

September 9, 2019

The City Council of the City of Rocky Mount met this day in a regular session scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building with Mayor David W. Combs presiding.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, Tom Rogers, W. B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

Councilmember absent: E. Lois Watkins.

Staff Present: Rochelle D. Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Chris Beschler and Natasha Hampton, Assistant City Managers; Tameka Kenan-Norman, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer; Ken Hunter, Budget and Evaluation Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Kevin Harris; Business Development Manager; Will Deaton, Director of Development Services; Mark Rogerson, Fire Marshal; Kim Batts, Deputy City Clerk; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Security Officers: Retired Police Sergeants L. S. Parker, Jr. and Stoney Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order and called on Councilmember Richard Joyner to offer prayer.

Councilmember Joyner said last month marked 246 years since slavery started in America and added this past weekend the 40th anniversary of the Sanitation Workers Strike was recognized in the City. He requested a moment of silence for those who suffered and underwent torment in those years and for the recognition of family and suffering that has continued as a result of those experiences. Councilmember Joyner offered prayer.

WELCOME/SPECIAL THANKS

The Mayor welcomed citizens and directed them to copies of the agenda near the entrance of the City Council Chamber.

Mayor Combs recognized and thanked City staff for their work in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which was opened on a 24-hour basis recently in preparation and anticipation of Hurricane Dorian's arrival. He stated that City staff are always prepared and said he is thankful the City did not suffer damage as a result of the hurricane.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held August 26, 2019 were approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

The City Council received the minutes from a Regular Rescheduled Committee of the Whole meeting held May 13, 2019. The minutes are as follows:

MINUTES OF A SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HELD MONDAY, AUGUST 26, 2019 AT 2:00 P.M. IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM OF THE FREDERICK E. TURNAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Rogers, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D Knight*
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 E. Lois Watkins
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 Mayor David W. Combs

OTHERS PRESENT:

Norris Tolson

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle Small-Toney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Chris Beschler
 Natasha Hampton
 Tameka Kenan-Norman
 Brenton Bent
 Will Deaton
 Ken Hunter
 Kelly Cook
 Kevin Harris
 JoSeth Bocook
 Elton Daniels
 Kim Batts
 Richard J. Rose

OPENING OF MEETING

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and welcomed all present. He noted that the first item would be a closed session item and that the plan was to recess the meeting to take a Council photograph following the closed session.

Mr. Rogers stated that consideration of Boards, Commissions and Committees is on today's agenda and may need to be moved up as it needs to come before Council for consideration today. The City Manager responded that it is her intent that Council review all items on today's agenda and requested the meeting move forward as planned.

Mayor Pro Tem Rogers explained the guidelines for Committee of the Whole work sessions.

CLOSED SESSION

The Manager requested a closed session to discuss a matter concerning economic development.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that the City Council adjourn to Closed Session at 2:05 p.m. for the purpose stated. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as **ESM-536** at the end of Minute Book 36 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

**Councilmember Knight arrived at 2:16 p.m.*

RECESS

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that the Committee of the Whole recess at 2:23 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECONVENED

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers reconvened the Committee of the Whole in regular session at 2:35 p.m. with the following in attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Rogers, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Chris Beschler

Richard Joyner
 E. Lois Watkins
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

Natasha Hampton
 JoSeth Bocook
 Kevin Harris
 Paula Carbone
 Ken Hunter
 Will Deaton
 Kelly Cook
 Elayne Henderson
 Brenton Bent
 Richard J. Rose

Councilmember Watkins stated she will need to leave by 5:00 p.m.

ATLANTIC/ARLINGTON CORRIDOR LAND USE STUDY - Will Deaton

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney noted she is aware the Council has asked that when studies come before the Council that there be enough time for Council to receive and digest them before staff comes back with a plan of action. She called on the Director of Development Services to provide a high-level update relative to the Atlantic/Arlington Corridor Land Use Study. It was noted that a special facilitated meeting of the City Council and the Community members who have been heavily involved in these discussions will be requested for the week of September 9 or 16 to allow the City Council to receive first-hand information from the Community prior to taking formal action.

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, told the Council that staff has completed a draft of the Atlantic/Arlington Corridor Land Use Study and the study will serve as a guide for residents, property owners, developers, City staff and elected officials to make responsible recommendations for future development within the study area. He provided background information relative to the study.

