

2516

MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING

AUGUST 8, 2023

6:00 P.M.

The Mayor and Council met for their regular meeting.

Those Present:	John Howard	Mayor
	Larry Bradley	Vice-Mayor
	Lee Malcom	Council Member
	Myoshia Crawford	Council Member
	Charles Boyce	Council Member
	Norman Garrett	Council Member
	Tyler Gregory	Council Member
	Nathan Little	Council Member
	David Dickinson	Council Member
	Logan Propes	City Administrator
	Beverly Harrison	Interim City Clerk
	Paul Rosenthal	City Attorney
	Russell Preston	City Attorney

Staff Present: Danny Smith, R.V. Watts, Andrew Dykes, Beth Thompson, Rodney Middlebrooks, Mike McGuire, Brad Callender, Kaitlyn Stubbs, Les Russell, Leigh Ann Aldridge

Visitors: Ned Butler, Andy Sims, Ed Lane, Bill Schmidt, Danny Clack, Breann Robinson, Robin Peters, Shauna Mathias, Julie Sams, Casey Marbutt, Randy McGinley, Joy Welch, Giancarlo Podeszwa, Kellen Podeszwa, Lexi Coleman, Brandon Blume, Noah Coleman, Kamera Ansley, Derrick Ansley, Kolliyah Ansley, Kaelyn Ansley, Derrick Bailey, Zack Bailey, Jason Fontenot, Jamilla Fontenot, Sophia Fontenot, Lauyrn Shaw, Kendra Shaw, Lori Volk, Penny Anderson, Brenda Garner, Bruce Hendley, Robbie Vorvano, Jennifer Sims, Delaney Sims, George Baker III, Mark Willet, Sherri Willet, JB Willis, Dennis Black, Dion Lyons, Lisa Anderson, Taylor Clay, Ricky Clay, Adriane Brown

I. CALL TO ORDER – JOHN HOWARD

1. Invocation

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley gave the invocation.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Howard noted that all Council Members were present. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of Agenda

Add Item 1b. Presentation – District Attorney Randy McGinley under Section II – Public Forum.

*Motion by Malcom, seconded by Crawford.
Passed Unanimously*

To approve the agenda as amended.

*Motion by Gregory, seconded by Little.
Passed Unanimously*

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. July 17, 2023 Council Minutes
- b. July 17, 2023 Executive Session Minutes
- c. June 20, 2023 Planning Commission Minutes
- d. June 27, 2023 Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

*Motion by Crawford, seconded by Malcom.
Passed Unanimously*

II. PUBLIC FORUM

1. Public Presentations

- a. Hurricane Elite Proclamation

Mayor John Howard presented the Proclamation and introduced the athletes.

No Action.

b. Presentation – District Attorney Randy McGinley

District Attorney Randy McGinley of the Alcovy Judicial Circuit gave a brief update on the funding provided from the City of Monroe. He explained the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) does case load studies, and Alcovy was determined to be the fourth fastest growing circuit over the next five years. ADA Alex Stone is the Gang / Violent Crime Prosecutor. He discussed examples of various cases. There was an individual in Barrow County that is being charged with murder while wearing an ankle monitor. People using the phone while in jail admit to crimes and try to put out hits. They are trying to get mock trials started in the schools again. He explained there is not much that can be done for someone committing a crime using a gun.

No Action.

2. Public Comments

Mr. Ned Butler, of 574 Conyers Road in Loganville, spoke concerning the Development Regulation Amendments. He is a representative from Reliant Homes. He discussed the proposed change to Section 4.2.4 concerning development permits. The proposal has a hard expiration date on land disturbance permits of 18 months; this does not take into consideration that not all developments are the same. There are delays that occur like supply chain issues, labor ability, and weather conditions that are outside the control of a developer. He requested that the permits be left so that they do not expire if the development is active, or to give City administration the ability to extend the permit if substantial work has occurred. He requested Council to consider a way of addressing the current Preliminary Plat and Final Plat process as it would pertain to phasing. He discussed a subdivision where they paid Walton EMC for power, but they still do not have the transformers for the project over a year later. He discussed other possible options for the process.

Mr. Andy Sims, of 114 Pinecrest Drive, stated he is the Marketing Director for Tacos & Beer. He expressed his support for the current Ordinance that permits restaurants to remain open until 1:55 am. He discussed President Roosevelt ratifying prohibition and previous comments made by Mayor and Council. People leaving their second jobs and people servicing our town do not want the times to be changed. He discussed preserving the integrity of the community and the younger community. He stated this amendment is outlandish. Shifting the last call will affect current and future restaurants that rely on the late-night customers as a portion of their revenue. He discussed the tax money the City will lose due to the time change and following State Laws.

Mr. Danny Clack, with Will Henry's Tavern, spoke concerning the Alcohol Ordinance. They were just approved for their Alcohol License at the last meeting. A copy of the Alcohol Ordinance was given to him when he met with the Downtown Development Authority. The hours in the Ordinance were the same as his other two locations. They valued the current hours as essential when evaluating their cost for the restaurant. Their forecast for sales were also based on the current hours. They are making a major cash infusion to turn this building into a restaurant bar. He believes a lot of the potential customers are being forgotten if the change of hours gets approved. A vast number of people in the area do not get off work by 6:00, and they deserve the same benefits as people that get off early.

III. BUSINESS ITEMS**1. City Administrator Update**

City Administrator Logan Propes stated the Town Green is about 99% complete with construction. Construction of the Dr. Kenneth Grubbs Terminal Building has been finalized and will be open for use in a couple of months. The sidewalks on Walton Road are being installed. Resurfacing of the rear parking lot at the Library will be starting soon.

2. Assistant City Administrator Update

Mayor Howard stated Elizabeth Jones from the Pilot Park Garden brought vegetables to the Customer Service team last week.

3. Department Requests**a. Police: Approval – Walton County School SRO Program Agreement**

Police Chief R.V. Watts explained these are the annual contracts for the City to provide the School Resource Officer Program services on a full-time basis during the regular school year for Monroe Area High School, Foothills Regional High School, and George Walton Academy. The cost is completely reimbursed by the Walton County Board of Education and George Walton Academy.

Approval of the SRO Program Agreement with the Walton County Board of Education to provide school resource officers at Monroe Area High School and Foothills Regional High School, and with George Walton Academy for the 2023 – 2024 school term.

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Gregory.
Passed Unanimously.*

- b. Police:** Approval – Walton County School SRO Program Agreement for Foothills Regional High School

Approved above.

- c. Police:** Approval – George Walton Academy SRO Program Agreement

Approved above.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings

- a. Conditional Use – 113 North Broad Street**

Mr. Brad Callender presented the application for conditional use of this property to allow retail sales of wine. Retail sales of wine and beer are conditional uses in the B-2 (General Commercial) Zoning District and the CBD (Central Business District Overlay). The applicant proposes to include the retail sale of wine with a business that also sales olive oils, olives, spices, breads, and baked goods. The operation will be located in a 685 square foot loft space within the Monroe Mercantile Company building located at 113 North Broad Street. In addition to retail sales, the applicant proposes to include wine tasting as part of the operation. The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Conditional Use request as submitted without conditions.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

Ms. Adrienne Vines spoke in favor of the conditional use. She explained it will be similar to their business in Covington. Customers will be able to sample everything that is sold within the store. It will be a tasting experience, not a bar. They do not plan to offer beer purchases.

There were no other public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

- b. Rezone – 707 South Madison Avenue**

Mr. Brad Callender presented the rezone request from R-2 to PRD (Planned Residential District) at 408 Knight Street to develop a unique infill development project. The property currently contains one single-family residence that was constructed in 1920, which will remain on one of the newly subdivided lots. The .59-acre property will have a total of five (5) residences. The applicant proposes to construct four (4) new single-family residences on small sized lots. The new houses will range from 1,383 square feet to 1,680 square feet, with lot sizes from 2,541 square feet to 5,372 square feet. Each lot will be accessed from a private access drive on a common lot in the center of the development. The Historic Preservation Commission has approved their architecture styles. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezone request as submitted without conditions.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

Ms. Laurie Volk stated Mr. Callender has already summarized the project, and she is available if anyone has any questions.

There were no other public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

No Action.

- c. Development Regulations Text Amendment #7**

Mr. Brad Callender explained the purpose of the amendment to the Development Regulations is to modify Article 4, Section 4.2.4. The language in the section regarding development permits and their expiration is vague and difficult to interpret. Currently, Land Disturbance Permits (LDP) expire within 12 months, with one possible three-month extension. The proposed

amendment changes the expiration of development permits from 12 months to 18 months, with no extensions. It also clarifies the language within which an automatic expiration would occur. The language for Preliminary Plat expirations was clarified on January 10, and that language was specifically tied to the expiration of a LDP or a site development plan. The Preliminary Plat was expanded to be valid for one year. The developer would have to obtain a LDP or a final plat within that year; the Preliminary Plat would expire if they did not get these within the year. The language also included the attachment to the site development plan expiration, which extends the life of the Preliminary Plat to be carried with the site development plans and would be active as long as the LDP was active. The modification will extend the life of the LDP to 18 months after issuance. It also clarifies that the development permit will expire if development activity does not occur or there is no activity within six months. The expiration for a lapse in development activity is going to be increased from one month to 45 days. This will give a proposed timeline of one year to get an LDP after a Preliminary Plat has been submitted to the City. After the LDP has been granted, the developer will have an additional 18 months to complete the development. This will now give a developer a maximum time of 30 months to obtain a Final Plat after the Preliminary Plat has been approved. Currently, that time frame is about 24 months.

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley questioned whether this is the issue Mr. Butler was speaking about during Public Comments, and how it would affect his transformer situation.

Mr. Callender explained that development has technically already begun. The Land Disturbance Permit was granted in October of 2021, and the permit just expired in May of 2023. They should have ordered their transformers in October of 2021, which was prior to all the issues and delays with getting materials that started in January of 2022. He does not know why they were unable to get the number of transformers needed. There have been other developments within the City that have made their orders and received them in the time frame which that development has been granted approval.

Council Member Lee Malcom questioned why Walton EMC is having issues getting transformers.

City Administrator Logan Propes stated that he believes Walton EMC only uses one type of transformer and the City uses a variety of different transformers.

Ms. Malcom stated the County is allowing the boxes to be placed without the transformers so they can get started on the building process.

Mr. Callender stated that he is not familiar with that approach; it feels harmful without having a final plat. There has to be finality to a permit that is issued; there has to be an end to a process in order to correctly stabilize those sites. This expiration assures Council that if someone starts a development and walks away, there will be consequences to that action. The LDP involves the installation of infrastructure, stormwater management areas, and roads that will be dedicated to the City. They need to remain active, be inspected by City staff, and need finality to the LDP.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal explained part of the changes are to cleanup and fix some of the language ambiguity. The City does not want to take approval of any final plats until everything is in the ground correctly, except in circumstances where a performance bond makes sense. They are trying to prevent things like a crash from happening again.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

There were no public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

No Action.

d. Zoning Ordinance Code Text Amendment #17

Mr. Brad Callender explained the amendments. Section 620 – Modify Commercial Zoning District Land Use Regulations in Section 620.3 – Table 5 to modify and add land uses related to alcohol, brewpubs, breweries, and distilleries as regulated and licenses in the Code of Ordinances; add a tattoo parlor as an allowed land use. This will identify where in the City these uses should be allowed. This table only categorizes and places them in the commercial districts, it does not make them allowed by right. Section 630 – Modify Industrial Zoning District Land Use Regulations in Section 630.3 – Table 6 to add land uses related to alcohol, brewpubs, breweries, and distilleries as regulated and licenses in the Code of Ordinances; to remove the general category of Residential from the land use table. The uses are being added so they will be

allowed in the M-1 District, and the general residential category will be removed from the M-1 District. Section 643 – Amendment to the procedures for the Corridor Design Overlay District deferred to a future amendment. Section 643A.2 (1)(c)(vii) – Modify the materials permitted on structures in the Corridor Design Overlay District to allow E.I.F.S. siding. Section 645 – Modify the garage requirement in Section 645.5(6) of the Infill Overlay District to match the requirement in Section 910.1. Section 646 – Modify Central Business District Overlay (CBD) Land Use Regulations in Section 646.3 – Table 8 to modify and add land uses related to alcohol, brewpubs, breweries, and distilleries as regulated and licenses in the Code of Ordinances; add a tattoo parlor as an allowed land use. This will list the permitted use by right in the CBD. Section – 820 – Amend language for development types and minimum development size for developments required to be rezoned to Planned District. Section 1000 – Modify the language under the Residential – Accessory Apartment and Accessory Dwelling regulations in Section 1000.8 to grant the ability for all single-family dwellings in the City to be eligible for an accessory dwelling or apartment regardless of the underlying zoning.

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley questioned how removing residential from M-1 Zoning would affect the one that just passed.

Mr. Callender explained it would have no impact on that approval; the conditional use permit would stand as it was approved by Council. This amendment would make it a non-conforming use. The current M-1 category is a general category of residential; it is not specific residential land uses. Single-family, single-family attached, detached, duplex, townhomes, and lofts are all specifically identified as being land uses within other tables for R Districts, etc., whether they are or are not permitted within a certain Zoning District. This is just a general category of all of those land uses and not specific to what type.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

There were no public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

No Action.

e. Traffic Pattern Change

City Administrator Logan Propes discussed traffic pattern changes for Milledge Avenue, Colley Street, and Bell Street between Davis Street and East Church Street. The City has previously amended the traffic patterns to make all three streets one way. Now that the majority of the homes have been constructed in the area, in addition to a great deal of utility work, and on general observation of traffic patterns, it is recommended that the existing traffic patterns be amended as follows: leave Milledge Avenue that is 15 feet wide as one-way southbound from Church Street to Davis Street, change Colley Street that is 20 feet wide back to a two-way street, and change Bell Street that is 11 feet wide to one-way northbound from Davis Street to Church Street. He recommended having another public hearing next month to give everyone an opportunity to express their concerns and ask questions.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

There were no public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

No Action.

f. Southview Drive Cul-de-sac Proposal

City Administrator Logan Propes discussed the closure of direct access of Southview Drive to US Highway 78. The City is working with Walton County to construct a cul-de-sac to prevent cut through traffic from the new jail and public safety complex through the residential neighborhood. The City wants to get public feedback before entering into an agreement with Walton County for the construction and realignment of Southview Drive for a cul-de-sac street termination. The County will pay for this construction as part of the new connector road from the end of Baker Street to US Highway 78. He recommended having another public hearing next month to give everyone an opportunity to express their concerns and ask questions.

Council Member David Dickinson stated he would like clarification on how the new street will intersect with Baker Street for the people in the neighborhood.

Mr. Propes stated he will get a map from the County showing that information and have it at the next Council Meeting.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

Mr. Henry Harbuck, Sr. stated that he is neither in favor or against the cul-de-sac. The County wants to put a road right next to his house. It will ruin his beautiful view, but he is on board. He is not against progress. He has three houses in that neighbor, and the traffic flies through there. The cul-de-sac would be good. He would like to see it closed, but it will be inconvenient for some people. He questioned where it will tie in; he would like to see a picture. He does not see anyway that it can tie into the end of Baker Street. Tying it directly into the complex would be great and would cut out a lot of traffic. He discussed putting a park in the area behind him.

Ms. Robin Peters stated she has lived on Southview Drive for 32 years, and she is in favor of the cul-de-sac proposal. She would love for the entrance to Highway 78 to be closed tomorrow.

Mr. Propes stated the County says they want to make sure there is appropriate access from Pierce, Bolton, and Reese to the new street and back to Highway 78. They do not want to create interference there. The County will work with the City on the design of how it should intersect with Baker Street.

There were no other public comments; Mayor Howard declared that portion of the meeting closed.

No Action.

2. New Business

- a. Application – Spirituous Liquors and Beer & Wine On-Premise Consumption – The Thirsty Moose

To approve the application.

*Motion by Garrett, seconded by Crawford.
Passed Unanimously.*

- b. Conditional Use – 113 North Broad Street

To approve the Conditional Use to allow retail sales of wine and beer in the B-2 Zoning District and CBD.

*Motion by Malcom, seconded by Dickinson.
Passed Unanimously.*

- c. Rezone – 707 South Madison Avenue

Council Member Lee Malcom thanked them for putting in the green space.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal stated Unit #4 at the back corner must be condo-based, because it does not have legal road frontage. The single unit will have to be sold as a condo. The application indicates that there is going to be a condominium ownership structure, but it later states it will be fee simple lots. The lot in the back corner does not have legal road frontage; the only way it can be done as it is designed would be condominium ownership. They will either have to do a declaration of condominium, or they could eliminate the house on the back corner lot. He stated it would simply be approval for PRD Zoning, subject to the fact that the ownership of the houses would need to be pursuant to a declaration of condominium. The appropriate legal ownership structure would be a declaration of condominium.

Council Member Lee Malcom questioned whether all the lots would have to be considered condominiums.

Mr. Rosenthal answered the existing house, Lot #1, Lot #2, and Lot #3 could be owned as fee simple. They could all have CCRs for the access of ingress and egress of the common areas, and a declaration of condominium could be done for Lot #4 only. That would not be advisable, because the whole purpose of a condominium is to allow for fee simple ownership with an undivided interest in the common elements. The five individual owner condominium parcels would own one fifth of the undivided interest in the common elements, which would be the driveway and the two green spaces. He stated the Development Regulations do not allow lots without legal road frontage.

Mr. Brad Callender stated this is a planned district. They are creating their own standards and accessing that lot from an easement.

Mr. Rosenthal stated that is correct, but there would still be an illegal lot if it was sold as fee simple.

Mr. Callender stated that is the way the Madison PRD was done. They have lots that are accessed only from an access easement. They established their own regulations and followed the same pattern.

Mr. Rosenthal stated that will need to be looked into further. It is a title insurability issue. People are scared of the terminology of a condominium, but it is only a different legal way to own property.

To approve the rezone to PRD subject to the issue of the structure of ownership being worked out between the Development Office, the Planning Office, the Developer, and the City Attorney.

*Motion by Dickinson, seconded by Malcom.
Passed Unanimously.*

d. Preliminary Plat – Bell Street Subdivision

Mr. Brad Callender presented the request for approval of the Preliminary Plat for 502 and 506 East Church Street to allow for the development of four single-family residential lots in the Infill Overlay District (IOD). The property was previously subdivided into three lots; there are two existing homes on the lot that faces Davis Street. The property owner would now like to subdivide one additional lot from the property, which requires a Preliminary Plat and Final Plat. The two new single-family residential lots will front on Bell Street, and all four of the lots will meet the standards for the IOD. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the preliminary plat without corrections.

To approve the Preliminary Plat, without corrections.

*Motion by Dickinson, seconded by Gregory.
Passed Unanimously.*

e. Preliminary Plat – Brookland Commons

Mr. Brad Callender presented the request for approval of the Preliminary Plat for 961 Good Hope Road to allow for the development of 142 residential units inside a Planned Residential Development. The applicant is requesting approval of a Preliminary Plat to renew a Preliminary Plat that was previously approved on July 6, 2021, which has expired. The Preliminary Plat is identical to the one Council has already approved; the reactivation will enable them to get a new Land Disturbance Permit (LPD) tomorrow and move forward with the project. The project consists of 98 single-family detached residential lots and 44 single-family attached townhome lots, for a total of 142 units on 43 acres. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the Preliminary Plat without corrections.

Mayor Howard questioned why the project took so long.

Mr. Bill Schmidt, with McKinley Homes, explained they had to wait 14 months for power. They could not submit Final Plats until that was completed. He stated they waited three months to get the design for the power, paid \$260,000.00 to Walton EMC, and did not get transformers for over 12 months.

To approve the Preliminary Plat, without corrections.

*Motion by Dickinson, seconded by Malcom.
Passed Unanimously.*

f. 1st Reading – Development Regulations Text Amendment #7

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley questioned whether there is any way to grant extensions.

City Administrator Logan Propes explained they have discussed that option, but they are trying to remove all of the ambiguity from the text so that it is clear cut. He stated the timeline could be changed from 18 months to 24 months. There are probably bigger problems than just the timeline if things are taking longer than 24 months.

Mr. Bradley stated being actively involved is different from deserting a property.

Mr. Brad Callender stated if the developer is near the expiration of their permit, they can simply reapply for their Preliminary Plat to reactivate their LDP. If someone is actively developing a site and they reach month 16 and know that they are not going to get the Final Plat submitted to the City, they can reapply for approval of their Preliminary Plat, and the LPD will be reissued the following day.

Council Member Lee Malcom questioned the cost to reapply.

Mr. Callender answered the LDP is a ten percent charge, but that can be changed if Council would like it to be.

Council, Mr. Propes, Mr. Callender and Mr. Rosenthal further discussed permits, the costs, State requirements, and reapplying for permits.

Mr. Propes stated the City is not trying to be development unfriendly. The City is trying to create clearcut parameters, especially with all the litigation that is being seen.

Council waived the reading of the Ordinance.

g. 1st Reading – Zoning Ordinance Code Text Amendment #17

Council Member Lee Malcom proposed tabling the amendment for a month to get a better understanding of the implementations and to take a look at the overall M-1 Zoning areas.

To table until next month.

Motion by Malcom, seconded by Bradley.

City Administrator Logan Propes stated it seems that the M-1 Zoning is the specific issue that Ms. Malcom has with the amendment, rather than the elements concerning the Alcohol Ordinance. They were trying to provide parity for the forthcoming Alcohol Ordinance Amendment in the land uses. They wanted the changes to track at the same time if possible, so there would not be any ambiguity. He stated the M-1 Zoning could be removed and be considered at a later time.

To amend the motion to temporarily remove the M-1 elements from Zoning Ordinance Code Text Amendment #17 for further clarification.

*Motion by Malcom, seconded by Bradley.
Passed Unanimously.*

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal clarified that Ms. Malcom does not want the M-1 elements of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment to go forward. She is ok with the other zoning text amendments that do not relate to the M-1 Zoning classification moving forward. This will be considered the first reading of those portions of the Zoning Text Amendment and the M-1 portions will come before Council at another time with Text Amendment #18. The second reading of Text Amendment #17, with all the elements other than M-1, will be next month.

To waive the second reading of the Ordinance.

h. 1st Reading – Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance Amendment

Mayor Howard discussed the time change within the Ordinance.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal stated the Ordinance is still drafted as 12:30, because they never heard a definitive answer concerning the time. The other requested changes have been made. It would be good if Council had a consensus on the time for the hours of operation, so it can be inserted for the second reading. He suggested that Council discuss what time they would like for it to be now.

Council Member Norman Garrett stated he wants the time to remain at 1:55.

Council Member David Dickinson stated the time is not all that important to him. He is in favor of a reasonable compromise; he suggested 1:00 for the time of last call.

Council Member Tyler Gregory stated he is fine with 1:00 as a compromise.

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley stated that he does not have a preference.

Council Member Lee Malcom stated she would compromise at 1:00.

Council Member Myoshia Crawford stated 1:00.

Council Member Charles Boyce stated 1:55.

Council Member Nathan Little stated 1:00

Mayor Howard read a letter from Lisa Anderson with the Downtown Development Authority; the letter expressed their wishes for the time to be 12:30 am. He stated the consensus seems to be 1:00.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal gave the first reading of the Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance Amendment.

i. Approval – 2023 Millage Rate

Finance Director Beth Thompson recommended approval of adopting the full rollback millage rate of 6.467 mills for 2023. The net tax digest from Walton County for 2023 had an increase of 28.5%. She explained if the millage rate is left unchanged from 2022 it would qualify as a tax increase, due to inflationary growth and reassessments in the tax digest. The rollback rate shows an increase in collections for the City, but is 0.593 mills less than 2022. She stated 6.467 mills will be the lowest millage rate for the City of Monroe in the last 23 years.

