

August 9, 2021

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 C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson, Jr. presiding.

Councilmembers present: André D. Knight, Reuben C. Blackwell, IV, Richard Joyner, T.J. Walker, Lige Daughtridge, W.B. Bullock and Christine Carroll Miller.

Staff present: Rochelle Small-Toney, City Manager; Pamela O. Casey, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Jessie Nunery, Interim Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Chris Beschler, Director of Energy Resources; Peter F. Varney, Interim Director of Community & Business Development; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Humans Resources Director; Will Deaton, Development Services; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Tracey Drewery, Assistant Chief of Administration & Planning (Fire Department); Chase Norwood, Management Analyst; Keyana Walston, Management Analyst; Jayson Dawkins, Policy Analyst, Budget and Evaluation Department; Corey Mercer, Fire Chief; Ken Hunter, Assistant to the City Manager for Budget and Evaluation; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Maysieo Tanks, LeadNC Fellow, Office of Budget and Evaluation; and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

NOTE: Public participation limited relative to the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); meeting was accessible remotely via FaceBook and the City's YouTube Channel.

Security Officers: Police Sergeant Stephen Walker and Senior Police Officer, Shawn Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and requested a moment of individual silent prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the minutes of a regular scheduled meeting of the City Council held June 28, 2021, be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

Mayor Roberson stated is aware of two items to be added to tonight's agenda and questioned if there are any other changes/additions to the agenda.

Councilmember Joyner requested that item 8c relative to a demolition ordinance be removed from the agenda.

Councilmember Miller requested that item 7e relative to the request for rezoning by Marvin Pike be deferred until the September 13, 2021, City Council meeting. The Mayor suggested that the public hearing be held this evening and consideration of the request be deferred until the September 13, 2021, meeting. Ms. Miller inquired if there will be an opportunity for public comment later and the City Attorney responded if the public hearing is closed this evening there will be no opportunity for public input on this matter on September 13. Following discussion, consideration was given to the following amendments:

- 7(e) - hold public hearing relative to rezoning request (±6.59 acres @ 141 Cobb Farm Village Lane); continue/recess public hearing and defer consideration until September 13, 2021, meeting;
- 8(a), (b), (c) and (d) - demolition ordinance - (511 Magnolia Street; 320 Olive Street; 409/411 Arlington Street; and 334 Carolina Avenue) - remove from agenda;
- 11(a), (b), (c) - table consideration;
- Add:
 - o Consideration of retaining Poyner Spruill relative to redistricting; and
 - o Consideration of resolution ending association with Hunt Services, Inc.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that the agenda be approved, as amended.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney provided the following community update. The Manager:

- Began her report by sharing that the Parks and Recreation Department will hold an End of Summer Celebration on Saturday, August 28 at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. The event will begin at 5 p.m. and feature inflatables for children, various food truck options and DJs. The featured act will be the Junkyard Band, which has a decades-long history as a member of the famous Def Jam Records. She invited all to visit the City's social media outlets as well as rockymountnc.gov for more information;
- Encouraged all to visit the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences to view the Navigating Jim Crow: The Green Book and Oasis Spaces in North Carolina exhibit. She reported the exhibit will hold a closing program on Thursday, August 12 at 6 p.m. and said the City is honored to have been chosen by the Smithsonian Institute to screen their documentary: "The Green Book: Guide to Freedom." The Navigating Jim Crow exhibit features a pair of Rocky Mount locations – The Wright's Motel and Chick Shack as well as The Lincoln Park Motel and Restaurant. The exhibit will close Friday, August 13, and more information can be found at imperialcentre.org;
- Announced that the Summer Night Lights Series is nearing conclusion. The Series makes a stop this Friday, August 13 at the South Rocky Mount Community Center. The series runs every Friday through August 27 from 6-8 p.m. at various City parks through the month of August. The events are free and offer field games, family fun, music and hot dog snack packs. Attendees will also have an opportunity to meet Chief of Police Robert Hassell and members of his staff at these events. For more information, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 252-467-4902;

- Stated that the Theater at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences will hold auditions for various roles for its upcoming production of “The Nerd” by Larry Shue on Monday, August 16 and August 17. For more information contact 972-1156;
- Announced that the Business and Collections Services Department is utilizing the Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funding to assist utility customers within the city limits who meet income requirements. The program is designed to assist with payment of delinquent utility bills for low-to-moderate income households impacted by the loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Households that became delinquent after March 31, 2020, and whose income was affected by COVID-19 may receive up to six months of utilities assistance via this program. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit rockymountnc.gov or contact the Business Services Center at 972-1250;
- Reminded citizens that the Tar River Transit service has extended its offering of free rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites for those with scheduled appointments to “drive-up” sites. Transportation is available from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday to vaccination sites located in Nash and Edgecombe counties. Citizens who are interested in transportation to and from vaccination sites may call Tar River Transit at 252-972-1174. All appointments need to be scheduled the day before the trip. Free rides will be available until at least August 31. Visit tarrivertransit.org regarding more information;
- Reported that residents’ voices and opinions are needed and invited all to log onto www.rockymountresilience.com and complete the Natural Hazards Resiliency Plan. The survey will take less than five minutes to complete and will play a major role in helping to evaluate and prepare for natural and human-caused disasters like floods and cyberattacks as well as aging infrastructure and economic issues. Direct links to the survey are available on the City’s Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor pages; and
- Stated that tickets are available for the 24th annual Down East Viking Football Classic, which will be held Saturday, September 4 at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex between Elizabeth City State University and Fayetteville State University. Tickets may be purchased online at rockymountnc.gov, by visiting the calendar of events or by stopping by the Booker T. Washington Community Center from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Tailgating and RV spots are also available for purchase at the Booker T. Washington Community Center, located at 727 Pennsylvania Avenue in Rocky Mount.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Mayor opened the meeting for petitions from the public and outlined guidelines for public petitions. He recognized the following individuals for public comment and a summary of comments is outlined below:

- ***Dennis Gunter:***
 - *Stated he has been the pastor of Greater Mount Hermon Missionary Baptist Church for 24 years;*
 - *Voiced concern for the number of vacant dilapidated houses in the City in the Black community; said he has observed 4 blocks with 23 vacant houses and trash everywhere on Branch Street; some houses are in a dilapidated state but some could be renovated; noticed another 5 vacant houses on Pender Street across from Truth Tabernacle on the way to tonight’s meeting (6 blocks in one community); said they need to be demolished or remodeled;*
 - *Said he has lived in Rocky Mount all his life and grew up in that neighborhood; and*
 - *Said the Holly Street neighborhood has seen some revitalization and looks nice.*

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner requested the City Manager respond to Reverend Gunter’s concerns. City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney

reported that staff and the City Council are working on a housing strategic plan initiative to eradicate blight. She said \$3M of the \$11.7M in federal funds received by the City will be used to get a jumpstart to correct the problem. She stated she believes that over the years the City Council has done a good job with limited resources received from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) along with General Funds that are used to assist homeowners to bring their properties up to code, but the funding has simply not been enough. She said the federal funding can be leveraged with private funds. Ms. Small-Toney added that she is fairly certain the area identified has been targeted for redevelopment. She thanked Reverend Gunter for his comments and said she would be happy to keep him informed of what is being done in the area.

Councilmember Blackwell requested time to speak later in the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner thanked Reverend Gunter for his observations and comments adding Council realizes that addressing one home at a time is not a solution and that is the reason they are looking at renovating entire blocks.

○ **Samuel Battle:**

- *Stated he also had intended to speak about vacant houses adding on Long Avenue, Cokey Road and Pender Street he has counted 123 “bad” houses;*
- *Said he has been in Rocky Mount all his life and the problem did not occur overnight but from lack of code enforcement;*
- *Said some of the problem occurred when the owners passed away or because the owners reside out of state, but it exists all over the City;*
- *Told the Council that Branch Street looks bad and there is also a problem of homelessness in that area; and*
- *Said “we” have to do a better job looking out for people.*

○ **J’kyra Brown:**

- *Told the Council she was born and raised in Rocky Mount and graduated from Rocky Mount High School with a full academic and athletic scholarship to ECU transferring to the University of Virginia from which she graduated;*
- *Said she started playing professional basketball, has played in several countries and is still playing and in a few weeks will be leaving for Belgium for a fourth season;*
- *Reported she hosted an all-girls elite basketball camp this past weekend at the South Rocky Mount Community Center and brought in 30 elite basketball players from all over eastern North Carolina adding the talent was “through the roof”;*
- *Said the camp allowed the girls to learn from elite trainers and to showcase their talent in front of college coaches in attendance and watching livestream;*
- *Questioned why local athletes have to leave Rocky Mount to be seen adding other similar events could be held in the City;*
- *Said she hopes to partner with the City to bring activities so female athletes can showcase their talent; and*
- *Thanked those who supported her event, especially Mayor Roberson, Councilmember Walker and Chris Allen from the South Rocky Mount Community Center and said she received much feedback on how great the event was and how beautiful the City is and those in attendance want to come back.*

○ **Quatoshia Hill:**

- *Stated she is here on behalf of the Holly Street Community;*
- *Thanked Councilmember Knight and Parks and Recreation Director Joel Dunn for assisting her in setting up an event for kids in Holly Street Park adding they are collaborating on dates now;*
- *Requested that lights be installed at Holly Street Park saying it is in a dark location; and*
- *Thanked the Police Department saying they have been awesome during the summer in supporting events at the park.*

Councilmember Knight thanked Ms. Hill for utilizing Holly Street Park and said the Council hears her request for lighting at the park. He added that some Councilmembers have been receiving complaints about people riding dirt bikes through the park. He said the park is not designed for that and Council does not want the money invested in the park to be wasted because of damage from dirt bikes and three-wheelers. Ms. Hill agreed this has been a problem in Holly Street Park and other areas of the City adding she knows the Police Department is aware of and trying to minimize the problem.

Councilmember Walker said at some point the City may need to look at creating a City-wide ATV park because times are changing. He said historically in the African American community people would ride their bikes/dirt bikes in the countryside but today dirt bikes and four-wheelers are a more modern way of transportation for young people.

○ **Michael Moe Deloach:**

- *Told the Council he recently held a bookbag give-away in the South Rocky Mount community;*
- *Thanked the Police Department, Fire Department, Councilmembers Knight and Walker and Assistant City Manager Elton Daniels for their attendance and help;*
- *Said he was able to give away 650 book bags and provided food, games and activities for the community;*
- *Acknowledge and thanked Chris Allen for the work he is doing at the South Rocky Mount Community Center with the youth;*
- *Said he was able to check out J'kyra Brown's camp; said he has been holding camps in Rocky Mount for the past 10 or 11 years and it was amazing to see some of the young ladies doing some of the things they were doing; and*
- *Appreciated the South Rocky Mount Community Center and said there have not been in problems there and everything always runs smoothly.*

○ **Morrie Minges:**

- *Told the Council she spent 2.5 hours yesterday cleaning up the outside of her business on 301 and saw more trash there than she had seen in a long time; questioned if people who litter have no self-respect;*
- *Said she knows she harps on this and questioned who owns the former Ebony and Ivory Club property; she asked if anyone cares about how nasty the property is adding that she gets notice of when her grass is too high, but it seems the owner of that property is not being held accountable saying if someone on the Council knows him, they should call him and tell him to clean up his property;*
- *Requested when the public has concerns and comes to a Council meeting that they should be contacted; and*
- *Said she loves the pretty flowers in front of the building, and they are beautiful.*

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner asked the City Manager to explain the City's process for addressing public petitions. The City Manager responded by saying there is no formal process but sometimes staff members are present to speak with citizens who have a complaint. She said her office responds to some issues, but staff does contact petitioners. She added the City is aware of the litter issue and also of the issues with the Ebony and Ivory building.