Mr. Deaton introduced Project Manager JoSeth Bocook to provide information relative to the study. Mr. Bocook stated that the project initially began in early 2018 and was borne out of work being done in the Downtown. Council was shown a map outlining the study overview area and it was explained that the corridor starts at the north near U.S. Highway 64 and ends in the south near Raleigh Boulevard, touching Wards 1, 2 and 3. Mr. Bocook outlined the vision for the plan as:

Vision:

"The Atlantic/Arlington Corridor is the principal place within Rocky Mount for equitable development, business and housing opportunities and the foremost destination for African-American heritage tourism."

He explained that staff has worked with the Community Academy ad hoc group to develop the vision. Mr. Bocook outlined the Land Use and Zoning Goal to be:

"To develop regulations that provide flexibility while preserving residential neighborhoods, supporting commercial development and encouraging mixed-use development."

Mr. Deaton told the Council that staff will review the Land Development Code (LDC) to make the necessary revisions and that amendments will go to the Planning Board for consideration with recommendations being submitted to the City Council.

He reviewed the Urban Design, Housing, Transportation and Public Facilities and Infrastructure goals and recommendations and responded to questions/comments from Councilmembers.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney told the Council there are some actionable items for Council to consider pertaining to the study and there will be some consistent themes seen when Council is able to meet with Community members who were involved. She said actionable items can be developed following that meeting for Council consideration and funding.

The City Council was provided with the full study for review.

Councilmember Blackwell stated this is a great beginning and there needs to be clear direction for the future. He added there seems to be a lot of interest in integrating urban gardens/food into the communities. Mr. Bocook noted there is a recommendation to explore the use of urban agricultural strategies as a means of activating communities within the study area similar to the model of the Down East Community Neighborhood Association where a vacant property was converted into a community garden at Lexington and Rose Streets. He stated the area in the 100-year flood plain has been a suggestion for consideration. Discussion continued.

The City Manager stated the Council will be polled for its availability for a Community Meeting in September.

Councilmember Blackwell stated there needs to be clarity relative to the next steps to include a timeline and opportunities for more public engagement to make the vision a reality. Councilmember Joyner added that low hanging fruit that can be moved on quickly to provide fresh affordable food in food deserts should be a priority.

It was noted that at least two Councilmembers will be attending a conference the week of September 9, 2019.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Received report; no formal action.

NONRESIDENTIAL MAINTENANCE CODE/COMMERCIAL ABATEMENT - Will Deaton/Kelly Cook

The City Council was advised that staff presented a draft non-residential maintenance code for review at the July 8, 2019 Committee of the Whole Meeting and at that time Councilmembers requested additional information and a list of properties that would be high priority.

The City Council was provided with a spreadsheet outlining the priority properties outlining the owners, estimated demolition costs, unpaid taxes and liens along with photographs of the properties. Mr. Deaton advised the Council that asbestos abatement has not been included in the estimates. He added that some of the properties are in the floodplain.

Council held discussion and Councilmember Knight suggested that removing the tin roof from one of the larger ticketed properties could address one of the concerns. Councilmember Blackwell questioned if there have been attempts to have conversations with property owners to encourage them to bring their properties up to code. Mr. Cook responded that without an ordinance in place it is difficult to address concerns.

The City Council was provided with a proposed ordinance addressing the repair, closing and/or demolition of non-residential buildings or structures. Mr. Deaton advised that the proposed ordinance would provide an additional tool for enforcement of nonresidential buildings and structures. He responded to questions posed by Councilmembers.

The Director of Development Services added that, upon direction from the Council, staff is prepared to move forward to schedule a

public hearing and formal consideration of the Ordinance by the City Council.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. *Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Watkins and unanimously carried that staff move forward with the required action for formal consideration by Council of the Ordinance relating to the repair, closing and/or demolition of non-residential buildings or structures.*

PROPOSED DEMOLITIONS AND RESCINDING DEMOLITIONS - Will Deaton

Director of Developer Services Will Deaton advised the City Council that staff is requesting approval:

1. To proceed with approval of a demolition ordinance at the next Council meeting for certain structures that are fire damaged and/or unfit for human habitation or that are a health or safety hazard (list of properties provided); and
2. By Council for rescinding the moratorium on demolitions previously imposed by Council. The City Council was provided with a procedure/process for consideration for future demolitions of extremely dilapidated dwellings.

