

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009**  
**201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Governing Body Present:** Mayor Jeff Smart; Mayor Pro-Tem/Councilmember Bill Bayless; Council Members: Tony Clewis, Pat Preslar and Jesse McQueen. **Absent:** Councilwoman Abbie Covington

**Staff Present:** Marchell David, City Manager; Steve Futrell, City Attorney; Tammy Kirkley; City Clerk; Mike Deese, Finance Officer; Robert Brown, WTP Superintendent; John Haywood, Police Chief; Gail Strickland, Zoning Officer; Susan Sellers, Senior Center Director

**Others Present:** Reverend Adolph Smith; Brendolyn Moore; Ray Goodwin; Ronnie Kinard; Nan Deberry; Frank Fisher

1. **Call to Order.** Mayor Jeff Smart welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
2. **Invocation.** Reverend Adolph Smith thanked council for the opportunity to be here and gave a brief update on Mrs. Covington's absence prior to offering the invocation.
3. **Adoption of the Agenda.** Mayor Smart noted that the agenda needs to be amended to add *"Item 7A. Consideration of an Ordinance Directing the Building Inspector to Remove and Demolish Property as Unfit for Human Habitation and Directing that a Notice be Placed Thereon that the Same May Not be Occupied: 515 Spring Street."* Councilman Preslar motioned to adopt the agenda with the provisions of Item 7A and Councilman McQueen seconded. All were in favor and the agenda was adopted.
4. **Approval of December 9, 2008 Minutes.** Councilman Bayless and Clewis motioned to accept and all were in favor. The minutes are approved.
5. **Comments from Attendees. Ms. Brendalyn Moore,** Vice Chair of the MLK Foundation Committee presented council to talk to the city about considering the renaming of a city street in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She stated the subject road begins along Hwy 74 West starting at the city limits sign located across the highway from the Griffin Toyota dealership going down to the East Hamlet city limits sign located next to the Merita Bread Store on Hwy 74. Ms. Moore stated that 2009 will represent a year of change and new beginnings and said that Hamlet should be on board with the changes and show pride by honoring the founder father of civil rights. Ms. Moore reported that the committee members are dedicated to working and assisting in any way to see this deed accomplished.

Mr. Bayless stated that the requested road is a US Highway and that it would have to go before the Board of Transportation; he said that council can consider changing street names within the city, but that they cannot do anything with US Highways. Councilman Preslar asked staff to assist with obtaining DOT's contact information for the committee. He stated

that if the request cannot be considered with DOT, then the city will do whatever they can to rename a city controlled street. Mrs. David confirmed that she will assist with the contact information. Councilman McQueen suggested for Ms. Moore to contact the Town of Maxton, saying that they renamed a portion of US 74 that runs through town after Martin Luther King, Jr.

6. **Tabled Tax Release for Ralph and Virginia Davis.** Council referred to information explaining the tax releases requested by Richmond County last month for Ralph and Virginia Davis' property located on East Hamlet Avenue. Mrs. Strickland explained that the property has changed hands several times. Council noted the problem they have with approving these types of tax releases wherein property owners allow their property to go down and they spoke of the hazards with these abandoned properties. Council agreed that this will not be the last of these types of situations and that the city loses in these type matters. The manager confirmed that there is not a lot the city can do because we do not establish the guidelines. Councilman Preslar motioned to not approve the release and Councilman McQueen made the second. All were in favor of not approving the request. The mayor asked for the manager to send a letter to Richmond County informing them why the release was not approved.
7. **Resolution In Support of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.** Mayor Smart read aloud the Resolution supporting January 19, 2009, as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Councilman Bayless and Preslar motioned to approve the resolution and all were in favor. Mayor Smart stated that he is looking forward to the upcoming activities honoring Dr. King.
- 7A. **Consideration to Approve an Ordinance Directing the Bldg. Inspector to Remove and Demolish Property as Unfit for Human Habitation and Directing that a Notice be Placed Thereon that the Same May Not be Occupied: 515 Spring St.** Gail Strickland reported that everyone is aware of the problem property at 515 Spring Street. She stated that there is a \$10,000 judgment against the property and that the city more than likely will not get their money back on this demolition; however, that the demolition will clear the problem. Council and Mrs. Strickland briefly discussed where the property owner is residing. Mrs. Strickland reported that the city will place a lien against the property and the demolition may cost the city around \$8,000. She then informed council that prior to the meeting tonight she received a call from the owner of the property at 218 Wilmington Street and the owner informed her that he wants to try to take the structure down and she provided him with the terms. Mrs. Strickland went on to report that the abandoned structures at 515 Spring Street and 218 Wilmington Street are not burnable. Councilman Clewis made a motion to approve the ordinance and Councilman Bayless seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Council inquired as to the remaining amount of funds in the budget for code enforcement issues and Mrs. Strickland responded that approximately \$17,200 with \$2,800 being used thus far. Councilman Clewis noted that the city has recouped some of the funds in this area.
8. **Departmental Reports.**  
**Chief Haywood** thanked his officers and fellow employees for their hard work since before the Christmas holidays. He added that Officer George Schaner recovered the same vehicle twice and he thanked him for his hard work. He read aloud a letter from the Governor thanking his department's dedication and support in connection to the

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Governor's Highway Safety Program. Chief Haywood reported that the department received a free trailer from the GHSP. He thanked the citizens for their assistance with the recent neighborhood watch efforts.

Councilman McQueen took a moment to thank Officers Jimmy Covington and Stephen Williams in connection to recent assistance they offered at his residence.

**Tammy Kirkley** announced that the next Small Town Main Street Community Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20, at 6:00 p.m. at Hamlet City Hall and she encouraged everyone to try and attend. Mayor Smart added that he sent out letters reminding the property owners and business owners about the meeting and that he hopes to have more participation at the next meeting.

9. **Manager's Report.** Marchell David reported that city offices will be closed Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and reported the garbage pick up schedule. Councilman Clewis inquired about the council meetings being recorded and televised. The manager stated that the county will be taking over the responsibility of airing the meetings and the city will be forwarding the tapes to the county. Mayor Smart reported that he has been receiving the taped meetings for the past few months to review them and get feedback in reference to the quality and recording professionalism. Councilman Clewis explained that he wants to make sure that he is giving the public accurate information on the matter.

The manager reported that the North Carolina League of Municipalities will host a 2009 Regional Legislative Update in Moore County and asked council to let her know if any are interested in attending by Friday for registration purposes. The update will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, 2009.

10. **Council's Comments.** Councilman Bayless reported that during the last Lumber River Council of Government's meeting he volunteered Hamlet to be a lead agency for a special revitalization grant. He added that hopefully, the city will receive some assistance with the match in this matter.
11. **Mayor's Comments.** Mayor Smart reiterated that the Small Town Main Street meeting is scheduled next Tuesday, January 20 at 6:00 p.m. at city hall and that the next Golden Leaf Foundation Community Meeting will be held this Thursday, January 15 at 3:00 p.m. He encouraged the public's support in both meetings.

### **Mayor's thoughts on items to address in the near future.**

- Issue of cleaning up debris on the streets.
- Proceed with supporting the Downtown Revitalization Project. The mayor wants to see more progress with the program and wants the city to step-up to the plate in getting something done that the citizens can see.

**Other Items to be brought back to the table again:**

- Update facilities at Memorial Park – the gym needs to be updated. This is an investment in our kids. Currently we do not have the facilities to keep what we have with the football and cheering program and it is the only program countywide.
- Stinson Bldg. – Need to decide what can be done with building.
- Opera House – Need to decide where we're at and keep moving with project.
- Lassiter Bldg. – Project is underway and construction should begin soon.
- Museum at the Depot – New updates will begin soon.

Councilman Preslar asked how things look like financially for the city to be able to hire additional personnel to clean the streets. The manager stated that she recently ran some numbers and found that it will cost approximately \$54,000 for the total package to include two positions for one year. It was noted that a new street sweeper will cost approximately \$200,000 and that the majority of residential areas do not benefit. Mrs. David stated that the city might be able to consider putting one employee in-place before the end of the fiscal year and maybe another one by the year's end. She suggested council to consider making room on the agenda for the extra personnel during the upcoming planning meeting. The mayor stated that he is envisioning putting blowers on people's back and walking the streets to clean them. He said he is in favor of putting people to work and stated that the city may have to find ways to cut in order get what we need.

Chief Haywood suggested looking into paying the contracted employee who cleans the Mary Love Cemetery to help out with this matter. Mrs. David reported that she and the Fire Chief have talked and the chief is lining up a viewing of street sweeper equipment that is used at the race track. Mayor Smart stated that this is something council needs to look at and consider.

Councilman Preslar inquired about the Stinson Building and asked if there is something the city can do to either rent or sell the property. The manager stated that one of the contractors who bid on the renovations is going get back with staff with other proposals. Councilman Bayless added that we are going to have to adhere to various criminal justice standards/requirements if the renovations are made for a police department. The manager commented that the city is going to have to do something to take care of our own and that we have been lucky with a few of our buildings thus far.

Councilman Preslar asked about hiring a few temporary employees with the manager reminding him of the importance of having to be careful in those situations. Mr. Preslar suggested checking into the possibility of having a contract employee or a full-time temporary employee until the end of the year to see if the funds will be there for the position. Councilman McQueen asked about looking into contracting with a private firm to sweep and clean the streets.

**12. Adjournment.** With there being no other further business to discuss, Councilman Bayless and Preslar motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:05 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tammy Kirkley, City Clerk