Councilmember Knight stated that the Ebony and Ivory building is owned by Kevin Jones. He said the building was in worse shape when Mr. Jones purchased the property, and some demolition has occurred. He stated he is aware that Ms. Minges has complained about the property several times and her concerns should have been addressed. He added that the Community Development Director is present, and this would be his area.

Councilmember Blackwell said that Council has discussed the issues of dilapidated commercial property for years and if the City moves to sanction it needs to be ready to clean up the property. He added he is sure fines have been assessed, calls made, and letters written but the Council's power to take, demolish or clean up the property would require funding and take away from what the Council is trying to accomplish on the residential side. He said it is not as if Council rides by and closes their eyes and said Ms. Cooper came to the last meeting with similar complaints. He said he was on staff in 1996 and inventoried dilapidated properties. Mr. Blackwell said thousands of properties have been cleaned up through the years but eyes-only rest on what is left adding that is part of what he has asked to make comment about this later in the meeting. He said it is incorrect to assume the City is doing nothing but efforts are limited by the North Carolina General Statutes and by budget and there are some things Council would eagerly do if funding were available. He said it is a balance of priority and he believes citizens have to help Council understand what is important to them so that when funding is directed to one area it is recognized there is not enough funding for another area and there needs to be a balance. Mr. Blackwell stated Council tries to do the best it can but agreed that commercial and industrial dilapidated properties are very problematic.

o ***Brenda Cooper:***

- *Told the Council she is here again about dilapidated properties and landlord blight left in neighborhoods; she said landlords must be held accountable saying they clean a little and leave the rest at the property;*
- *Said she has photos of some of the properties;*
- *Said the south end of Church Street looks like it has been forgotten and nothing is happening to make it look like it is a part of Rocky Mount while further north it looks nice; she said people come into the City from the south as well;*
- *Stated dogs are running loose and Animal Control has been called but nothing happens no one seems to be able to catch the dogs; said these dogs will frighten*

children at the bus stops and they have chased others, and someone needs to help; and

- *Said she concurs with everything said about the properties and said at the corner of Kingston Avenue there is a property that used to be a laundromat that has a big hole in the wall and nobody does anything about it; said it is like it has been forgotten and until it is remembered she will keep coming.*

Councilmember Knight said the dog was reported again this morning and he is waiting to hear if the dog was captured along with six (6) puppies.

Councilmember Joyner stated that he believes staff continues to work relative to code enforcement, especially with regard to industrial properties in the South Rocky Mount area. He said some work has been done but a lot more is needed.

Mayor Roberson recognized Councilmember Blackwell for comment.

Councilmember Blackwell said he wishes to speak relative to item 8 on today's agenda (demolition ordinance). He said he has heard that some people think the Council is protecting landlords and that is not true. He said some of the properties listed on the agenda for demolition (photos online) are able to be redeveloped and renovated and the question is how does the City remove them from the hands of the people who have them and put them in the hands of people who will do something with them to benefit and aid the community. He said Council has been working diligently on a process to provide pathways for people who either owe taxes and are unable to pay them or who are unable to invest in keeping the properties decent to find ways to place them in the hands of folks who would value the property and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Blackwell said it is recognized that there are a number of properties in inner city communities that are dilapidated and said it is not as bad as it has been but not as good as it needs to be. He reported that Council is looking to the City Manager and her team to bring a plan to Council for consideration. He added that the desire is to redevelop instead of tear down and reminded the citizens of the work done by Capitol Broadcasting at the Rocky Mount Mills. He said if everything is torn down the capability for replacement is limited.

Mr. Blackwell stated that the City is at the beginning of developing a strategy that would put millions of dollars into the community to support housing and affordable housing is a priority. He said the City is at the beginning of creating a process that will help everyone participate in the rebuilding of the inner-city core and create opportunity for developers, individual homeowners and institutions that have never left those communities and want to do better.