Council was provided with a draft of Ordinances for Demolition of eight (8) fire damaged properties and/or properties unfit for human habitation or that are health or safety hazards for consideration.

Mr. Deaton responded to questions from Councilmembers. Councilmember Knight noted that previous aggressive demolition has resulted in blocks of naked properties in some communities resulting in the loss of historic African American communities. He said there needs to be a balance. Mr. Deaton responded that part of the Atlantic/Arlington study calls for a review of the ordinance to ensure it is not too restrictive for building back. He added there is a commitment for bringing properties that can be saved to the attention of Community and Business Development.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. *Received report; no formal action.*

PARKS AND RECREATION PRESENTATION - Elton Daniels

Parks and Recreation Director Elton Daniels told the City Council he has been in Rocky Mount for six (6) months and loves what he does. He stated the mission of Parks and Recreation is to: advance the quality of life by providing positive, inclusive experiences through: People, Parks and Programs.

He provided the City Council with information relative to staffing, the FY 2020 budget, programming, new initiatives and partnerships and outlined planned FY 2020 Park Projects.

Mayor Combs questioned if the office near the spray park is air-conditioned. Mr. Daniels reported that industrial fans are currently being used but air conditioning has been included in next year's budget.

He provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining grants and new initiatives. Mr. Daniels provided information to the Council relative to his background and said the biggest reason he does what he does is his family. He showed a photo of his new baby and Council congratulated him on the birth of his son.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. *Received report; no formal action.*

DOWNTOWN ROOFTOP REPLACEMENT AND REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM - Natasha Hampton

Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton provided the City Council with the proposed Downtown Roof Replacement and Repair Grant Program Policy Guidelines and stated that staff is seeking Council approval to make the grant available throughout the Downtown core (within the boundaries of Franklin Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue and Raleigh Boulevard).

She provided background and added that the program is in response to the large number of Downtown buildings requiring roof repair or replacement and is in addition to the façade grant. She showed an aerial view of the Downtown core revealing that at least thirty (30) buildings have minor to severe roof damage, including five (5) buildings with entire roofs missing. Council was advised that fifty (50) buildings are in minor, moderate or severe condition.

Council was advised that the 2019-2020 budget has allocated an initial \$60,000 for the program. Ms. Hampton advised that there is a matching grant for commercial use of up to \$10,000.

Councilmember Miller stated it is important that the companies chosen to do the work be qualified, so the roofs are properly repaired.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight and unanimously carried that the Downtown Roof Replacement and Repair Grant Program Policy be approved.

HYPOCHLORITE CONVERSION PROJECT - Brenton Bent

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated that the presentation relative to the hypochlorite conversion project will be made in the regular City Council meeting. This item was not discussed in the Committee of the Whole Meeting.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES - Pam Casey

The City Clerk reviewed with the Council the attendance records of incumbents and personal history forms and resumes from citizens interested in appointment.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: By consensus, the following appointments/reappointments were recommended.

- Board of Adjustment:
 - Nellie B. Carmichael - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Benjamin E. Moore, Jr. - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
- Business Development Authority:
 - Peter F. Varney - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Jean M. Bailey - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
- Central City Revitalization Panel:
 - Chris C. Miller, Downtown Renaissance, Inc. - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Dr. Antwan Lofton, Member At-Large - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Charles Roberson, Member At-Large - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
- Community Appeals Board:
 - Georgia Davis - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that the Committee of the Whole recess at 3:55 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RECONVENED

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Rogers reconvened the Committee of the Whole in regular session at 5:52 p.m. with the following in attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Rogers, Mayor Pro Tem
 André D. Knight
 Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
 Richard Joyner
 E. Lois Watkins
 W. B. Bullock
 Chris Miller
 David W. Combs, Mayor

STAFF PRESENT:

Rochelle D. Small-Toney
 Pamela O. Casey
 Chris Beschler
 Natasha Hampton
 Elayne Henderson
 Richard J. Rose

MEMBER ABSENT:

E. Lois Watkins

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES - Pam Casey

The City Council continued making appointments as follows:

- Housing Authority:
 - Russell Jackson - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2024
 - Minnie D. Knight - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2024
- Human Relations Commission:
 - Mousa Shehadeh - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2023
 - Teresa A. Stokes - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2023
 - Richard C. Pitt - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2023
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission:
 - Milton V. Batts - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Melba W. Tyson - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Jody C. Wright - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - Nekkia McGee - appointed - unexpired term expires June 30, 2021
 - David Worsley - appointed - term expires June 30, 2022

**NOTE: The Human Relations Commission shall appoint two of its members to serve as ex-officio members of the Commission (these members may serve no more than three consecutive years and shall not have voting rights. Mousa Shehadeh's term expired June 30, 2019*

- Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities:
 - Allen Mitchell - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
 - Lee E. Gaskins - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
 - Richard Arnow - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
 - Harold Clark - appointed - unexpired term expires June 30, 2020
- Planning Board:
 - Elaine Williams (Ward 4) - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022

- o Robert D. Hudkins (Ward 7) - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
- Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport Authority:
 - o Garry E. Hodges - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
- Transportation Advisory Committee:
 - o Richard Joyner - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
 - o Chris Miller - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
 - o W. B. Bullock - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2021
- Tree Advisory Board
 - o Doris Cooper - (Ward 1) - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2023
 - o Sue Battle Moore - (Ward 5) - appointed - unexpired term expires June 30, 2022
- *Workforce Housing Advisory Commission*
 - o *Aston Haughton - (Ward 3) - appointed - term expires June 30, 2021*
 - o *Kim Eng Koo, M.D. - (Ward 6) - appointed - term expires June 30, 2020*
- Carolinas Gateway Partnership
 - o Andre Knight - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022
 - o Barden Winstead - reappointed - term expires June 30, 2022

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. Appointments to Boards, Commissions and Committees be approved as recommended.

SAFETY IN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Discussion was held among Councilmembers relative to a concern for personal safety during Council meetings. Councilmember Joyner agreed to coordinate with Police Chief George Robinson to schedule a conversation relative to concerns of Council.

CLOSED SESSION

The City Manager requested a closed session to discuss matters concerning personnel and attorney-client privilege.

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the City Council adjourn to Closed Session at 6:22 p.m. for the purpose stated. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be placed on file as a continuation of **ESM-536** at the end of Minute Book 36 upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor Pro Tem convened the Committee in regular session at 7:30 p.m. and, there being no further business, the Committee of the Whole adjourned.

The City Clerk noted that several appointments have been added to the Committee of the Whole Minutes.

Councilmember Knight stated that the draft ordinance relative to the demolition of nonresidential property received by Council in the Committee of the Whole is very detailed and said he wants to

ensure that Council has a good understanding of the ordinance prior to its adoption.

Discussion was held relative to the fire damaged properties and Councilmember Blackwell stated that Council is in favor of moving forward with the demolition of those properties.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the minutes inclusive of appointments, as amended, and recommendations from the Committee of the Whole be approved; that staff be authorized to move forward towards formal consideration of an ordinance relating to the repair, closing and demolition of non-residential buildings or structures; and that **Resolution No. R-2019-35** entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY NO. II.35 ENTITLED "POLICY: DOWNTOWN ROOF REPLACEMENT & REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM"** be adopted.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

Swearing in of Fire Chief Corey Mercer:

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney extended an invitation to attend the swearing in ceremony of Fire Chief Corey Mercer on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at 3 p.m. at Fire Headquarters. She announced that Fire Chief Mercer will be sworn in by Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Quentin Sumner.

Atlantic/Arlington Corridor Land Use Study Open House

City Manager Small-Toney announced that a special meeting of Council relative to the Atlantic/Arlington Corridor Land Use Study will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at the Booker T. Theater at 6 p.m. She said the draft report has been shared with the City Council, but this meeting will be an opportunity for Councilmembers to hear directly from the community that was engaged in making recommendations for the Atlantic/Arlington Corridor Land Use.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor outlined the guidelines for petitions from the public and opened the meeting for public petitions.

