

December 11, 2023

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, Jr., Lige Daughtridge, Tom Harris and Jabaris Walker.

Staff present: Keith Rogers Jr., City Manager; Kim Batts, City Clerk; Elton Daniels, Assistant City Manager; Brad Kerr, Public Works Director; Emilie Pinkston, Director of the Department of Development Services; JoSeth Bocook, Deputy Director of the Department of Development Services; Joel Dunn, Parks and Recreation Director; Archie Jones, Director of Human Relations; Brenton Bent, Water Resources Director; Gregory Cotten, Chief Technology Officer; Latasha Hall, Director of Business and Collections Services; Darvin Moore, Fire Chief; Michael Roupp, Assistant Chief of Operations; Robert Hassell, Police Chief; Abdul Baloch, Chief Internal Auditor; Mark Adcox, Video Production Specialist; Robin Cox, Communications Specialist; Kirk Brown, Communications and Marketing Director; Cornelia McGee, Community and Business Development Director; Kena Cofield-Jones, Director of Human Resources; Kream Mosley, Deputy City Clerk; Monica Brantley, Deputy City Clerk, Amber Burgess, Administrative Assistant City Clerk's Office and Richard J. Rose, City Attorney.

Security Officers: Corporal Clay Wilder, Sergeant Chris Williams, and Senior Police Officer Shawn Battle.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and requested all in attendance to stand for a moment of silent prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Harris, and unanimously carried that the minutes of the Regular Scheduled City Council meeting held July 24, 2023 be approved as submitted to the City Council prior to the meeting.

OATH OF OFFICE/WARD 1 COUNCILMEMBER

Mayor Roberson recognized the Honorable Lamont Wiggins, Resident Superior Court Judge, Judicial District 7B, to administer the oath of office to the following City Official who was re-elected on October 10, 2023:

- Ward 1 - André D. Knight

Judge Wiggins administered the oath of office to incumbent Ward 1 Councilmember André D. Knight for a four-year term to expire December 2027. Councilmember Knight was joined for the swearing in by family members, friends and supporters.

Photographs of Councilmember Knight and his family members and supporters were taken.

OATH OF OFFICE/MAYOR, WARD 4 AND WARD 5 COUNCILMEMBERS

Mayor Roberson recognized the Honorable Quentin T. Sumner, retired Superior Court Judge, to administer the oath of office to the following City Officials who were elected on October 10, 2023 (run-off November 7, 2023):

- Mayor - C. Saunders Roberson, Jr.
- Ward 4 - T.J. Walker, Jr.
- Ward 5 - Elijah "Lige" L. Daughtridge

Judge Sumner administered the oath of office to Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. for a four-year term to expire December 2027. Mayor Roberson was joined for the swearing in by family members, friends and supporters.

Judge Sumner administered the oath of office to incumbent Ward 4 Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. for a four-year term set to expire December 2027. Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. was joined for the swearing in by family members, friends and supporters.

Judge Sumner administered the oath of office to incumbent Ward 5 Councilmember Elijah "Lige" Daughtridge for a four-year term set to expire December 2027. Councilmember Daughtridge was joined for the swearing in by family members, friends and supporters.

Photographs of Councilmembers and their family members and supporters were taken.

ROLL CALL

The City Clerk called the roll for the newly seated City Council.

Members present: C. Saunders Roberson, Jr., Mayor; André D. Knight; T.J. Walker, Jr. and Elijah "Lige" Daughtridge.

MAYOR PRO TEMPORE

Mayor Roberson called for nominations for the office of Mayor Pro Tempore.

Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. nominated Councilmember Lige Daughtridge for Mayor Pro Tempore for a one-year term to expire December 2024. The nomination was seconded by Councilmember Knight and Councilmember Daughtridge was unanimously appointed Mayor Pro Tempore.

The Honorable Quentin T. Sumner, retired Superior Court Judge, administered the oath of office of Mayor Pro Tempore to Councilmember Daughtridge.

CITY TREASURER

Mayor Roberson called for nominations for the office of City Treasurer.

Councilmember Blackwell nominated Councilmember André D. Knight for City Treasurer for a two-year term to expire December 2025. The

nomination was seconded by Councilmember Joyner and Councilmember Knight was unanimously elected City Treasurer.

Mayor Roberson called for a 15-minute recess.

COMMUNITY UPDATE BY CITY MANAGER

City Manager Keith Rogers Jr. provided the following community update. The City Manager reported that:

- Stated on Saturday January 6 at 9 a.m. will be the 36th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Oratorical Competition
- Stated students in grades 6 through 8 will be invited to speak to the theme of “I am Too Worthy” and grades 9 through 12 will speak to the theme of “Be True to the Promise”
- Stated if anyone is interested in participating please visit the Human Relations page on rockymountnc.gov

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR MCKINLEY BATTLE ON WINNING THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CLASS 3A INDIVIDUAL TENNIS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

The Mayor congratulated Rocky Mount High School McKinley Battle on winning the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 3A Individual Tennis State Championship.

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember Jabaris Walker and unanimously carried that the following **Resolution R-2023-72** entitled **RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR MCKINLEY BATTLE ON WINNING THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CLASS 3A INDIVIDUAL TENNIS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP** was adopted:

RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING ROCKY MOUNT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR MCKINLEY BATTLE ON WINNING THE NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CLASS 3A INDIVIDUAL TENNIS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

WHEREAS, McKinley Battle, a Rocky Mount High School junior, competed in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 3A Individual Tennis State Championship; and

WHEREAS, McKinley entered tournament play with a perfect regular season finishing 25-0 in individual singles matches; and

WHEREAS, McKinley was dominate in the State Tournament, winning 47 of 48 sets played and dropping only 15 of 66 games played throughout the tournament; and

WHEREAS, McKinley overcame the loss of her first set of the season to win the championship with scores of 3-6, 6-0, 6-1;

WHEREAS, McKinley became part of the only one percent of the State title winners that have been able win the championship after losing a first set; and

WHEREAS, McKinley is the first black tennis player to win the 3A State Tennis Tournament; and

WHEREAS, McKinley has brought Rocky Mount High School its first-ever Women’s Individual Tennis Championship with this win; and

WHEREAS, contributing to McKinley’s success were her coaches, J.P. Battle (her grandfather), Richard Oxendine, Sam Scott and Charlie Lawrence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor C. Saunders Roberson, Jr. and the Rocky Mount City Council hereby congratulate McKinley Battle on her outstanding season and history making championship win; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be spread upon the pages of the minutes of this proceeding and a copy shall be presented to McKinley Battle in recognition of her significant accomplishments.

PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

Joshua Robinson

- Stated he wanted to personally give a shoutout to Joel Dunn in Parks and Recreation who has been unlocking the gated fence at the sports complex
- Stated this holiday season he truly wishes that everyone will keep making sure Rocky Mount is headed in the right direction
- Stated everyone will not agree on the decisions made by Council but he asks that the Council make decisions with the best of their abilities

Nathlyn Ohree

- Stated she would like clarity on how the pay is distributed to the City workers, how the pay scales are established, and how they will be looked at in the future
- Stated she is excited about the \$500 bonus the City workers received last week
- Stated regarding transparency, there seems to be a conflict of interest when one of the Councilmembers tables a conversation regarding pay increases for sanitation workers because that Councilmember has direct ties to another sanitation company
- Stated if that person could recuse themselves from any discussions about the sanitation workers that would help to extinguish any conflict of interest
- Stated someone needs to go in and look at the pay scale for the sanitation workers because it is not fair for workers that have been there for a long time

Dr. Kim Koo

- Stated there is a truism that states every new discovery or great change rests on the work achieved in the past and it is in this context that many of the benefits that are given to workers are benefits established from the past
- Stated it is incorrect to talk about paid leave, vacation or sick time without acknowledging the contribution and struggles of past works
- Stated workers may enjoy greater benefits now but it does not mean they do not suffer injustices of all manner and shades
- Stated Rocky Mount is no exception when the City sanitation workers perceived an injustice and spoke out; instead of listening or negotiating the loudest protester was singled out and suspended without pay from his job

Richard Petway

- Stated over 55 years have passed since Dr. Martin Luther King's died fighting for sanitation workers we are still looking for equality
- Stated the citizens in solidarity with the sanitation workers because there has been injustice done and retaliation
- Stated it is amazing how there are laws that govern the rights people have yet they are not enforced

- Stated the citizens are demanding that the Mayor and City Council stop this retaliation and firing of people who want to speak out
- Stated they demand that Tim Farmer be fired

Mumtaz Shaik

- Stated last week some petitioners derided the supporters of City employees calling their firm stand for justice for the workers temper tantrums and bickering but people all over the world are demanding fair wages and improved benefits
- Stated people seem to have no clue about this global class warfare
- Stated maybe friends in high places want to shame the people who are speaking out into silence the way they gagged and suspended Mr. Arnie Jones

Bronson Williams

- Congratulated those who were reelected
- Stated sometimes we are too close to our own personal mirrors to realize what is happening in our communities
- Stated we should celebrate the things that we have excelled in, work on the things that we can improve collectively, and change our community for a better tomorrow
- Stated working against one another will never solve the issues, as a community they must work to right whatever wrongs that may exist

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. and unanimously carried that the Consent Agenda - Items 14(A) through 14(D), be approved as follows and more specifically:

A. AMENDED RESOLUTIONS/FIRE STATION #2

1. That an amendment to **Resolution No. R-2023-39** entitled, **RESOLUTION DECLARING THE OFFICIAL INTENT OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES MADE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FIRE STATION 2 - AMENDED** be adopted. It was noted that the project increased from \$11,100,000 to \$11,400,000 due to the increase in the cost of labor and construction materials caused by supply chain issues and additional deliverables. This cost includes design-build preconstruction services, construction cost, permit and inspection fees, contingency, furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
2. That an amendment to **Resolution No. R-2023-40** entitled **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT - AMENDED** be adopted to update the cost of the project.

B. ANNEXATION NO. 332/HARPER & WILLIAMS (SUNSET AVENUE) PROPERTIES - PIN 382012960747 & 382008972953U

That the following resolutions be adopted:

- **Resolution No. R-2023-73** entitled **RESOLUTION OF CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF PETITION FOR ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA BY CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT ANNEXATION NO. 332 - HARPER & WILLIAMS (SUNSET AVENUE) PROPERTIES - PIN 382012960747 & 382008972953U; and**
- **Resolution No. R-2023-74** entitled **RESOLUTION CALLING A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE CITY LIMITS OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT TO INCLUDE ANNEXATION OF A CONTIGUOUS AREA ANNEXATION NO. 332 - HARPER & WILLIAMS (SUNSET AVENUE) PROPERTIES - PIN 382012960747 & 382008972953U; (schedules public hearing for January 8, 2024)**

City Council was advised the resolutions certify the sufficiency of the petition pursuant to NCGS 160A-58.1 and call for a public hearing to be scheduled for the annexation.

It was noted that the Department of Development Services be instructed to prepare a feasibility study in connection with the annexation.

C. FY 2022 INSTALLMENT PURCHASE CONTRACT - EQUIPMENT

The City Council was advised that requests for proposals (RFPs) were received and opened on November 14, 2023 to provide an installment financing contract for the purpose of financing the purchase of equipment listed on RFP 2023 IFC-3 in the amount of \$6,955,000 for 59 months. It was noted the RFP was mailed to 56 firms with 10 responding and staff recommends the Council adopt a resolution authorizing the execution and delivery of the installment financing for the following equipment:

- **59-month term (\$6,955,000)**
 - \$341,100 Lenco BearCat (Police)
 - \$1,132,000 Pierce Enforcer Heavy Duty Rescue (Fire)
 - \$206,000 Knuckle Boom Loader (Env. Services)
 - \$145,000 Pac Mac 8 yd. Mini Loader (Env. Serv.)
 - \$858,500 (2) Labrie Automizer Sideloaders (Env. Serv.)
 - \$125,500 Backhoe (Environmental Services)
 - \$377,000 Front End Loader (Environmental Services)
 - \$318,000 Rear Loader (Environmental Services)
 - \$127,500 Steel Recycling Trailer (Env. Services)
 - \$408,500 Wheel Loader (Environmental Services)
 - \$225,500 (2) Dump Trucks 6.5yd (Streets)
 - \$110,000 Flatbed Dump Truck (Streets)
 - \$320,000 Crawler Dozer (Streets)
 - \$151,000 Tandem Dump Truck (Streets)
 - \$118,000 Dump F570 Crew Cab (Cemetery)
 - \$71,500 Tractor/Mower (Sports Complex)
 - \$127,000 Dump F570 Crew Cab (Parks Maintenance)
 - \$74,000 Tractor/Mower (Parks Maintenance)
 - \$110,000 Flatbed Dump Truck (Parks Maintenance)
 - \$118,000 Rubber Tire Backhoe/Loader Combination
 - \$214,000 WWTP Rectangular Clarifiers Festoon
 - \$242,000 WWTP Gear Box
 - \$65,000 Remote Slope Mower
 - \$367,000 Tornado Regenerative Air Sweeper
 - \$73,000 Compact Excavator
 - \$307,000 Leaf & Debris Collector
 - \$110,000 Flatbed Dump Truck
 - \$113,000 Dump Truck 6.5yd.

The Council was advised that the most favorable rate was received from TD Equipment Finance, Inc. which proposes to finance purchase of the equipment at the fixed interest rate of 4.30% for the 59-month term.

This resolution authorizes the Mayor, the Finance Director or the City Manager, to execute and deliver an installment financing agreement consistent with the TD Equipment Finance, Inc. proposal, to execute certificates and documents, and to take all such further action

as may be considered necessary or desirable to carry out the financing of the equipment as contemplated by the TD Equipment Finance, Inc. proposal and this resolution.

Resolution No. R-2023-75 entitled **RESOLUTION APPROVING A PROPOSAL FROM TD EQUIPMENT FINANCE, INC. TO FINANCE THE ACQUISITION OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT** was adopted.

D. CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULES (REGULAR AND COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)

Consideration was given by the City Council of proposed 2024 City Council and Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting schedules.

The proposed 2024 meeting schedules were approved.

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 Race Trac, Inc. to rezone a +7.01-acre site having PIN 386214343819, located on Wesleyan Boulevard, southeast of the junction with Thomas Betts Parkway, from I-2 (Heavy Industrial District) to B-5 (Commercial Services District)

It was noted that the item was postponed from the November 13, 2023 City Council Meeting and the petitioner is requesting that the action be postponed until January 8, 2024.

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Daughtridge and unanimously carried that the item be postponed until January 8, 2024.

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 Kupona Properties, LLC to rezone a +8.24-acre site at 2947 Old Battleboro Road, from A-1 (Agricultural Residential District) and O-I (Office and Institutional District) to R-6MFA (Medium-Density Multifamily Residential District)

Emile Pinkston, Director of Development Services, gave an overview of the request.

Councilmember Blackwell stated that there was a letter that was submitted to them from members of the community which listed several concerns including questions about the traffic count, and he would like to know if those concerns were received and evaluated by staff and the Planning Board. He also wanted to clarify if there will be required mitigations to resolve issues if there are challenges that come up.

Emilie Pinkston responded there were a handful of neighboring property owners that spoke at the Planning Board meeting presenting concerns related to drainage, access to the property, and the overall character of the neighborhood. She stated that the development plan

for the property has been submitted for review to development services and is still under review. The development will be a planned building group, which is a development that does have to be reviewed by the planning board at a public hearing. She explained that some of those development characteristics will be resolved through that process. She continued stating that the Planning Board will be tasked with determining if the planned building group complies with the land development code which means the development will have to comply with a series of stormwater, drainage, and access requirements.

Mayor Roberson recognized the following who wished to speak on the item:

Anita Cooke

- Stated she has a community petition with 56 signatures against the property rezoning and she has permission to speak on their behalf
- Stated they were informed that there will be multifamily units with recreational facilities which is going to bring more people into the neighborhood
- Stated they have already had an increase in traffic and recently had a fatality at the intersection
- Stated she feels like the traffic needs to be checked again because it is her understanding that the last time it was done by the state was in 2021
- Stated this area was flooded in 1999 so flooding is a major concern as well because all of the areas there still hold water
- Stated if this is approved, the community will lose what little bit of peace and quiet that they have enjoyed since being annexed into the City limits
- Asked that these things on the petition be considered before this is approved

Nick Rightmyer

- Stated he is with Joyner Keeney and he is the engineer for the project, they are working with the developer of the project
- Stated they are in the process of working through the design of the project which will address the concerns that have been raised about stormwater and traffic
- Stated at this point they are just looking at rezoning being the first step in the process
- Stated after that they will have to go through the plan building group process where it will be reviewed by Development Review Committee and they will be looking at all those issues much closer

Councilmember Blackwell confirmed that they are still in the process of developing solutions to the concerns that had been addressed by the community, and this action is a simple rezoning not an approval of the development plan, therefore they have time to go through details of development that concerns the community. Mr. Rightmyer confirmed that was correct.

Stephon Bowens

- Stated he was with the law firm of Wallace, Bowens, Averhart & Associates and he is here on behalf of the developer
- He stated with respect to this particular project and the request of rezoning, he would like to reiterate for the record that this rezoning request does comply with NCGS 160D-605A and B
- Stated staff has already confirmed the rezoning meets the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan, being consistent therewith and that it is in fact reasonable for those purposes
- Stated therefore he would ask that this rezoning be approved

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight, and unanimously carried that **Ordinance No. O-2023-122** entitled **ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND MAP OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT** was adopted.

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 Thomas Wayne Hopkins to rezone a ± 0.856 -acre site at 52 Green Pasture Road, from B-5 (Commercial Services District) to A-1 (Agricultural Residential District)

It was noted that the City Manager's recommendation was to postpone the public hearing to January 8, 2024.

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner, and unanimously carried that the item be postponed until January 8, 2024.

PUBLIC HEARING/RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR ECONOMIC PURPOSES

The Mayor opened a public hearing relative to a resolution authorizing acquisition of the following real property for economic development purposes:

- approximately 336 acres located in an area bounded on the West by North Old Carriage Road, on the North by U.S. Highway 64, on the East by Interstate 95, and on the South by Dozier Road and Sunset Avenue

It was noted that the property is covered by Options and is believed to have significant potential for industrial and commercial development. The Resolution sets a purchase price of \$15,200,000, which will be funded through the issuance of financing by the City.

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

Motion was made by Councilmember Daughtridge, seconded by Councilmember Joyner and unanimously carried that **Resolution No. R-2023-76** entitled **RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES** was adopted.

APPOINTMENTS

Motion was made by Councilmember Blackwell, seconded by Councilmember Knight unanimously carried that Reverend Mack Battle be appointed to fill one of the two faith-based community member requirements on the Workforce Housing Advisory Commission.

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

Council Comments

Blackwell -

- Stated that he just wants to say to the communities that are dealing with growth that is taking place in and around their neighborhoods, that many of us have gotten adjusted and comfortable in the neighborhoods and situations around us
- Stated that our country is in the middle of a huge migration with people moving into southern states more rapidly than other parts of the country
- Stated he believes that North Carolina is one of the top 8 states in the nation that is experiencing population growth for cities and communities in proximity to Rocky Mount
- Stated because of where we are near the Triangle area and because of the great things the City is doing, people want to come here
- Stated we have to find a balance between the things and people that we are used to and welcoming others into our neighborhoods and our communities
- Stated it is a balance and we all have to give up something, but what we gain is a better community and a better City if we do it correctly
- Stated he understands their concerns, but at the same time they must accommodate growth for Rocky Mount
- Expressed his appreciation for those who are impacted and thanked the professionals that are engaged to make sure the neighborhood concerns are addressed
- Stated they have to get it done and get it done properly

Daughtridge -

- Stated during the public comment it was mentioned about a Councilmember having a conflict of interest and he believes it was directed at him
- Stated that he does want to be transparent since he does promote transparency
- Stated when he was elected over 4 years ago he made it known that he would no longer do business with the City of Rocky Mount with both businesses that he did have
- Explained he sold his interest in the trash business over 2 years ago so he no longer has any ownership
- Stated that he appreciates and believes in accountability, so he greatly appreciates that being brought up
- Stated again for the record that he no longer has any ownership in a trash business

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, motion was made by Councilmember Joyner, seconded by Councilmember T.J. Walker, Jr. and unanimously carried the meeting be adjourned at 8:18 p.m.



Kim Batts
City Clerk