

MINUTES
WORK SESSION MEETING
OF THE PERRY CITY COUNCIL
January 4, 2010
5:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order: Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth, Jr., Presiding Officer called to order the work session meeting held January 4, 2010, 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll:

Elected Officials Present: Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth Jr., Presiding Officer.
Council Members - Willie King, Phyllis Bynum-Grace and Riley Hunt.
Council Elect Members - Joe Posey, Randall Walker and William Jackson.

Elected Official Absent: None.

Departmental Staffing: City Manager Lee Gilmour, Mike Beecham - Director of Community Development, George Potter – Director of Public Safety, Deputy Chief Joel Gray – Fire Department, Brenda King – Director of Administration and Joni Ary - Recording Secretary.

Guests: Mr. Penrose Wolfe, Mr. Tom Arledge, Mrs. Lora Arledge and Mr. Bob Hubbard.

Press: Charlotte Perkins and Crystal Riner – Houston Home Journal.

3. Items of Review/Discussion: Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth Jr.

- 3a. Review of proposed sign ordinance amendment. Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth Jr. stated that the City has a public hearing and first reading of an ordinance on the same night, then after 45 days that ordinance becomes law if no action is taken. The Council must take action at the 01/05/2010 meeting because the 45 days time limit will expire prior to the 01/19/2010 meeting. Mayor Elect Faircloth asked Mr. Mike Beecham – Director of Community Development to review with Council the proposed sign ordinance amendment and if Council had any specific questions regarding the proposed sign ordinance.

Mr. Beecham gave an overview stating that the animated signs will change its message every six hours. Council Member Riley Hunt asked Mr. Beecham if he has checked with other towns to see if there is a safety or increase in traffic issues. Mr. Beecham stated that Warner Robins and Macon did not consider these signs to be a traffic hazard. Council Member Elect William Jackson stated that he felt like six hours just way

over does it. Council Member Elect Joe Posey asked if the vehicles that drive around that have signs if they would fall under this ordinance. Council Member Phyllis Bynum-Grace asked if a study has been done about animated signs. Mr. George Potter – Director of Public Safety stated that flashing signs that distract drivers are a safety issue, but he does not have a problem with signs that are not flashing. Council Member Riley Hunt stated that he did not want to hinder businesses since we all are experiencing hard times. Council Member Willie King stated that we should leave it like it is as long as it's safe. Council Member Elect Randall Walker stated that in both Warner Robins and Macon they have billboard signs that change in color with LED lights and they are just as distracting as flashing signs. Council Member Elect William Jackson asked if the change to the ordinance came from GMA. Mr. Beecham stated that the ordinance change came from GMA. Mayor Elect Faircloth asked if Council was in concurrence to allow animated signs, but limit the amount of times the sign can change to once every ten seconds and also state that the animated sign could not be flashing. Mayor Faircloth asked Mr. Beecham to have the changes recommended available for Council to review at the pre-Council meeting tomorrow night at 5:00 p.m. All members concurred.

Mr. Beecham stated that the next issue with the proposed sign ordinance is the residential signs. Mr. Beecham stated that under the new sign ordinance citizens can put an unlimited amount of 4 square feet signs in residential neighborhoods as advised by legal council. Mr. Beecham stated that our current ordinance relative to residential signs needs to change to conform to the law. City Manager Lee Gilmour stated that the current proposed ordinance came from the Planning Commission. City Manager Lee Gilmour stated that there are two options; (1) doesn't allow signage, or (2) keep the ordinance as it is now allowing signage, but only for political, real estate and home occupation. City Manager Lee Gilmour stated that we can not regulate the verbiage of the signs due to "free speech". Council Member Elect William Jackson asked what started all of this. Mr. Beecham stated the City of Warner Robins was sued and lost. Since our ordinance was similar to Warner Robins a moratorium was placed on signs to give us time to amend the ordinance. Mr. Beecham stated that this is a state wide issue. Mr. Beecham stated that the City has based its ordinance on what GMA recommends and was approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Beecham stated that we can leave the residential signs as it is, it has not been challenged and under certain conditions allows political, real estate and home occupation signs. Council Member Riley Hunt stated that if we allow signs in residential neighborhoods it would ruin neighborhoods. Council Member Willie King stated that we should follow the recommendations of legal council and the Planning Commission and change the ordinance. Council Member Phyllis Bynum-Grace agreed with Council Member Willie King.

Mayor Elect Faircloth asked if there was a consensus to change the ordinance to limit the signs in residential neighborhoods. Council Member Elect Joe Posey asked once the ordinance goes into effect can we change it, and then put a moratorium on the ordinance. Council Member Elect William Jackson stated that he thinks we should leave the ordinance as it was originally and speak to our State Legislatures about amending State Law. Council Member Riley Hunt stated that we should leave the ordinance as it is. Mayor Elect Faircloth stated that the consensus is to leave the sign ordinance language as it currently is.

Perry Land Development Ordinance – Animals in a Residential District.

Mayor Elect Faircloth asked Council if they had any questions about this ordinance. Mr. Beecham stated that this ordinance is a change in the PLDO language to match the Animal Control Ordinance.

Perry Land Development Ordinance – Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

Mayor Elect Faircloth asked Council if they had any questions about this ordinance. Mr. Beecham stated that this ordinance is a change dictated by the State.

- 3b. Mayor/Council consideration of Mayors' Day attendance. Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth Jr. asked Council if there was any interest in attending the GMA Mayors' Day. Mayor Elect Faircloth stated that the City is under budget restraints and he does not plan on attending the GMA Mayors' Day. Council Members Phyllis Bynum-Grace and Riley Hunt stated that they would not be attending. Council Member Willie King stated that he would like to attend to continue his education. Council Elect Members William Jackson, Joe Posey and Randall Walker stated that they would not be attending. Council Elect William Jackson and Mayor stated that they would be attending the Newly Elected Officials meeting in Athens, and Council Posey and Walker stated they would attend the same meeting to be held in Tifton.
4. Other items as needed: Mayor Elect Faircloth stated that at the second Council meeting on Tuesday, January 19th at 5:00 pm a photographer will be at City Hall to take photos.

Mayor Elect Faircloth reminded Council that there will be a pre-Council meeting tomorrow at 5:00 pm to review the proposed adjustments to the proposed sign ordinance.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Elect James E. Faircloth Jr. adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m.