Mayor Combs recognized the following individuals and a summary of comments is outlined below:

- ***T. J. Walker:***
 - Expressed appreciation for the opportunity to run as City Councilmember for Ward 4;
 - Thanked the Council and the City for placing the Sanitation Workers Marker at the intersection of Atlantic and Spruce Streets and said the unveiling was vital to the potential and progress of the City and that he believes the City is on its way to freedom from social, racial, gender and ethnic injustice and that the unveiling of the marker spearheaded that movement;
 - Said he would like young people to view the Sanitation Workers Strike documentary so that will know the history here in Rocky Mount
- ***Dr. Kim E. Koo:***
 - Said on November 12, 2007 the City Council passed a resolution approving the US Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement but, except for picking

up recyclable materials, she has not seen the City put its weight behind the resolution;

- Said the City Council cannot even manage to rescind the resolution in support of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline, in spite of several petitions by Anna Lamb and added that is the least Council can do to show its sincerity in mitigating climate change;
- Said hurricanes and other disasters are now a yearly occurrence and it is her belief that the global environmental crisis is the most important problem facing humanity in the 21st century and environmental justice is in everyone's interest;
- Said many young people are joining what is called the extinction rebellion;
- Urged the City Council to form a commission on climate control/climate change and a commission on youth

- **Warren Daughtridge:**

- Said he would like to address the current and future City Council on ideas he thinks most citizens will agree are necessary investments;
- Said an overdose of transparency seems to be in order in light of the distrust throughout the community;
- Said many have recommended topics for future workshops and informational sessions because confusion and distrust exists throughout the City and recommended dialogue be opened and citizens be brought together in an attempt to eliminate any source of confusion or misinformation;
- Said the current reliance on social media to trade both barbs and opinions is only making matters worse and fueling the fires of unadulterated hatred;
- Said existing and new City Officials will have to set the example for those who elect them as leaders;
- Said the “Love Rocky Mount” group is here to stay, and 1,200 people have deliberately joined hands to lead the way in bringing diversity and groups together to foster open dialogue and honest conversation;
- Said possible topics of conversation might include the Rocky Mount Event Center; the proposed hotel and mixed-use development; gangs; non-governmental agencies, charities and others closely united with the City and Edgecombe flight;
- Said he and his family intends to fight the good fight and open dialogue with others throughout the City and give back more than they take; turn the other cheek; and rest well at night knowing they are trying to do the Lord's work. He said they will love Rocky Mount and hope others will join them

- **Nehemiah Smith, Jr.:**

- Thanked Tameka Keenan-Norman on the fantastic job she did on the documentary of the Sanitation Workers Strike;
- Thanked the entire City Council for their intestinal fortitude/guts in apologizing for a wrong that went unaddressed for decades and said that says something about them as a Council and also about the City Manager;
- Said in looking at the documentary he realized that the former city manager should have done something and feels that was injustice;
- Said these men suffered financially for standing up for what was right, and he feels there should be some compensation given to them for the sacrifices they made which made it possible for him to come into the George W. Dudley City Council Chamber to speak;
- Said there is talk of bad things happening in the City but one of the good things that has happened is that out of the 14 murders in the City 11 have been brought to resolution; he commended the Police Chief and Police Department and said he feels safe in knowing he has a Police Department that is on the job and doing everything in their power to make sure City residents are safe

- **LaWanda Pulley:**

- Said she is a new city resident and business owner of a community service organization;
- Said the 2019 Community Health Assessment Needs show the City has a major problem and the youth are being failed in the areas of education, opportunities to become productive citizens, gang involvement, violence, education and truancy

and it is up to community leaders and the community to develop a plan of action that consists not just of Councilmembers and Police but includes community service organizations and teachers so that youth can become productive citizens;

- Said it takes a community to raise a child and everybody has to get involved because today's juveniles are the Rocky Mount of our future and she would like to see it be productive

- ***Johnny Cunningham:***

- Said there is a serious issue with a member of the Human Relations Commission and MLK Jr. Commission using language on social media that crosses the line; he said the language uses racial slurs and attacks African-Americans;
- Said the language is taunting and the behavior unacceptable for a member of the MLK Jr. Commission;
- Said he will be present at the Human Relations Commission meeting on Wednesday and the issue needs to be resolved;
- Said Edgecombe County residents are not leaving - they are building, and the meetings held between citizens and Councilmembers have been awesome;
- Said the murder rate is actually low;
- Thanked the Council for building in the community and in Edgecombe County and said he appreciates the Council's community engagement

