

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM  
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2019  
7:00 PM  
MINUTES**

**Governing Body Present:**

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Maurice L. Stuart, II
Council Member	Joe Robinson

**Staff Present:**

City Manager	Jonathan Blanton
City Clerk	Gail Strickland
City Attorney	TC Morphis
Finance Officer	Jill Dickens
IT	Zach Garner
Public Works Director	Billy Stubbs
Police	Jatique' Barnes
Public Buildings	Doc Sylvain

**Others Present:** Curtis Ingram, Linda Bayless, Carrie Aquino, Glenda Hampton, Geraldine Ludlum, Chip Gordon, R. E. Carlisle, Terri Robinson, Carroll Blakely, Michael Wilham, Jo Ann Wilham, Jordyn Wilham, Amy Guinn, Tim Nevinger, Kay Cavendish, Kelley Bryant, James Bryant, Sanora Dickens, Ollie Ingram, Misty Gibson, Audrey Stuart, Toma Patterson and LaTosha Bivens Patterson

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 7: 00 pm.

**2. Invocation**

Pastor Chris Lyerly of Calvary Baptist Church offered the Prayer.

**3. Adoption of Agenda**

Council Member Martin motioned to adopt the Agenda as presented. Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 3-0.

**4. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the July 9, 2019 Regular Meeting were approved by motions of Council Members Stuart and Martin. The vote was 3-0.

The Mayor announced 2 Council Members could not attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

**5. Comments from Attendees**

Mr. Chip Gordon addressed Council to discuss reestablishing American Legion Post 49 baseball. He wants the team to play at Memorial Park. He has met with City Staff and obtained a quote of

\$10,000.00 for the needed repairs at the location. Mr. Gordon stated he will provide all labor, except the fence installation and City employee, Doc Sylvain, has offered to assist with the fence. Once improved, the ball field can be utilized for other City programs. In reference to the Concession Stand, he said the City can operate it to recoup monies. The Mayor stated travel ball hurt the American Legion Program. In response, Mr. Gordon explained the difference in ages allowed for Legion versus other programs. He has 14 committed players at this time. Mr. Bayless inquired if Mr. Gordon was requesting the \$10,000 from the City and he confirmed he was, but he was willing to use his equipment and provide all the labor at no cost. He will also maintain the fields year-round. Council Member Martin called the proposal a win-win for the City, stating if the American Legion Program folds, the City still has an upgraded ballpark. City Manager Jonathan Blanton provided an overview of the in-depth cost analysis of the renovations. Mr. Gordon explained he was purchasing the lumber from Belk Lumber at their cost. Also noted was the fencing is \$8600.00, the majority of the costs. He explained the City can get a savings if they use the City dump trucks to transport the clay needed for the infield, but has the delivery price included in the quote. Mr. Martin inquired on coaches and who pays for the expenses of the team. Mr. Gordon stated he has been raising money and has reached his goal of \$7000.00 for expenses. He and Chaz Sessoms will volunteer their time to coach. Mayor Bayless said Council could consider at the January Budget Meeting but the Manager explained clearance was needed at this time for Mr. Gordon to move forward and have the field ready for the Spring. Council Member Martin asked for the Manager's opinion of the matter. Mr. Blanton stated this is a program led by someone with passion for the project and in the worst case, the City would have a refurbished field that could be utilized for other uses. He said if Council agrees and allows him to work with Mr. Gordon, he will work to hammer out an agreement as to the specific responsibilities of each party. Council Member Robinson stated he remembered the past history of the American Legion and its impact on the community. He feels it would be beneficial to the community at this time and commended Mr. Gordon for his passion. His only concern was interference with soccer and other sports. It was determined there would be no interference. Mr. Robinson said he was on board with the City financing the project. Council Member Stuart recalled the attendance at the American Legion Games. He expressed his appreciation to the City Manager for working on the terms of liability for each party. Council Member Martin provided a motion to allow the City Manager to work with Mr. Gordon to make improvements to the Memorial Park Field up to \$10,000.00. Council Member Stuart provided the second and the vote was 3-0.

#### Old Business

**6. Public Hearing No. 1. - Commercial Vehicle Parking**

Mayor Bayless opened the Public Hearing and asked, in the absence of 2 Council Members, for a motion to postpone the matter until the September Meeting. Council Martin motioned to postpone the Public Hearing and Council Member Stuart provided the second. The vote was 3-0.

**7. Consistency Statement and Decision Commercial Vehicle Parking**

Postponed until September Meeting.

#### New Business

**8. Public Hearing No. 2 – Blakely Rezoning**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing and asked for any comments. The Mayor stated Carroll D. Blakely and Cynda B. Blakely, owners of property located at 101 Gin Mill Road, have filed a rezoning request. When zoning was established, the property was zoned B-3 Neighborhood Business. In 2016, the owners petitioned for and were granted the rezoning from B-3 Neighborhood Business to Residential -6. In January 2018, they petitioned for and were granted a rezoning from Residential 6 to

B-3 Neighborhood Business. The current request is to rezone the parcel from B-3, Neighborhood Business to Residential 6. The Planning Board met on July 15, 2019 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. A Public Hearing has been advertised, first class letters mailed to surrounding property owners and the land posted with a rezoning sign. No one presented to address Council. The Public Hearing was closed.

**9. Consistency Statement and Decision Blakely Rezoning**

Council Member Stuart provided the motion to adopt the Consistency Statement and Council Member Robinson gave the second. The vote was 3-0. The motion to approve the rezoning was offered by Council Member Robinson and second by Council Member Martin. The vote was 3-0.

**10. Public Hearing No. 3 – Gattis Rezoning**

Mayor Bayless opened the floor to the Public Hearing and asked for any comment. The Mayor stated Jerry and Gwen Gattis have purchased the property formally operating as Fiesta Brava and also the lot at 705 King Street. Lot 8078 on Spring Street and a portion of Lot 8909 are currently zoned Residential 6. The property owners are requesting to rezone the properties to B-2 General Business. The Planning Board met on July 15, 2019 and offers a favorable recommendation for the rezoning. A Public Hearing has been advertised and first-class letters mailed to surrounding property owners. No one presented to address Council. The Public Hearing was closed.

**11. Consistency Statement and Decision Gattis Rezoning**

Council Member Robinson provided the motion to adopt the Consistency Statement and Council Member Stuart gave the second. The vote was 3-0. The motion to approve the rezoning was offered by Council Member Robinson and second by Council Member Martin. The vote was 3-0.

**12. Approval of Annual Tax Settlement for FY 2018/19.**

The City Manager provided the tax collection rates for prior years and stated the rates are consistent. He noted the City does an excellent job collecting taxes. Council Member Martin motioned to approve the Annual Tax Settlement. The second was provided by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 3-0.

**13. Approval of Tax Releases**

Council Member Martin motioned to approve the Tax Releases. The second was provided by Council Member Stuart. The vote was 3-0.

**14. Ordinance to Demolish**

The Mayor stated Staff is requesting Council issue an Ordinance to Demolish property located 211 Pine Street. The Richmond County Tax Card lists the owner as William Vance Brooks, c/o Nancy Healy. Notices of violations were mailed by certified and regular mail to the address on the property card. The certified mail was signed for when violation notices were originally mailed in 2013; however, the property owner has not made contact with the City. The property has since burned, leaving a chimney that is leaning, and is a hazard. Staff wishes to move forward with the removal of the structure, following the requirements set forth in the NC General Statutes and asks Council to issue the Ordinance to Demolish. The motion and second to adopt the Ordinance to Demolish were given by Council Members Stuart and Robinson. The vote 3-0.

**15. Re-appointment to Hamlet Planning Board**

Mayor Bayless announced when several appointments were made to the Hamlet Planning Board last year, the Members' terms were staggered to ensure their terms did not conclude at the same time. Council agreed those appointed for 1 year would be re-appointed for a 3-year term. Mr. David Quick's 1-year term as a Regular Member expires September 10, 2019. Council Member Martin provided the motion for the reappointment. Council Member Robinson gave the second and the vote was 3-0.

**16. Appointment to Hamlet Senior Center Advisory Board.**

Mr. Bayless reported the City has received an application from Steve Mercer to serve on the Senior Center Advisory Board. Council Member Robinson made the motion to appoint Mr. Mercer to the Board. Council Member Martin provided the second. The vote was 3-0.

The City Manager advised Senior Center Director, Sarah Locklear, has provided another application for Council's consideration that could be voted on at that time or placed on the Agenda for next month. Council Member Martin made the motion to appoint Ms. Glenda Speight to the Advisory Board. Council Member Robinson provided the second. The vote was 3-0.

**17. Mayoral Appointment to Hamlet Housing Authority.**

The Mayor reported Mr. Charles Bristow's term with the Hamlet Housing Authority Board expires on September 15, 2019. The Director has indicated Mr. Bristow has agreed to a re-appointment for a 5-year term. Mayor Bayless re-appointed Mr. Bristow.

**18. Discussion of City Parks**

Mr. Blanton discussed the recent clean-up efforts of the City's Parks, stating WD James, Memorial Park and South Hamlet have received new playground equipment. With Mr. Gordon's plans for Memorial Park, it will be a visually appealing area as people enter the City. Two entrance signs have been installed in the City limits and 2 additional signs will be placed soon. An estimate for solar lighting has been obtained from Quick & Sinclair and landscaping will be placed. The City has been working aggressively at City Lake to remove the overgrowth and will continue to move forward. He would like to see large rocks placed and is working with Mr. Stewart Carmichael to provide a mural. The Manager showed Council and the audience a rough drawing of a landscape scene Mr. Carmichael had provided to fill the totality of the wall. Council Member Stuart inquired if the wall was the one behind the Senior Center and the Manager confirmed. Council Member Robinson reported he noticed, as he has been at the walking trail, that the corner of the wall needs attention prior to repaving the parking lot. Mr. Blanton replied the City will make the repairs and prepare the wall. The Manager said continued improvements would include lights for the mural. He stated as long as there was no objection from Council, he would move forward with the plans. Also, given was an update on the picnic tables. They are in but he wants to wait for placement until other improvements are made. Council Member Robinson also noted the location of the Imperial Fire Victims Memorial at the lake area. The Mayor stated he would like to see a mural on the side of the Birmingham Drug Store Building on Main Street.

**Other Business**

**19. City Manager's Report.**

Mr. Blanton reported the City is running well. He announced City offices will close for Labor Day but there will be no change in garbage schedule.

**20. Comments of Council.**

Council Member Martin commended the City Manager for taking the initiative on cleaning the City Lake. He asked the Manager to discuss the City and Sheriff's Department's Back to School Drive. Mr. Blanton said the Police Department will be grilling out and giving out school supplies that have been donated to the Department on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

Council Member Stuart thanked the Manager for the beautification efforts for the City. He encouraged the citizens to attend the meetings and support the causes of the City. He thanked his fellow Council Members and offered his assistance to them. He thanked the Manager, Sheriff and Police Chief for the August 24<sup>th</sup> event for the youth. He said we have to show the youth we care about them and invest in them.

Council Member Robinson stated he was thankful for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Hamlet and glad to see the improvements. He announced the Police Department's Neighborhood Watch Meeting for August 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm and asked all to come get involved and to learn who your neighbors are. He also asked citizens to bring their concerns to Council.

**21. Mayor's Comments.**

The Mayor stated he empathized with the Town of Dobbins Heights in the recent loss of the 17-year old. He said the new Council Members are doing a great job and encouraged the citizens to contact Council or the Manager if they have concerns. The dates of the Lions Club Fair were given as October 29<sup>th</sup> – November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mayor Bayless wished everyone a safe Labor Day. He mentioned the effectiveness of the Tsunami Cameras leading to the arrest of the recent bank robbers and said the cameras have been useful in other areas as well. Concluding, the Mayor remarked he is excited to see the reorganization of American Legion Baseball in Hamlet.

**22. Motion to Adjourn.**

At 7:52 m, Council Members Martin and Robinson provided the motion and second to adjourn. The vote was 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail M. Strickland, City Clerk