Vice-Mayor Larry Bradley emphasized that this will be the lowest millage rate in the last 23 years for the City of Monroe, while others are increasing their rates. He hopes that information will be publicized. He is in support of the rollback rate but wants it to be noted that the City has discussed how the burden of the taxes has gone to the homeowners and not the industries. He would like for the Mayor and Mr. Propes to meet with the board of assessors to discuss this and possibly address the issue before next year. He would like for it to be fair. He would also like for Mr. Propes and Mr. Rosenthal to draft legislation for Representative Williamson to take to the State at the next General Assembly, which would allow next year's Council to place a referendum on the ballot next year for an additional homestead exemption to homeowners within the City of Monroe. This would help to balance out some of the increases and help with the imbalance between homeowners and commercial properties.

Council Member David Dickinson stated Council needs information on how that would economically affect the operations of the City. Council has a responsibility to the citizens to make sure that the City remains fiscally stable, and the City has some serious commitments in the pipeline. He stated that he is not opposed to the idea, but he thinks Council needs to vote on the millage rate only tonight. He feels further information is needed concerning these other proposals before moving forward; there could be unintended consequences.

Mr. Bradley stated that he does not disagree with Mr. Dickinson; it needs to be discussed further and more research needs to be done. However, it is his understanding that the legislature has to pass it before next year's Council can even make a decision about whether to put it on a referendum or not. He was just trying to get it through the legislation.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal explained the agenda will need to be amended if Council is going to take that type of action. Approval of the millage rate is what is before Council now. It would be fine to give staff direction to work on it, but any official action would require the agenda will need to be amended; an action item would have to be added before moving forward.

City Administrator Logan Propes stated he can collect data unofficially through the rest of the year.

To approve the full rollback millage rate for 2023 at 6.467.

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Dickinson.
Passed Unanimously.*

j. Approval – Traffic Pattern Change

City Administrator Logan Propes recommended having another public hearing next month, prior to any action being taken.

No Action.

k. Approval – Southview Drive Cul-de-sac

City Administrator Logan Propes recommended having another public hearing next month, prior to any action being taken.

No Action.

V. DISTRICT ITEMS**1. District Items**

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal explained there will be a Charity Benefit on August 26 for the new Humane Society of Walton County. The facility will be ready to take rescues within the next 90 days. The Charity Benefit Concert will be featuring his daughter at the Engine Room. Tickets are \$25, and all of the proceeds go to the Humane Society. There will be free food and free non-alcoholic drinks. There will a raffle and a cash bar.

Council Member Lee Malcom stated she is excited about the Town Green and appreciates the departments working so hard through the storms.

Council Member Myoshia Crawford stated she is also excited about the Town Green.

Mayor Howard stated that Coach Boyce took a team to the National Championships, and they will be recognized at the meeting next month.


Council Member Tyler Gregory thanked the City crews for maintaining everything so well, and he is also excited about the Town Green.

2. Mayoral Update

Mayor John Howard stated Patricia Roberts was the Silver Medalist while competing with the first ever USA Basketball team in the 1976 Olympics. They will be honored as Trail Blazers and inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He discussed hosting some of the people from the Nelson Mandela Fellows Program at the Historic Courthouse. He read a letter that Logan Propes received from Joyce Evans complimenting the awesome and professional employees the City has in the IT / TV Department. He stated for everyone to remember Bella Rosenthal at the Engine Room. There will be a Housing Retreat on August 24. The Monroe Housing Authority has 383 public housing units. There are 255 LIHTC units and 108 Section 8 units in Monroe.

VI. ADJOURN

*Motion by Malcom, seconded by Crawford.
Passed Unanimously.*


MAYOR


INTERIM CITY CLERK