

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, August 22, 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 Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins and McDaniel present. Commissioner Bojo was absent attending training. Commission Beeman opened the meeting with prayer and led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – August 8, 2022

The Minutes of the August 8, 2022, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, with one meeting date adjustment, were approved by unanimous consent.

Firefighter Appreciation Month

Commissioner Askew presented a proclamation recognizing September as Firefighter Appreciation Month in the City of Rome. This proclamation was presented to Rome/Floyd Fire Chief Troy Brock. Chief Brock, many of his command staff, and fellow firefighters were in attendance at tonight's meeting.

Fire Chief of the Year

Commission Askew presented a proclamation recognizing Chief Troy Brock as the Fire Chief of the Year for the State of Georgia. Chief Brock was awarded this designation earlier in the year. Along with the proclamation, a plaque was presented to Chief Brock recognizing this distinction.

Ken Wright

Mr. Ken Wright, P.O. Box 324, Silver Creek, GA addressed the City Commission concerning the PFLAG event that occurred earlier this year. Mr. Wright read the following statement (attached) regarding the event and a requested investigation.

Peaches 325 Broad St. - Suspension

Secretary Smith reported on the outcome of the License Hearing regarding Peaches, 325 Broad St., that was held at the August 15, 2022, Alcohol Control Commission Meeting. As summarized in the ACC minutes, the License Hearing was held as a result of a large fight that occurred at Peaches in the early morning hours of Saturday, July 30, 2022. At the end of the Hearing and fact-finding effort by the Alcohol Control Commission, a motion was approved to require Stephanie Shaw, licensee at Peaches, to meet with the Rome Police Chief to develop a written plan for her security needs. This plan is to be closely followed by Peaches after its development. The ACC also recommended that the Alcohol Pouring License and the Entertainment License at Peaches be suspended for a two-week period.

Commissioner Beeman commented on the testimony heard at the Alcohol Control Commission, especially regarding the severity of the fight and the lack of adequate security on that day. Commission Beeman moved to approve the recommendation by the Alcohol Control Commission regarding the development of the security plan and the two-week suspension of the

Alcohol Pouring License and the Entertainment License. Commission Collins seconded the motion.

Ms. Shaw was present tonight representing Peaches and reviewed some of the same testimony that was given at the Alcohol Control Commission hearing. She emphasized that the large crowd that arrived at her establishment that night was unexpected, and she was not prepared for the ensuing fight. She reminded the Commission that she did have security present that night, however it was only one person, and they were not able to address the needs after the fight began. Ms. Shaw also stated that, until recently she had employed an off duty local (POST) certified police officer. Although these officers are not able to work inside her establishment, their presence at the door is a deterrent to disorderly activities. She stated she has had difficulty in hiring an off-duty police officer to work in this capacity recently. She also stated that she has a meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 23rd with Rome Police Chief Denise Downer-McKinney to discuss her security needs. Ms. Shaw reminded the Commission that she has been in operation at this location for approximately two years and this is the first incident of this nature that she has encountered, and she has not been before the Alcohol Control Commission for a license hearing previously.

The City Commissioners expressed their concern of this serious incident. They realize the importance of downtown and having all businesses behave in a responsible matter regarding, not only their employees but also their customers.

Commission Beeman's motion to adopt the ACC's recommendation of a two-week suspension was defeated by the following vote:

YES: Beeman and Collins

NO: Cochran, Doss, Quick, Askew and McDaniel

Commission McDaniel moved to require that Peaches complete the security plan as outlined by the Alcohol Control Commission and that the Alcohol Pouring License and the Entertainment License at Peaches be suspended for a four-week period. Commission Quick seconded the motion. There was considerable discussion by the Commissioners concerning this motion. Commission Collins expressed his opinion that the punishment was too severe for the infraction. He reminded the Commissioners that this was the first infraction of Peaches and asked if they would be prepared to impose as severe a penalty for other establishments with a similar first offense. Commissioner McDaniel stated that the Alcohol Control Commission does an excellent job however, their focus is more alcohol related and the City Commissions focus is broader. Some Commissioners expressed their concern that Rome's downtown environment must be protected and this fight did somewhat "spill out" onto Broad St. and placed others at risk. Each commissioner had comments on this matter. Commissioner Cochran added that the downtown open container ordinance, which was supported by a vast majority of businesses, places some extra burden on the business owners for responsible alcohol service and oversight of their customers. There has also been a majority of Broad Street problems occurring in the area of Peaches, with an apparent lack of responsibility by the owner. With the discussion concluded, Commission McDaniel's motion for a security plan and a four-week suspension of the Alcohol Pouring License and the Entertainment License was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Collins left the meeting to attend to other planned business before the conclusion of this topic.

