any public comments, with none made, he declared the public hearing closed. Councilman Davis made the motion to approve the revised ordinance. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date advertised for the Public Hearing for the Bottom Area Phase III CDBG Application. Keith Barker spoke regarding the submittal of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). He explained we estimated working on approximately 14 houses (constructing 8 new houses), 11 businesses, and improving stormwater/water/sewer lines in the area. The total grant application would be \$1.4M from DHCD, with the remaining match from property owners, businesses, our annual VDOT allocation over a 2 to 3 fiscal year period if needed, a MPRDC Utility Construction Grant request, and a portion of our stormwater reserve. He said we were successful in obtaining a VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant in the first Bottom Area Project, so it was our intent to apply for a VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant and a Mount Rogers PDC utility construction grant as those application periods open up. In meeting with staff from the Engineering, Public Works, Finance, and City Manager's office; Mr. Barker said that this was a project that would be well served in the use of our VDOT allocated funds if the other grant funds do not materialize. We had been successful in talking to almost every property owner in the projected project area and there was a general excitement about the possibilities with the project. Keith Barker said some staff traveled to DHCD offices in Abingdon as part of a general presentation of the project and it was well received by staff from Abingdon and Richmond. The general comment was that we have a strong project, a strong team of staff/community leaders that could accomplish the project, and a long term vision on how to accomplish these neighborhood projects throughout the Bottom Area. Janet Jonas, Community

Planning Partners, Inc., Project Manager, was present to address Council with additional information regarding the application and answer any questions they may have had.

With no public comment, Mayor Mitchell declared the public hearing closed. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the resolution, and authorize the submittal of the Bottom Area Phase III grant application. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date advertised for Public Comment where Council could accept public comment regarding a proposed US Cellular Tower location on Valley Street, on the V&M Recycling Property. Keith Barker noted this was permitted use under the zoning ordinance and was considered an administrative approval only. Carl Taskes from US Cellular was present to give specific information regarding the tower and answer questions from Council or the public. With no public comment, Mayor Mitchell declared the public hearing closed.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council at the February 27, 2017 meeting, Council authorized the school Board to proceed with the Galax Elementary School Project. He said when the original Kipling Lane site was considered for a new school, Council imposed a requirement that there be a design committee that included 2 Council members and appropriate City staff. He asked Council's consideration to still make this a requirement of the project even though it is at the existing site. Mr. Sturgill, had indicated the School Board would welcome that committee if Council would wish to continue it. The original design committee appointees were Dr. Lazo, Councilwoman Crouse, and the City Manager. He noted that Dr. Lazo was no longer on Council or a City resident. After a brief discussion Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to appoint Keith Barker, Edwin Ward, William (Bill) Davis, and re-appoint Margo Crouse. Councilman Garner seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

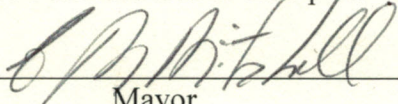
Mayor Mitchell welcomed Travis Staton who represented the United Way of Southwest Virginia. Mr. Staton was present to give an update on the United Way's local programs.

Chris Pollins, Chestnut Creek School of the Arts Director, presented an update to Council on CCSA as well as Public Arts Committee activities. Council thanked Ms. Pollins for her dedication and passion for CCSA.

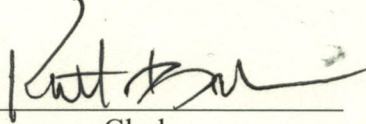
City Manager Keith Barker informed Council of a new DHCD Homeowner Rehabilitation Grant Program which would provide up to \$40,000 in housing rehabilitation costs per home for qualified low income homeowners. Grants Administrator Brenda Marrah was present to explain details of the program and answer any questions. It was explained that it was a five year, zero percent deferred lien on the home, forgiven at a rate of 20% a year. The City would like to make application for \$200,000 in grant funds and to use its existing Bottom Area Management Team to administer the grant. Mr. Barker said this would aid us in the grant submittal process since we already had experience with management of projects, a Rehab Specialist on staff, etc. The City expected to request \$1,300 in soft costs per unit for out-of-pocket expenses, such as title searches, deed preparation, etc. A project similar to the Bottom Area application was for a specific neighborhood, this grant would be for general areas or for an entire community. Mr. Barker stated that grant applications were due by April 2 and DHCD would notify localities of awards on May 1. Each grant would be for 2 years, however if funds were spent prior to the two year period, a locality could be eligible for additional funds. Councilman Garner made the motion to authorize the submittal of a grant application and authorize the City Manager to

sign any required application documentation. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:50 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk