



**OFFICIAL MINUTES
RINCON CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2022
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
107 W. 17TH STREET
7:00 PM**

Councilmember Present:

Reese Browher
Levi Scott, Jr.
Patrick Kirkland
Michelle Taylor
Jesse Blackwell, Jr. – Present by Phone
Damon Rahn

Present:

Ken Lee, Mayor
Jason Stewart, Interim City Manager
Raymond Dickey, City Attorney
Dulcia King, City Clerk
Daniel Thompson, Police Lieutenant
Lou Reed, Interim Fire Chief
Mike Osborne, Recreation Director
Tm Bowles, Public Works Director

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM. The Invocation was given by Mayor Lee and Pledge to the Flag was recited.

Approval of the agenda with the following addition:

12A, Reappointment of Mr. Herb Jones as the Non Public Representative for Effingham County to serve on the Coastal Regional Commission.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Rahn
Vote by Council: Unanimous

Approval of the May 23, 2022 minutes:

Motion to approve: Councilmember Kirkland

Second: Councilmember Scott

Vote by Council: Unanimous

Public Hearing #1:

Turn meeting over to public hearing officer, Raymond Dickey:

Open public hearing: 7:10 PM

Public Hearing on a petition for a Zoning Map Amendment filed by GHGC Holdings, LLC. to rezone 1.89 acres located at 0 Blandford Road to amend the zoning from R4 (Single Family Residential) to R8 (Residential – Multi-unit attached) (townhouse or row house); the property is owned by GHGC Holdings, LLC. (Parcel # R2130013)

Public input: Attorney Dickey said all parties involved will have no less than 10 minutes for or against this measure. He asked Mr. Stewart if an advertisement was placed in the legal organ, was the property marked and nearby property owners notified, yes. Neal McKenzie, Coleman and Company was present. Mr. McKenzie said the intention of this action is to construct 15 townhomes, the area is mostly residential. They are looking to add this in to give the residents of Rincon some more options for obtainable housing. Mr. Stewart said the Planning and Zoning Board did not recommend approval by a vote of 3 to 2, those not in favor were concerned it did not meet the comprehensive plan as far as the zoning map for future land use and suggested that it remain undeveloped, also there were concerns about traffic on that corner. The two who voted in favor of the project believes there is a need for obtainable housing. Councilmember Taylor asked were there townhomes near there, Mr. McKenzie said yes. Mr. McKenzie said they amended the site plan to accommodate concerns at the Planning and Zoning meeting. There were originally two entrances and the one closer to West Ninth has been taken out that will give people the ability to queue up that access point closer to West Ninth will be for emergency access only and will be blocked to residents. The townhomes are proposed to have a garage and will have additional parking. At the Planning meeting they also talked about trash and mail, they will have a trash enclosure. There is R8 present about 1100 feet east of this and there are two properties zoned R8, one is Pine Manor and another property on Broome Lane. As far as infrastructure, they just completed a large housing project down the road from this so we do have adequate infrastructure. This project will access on to Sherwood Court. They feel this project is in character with what is out there and in line with what the zoning is. Councilmember Scott said we are creating another problem you don't have enough distance to dump traffic on Sherwood Drive right now. How many houses have they built back there, Mr. Stewart said 36. There are three roads coming into one, bottle necking so we are creating another problem. We talk about the other units in that area, we don't want to saturate that area. Part of our plans is to clean up the area, if we get too many of these units we lose control so we don't want to start accepting rental properties in this area. If you have one 150 yards down the street we don't want to put another because what will

start happening is it will create public safety and stacking problems. Councilmember Taylor said when you drive down 9th Street there is neighborhood after neighborhood, the traffic is going to be there regardless. Councilmember Scott said we have to plan for the traffic. That is what we are here for and why it should have been cleared in the Planning Board. Instead of this coming before us with a changed version this should have went back to the Planning and Zoning Board. Mr. McKenzie said we are here for the Zoning the concept plan is not set in stone, they would come back in for the design of this. Councilmember Scott said if we approve the Zoning change tonight, we cannot stop you from putting those units in there. Mayor Lee said in the minutes of the Planning and Zoning meeting it is noted that this goes against our Comprehensive Plan, if we go to the trouble of developing a Comprehensive Plan for long range planning for this City and then we disregard what are we doing. This violates the Comprehensive Plan for this property, that is the first thing that jumps out to him. Mr. Stewart said the Comprehensive Plan is a guide on how you approve not necessarily that you can't approve the change.

Close public hearing: 7:28 PM

Turn the meeting back over to Mayor Lee.

Vote on the first reading for a petition for a Zoning Map Amendment has been filed by GHGC Holdings, LLC. to rezone 1.89 acres located at 0 Blandford Road to amend the zoning from R4 (Single Family Residential) to R8 (Residential - Multi-unit attached) (townhouse or row house); the property is owned by GHGC Holdings, LLC. (Parcel # R2130013)

Attorney Dickey said we have completed the public hearing, if there are other questions that you have we can table the vote to get the additional information. Councilmember Kirkland said he is not opposed to changing it to R8, but with all of the questions he wants to think on this. Councilmember Scott said we talked about not saturating this area with rentals. The residents will not believe we are trying to put in another unit down there less than 150 feet. Councilmember Rahn asked if it was a residential problem or traffic problem. Councilmember Scott said it is a traffic problem for him but he knows that it will be a rental unit problem for the residents in the area. Mr. McKenzie said they do not have to be rental properties. Councilmember Scott said we need to stay as close to the Comprehensive Plan as possible. Mr. McKenzie said they will do a traffic study. Councilmember Scott they need to look at the traffic but they will need to take it to the Planning Board again.

Lisa Cowan, asked have they seen the notes from the Planning meeting, Mr. Stewart said Council does have those minutes.

Councilmember Rahn asked did any alterations made to a plan have to go back before the Planning Board, Mr. Stewart said that is at Council's discretion.

Motion to table: Councilmember Taylor
Second: Councilmember Kirkland

Mayor Lee said he would like it to go back to Planning and Zoning Board. Both motions were amended to table until July 25th due to the concept plan being different from what the Planning and Zoning Board reviewed and this item going back to the Planning and Zoning Board.

Councilmember Kirkland said you still have a lot of destiny there, he thinks it is great to have affordable housing there but we have no control of the county area back there and if it blows up then we have a major problem.

Vote by Council: Unanimous

Public Hearing #2:

Turn meeting over to public hearing officer, Raymond Dickey:

Open public hearing: 7:45 PM

Public Hearing on a petition filed by Jacob Lang to rezone .74 acre parcel located at 107 W. 15th Street, to amend the zoning from OC (Office Commercial) to GC (General Commercial); the property is owned by QC Commercial Real Estate LLC. (Parcel # R2090027)

Public input: Attorney Dickey asked was this advertised, was the property marked with signage and the surrounding property owners notified by mail, Mr. Stewart said yes. The Planning and Zoning Board did recommend approval. This property has been a variety of things over the years. Attorney Dickey said he thinks the problem with this property is it does not have a separate sewer to the building facing Carolina Avenue. The water is separate. The house is Office Commercial. Mr. Stewart said it is a small parcel so he will be limited on what he can put there.

Maxine Wendelken, 110 West 15th Street, asked when was this changed from Residential to Office Commercial and is her property residential or commercial.

Councilmember Kirkland asked was this an opportunity to place this particular property into the CID (Community Improvement District). Attorney Dickey said it can be included in the CID. Councilmember Browher asked did GC open it up to a different variety of businesses like a gas station, Mr. Stewart said yes but it is limited by the size of the property.

Close public hearing: 7:57 PM

Turn the meeting back over to Mayor Lee.

Vote on the first reading of a petition filed by Jacob Lang to rezone .74 acre parcel located at 107 W. 15th Street, to amend the zoning from OC (Office Commercial) to GC (General Commercial); the property is owned by QC Commercial Real Estate LLC. (Parcel # R2090027)

A motion was made to table until staff can reach out to Mr. Lang and see if he is interested in participating in the CID.

Motion to table: Councilmember Kirkland
Second: Councilmember Taylor
Vote by Council: Unanimous

Old Business:

1. Request approval to purchase football/soccer equipment from Thompson's Sporting Goods in the amount of \$5,850.00. LI #100.6100.531116 (Tabled at the 5/23/2022 meeting)

Motion to remove from table: Councilmember Browher
Second: Councilmember Scott
Vote by Council: Unanimous

Mike Osborne said this equipment is desperately needed for football, there are a lot of things listed but what he needs right now are the shoulder pads. Mayor Lee asked if he is not getting bids, do you feel like you are reaching everybody. Mr. Osborne said he has placed an ad and reached out to people. Councilmember Rahn asked who does the County use, Mr. Osborne said Thompson Sporting Goods.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor
Second: Councilmember Scott
Vote by Council: Unanimous

New Business:

1. Request approval of a resolution to recognize Abercorn Baptist Church's 200th Anniversary.

Councilmember Kirkland said he went last week and Abercorn Baptist Church is celebrating their 200th year anniversary. It was a great event and they were appreciative of the resolution.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Kirkland
Second: Councilmember Scott
Vote by Council: Unanimous

2. Effingham Heroes, Inc, request approval of a special events permit to host the Freedom Rings in Rincon Parade on June 25, 2022.

Susie Davis was present. Mrs. Davis said there is a letter they are sending to businesses and organizations that will be impacted. The theme is Born in the USA and the insurance will be with Dewitt Insurance Agency. This year they will be staging from Rincon Elementary. The Third ID Color Guard and Military Band will be here. Tim Bowles said we caught a lot of flak from subdivisions about closing the road and not letting anybody know. Councilmember Browher said we need to reach out to the Home Owners Associations. A motion was made to approve and waive the special events permit fee.

Motion to approve and waive fee: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Kirkland
Vote by Council: Unanimous

3. Request approval to pay M.E. Sack Engineering \$19,577.50 for engineering services associated with the expansion of the WWTP for the months of February, April and May 2022. LI #506.4335.541453

Marcus Sack was present. Mr. Sack said he have submitted documents to EPD it has been in their hands for a little over a month. They are waiting for a response, hopefully they will get full approval. As a result of the grant they will have to do an additional environmental document. Councilmember Kirkland asked when we will start to see the funds, Mr. Sack said they are inundated and right know he does not have an answer for that.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor
Second: Councilmember Scott
Vote by Council: Unanimous

4. Sikes Brothers, Inc. request approval of pay request #3 in the amount of \$990.00 for 2021 Rincon LMIG - Lockner Drive. LI #320.4100.549100

Doug Morgan was present. Mr. Morgan said this was overlooked and not billed, it is for crosswalk stripeing.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Browher
Second: Councilmember Rahn
Vote by Council: Unanimous

5. Sikes Brothers, Inc. request approval of pay request #4/final retainage in the amount of \$14,478.17 for 2021 Rincon LMIG - Lockner Drive. LI #320.4100.549100

Mr. Morgan said this has been completed everything was tested, reviewed, corrected and accepted. This will begin the one year warranty period. This project did come in under budget.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Rahn
Vote by Council: Unanimous

6. Griffin Contracting, Inc. request approval of change order #1 in the amount \$17,767.20 for the 2021 Rincon TSPLOST – Middleground Road project. LI # 335.4100.549104

Mr. Morgan said this change order is for work that was already done. Mr. Bowles wanted to tie the new six inch water line into the eight inch water line on 7th Street. Mr. Bowles said this is so it would loop those lines with valves to cut it off and on if need to.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Browher
Second: Councilmember Scott
Vote by Council: Unanimous

7. Request approval to purchase two 72” zero turn mowers from Georgia Equipment Company in the amount of \$30,811.80. LI #320.4100.542535

Mr. Bowles said this was advertised in paper and he got three bids back. Grid Iron, LLC was the lowest but they did not meet the specifications. They would not put on tweel wheels.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Kirkland
Second: Councilmember Taylor
Vote by Council: Unanimous

8. Request approval to purchase two LIDAR units from Stalker RADAR Applied Concepts Inc. and related equipment in the amount of \$4,400. LI #100-3200-542528

Lieutenant Thompson said two handhelds went out and they have been down two for awhile. Councilmember Rahn asked about calibration, Lt. Thompson said they have to be calibrated every year.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor
Second: Councilmember Rahn
Vote by Council: Unanimous

9. Request approval to surplus Engine 12 Pierce Class A Pumper.

Interim Chief Reed said this is the vehicle that Engine One replaced, they thought they would be able to keep it but it will cost \$84,000 to fix. It is a 2007.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Taylor
Second: Councilmember Browher
Vote by Council: Unanimous

10. Request approval of a career development plan for the Rincon Fire Department.

No action taken. Item will be taken to a workshop.

11. Request approve of three Lieutenant Positions according to the organizational chart. LI #216.3500.511100

No action taken.

12. Request approval of annexation petition from William Exley for a 388.21 acre property located at 923 South Old Augusta Road.

Attorney Dickey said this is a petition filed by Mr. Exley and it will start the process of annexation. Once you accept documents will go to the County and will come back to you in approximately 60 days.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Browher
Vote by Council: Unanimous

12A. Reappointment of Mr. Herb Jones as the Non Public Representative for Effingham County to serve on the Coastal Regional Commission.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Rahn
Vote by Council: Unanimous

13. Administrative Reports:

City Manager – Mr. Stewart said he has asked staff to assist him with a comprehensive package to give to the development community. Mr. Lee said we have been talking about that for a long time, just some consistency and what the expectations are, a check list; they do have vacancy on the Planning Board.

City Engineer – Mr. Morgan said he has emailed staff a list of projects and update every week; he got back the signed contracts for the 2023 LMIG; they finished the football plans, just a few minor details and then they will put it out to bid; Councilmember Kirkland asked about the McDonald sidewalk, Mr. Morgan said they will have to meet about that; they are just about finished with the Public Works parking lot.

Councilmember Taylor said she needs plans for Veterans Park at the library and asked did he know anything about the landscape architecture for City Hall. Mr. Morgan said he is not aware but he will find out and get an update.

Chief of Police – Lt. Thompson informed Council that they filled the part time Property Custodian position; they are down two on patrol so the department is almost full staff; they

are going to repurpose a Mercedes for CID. Councilmember Kirkland asked about a Resource Officer position, Lt Thompson said he does not have any information on that. Attorney Dickey said we really need to speak to Chief Murrell.

Recreation Dept. – Mr. Osborne presented information about the playground equipment. The total estimate that he has is \$298,172.18. Councilmember Kirkland asked about a walking path. Councilmember Scott asked about the budget, Mr. Osborne said everything is included in this price. Mr. Osborne said he needs to have a workshop to have a good discussion. Councilmember Browher asked about funding, what revenue source. Mr. Osborne said he has money in SPLOST. Councilmember Browher asked could we put it on the next agenda to spend up to \$300,000. Attorney Dickey said go ahead and put it out to bid first and move forward with a funding source. Councilmember Browher asked if there was any way we can get the equipment that is at Veteran’s Park up and running. Mr. Osborne said the slide is also in need of repair.

Water/Sewer/Public Works – Mr. Bowles said the weather is getting hotter and we are coming up on a chlorine shortage. We may need to tighten up the water ordinance.

Finance – Mayor Lee said he has reached out Monica’s supervisor, Chris Holland, to ask for a dedicated day when she will be in the office and he was told Thursday will be her committed day.

Lost Plantation – Mayor Lee said the Bistro had their final inspection on Friday and he has talked to Fran Harbin about the transition of financials to the Bistro.

Mayor and Council - Andy Cripps from the Effingham County Chamber of Commerce was present. Mr. Cripps said they will have the annual awards coming up on the 23rd. He is looking forward to moving into their new building.

Mayor Lee informed Council that we are scheduled for next LOST meeting on Tuesday the 21st. Councilmember Browher asked about the Paid Time Off that was discussed at the workshop. Attorney Dickey said we are going to have a complete workshop on the Community Improvement District because it starts on July 1. There will be a workshop on June 28th for Recreation and Fire and one on July 9 for CID and benefits discussion.

14. Executive session to discuss personnel, pending litigation, attorney client privilege, and real estate.

Motion: Councilmember Scott
Second: Councilmember Kirkland
Vote by Council: Unanimous

Motion to return to meeting: Councilmember Rahn
Second: Councilmember Kirkland
Vote by Council: Unanimous

15. Follow the statutes of executive session, to put on file an executive session affidavit and resolution.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Browher

Second: Councilmember Kirkland

Vote by Council: Unanimous

16. Take any action that is needed on the items from executive session.

A motion was made to appoint Jason Stewart as Interim City Manager.

Motion to approve: Councilmember Rahn

Second: Councilmember Scott

Vote by Council: Unanimous

Adjourn:

Motion: Councilmember Kirkland

Second: Councilmember Scott

Vote by Council: Unanimous