April Tanner – Peaches 325 Broad St.

Ms. April Tanner, 448 Brumbelow Rd. Aragon, GA, addressed the City Commission. Ms. Tanner made comments regarding Peaches, 325 Broad St. Present along with Ms. Tanner was her son, Kade, and spoke about an incident that occurred in January 2021. She described the event when her son and another friend received a call from female friends who were at Peaches. These young ladies at Peaches were underage and ask that her son and his friend come to Peaches to walk them to their car. These young men did that but also got into the car with the two ladies and ultimately there was a serious accident on HWY 101S in the southern end of Floyd County. As a result of this serious accident, her son is now a paraplegic.

Ms. Tanner focused her comments on her belief there was underage drinking that occurred at Peaches on this night of this incident and that underage service is a regular occurrence at this establishment. Ms. Tanner encouraged the City Commissioners to investigate and take action regarding Peaches and any other establishments that serve alcohol to persons under 21.

Z22-08-01 Rezone 11 W. Forest Street

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed rezoning file Z22-08-01, the request to rezone property located at 11 W. Forest Street and identified by Floyd Tax Parcel Number J14E-231 from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties and stated that the Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Nathan Smith, Cartersville, GA. Mr. Smith stated he is a realtor representing the buyer of this property. This family would like to acquire this property as their residence, and they desire the correct zoning for the intended use. With no one else to speak regarding this matter, and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner quick moved to approve the rezoning of 11 W. Forest Street from Community Commercial to High Density Traditional Residential as requested, Commission McDaniel seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-08-05 Rezone 23 Chateau Drive

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed rezoning file Z22-08-05, the request to rezone the property located at 23 Chateau Drive and identified by Floyd Tax Parcel Number J15W-469B and portions of parcels J15W-470, J15W-472 and J15W-471 from Community Commercial to Multi-Family Residential. Mr. Wood reminded the Commission, that this request originally appeared last month in the form of a Special Use Permit. City Commission ultimately referred this request back to the Planning Commission and the request has been changed to a rezoning. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties and reported that the plan is to convert this former hotel into micro apartments. The Planning Commission has recommended approval for this request.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Jim Hoffman of Sandy Springs, GA and the attorney representing 5th Skytop Corporation and Mr. Ryan Griffin of Chattanooga. Mr. Hoffman and Mr. Griffin explained that the plan is to convert this former hotel into micro-apartments. They explained that these will be very well managed and maintained with a full-time on-site manager. Their objective is to have most or all of the leases for the units at 12 months or more and the gentlemen also spent time outlining their security plan for this property. With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the rezoning request from Community Commercial to Multi-Family Residential as requested. Commissioner McDaniel seconded and after a brief discussion by the Commissioner, the vote was unanimously in favor.

SUP 22-08-01 - 333 Branham Avenue

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood introduced Special Use Permit Request file SUP22-08-01, the request for a Special Use Permit to use a house located at 333 Branham Avenue and identified by Floyd Tax Parcel Number I14W-433 and I14W-491 as a house of worship. Mr. Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding properties. The Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval of this request.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. There was no one speaking in favor or opposition and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the Special Use Permit Request as submitted, Commissioner Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Commissioner Cochran responded to a question by outlining the fire sprinkler requirements of the Rome/Floyd ULDC.

SUP22-08-02 - 1200 Dean Avenue

Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood introduced Special Use Permit Request file SUP22-08-02, the request for a Special Use Permit to operate an indoor gun range in an area zoned Community Commercial and located at 1200 Dean Avenue and identified by Floyd Tax Parcel Number J14J-343 and J14J-344. The Planning Commission has unanimously recommended approval of this request. Mr. Wood reviewed this file and stated that there are currently many warehouse units on this property. These will be demolished, and the gun range facility constructed. There is an adjoining retail gun store that belongs to the applicant. Mr. Wood also stated that the ULDC is somewhat silent on this topic, however the Floyd County Commission did require an SUP for an indoor gun range that was located in unincorporated Floyd County several years ago.

Mayor Stevenson called a public hearing to order concerning this request. Speaking in favor of the rezoning request was Mr. Greg Gibson, Euharlee, GA. Mr. Gibson stated that he operates Rome Gun and Pawn and would like to construct an indoor firing range on the adjoining property. Mr. Gibson explained that he plans to have 8-10 shooting lanes. The facility will be built to modern standards and will provide a safe, clean environment for firearm training and education with a certified instructor on-site. Mr. Gibson stated there is no indoor firing range in

Downtown Rome and he feels there is a market need for this facility. He also stated that his hours will vary, however he expects to be closed by 8:30 p.m. or 9:00 p.m. each night. He will require that persons shooting at the indoor range use commercially loaded ammo rather than hand loaded ammunition. He also spent time explaining his soundproofing procedures and other particulars about the facility such as firearm caliber allowances, and his lead capture system. He concluded his comments by assuring the Commissioners there is no possible way for a bullet fired from a weapon to leave this facility. With there being no further comments, Mayor Stevenson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Quick moved to approve the SUP request as submitted, Commissioner McDaniel seconded, and after a brief discussion the motion was unanimously approved.

Labor Day Closing

City Manager Rich announced that City offices will be closed Monday, September 5th in observance of the Labor Day holiday. There will be amended garbage and trash schedules on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. As a result, the Walker Mountain Landfill operating hours on Monday, September 5th, will be from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

LOST Negotiations

Mayor Stevenson and Mayor Pro Tem Cochran announced that City and County negotiations continue regarding our Local Option Sales Tax split. The City and the County and Cave Springs must come to a decision regarding this matter by August 26th or arbitration will be used. This matter must be concluded, and documentation forwarded to the State of Georgia before the end of the year. The next LOST Negotiation meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, August 24th at 2:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Library Board

Commissioner Beeman reported on the latest Library Meeting which occurred at 4:00 p.m. on August 18th. Commissioner Beeman stated that the meeting was very well attended and productive.

Tourism

Commission Doss announced that the Tourism Committee will meet on Wednesday, August 24th at 11:45 a.m. at the Rome Area History Center.

Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission

Commission Quick announced that the Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, September 1st at 2:30 p.m. in the Sam King Room.

Recycling Center Deficit Invoices

Commissioner Askew moved to approve the payment of the Recycling Center deficit invoices for the 2nd quarter of 2022. These deficits are split into three equal payments and paid by the City of Rome, Floyd County, and the Solid Waste Commission. The amount due from each of the three entities for the 2nd quarter deficit is \$6,886.37. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

General Administration Committee

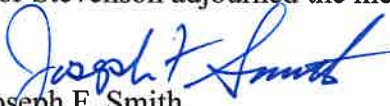
Mayor Stevenson announced that the General Administration Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 23rd at 11:00 a.m. at Stonebridge Golf Course.

Executive Session

Mayor Stevenson announced that an Executive Session was held prior to tonight's meeting on the motion of Mayor Pro Tem Cochran and seconded by Commissioner Askew and a unanimous vote. One real estate matter was discussed, and no votes were taken. Commissioner Quick moved to adjourn the meeting and Mayor Pro Tem Cochran seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.


Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk

KEN WRIGHT
RCC 8-22-2022

Rome GA recently made national news, but not in a good way! The title of the article reads " family friendly event features sex toys and drag queen performances".

Advertising for the event included 'family friendly' and a 'pride kids zone' that included face painting, live dj, hair styling and story time. At this event drag queens read to kids and vendors featured sex toys on display in the presence of kids. There is video and photographic evidence showing a child tipping the drag queen and sex toys on tables in full display of children. The national article also states that police took no action to stop these things from occurring, although I personally know law enforcement officers are both offended and disgusted by what went on in the presence of children.

This isn't a question about whether you support this type of lifestyle nor is about the choices of adults. Opinions don't really matter. What does matter is the law. This was in violation of no less than 4 federal laws;

Promoting lewd acts to a minor

Exposing minors to obscenity (sex toys is included in the definition)

Promoting obscene material to minors

Enticing minors for sexual activity

You see this didn't just happen accidentally. Kids were enticed to come to this event with the promotion of family friendly, story time, face painting, etc....that eludes to even further legal violations

This also occurred in a public park

There is a reason that adult stores have restrictions related to customers 18 and older – yet this was ignored at this event

Sponsors and customers of sponsors were not aware this type of illegal behavior would take place

However the parties in charge of this event certainly had full knowledge that children would be present and that these adult stores would be displaying these items. Of course naturally the vendors were aware also.

My ask is simple – that all parties involved in creating this event be investigated ,charged, and prosecuted for violating federal law for their roles in the corruption of minors. Additionally that based upon the criminal actions of this group – this event is permanently banned from Rome and Floyd county.

I sincerely hope that the sponsors of this event will place ads on local media to apologize for being misled to believing this was a family event. I am certain that their customers and Floyd county citizens would appreciate this -since nothing could have been further from the truth.

Please assure citizens that this Commission and the City police will act on this complaint and follow up with state and federal authorities as needed to bring these child sexual offenders to justice. This has damaged our community including citizens , businesses, schools, real estate market and industry recruitment. Now is the time for damage control to minimize the damages caused by this irresponsible, immoral and unethical event.

Evil persists where good people do nothing.