- ***Samuel Battle:***

- Said the murder rate is off the chain and crime is moving fast;
- Said since 2017 he has been saying there needs to be programs for kids;
- Said everybody is talking about a hotel and parks for \$18M, but what is needed is a new jail and a new courthouse;
- Said he has been there before, and the Nash County jail is housing kids from Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County and the City needs its own jail;
- Said mothers have lost their children and grandmothers are dying because of the stress related to their grandchildren;
- Said there are the haves and have-nots and the have-nots are left behind;
- Said there are three pastors on the City Council and none of those mothers have seen them come to their door though they go to other's funerals;
- Said this is not a white issue and is happening in the black community

Councilmembers Blackwell, Knight and Joyner made the following comments:

Blackwell:

No. 1: Councilmember Blackwell said he has been involved for 21 years in the streets of Rocky Mount and has a track record. He said he might not know everybody that Mr. Battle knows but can say he has a program that works for people who want to work and has put 70 people this year who came back from jail and prison to work. He added there is another 70 people in class right now who want to work.

No. 2: He said that he and Councilmember Knight have organized community-based events for the past 15 years and have walked the streets; prayed with people; delivered and sent food and showed up at people's houses. He said the place where he is today is that mothers and fathers must raise their children. He said the City Council cannot fix broken minds; but can work together with people who want to work together and help make it better. He said to hear accusations that the City is not doing anything is false. Councilmember Blackwell said the City funds thousands of dollars of programs with community-based organizations and has the data, not just accusations, but data of people who are being helped every day in the schools and in the communities. He added he does not have to prove to a person that he does his job because it is proven on a

continual basis with the budgets approved and the testimonials given in multiple places.

No. 3: Mr. Blackwell said that what is happening in crime is not just about Rocky Mount but is happening across this country and anybody who watches TV or social media or reads a newspaper sees that inner-city crime is on the increase. He said the way to deal with it is structurally dismantling institutional racism, creating economic development opportunities and workforce training opportunities and building up housing and schools.

No. 4: Mr. Blackwell that that relative to all this conversation about the City Council being responsible for poor performance in schools that people need to go to their County Commissioners and tell them because the County funds the school system. He said the City Council only funds the gap between Nash and Edgecombe County and to expect the City Council to change a narrative in a system for which they do not have authority or legislative or constitutional ability to directly make decisions is ill informed and unfair. He added that this Council and this staff have been more than engaged and willing to work any place that they can work but cannot take the blame for people's personal behavior. He said if someone can show him a city in America where the City Council can fix the murder rate and show Council the best practice that they are not doing then they are more than willing to look at it. He added he only speaks for himself in saying he will work together with our community to stop what he can stop but some of this stuff is carteled activity and that is where gangs come from and the trafficking of heroin does not come from Rocky Mount. He said heroin is brought in here from other places and if we want to deal with fixing the problem, we have to go to root cause and not just the fruit of what is seen.

Knight:

No. 1: Said he is the second pastor and that Mr. Battle comes in consistency and blames the Council (Reuben Blackwell and Andre Knight) and has said he has a relationship with gang members but has not yet stopped one killing in this City.

No. 2: He said "we" know this is the political season and know that Mr. Battle is working with a candidate that is running for Mayor. He added that this Council is a hard-working Council and understands what the game plan is, but it is not working. He wished Mr. Battle a blessed day.

Joyner:

Said he is the third pastor and wants Mr. Battle to know that they are concerned, not only as Councilmembers but as residents and pastors, and said thanks to Chief Robinson they are working with pastors and community leaders to address and meet with families who have lost loved ones and also families where youth have committed crimes and believe that they are coming to solutions. He invited anyone who wants to participate to come and join them as they make our city a safe city.

