

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, July 25, 2022

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Mayor Stevenson presided with Mayor Pro Tem Cochran, and Commissioners Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins and McDaniel present. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – July 11, 2022

The Minutes of the July 11, 2022, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

Joe Murray

Commissioner Askew presented a proclamation recognizing downtown merchant Joe Murray. Mr. Murray has worked downtown for over 68 years at The City Shoe Shop, The Rome Shoe Hospital and for the last 27 years as the owner and operator of The Blue Ribbon Shoe Shop.

City Commission Salary – Charter Amendment

Secretary Smith announced that the Charter Amendment to increase the salary of the Rome City Commission and the Rome Board of Education was being continued on First Reading. This matter is being advertised in the Rome News Tribune and will be scheduled for a Second Reading and vote at the August 8th City Commission Meeting.

2022 Tax Mill Rate – Public Hearing #3

City Manager Rich reported that the Finance Committee has recommended the City of Rome adopt a 2022 Millage Rate in the amount of 27.076 mills. This is a decrease from the 2021 rate of 27.427 mills. The proposal is to lower the City of Rome net M&O from 8.151 to 8.0, to keep the Capital Projects mill rate at 1.826 mills and to lower the Rome School M&O rate from 17.45 to 17.25. Even though the City of Rome is proposing to adopt the millage rate lower than the 2021, it is higher than the 2022 official roll back rate.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the 2022 Tax Mill Rate Increase. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

2022 Tax Mill Rate Resolution

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the 2022 Tax Mill Rate Resolution. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed. Commissioner Cochran moved to adopt the 2022 City of Rome Tax Mill Rate of 27.076 mills. The individual components are City of Rome M&O 8.0, City Capital 1.826 and City schools 17.25. Commission Collins seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

The 2022 property tax bills will be due by November 15, 2022.

Z22-07-01 Rezone 28 Lyons Drive

Rome/Floyd Assistant Planner Brice Wood introduced rezoning file Z22-07-01 request to rezone 28 Lyons Drive identified by Floyd County Tax Map Parcel H13X-255 from Suburban Residential to Duplex Residential. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this request. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. Speaking in favor of the request was Mr. Tom Sipp, 11 Bluff Mountain Road. Mr. Sipp stated that the planned development for this property will conform with the neighborhood and will offer more affordable housing in this area. With there being no further comments regarding this rezoning, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request for 28 Lyons Drive from Suburban Residential to Duplex Residential. Commission Askew seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-07-03 Rezone 1352 Redmond Circle

Rome/Floyd Assistant Planner Brice Wood introduced rezoning file Z22-07-03 request to rezone 1352 Redmond Circle identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel I120-36A from Office Institutional to Community Commercial. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this rezoning request. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the request. Speaking in favor of the rezoning was Mr. Chuck Hardin, 160 Three Rivers Drive. Mr. Hardin is an engineer and represents the owners of the property. Mr. Hardin stated that State Mutual (the owner) would like to rezone this property to Community Commercial for speculative and marketing purposes and they do not have a specific intended use at this time. There was no one else to speak on this matter and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request of 1352 Redmond Circle from Office Institutional to Community Commercial. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-07-04 Rezone 2524 and 2781 North Broad Street

Rome/Floyd Assistant Planner Brice Wood introduced rezoning file Z22-07-04 request to rezone 2524 and 2781 North Broad Street identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel numbers K13X-066, K13X-066A and K12Y-028 from Suburban Residential to High Density Traditional Residential. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this rezoning request. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning the request. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Walt Busby, owner of this property. Mr. Busby asked for High Density Traditional Residential stating that this is the best fit for this area. He is developing this property with single family homes and although the homes could be built with Suburban

Residential zoning, the High Density Traditional Residential zoning is more appropriate for this area.

Also speaking regarding this request was Mr. Sam Evans, 3 Indian Trace Drive, Jane Slickman, 2663 North Broad Street Extension, Marsha Lane, 16 North Pointe Drive, and June Tarpley, 12 Indian Trace Drive. Mr. Evans, Ms. Slickman, Ms. Lane, and Ms. Tarpley all spoke regarding this matter, not necessarily in opposition but referencing issues that are occurring in this area primarily with the condition of the roads. Mr. Evans specifically stated that the roads and sometimes the sewer is not adequate for the existing development, and he expects these problems to only get worse with more homes being built in this area. Mr. Evans asks that the City of Rome repair the roads in this area before new construction is allowed. He also referenced one of the retention ponds in this area and questioned who maintained that pond stating problems it is currently experiencing. Mr. Evans did express his opposition to a higher density in this area. Ms. Slickman and Ms. Tarpley also commented on the poor condition of the road and the inability for traffic to safely travel in this area. Ms. Lane referenced a recent smell that was detected in this area and while it was originally thought to be a natural gas leak it was later determined that the smell was from the sewer system. Ms. Lane questioned if the sewer capacity in this area was being addressed by the City of Rome.

Mr. Busby used some of his remaining time for rebuttal comments. He totally agreed with those other persons speaking tonight that the roads in this area are not adequate for current or future development. He did state that he was not aware of the sewer issue in this area. Mr. Busby commented that currently the density in this area is 4.2 and 4.8 homes per acre, and his new development will only be 4.1 units per acre.

With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request as submitted for change from Suburban Residential to High Density Traditional Residential and Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion.

There was lengthy discussion by the City Commission concerning this request. Specifically, some of discussion about the storm water retention pond. It was explained that the placement of these ponds is subject to the approval of the City of Rome Engineering Department and factors such as the topography of the property are also considered. The City Commissioners were in agreement that the roads in this area should be adequate and safe for the amount of traffic associated with these homes. It was also stated that the Rome School system is always planning for growth and additional homes in this area would not over stress the school infrastructure. City Commissioners also commented that an evaluation would be conducted concerning the sewer capacity in this area.

With the discussion concluded, the motion to approve the rezoning request was unanimously in favor.

Z22-07-05 Rezone 107 West 8th Avenue

Rome/Floyd Assistant Planner Brice Wood introduced rezoning file Z22-07-05 request to rezone 107 West 8th Avenue identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel number J13Y-052 from Office

Institutional to Neighborhood Office Commercial. The Planning Commission and staff have recommended approval of this rezoning request. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. He indicated that the owner of this property would like the option of using as a home or office whichever is more beneficial.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. With no one speaking in favor or opposition, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request at 107 West 8th Avenue from Office Institutional to Neighborhood Office Commercial. Mayor Pro Tem Cochran seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

SUP22-07-02 23 Chateau Drive

Rome/Floyd Assistant Planner Brice Wood introduced special use permit request, SUP22-07-02, the request for a special use permit for a change in use from a hotel to multi family dwelling units at the property zoned Community Commercial and located at 23 Chateau Drive. This property is identified by Floyd County Tax Parcel Number J15W-469B and portions of parcels J15W-470, J15W-471 and J15W-472. The Planning Commission's vote on this request was 3-3 and thus comes to the City Commission of no official recommendation. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, display maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties, stating that this property is currently used as the Comfort Inn and Suites Motel and that they would like to convert to micro apartments. There is a letter from Lisa Smith, Director of the Floyd/Rome Convention Visitors Bureau, opposing this change citing the loss of hotel rooms if a change is approved. Mr. Wood also stated that the owners of the property do not plan to combine rooms for larger apartments, thus each micro apartment would be approximately 380 square feet. Mr. Wood concluded his comments by stating that some local governments are considering proximity to downtowns, schools and other amenities when considering these types of permit requests.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Joe Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman lives in Cobb County and represents the owners of this site. He stated that this would be straightforward conversion and referenced a similar conversion that has taken place at the old Holiday Inn Skytop Motel. Mr. Hoffman stated that the Holiday Inn conversion has gone very well. Also speaking in favor of the request was Mr. Ryan Griffin, 21 Chateau Drive and owner of this property. Mr. Griffin stated that this will be a well-done conversion and they will encourage longer term rentals and discourage three and six months rentals. Mr. Griffin spoke regarding the amenities of this property stating a gym, pool and dog walk area. Water, power and cable are included, and he expects the monthly rental rate to be approximately \$700 and these units will be fully furnished.

Ms. Wendy Davis, 19 Vocational Drive, also spoke in favor of this request. Ms. Davis stated that these types of more affordable properties are needed in our community. Ms. Davis cited an example of a resident who stated they would likely be homeless if not for this type of micro apartment (Holiday Inn Skytop apartments). Ms. Davis reminded the Commission there is still a serious housing shortage in our community.

With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Quick moved to table this matter to allow for future discussion and evaluation. Commissioner Beeman seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

At the July 28, 2022, City Commission Retreat, a motion was made and approved to add this SUP item to the retreat agenda. A second motion was made and approved to remove this request from the table. A third motion was made and approved to send this SUP request back to the Planning Commission for further study.

City Commission Planning Retreat

Mayor Stevenson announced that the Rome City Commission will meet for a half day planning retreat on Thursday, July 28th beginning at 12:30 p.m. at the Fire Administration Building.

Joint Services Committee

Mayor Stevenson announced that the Joint Services Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 2nd at 8:30 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

LOST Discussion

Mayor Pro Tem Cochran announced that the discussion continues regarding the Local Option Sales Tax Allocation Agreement that must be approved by the City of Rome, City of Cave Spring and Floyd County before the end of the year. If an agreement is not reached within the 60-day period, then arbitration will be mandated.

Redevelopment Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Redevelopment Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 27th at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee will meet on Thursday, August 4th at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam King Room.

Historic Preservation Commission

Commissioner Beeman announced that the Historic Perseveration Commission has developed an animated booklet related to historic issues.

Historic Preservation Commission – Nominations

Commissioner Collins announced that the following re-appointment and appointments regard the Historic Preservation Commission are being officially nominated. Mandy Malone – re-appointed, Rev. Millie Kim – appointment and Logan Boss – appointment.

A vote on these nominations will be scheduled for the August 8th meeting.

Commissioner Collins announced that the Committee on Committees continues to work on vacancies for various committees, including more diverse appointees.

Boyd Austin – Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioner McDaniel announced that Mr. Boyd Austin has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Mr. Austin will replace Lloyd Fraiser who recently retired.

Parks and Recreation

Commissioner McDaniel announced that Parks and Recreation continues to be a discussed topic in our community. There are some concerns that the Rome/Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority (Floyd County Department) does a very good job in recreation, however some feel that the City of Rome does not have enough parks especially in the West Rome area.

The recent survey indicates that compared to other communities, our Park and Recreation Authority is underfunded.

Prostate Screening

Commissioner Askew reminded everyone of the importance of prostate screenings and that these are emphasized by the local men's health initiative.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 8:13 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk