

GALAX CITY COUNCIL  
Minutes  
February 23, 2004

The Galax City Council convened in regular session on February 23, 2004, in the courtroom of the WHS Public Safety Building. At 7:35pm the meeting was called to order by the mayor with the following councilpersons present and they are as listed: Odell Hamden, Sharon Plichta, C. M. Mitchell, and Willie Greene. Those councilmen absent are as listed: Johnny Lemons, George Valdez and Van McCarter.

Mayor Mitchell prayed the opening prayer which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Plichta motioned to dispense with reading the minutes of the last meeting and to approve them as written. Councilman Greene offered a second to the motion and it was unanimously approved.

This was the date and time duly advertised for a joint public hearing for City Council and the Planning Commission. Planning Commission members present for this hearing are as listed: Ronnie Catron, Roger Martin, Darlene Coleman, Linda Galyean, Jim Adams, and C. M. Mitchell. Anne Vaughan was absent from the meeting.

Mr. Catron, chairman of the Commission, stated that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive comments on updating the zoning ordinance. The proposed changes involved adding some definitions and creating two new zoning districts. Following his overview, he declared the public hearing open.

Judy Schank, a Washington Street resident, stated that she was very dissatisfied with the inconsistency of information that she had been given and that she was not in favor of an R5 zoning anywhere.

Councilman Hamden asked Doug Williams for a condensed version of the concerns of the neighborhoods that he is spokesman for.

Mr. Williams stated that he is a resident of 412 W. Grayson Street and also an architect with an office downtown. He expressed his concerns and stated that they also reflected those residents who believe they are in the targeted area for the proposed zoning changes. He stated that they were not notified of a meeting date change for the Planning Commission; that he is against creating new zoning districts; that certain neighborhoods have been targeted and that he has personally seen plans for a planned unit development to be put in a targeted area. He stated that the planned unit is not attractive and that it does not fit with the existing older homes and businesses already in place.

Nathan Smith, 509 West Center Street and property owner at 412

W. Grayson Street, expressed his concerns about the areas that are being considered. He referred to a map of the targeted area that ran in The Gazette. He questioned the need for an R-5 District stating that he and Mrs. Smith counted 36 empty buildings in and near the downtown area. He does not believe that the downtown area needs any more multi-family apartments but should concentrate on keeping the single family dwellings.

Robert Pryor, 310 Calhoun Street, asked for clarification as to the procedure for the rezoning process. Mr. Catron outlined the process. Dr. Pryor stated that with the expressed discontent of the residents of the targeted areas, he hopes that the Commission will be diligent in seeking the opinions of the residents in these areas before any changes are made.

Lona Cox, 200 block of Washington Street, asked for clarification of the B-2 designation and the proposed R-5. Mr. Catron and Mr. Kyle answered her question. She also asked for an explanation of the Bed and Breakfast designation.

Councilman Greene requested clarification on the targeted areas.

Janet Smith, West Center Street, stated that the map advertised for the information meeting did show a proposed area for the changes and that she is very much against such change.

Mrs. Pauline Zachary, Lafayette Street, asked if historic preservation could save the integrity of the designated neighborhoods from these changes and how they could go about pursuing this designation. Mr. Catron stated that he did not know.

At 8:30pm, Mr. Catron declared the public hearing closed.

Councilman Hamden advised that the Planning Commission was a friend and not an advisory.

Mayor Mitchell assured the concerned residents that their comments would be taken seriously and he also complimented them on the manner in which they participated in the public hearing.

Councilwoman Plichta motioned to reappoint Jim Adams and Andy Messner to another term on the Galax City School Board. Councilman Hamden seconded the motion. City Manager Campbell advised that the appointment isn't made until March. The motion was deferred until the March meeting.

Corbin Stone, the City's auditor, was present at tonight's meeting to outline the 2003 Year End Audit. He explained the new accounting standard and stated that the city had garnered a unique opinion which is the highest rating a municipality can receive.

City Manager Campbell expressed his gratitude to Director of

Finance Bedwell for her efforts in adapting to the new accounting procedures and GASB.

Mr. Cook, Galax City Schools Superintendent, stated his gratitude to Council for its good working relationship with him and the School Board. He advised that the School Board had approved a budget revision and he requested that Council approve the request for revised funds and appropriate said funds. The revised amount is \$9,995,206.00. The previous approval was in the amount of \$9,731,995.00. Councilman Hamden motioned to approve and appropriate the revised funds. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

City Manager Campbell discussed his efforts in seeking approval from the Corps of Engineers to have the large sandbar removed from Chestnut Creek. He will continue working on this project.

Councilman Hamden motioned to reappoint City Manager Campbell to another term as IDA secretary. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:55pm.



Mayor

Daniel J. Campbell  
Clerk

