

**MINUTES**  
**WORK SESSION MEETING**  
**OF THE PERRY CITY COUNCIL**  
March 16, 2015  
**5:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order: Mayor James E. Faircloth, Presiding Officer called to order the work session meeting held March 16, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

2. Roll:

Elected Officials Present: Mayor James E. Faircloth, Jr. Mayor Pro-Tempore Phyllis Bynum-Grace, Council Members Randall Walker, Willie King, Riley Hunt, William Jackson and Robert Jones.

Elected Official Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Lee Gilmour, City Attorney David Walker, and Recording Clerk, Cyndi Houser

City Departmental Staffing: Battalion Chief Robby Rowell – Fire and Emergency Services Department, Michael Beecham – Director of Community Development, Decius Aaron - Director of Public Works, Chief Steve Lynn – Police Department, Brenda King – Director of Administration, and Robert Smith – Economic Development Director

Guests: Mr. Andrew Presswood, Ms. Jeanette Arrington, Mr. Steve Rodgers and Ms. Sandi Smeltzer - CVB, Ms. Terre Walker, Ms. Catherine Edgemon – Main Street Coordinator, Mr. Davis Cosey and Ms. Cathy Shaw – FOPAS and Mr. Nick Kouloungis and Mr. Justin Futo – Middle Georgia Regional Commission.

Press: Don Moncrief, Houston Home Journal

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

3a. Presentation of the City's new website – Middle Georgia Regional Commission. Mr. Nick Kouloungis assisted by Mr. Justin Futo gave an overview of the proposed new City web site. Mr. Kouloungis pointed out the primary navigation menu, the larger search box, ease of contacting members of the various departments, ability to apply on-line for employment and pay bills. He also noted the Fire and Police departments are being integrated into the new site rather than having separate sites. Staff has received training, provided feedback and had an opportunity to experiment with editing the site. Mr. Kouloungis stated that when a new "brand" or logo is adopted, it would be very easy to incorporate into this site. The site was expected to go "live" the afternoon of March 20th provided it met the approval of Council. Ms. King urged Council to review the site and provide feedback before Friday.

3b. Discussion of the accommodation excise tax rate. Mr. Gilmour stated a prior Council had approved increasing the accommodation excise tax rate from 6% to 8% in order to

pay for the City's portion of the "Go Fish Education Center" and make improvements at the Perry Arts Center. With the last payment on the "Go Fish" to be made soon, Mr. Gilmour felt it was advantageous to review the current status. A petition was turned in from some of the hotel/motel owners recommending a reduction in the current rate. Ms. Smeltzer of the Convention and Visitors Bureau stated the CVB supports the local hotel/motel owners. At the same time, she realized that if the rate is reduced it would have a direct impact on her budget. If the rate stays the same, the CVB would be willing to work with the City to develop a product plan. By operation of law, an ordinance would need to go into effect to continue or lower the rate. A decision needs to be made soon which will allow notices to be sent to the owners so they can program equipment. Council will vote at the April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- 3c. Request to establish a designated account for animal control facility. Ms. Cathy Shaw stated the City is in dire need of a new animal shelter. After much research, it was determined that it was not feasible either financially or time wise to form a 501(c)(3). Therefore she was requesting Council authorize a designated account strictly for funding a new animal shelter to be established within the City's accounts. If this is authorized, grants could be applied for, donations accepted and other fundraising done. Any donations would also be tax deductible. Mr. David Walker had also advised there would need to be an agreement. Mr. Davis Cosey spoke in favor stating that people often donated to FOPAS thinking this was for an animal shelter. By establishing a separate account, this could possibly allow a 501(c)(3) to be created in the future. Mr. Cosey was complimentary of all the volunteer time and effort Ms. Shaw has provided to the animal shelter. Ms. Shaw is planning to write the grants that do not require matching funds from the City. After a brief question and answer time, Council concurred with adding the item to the March 17, 2015 agenda.
- 3d. Update of the Main Street Board. The Main Street Board requested approval to be a City organization. Based on discussion from March 2, 2015, Mr. Gilmour provided information on the Main Street Program's mission, vision, board member job descriptions and current by-laws. He also outlined the Administration's recommendation for board member qualifications and appointment process based on standards currently used Council. Mr. Gilmour noted that no other boards/authorities except for Convention and Visitors Board Authority have ex-officio members. A discussion was held regarding appointment procedure and terms of office. Ms. Edgemon provided more information including target dates and the Main Street Board recommendations. Council asked questions and held a short discussion. It was the consensus of Council to move forward to add the item to the March 17, 2015 agenda as an ordinance.
- 3e. Consider proposal for the Worrall Community Center sign. Mr. Gilmour showed an example of the proposed sign for the Worrall Community Center stating the sign has been approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission. It was a consensus to proceed with the bidding out the project for the full color sign.
- 3f. Update on the extension for natural gas service request. Mayor Faircloth asked the item be tabled because the requester could not be present. Council concurred with the request.

- 3g. Consideration of installation of downtown sidewalk in renovated Perry Public Library. The Perry library is close to complete, the renovations which will include new sidewalks. According to the blueprints, the area is on the edge of a portion of the downtown area where Council designated brick sidewalks be placed. Administration recommended City install this type of sidewalk with the cost being picked up by the City. Two possible plans were presented. The County is waiting on Council's decision to finalize their plans regarding replacing the sidewalks. Council requested more information be obtained by Administration in order to coordinate with the County's plans. Council agreed to move forward at the Tuesday meeting based on information received from Administration.
- 3h. Consideration of sole source contractors for sidewalk projects. Mr. Gilmour advised the last three (3) sidewalk projects have had the same low bidders for cement and brickwork. Administration was therefore recommending Council declare the contractors as sole source vendors for sidewalk projects. Comments from Mayor/Council expressed concerns these were not local vendors and the bidding process should be used. Council concurred with declining to authorize a sole source vendor for sidewalk projects.
- 3i. Discussion of control of violations of code violators. Based on discussion of repeat offenders during the joint meeting with the Planning Commission, Administration was recommending a 3-step program of increasing fines with possible loss of business license and disconnection of utilities when repeat offenders appear in municipal court. Offenders only appear in court after previous attempts to bring the owner into compliance with code violations through the normal channels of notification do not bring any results. Mr. Gilmour noted many violators appear to be unable or unwilling to make the corrections or submit a plan, but instead would rather pay a slight fee as a part of doing business. Council concurred with the recommendation of the 3-step plan subject to review by the City Attorney.
- 3j. Discussion of Blight Tax – 1012 Main Street – Old Pure Station. Mr. Beecham explained the property located at 1012 Main Street had been inspected and based on the recently passed Blight Ordinance it would qualify as a blighted property. A letter was sent to the owner advising of the City's intention to declare the property blighted and if so declared would be subject to a penalty of up to seven (7) times the ad valorem taxation. The owner has thirty (30) days from the declaration to appeal the decision to an administrative officer which would be appointed by Mayor and Council. Mr. Beecham further explained that the code violations noted in the pictures presented to Council only included those visible from the outside. There are no current City utilities or electrical service and cannot be turned on unless directed by Community Development. If no response is received from the owner, Council concurred to proceed with the implementation of the blight declaration.

4. Department Head Items:

Ms. King had no reports.

Battalion Chief Rowell left the meeting to answer a fire call.

Mr. Aaron thanked Council for the waiver for CDL instruction which is going very well. It has been beneficial to both the Public Works staff and Mr. Aaron. A new work order program, "Facility Dude", is set to go live April 1<sup>st</sup>. This will allow a history to be created and ability to monitor trends. National Public Works week is coming up in May.

Mr. Smith announced the Guardian Center received a Small Business "Rock Star" award from the Georgia Department of Economic Development, only one (1) of six (6) in the state. Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> is the City's clean-up day in coordination with Georgia Cities Week. Keep Georgia Beautiful is providing materials for this project which has been taken on by the new Perry Lions' Club and may also become an ongoing project. Ms. Edgemon invited and challenged other groups to join the Lions' Club in the cleanup along Courtney Hodges Boulevard.

Chief Lynn announced there would be a cleanup day in the Oldfield area on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 8 am and lasting until Noon with a light lunch provided. Participating groups will include Phenomenal Women, the Perry High School girls' varsity basketball team, Grace Church youth group and Abba House. Public works will complete the right-of-way clean up. A Blitz Build of the Habitat house on Van Street is underway.

Mr. Beecham announced that new home permits are still going strong averaging one per working day.

Mr. Gilmour presented a request from the former owner of the Howard Johnson for relief of penalties of FIFA and other fees in the amount of \$11,573.65 for the 2013 taxes because of a misunderstanding during the closing. Administration recommended denial of the request reminding Council their policy has been to deny such requests when it is not an error on the part of the City. The consensus was to deny the request.

Mr. David Walker – No report

5. Council Members Items:

Council Members Jackson, Bynum-Grace and King – No report

Council member Hunt reminded everyone that the tennis courts were removed from Rozar Park, but the agreement was that new ones would be installed. There are currently only 2 courts and they are very busy, especially on weekends. He also inquired about several code violations noted on Tucker Road including a travel trailer which is up on blocks and has been covered over with a tarp for several months.

Council member Jones inquired about the menu for Saturday's clean up.

Council member Walker wished Council member Jones "Happy Birthday".

Mayor Faircloth - No report

6. Executive Session entered at 6:55 p.m.: On a motion by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Hunt and carried unanimously, Council went into executive session for real estate acquisition.

7. Executive Session adjourned at 6:50 p.m.; Council regular meeting reconvened. Council adjourned the executive session held March 16, 2015 and reconvened into the Council's work session meeting.
8. Adopted Resolution No. 2015- 16 stating purpose of the executive session held on March 16, 2015 was real estate acquisition. On a motion by Council Member Hunt, seconded by Council Member Jackson and carried unanimously adopted Resolution No. 2015-16 stating the purpose of the executive session held on March 16, 2015 was for real estate acquisition. (*Resolution 2015-16 has been entered in the City's official book of record*).
9. Adjournment: On a motion by Council Member Walker, seconded by Council Member King and carried unanimously, the reconvened meeting of Council held March 16, 2015 was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.