• ***Leroy Williams:***

- Said he is glad to see that one of the Councilmembers brought up the slavery situation and said he would like to address 400 years of slavery as of August 2019 (since 1619);
- Said a friend of his wanted to know why he is an advocate for ADOS (American Descendants of Slaves) and he said he explained his reason to him in 60 seconds;
- Said when you speak with unity, and this City knows its history, we have a racial wealth gap that must be dealt with and in dealing with it the City needs to advocate for reparations

- **Elaine B. Williams:**
 - Thanked and appreciated the Council for their service;
 - Said she is a candidate for the Ward 4 Rocky Mount City Council seat;
 - Said the City should be thankful that it was spared from the storm that just came through and so many people are damaged;
 - Said the City should come together even when a storm is not present and there is another opportunity to be thankful, to get it right and the opportunity to stop the divisiveness and become united;
 - Said when Hurricane Floyd came through the City was united and showed love and it should not take a storm for people to unite;
 - Said a way to start is to talk to each other and not at each other;
 - Invited all citizens and residents to come to the Planning Board meeting tomorrow evening at 5:30 p.m. where there will be discussion on some rezonings, development and text amendments. She said she has served in a volunteer capacity on the Planning Board for the past 10 years. She thanked Dr. Koo for coming to the Planning Board meeting last month and invited all present to attend.

- **Brenda Cooper:**
 - Voiced concern relative to truck parking in neighborhoods and stated it continues to happen and the Police seem to ride by and not notice;
 - Thanked the City, Parks and Recreation and especially the South Rocky Mount Community Center employees for assisting with the annual community celebration and back to school festival in Ward 4;
 - Said storm season is here and voiced a concern relative to the dilapidated warehouse on Church Street; and
 - Voiced concern relative to the costs charged to nonprofits and churches to tap onto the City's water and sewer system

At Councilmember Joyner's request, City Manager Rochelle Small-Tony provided an update relative to a Code amendment to allow for non-residential or commercial buildings to be dealt with and said the Director of Development Services presented a list of the highest priorities, totaling in excess of \$1.7M, to Council recently. She said the good news is that staff is well on the way to asking the City Council to pass an ordinance to allow them to move forward to toward a policy for a non-residential building maintenance code to deal with commercial buildings and added she believes the building Ms. Cooper speaks about on Church Street is on the list.

Councilmember Miller stated she has received an inquiry relative to truck parking in residential areas and requested that the City Manager provide a report to the Council at an upcoming meeting.

BUDGET ORDINANCE/CARRYFORWARD APPROPRIATIONS AND EXPENDITURES

The City Manager provided the City Council with an Ordinance amending the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget to carry forward appropriations and expenditures for activities budgeted in the 2018-2019 fiscal year but not expensed. Council was advised that additional funds are appropriated for projects and activities scheduled for utilization of prior year budgeted funds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Rogers, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No.O-2019-63** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR THE**

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 FOR CARRYFORWARD OF FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019

ENCUMBERED FUNDS be adopted.

GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/FY 2020 URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM/HOUSING GRANT

The City Council was advised that one of the grants provided in the City's annual Housing Grant Program is a program for Urgent Repair which leverages funding from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. Council was further advised that the total program funding is \$250,000 made up from \$100,000 from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency with the remaining \$150,000 being provided from the General Fund from funds appropriated for the purpose of housing initiatives in the Department of Community & Business Development for FY 2020. The Council received a Grant Project Ordinance appropriating the grant funds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2019-64** entitled **GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/2019-2010 URGENT REPAIR PROJECT** be adopted.

RESOLUTION/WELCOME SIGNS

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney provided the City Council with a resolution endorsing "Welcome to Rocky Mount" slogan signs on four (4) existing signs located on US 64 and 301. It was explained that all costs associated with the design, fabrication and installation of the signs, estimated at \$10,000, is the responsibility of the City.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2019-36** entitled **RESOLUTION ENDORSING "WELCOME TO" SLOGAN SIGNS BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

MUNICIPAL AGREEMENTS/NCDOT

The City Council received the following municipal agreements with the North Carolina Department of Transportation:

- a. Installation of Sidewalk and Multi-use Trail on Sunset Avenue from Halifax Road to Old Carriage Road, Street Lighting on the Sunset Avenue Bridge over I-95 and Lighting of the New I-95 Interchange (City's share of sidewalk/multi-use trail \$190,496; NCDOT responsible for electrical conduit system for bridge lighting; City responsible for providing/replacing electrical lighting components, electric service and on-going maintenance; and NCDOT responsible for electrical conduit system and electrical devices for the interchange lighting; City responsible for electric service bill)(**C-2019-28**); and
- b. Annual Reimbursement from NCDOT for Right-of-Way Mowing on Sections of Hunter Hill Road and Winstead Avenue (City will be reimbursed \$175 per lane mile for a total of \$11,200 per year) (**C-2019-29**).