He said he has no problem voting to remove a property that is ready to come down but sees value in keeping those that can be

renovated adding there is a whole tv channel called HGTV devoted to renovating properties and they don't pay attention to how much the tax value is but find a way to salvage properties.

He questioned the community's appetite and acumen to figure out how to put sweat equity into some of these properties and work with the City. He said the City has not foreclosed on properties for the many years and that was a culture passed on to this Council.

Councilmember Blackwell said this Council has invested in demolition, in cleaning up properties, in investing in parks, in investing in streets and lights and neighborhoods, and while the job has not been completed because funding hasn't always been available the City has gotten progressively better. He said that is reflected in everything.

Mr. Blackwell said that the Police Chief reported today on the progressive growth in safety in those same communities and some of that can be aligned with what's taken place progressively as Council has made investment. He reiterated that this is the reason why he supported removing eight (8) properties being placed on the demolition list from today's agenda - not because those properties do not need attention but because there is the possibility for redevelopment.

He added it is absolutely inaccurate to say that the City Council does not care adding that the team that was elected and the team that was appointed have been working hard within communities and advocating for communities. He said without the voices of the community that would not happen. He thanked Ms. Cooper for reminding Council that more is needed and said Council needs to see the effort and energy from the community and people need to know landlord blight is not acceptable.

Mr. Blackwell told those present that some things require a little patience and asked the City Manager to provide a date certain as to when tax liens and foreclosures will begin.

He said the public may not have heard the comments made in the Committee of the Whole meeting prior to this meeting but there was conversation about a community land trust and how to move properties from foreclosure to renovation. He stated there was also talk about programs to get money in into the hands of homeowners so they can fix up what they have so it doesn't slide into neglect noting Ms. Miller has always been an advocate of addressing repair at an early stage.

He concluded his comments by saying there is work to do but encouraged the public not to miss the work that's been done and work that is happening now. He said it is a process and Council is working on it and just because something doesn't happen right now, doesn't mean it's not happening.

There being no other speakers, the Mayor closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Council received the minutes and recommendations from a Planning Board meeting held July 13, 2021. The minutes are on file in the office of the City Clerk.

The following action was taken upon the recommendations of the Planning Board:

A. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by John Sciortino to rezone ±0.74 acres at 133 S. Franklin Street from O-I to B-4

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request and responded to a question from Councilmember Miller relative to activities allowed in a B-4 district.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2021-64** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

B. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Peter Varney for the Rocky Mount Redevelopment Commission to rezone five (5) parcels totaling ±0.62 acres at 218, 222, 226 N. Grace Street and 509, 513 W. Thomas Street from B-1 & B-2 to R-6MFA

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Bullock and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2021-65** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

C. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Brenda F. Cooper of Cooper Help Center to rezone ±2.26 acres at 1912 S. Church Street from B-5 to R-6MFA

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2021-66** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

D. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request by Ben Braddock for Momeyer Properties, LLC to rezone +0.49 acres at 4513 Sunset Avenue from MHP to B-2

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

Councilmember Daughtridge stated, for the sake of transparency, he wishes to advise that the agent of the Petitioner is a customer of one of his businesses and he has spoken to the City Attorney as to his ability to vote on this matter and has been advised it would not a violation.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Blackwell and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2021-67** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

Councilmember Blackwell stated in times past the Council has been able to view maps of zoning requests on the screen in the Council Chamber and it made discussion a little easier and helped those in attendance understand the requests. He requested the maps be shown during the public hearings and Councilmember Miller concurred.

E. PUBLIC HEARING/REZONING REQUEST

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following rezoning request recommended for approval and found in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- Request submitted by Marvin Pike to rezone +6.59 acres at 141 Cobb Farm Village Lane from R-15 to R-6MFA

Will Deaton, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

The Mayor recognized Petitioner, Marvin Pike, for comment.

Mr. Pike stated that when he first approached the City zoning department, he explained that he wanted to build a 900-square foot patio home (all on one level) and was told the first thing he needed to do was to petition for rezoning. He said he paid the fee and

moved through the process and appeared at the Planning Board public hearing and the rezoning was recommended by the Planning Board. He said he is here tonight to answer any questions Council may have adding he was surprised when Councilmember Miller requested the item to be tabled and asked her to explain that request.

Mayor Roberson advised Mr. Pike that Council has agreed to hold the public hearing and continue/recess the public hearing until the September 13, 2021, City Council meeting and to defer action as to the request until such time.

Mr. Pike responded that he thought he had done everything he needed to do. He added he is not a developer and had hoped to build a small patio home. He said there are two small houses across the street from his property and he did not think his request would be upsetting to the neighborhood. Councilmember Miller clarified that the intent is to build one single home. She said the request is to rezone for multi-family housing, so people have been concerned and have reached out to her. Councilmember Miller added that once a property is rezoned it allows for other development that could possibly increase traffic and people have been concerned about environmental issues and increased water runoff.

Councilmember Blackwell asked for clarification as to whether Mr. Pike intends to build one home or multiple homes and Mr. Pike responded that it is his intent to build one 900-foot patio home all on one level. Councilmember Blackwell questioned if Mr. Pike plans to occupy the new home and Mr. Pike said he does not yet know.

Councilmember Blackwell asked if the instructions Mr. Pike had received were that in order to build a 900-square foot home he would have to rezone seven acres and Mr. Pike responded in the affirmative. Mr. Blackwell stated this is not his Ward, but he would have no issue supporting Mr. Pike's intent; however, the question is what is going to happen relative to development of the other six acres.

Mr. Pike stated when he bought his home he intended to stay there and not move anywhere and has spent a lot bring his home up to modern-day standards. He said the rezoning would allow him to have a source of income.

Councilmember Joyner concurred with Mr. Blackwell's comments and discussion continued. Mr. Pike told the Council he is willing to sign a document stating his intended plan for the property and the City Attorney suggest that conditional use zoning might be a solution. The Director of Development Services agreed to work with Mr. Pike relative to conditional use rezoning.

The Mayor recognized Diane Griffin. Ms. Griffin stated she has property at 108 Whispering Pines which borders the property that is the subject of Mr. Pike's rezoning request and based upon the

discussion her concern is now a moot point. She advised the Council that she was concerned with what would happen to the alley way that is beside her house in the event the intent of the rezoning was to build apartments. She said she has no problem with a patio home.

No one else from the public appeared and the Mayor recessed the public hearing to reconvene at the September 13, 2021, City Council meeting at 7 p.m.

By consensus, the public hearing was recessed/continued, and action deferred until the September 13, 2021, City Council meeting at 7 p.m.

F. LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS/PUBLIC HEARING

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to the following Land Development Code amendments recommended for approval and found in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board:

- **Purpose:** Revise the following Chapters and Sections of the Land Development Code of the City of Rocky Mount to remove barriers to the creation of affordable housing by clarifying residential use definitions and permitting certain residential development in commercial districts on the basis that the amendments conform with the Together Tomorrow: Tier 1 Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan:
 - Chapter 1 entitled "DEFINITIONS AND CONSTRUCTION," Sec. 102. Terms and uses defined.
 - Chapter 5 entitled "ZONING USE REGULATIONS," Sec. 503. Zoning use tables., Table 5-1: General Use Table - Residential Districts
 - Chapter 5 entitled "ZONING USE REGULATIONS," Sec. 503. Zoning use tables., Table 5-2: General Use Table - Transitional, Business and Industrial Districts
 - Chapter 6. entitled "DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARD," Sec. 601. Dimensional standards.

No one from the public appeared and the Mayor declared the public hearing closed.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that receipt of the Planning Board minutes be acknowledged; and that **Ordinance No. O-2021-68** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** be adopted.

DEMOLITION ORDINANCE

Pursuant to a request from Council, item 8 relative to consideration of an ordinance ordering the Community Code Inspector to proceed with demolition of the following substandard properties:

- a) 511 Magnolia Street
- b) 320 Olive Street
- c) 409/411 Arlington Street
- d) 334 Carolina Avenue

was removed from the agenda.

TAXICAB LICENSE/APPLICATION

The City Council received a recommendation from Chief of Police Robert Hassell for the issuance of three (3) new taxi right licenses to:

- Christopher R. Baker

Motion was made by Councilmember Knight, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that taxi permits be approved for issuance to Christopher R. Baker, as recommended by the Chief of Police.

PROPOSED FIRE STATION 2/USE OF DESIGN-BUILD PROJECT DELIVERY METHOD

The City Council was provided with the criteria document supporting the use of a design-build contracting process for delivery of the proposed Fire Station 2. Council was advised that in the 2013 Session the North Carolina General Assembly enacted legislation authorizing design-build contracting as an option for public construction. It was noted that the legislation requires the local government to establish written criteria of determining when design-build is appropriate for the project. The City Council was further advised that the criterion was established and approved by Council on November 19, 2014, with the approval of the design-build project delivery method for the Rocky Mount Event Center.

Council was informed that the design-build procurement process requires a qualification-based selection of a qualified design-build firm or team to contract for design and construction of the facility as a single entity. It was explained that this contracting method allows for a shorter project delivery time and is historically cost effective and typically has fewer change orders when compared to the traditional design-bid-build method of project delivery and is expected to be "cost plus fee with a guaranteed maximum price."

It was recommended that the criteria for use of the design-build delivery method for Fire Station 2 be approved.

Motion was made by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the criteria for use of the design-build delivery method be approved and that staff be authorized to proceed with the use of said method for the design and construction of the proposed Fire Station 2 Project.

BIDS/FY 2022 PARK MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING SERVICE

Consideration of bids for FY 2022 park maintenance and landscaping service for Holly Street Park, City Lake Park, Tar River Reservoir Boat Ramp and Saponi Creek Boat Ramp was tabled.

BIDS/FY 2022 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND LANDSCAPING SERVICES FOR CITY PROPERTIES

Consideration of bids for FY 2022 grounds maintenance and landscaping service for the Douglas Block, City Hall, the Senior Center, the Imperial Centre, the Business Services Center, the Rocky

Mount Event Center, Main Street, the Judicial Center, the Train Station, the Bus Station and Station Square was tabled.

BIDS/FY 2022 BATTLEBORO AND NORTHEASTERN CEMETERIES

Consideration of bids for FY 2022 Battleboro and Northeastern Cemeteries maintenance was tabled.

BIDS/C2 CLARIFIER REHABILITATION

The City Council received the tabulation of bids for C2 Clarifier Mechanical System Rehabilitation. Bids were received and opened on July 21, 2021, after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage, the HUB website and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-19**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Rebuild-it Services Group, LLC at a total cost of \$159,654 and that the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the bid contract on behalf of the City.

BIDS/PETERSEN TL-3 LIGHTNING LOADERS (MOUNTED)

The City Council received a recommendation for the purchase of six (6) lightning loaders mounted on six (6) 2022 chassis, through the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association (NCSA) vehicle procurement program, a competitive bidding group that offers a formally organized program, that offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies, pursuant to NCGS. 143-129(e) (3). The North Carolina Sheriffs' Association advertised as required by law and bid documentation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-20**.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Amick Equipment Company, Inc. at a total cost of \$944,819.10 and that City staff be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the Council's award.

BIDS/PASSENGER WAITING SHELTERS (TRANSIT)

The City Council received the tabulation of bids received for twenty (20) Transit passenger waiting shelters. Bids were received and opened on July 14, 2021, after all necessary legal procedures had been implemented and the bid tabulation is on file in the office of the City Clerk as **BD-2021-21**. The solicitation was also posted on the City's purchasing webpage, the HUB website and on the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that the bid be awarded to Brasco International, Inc., as the lowest responsive responsible bidder, at a total cost of \$172,500 and that the Purchasing Division

be authorized to issue a purchase order for the equipment in accordance with the equipment in accordance with the Council's award.

APPOINTMENTS

Councilmember Daughtridge nominated Suzana Radovic Meffen to fill the Ward 5 vacancy on the Animal Care and Control Advisory Board. Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Walker and unanimously carried that Ms. Meffen be appointed to the Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, as recommended for an unexpired term to expire June 30, 2022.

No action was taken to fill the remaining vacancies on the City's Boards, Commissions and Committees.

CONTRACT/REDISTRICTING OF CITY COUNCIL WARDS (ADDED TO AGENDA IN OPEN MEETING)

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the firm of Poyner Spruill be retained to provide services relative to redistricting of City Council Wards for the 2022 City of Rocky Mount municipal election; and that the Mayor, City Manager and/or City Clerk be authorized to execute the contract **(C-2021-29)** on behalf of the City.

RESOLUTION ENDING CITY'S ASSOCIATION WITH HUNT SERVICES, INC.

Consideration was given to a resolution ending the City's association with Hunt Services, Inc.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2021-38** entitled **RESOLUTION ENDING THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT'S ASSOCIATION WITH HUNT SERVICES, INC.** be adopted.

MANAGER'S COMMENTS/HOUSING BOND REFERENDUM

Mayor Pro Tem Joyner requested the City Manager provide information relative to the proposed housing bond referendum.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney stated that Rocky Mount, like other communities throughout the nation, has received funds through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). She said the City has received a total of \$11.7M, of which the Council has already set aside \$3M for affordable housing. She said that amount is not enough to address many of the housing issues in the community and Council has come up with a way to generate the revenue to support making those kinds of improvements in the community.

She reported that Council has asked her and City staff to take a look at the possibility of a General Obligation Bond (GEO). The Manager said staff is currently in the process of talking with City financial advisors about what a GEO Bond could look like. She said she will suggest that the bond not only be for housing, but that it be for other important needs in the community.

Ms. Small-Toney reported that soon they will review what financial impact a bond will have on the City's financial position and decide if the City should move forward with a General Obligation Bond.

She added that if the decision is made to move forward the bond referendum would be held in March 2022 at the same time as the election and the voters will have an opportunity to vote yes or no as to whether or not the City should go into debt to generate the revenue necessary to go forward with providing decent, affordable housing in the community. She said some existing dilapidated structures would be replaced but some can be salvaged, and the process will provide an opportunity for the City to address what she referred to as the "snaggletooth" effect where there is one house here and another house there with vacant property.

She stated the process is very long and tedious, but staff is doing its due diligence and performing an analysis to determine what the debt structure could look like. She advised when that process is complete the information will come before the Council for consideration, and they will take the appropriate action as to how much of the General Obligation Bond they want to put in front of the voters.

MANAGER'S COMMENTS/READY GRANT AND WODA COOPER COMPANY

Councilmember Walker requested that the City Manager provide an update relative to the Ready Grant and the presentation made by the WODA Cooper Company at the City Council's retreat.

City Manager Rochelle D. Small-Toney reported that she and the Downtown Development Manager met last week relative to the Ready Grant, and she thinks it will be ready for Council consideration at the September Committee of the Whole meeting. She added it is her understanding the Downtown Development Manager is proposed that \$1M be allocated for the grant.

Ms. Small-Toney reported that WODA Cooper has financial concerns in place and are poised to begin construction in September, or the first part of October so it is expected there will be a groundbreaking soon.

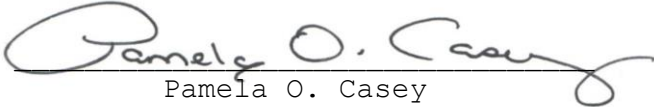
CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was requested for matters concerning attorney-client privilege and personnel.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the City Council enter into Closed Session at 8:35 p.m. The minutes of the Closed Session shall be filed as **ESM-586** at the end of **Minute Book 37** upon approval for release by the City Attorney.

OPEN SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

By consensus, the City Council returned to open session at 9:50 p.m. and there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.



Pamela O. Casey
City Clerk