Motion was made by Councilmember Miller, seconded by Councilmember Rogers and unanimously carried that the municipal agreements with the North Carolina Department of Transportation be

approved and that the Mayor, City Clerk and Finance Director, as appropriate, be authorized to execute the municipal agreements on behalf of the City.

At the request of Councilmember Rogers, Brad Kerr, Director of Public Works explained that multi-use trails are greenways.

BIDS/TUBULAR STEEL STRUCTURES

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for Tubular Steel Structures. Bids were received and opened on August 14, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-25**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Meyer Utilities at a total cost of \$245,084 and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment and execute the bid document in accordance with the Council's award.

REBIDS/ONE DIRECTIONAL BORING SYSTEM

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for One Directional Boring System. Bids were received and opened on August 27, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-26**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Ditch Witch of North Carolina at a total cost of \$178,000 and that the Purchasing Division be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment and execute the bid document in accordance with the Council's award.

BIDS/GROUND MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for the Ground Maintenance and Landscaping. Bids were received and opened on August 27, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-27**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Precision Cut Landscaping and Lawn Care, LLC at a total cost of \$85,950 for three (3) years (\$28,650 per year with an option of two

[2] additional one-year terms) and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

BIDS/PRE-EVENT DEBRIS MANAGEMENT AND REMOVAL SERVICES

The City Council received proposals for Debris Management and Removal Services. Proposals were received and opened on August 5, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-28**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Crowder Gulf for three (3) years with the option to renew for two (2) additional one (1) year terms and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

BIDS/HOME REHABILITATION ASSESSMENTS

The City Council received proposals for Home Rehabilitation Assessments. Proposals were received and opened on August 13, 2019 after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2019-29**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Bullock, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Triangle Construction Management at a total estimated cost of \$184,700 and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

COMMENTS

Councilmember Knight stated that he heard something this morning on a local TV show that was disturbing to him, especially in the spirit of the conversation today remembering the 400 years of slavery in America and the 40-year anniversary of the commemoration of the Sanitation Workers Strike here in Rocky Mount. He stated it was said that someone associated with the installation and purchase of the Confederate monument located at the Mill is about to be inducted into the Twin County Hall of Fame. He questioned if the City has any type of agreement with the Twin County Community Pride or any other organization to prohibit the display of an item that may be offensive to any ethnic group in a City building. He said this information does not rest well in his spirit with what the City is trying to do.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney stated she is unaware of any agreement(s) but is happy to look into the matter.

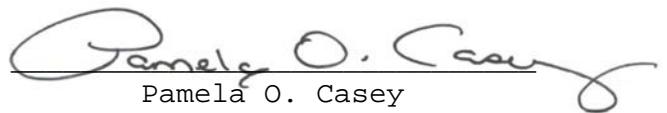
Councilmember Miller stated it is true that Mr. Ricks, the person Mr. Knight is speaking of, is one of 10 people chosen by the Selection Committee for induction in the Hall of Fame, but not for having anything to do with the statue but for his involvement with the Ricks Hotel and a lot of other development projects in the City. She said the nominator has been cautioned that no remarks relative to the Veteran's statue will be allowed. She added there is no litmus test that has been provided to Twin County Community Pride relative to whose portrait may be included by the organization. She said the organization tries to be sensitive relative to inductees but does not have complete knowledge of any inductee or citizen. She says she understands that Mr. Ricks may have contributed to the purchase of the statue.

Councilmember Knight recommended that Human Relations Director Archie Jones or someone on the Human Relations Commission be included in the vetting process for making decisions relative to material or photographs displayed in City buildings. He said he knows Mr. Ricks was very involved with the erection of the Confederate monument which is an unsettled issue in the City and at this time it is very inappropriate to induct someone into the Hall of Fame whose hands are dirty relative to the erection of the Confederate statue. He suggested the Twin County Community Pride selection committee replace Mr. Ricks with Mr. Alexander Evans.

Councilmember Miller said she would make a report to the organization relative to Councilmember Knight's comments.

ADJOURN

There being no further business for regular session, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.


Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk