



Mayor and City Council Work Session

Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:30 PM

City Hall, 875 Main Street, Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083

Minutes

Mayor and Council: Dr. Beverly Jones – Mayor | Post 3 :Mayor Pro Tem Ryan Smith

Post 1: Council Member Anita Bass | Post 2: Council Member Mark Marianos

Post 4: Council Member Gil Freeman | Post 5: Council Member Shawnette Bryant

Post 6: Council Member Teresa Crowe

**Staff: Darnetta Tyus - City Manager | Shawn Edmondson - Assistant City Manager - City Clerk |
Danny Mai - Assistant City Clerk | Jeff Strickland - City Attorney**

City of Stone Mountain, GA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofStoneMtn/>

Link to join Webinar: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85727715572>

Call to Order

Determination of Quorum

PRESENT

Council Member: Post 1 Anita Bass

Council Member: Post 2 Mark Marianos

Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Ryan Smith

Council Member: Post 4 Gil Freeman

Council Member: Post 5 Shawnette Bryant

Council Member: Post 6 Teresa Crowe

Mayor Beverly Jones

Invocation and Pledge

Mayor Jones led the Pledge at 06:38 PM ET. Mayor Jones led the the Invocation at 06:39 PM ET.

Citizen Comments – Including comments from public/stakeholders (3 minutes per comment)

Comments from the Public

The public comments are reserved exclusively for comments from the public and not for immediate reply. The purpose of public comment is to allow the public to voice city related requests, concerns or opinions only during the public comment portion of the City Council meeting. I. The Mayor and City Council reserves the right to extend or limit the length of public comments based on: (1) the issue under discussion; (2) the number of items on the agenda; and (3) the extent to which the speaker remains constructive in their comments and questions. II. The public may not directly confront the public speaker but must direct all comments and questions to the Mayor and City Council. III. Public harassment of or confrontation with a public speaker will not be tolerated. Members of the public violating tenets two or three will be asked to sit down or leave the premises.

Citizen Comment #1 (Susan Taylor): Taylor expressed their appreciation for the Juneteenth event and noted their excitement for future events on the greenspace. Taylor also noted that there should be buskers around the city to promote the local restaurants around the city. Taylor also noted that the city should open the gate on the west mountain street side.

Citizen Comment #2 (Denise Phillips): Discussed the DDA and the role, scope, and purpose of the DDA. Phillips also discussed and answered questions that City Council had at the previous Regular Session.

Citizen Comment #3 (Cheryl Dudley): Dudley thanked the city for taking down signs around the city. Dudley also noted the importance of utilizing the GMC Building properly. Examples of such include turning it into a community center, for children, youth and seniors.

Citizen Comment #4 (Ginger Criswell): Criswell noted that she would like to see administration annex memorial drive on west mountain and JBR. Criswell also noted that the city should hold a meeting to discuss annexation with concerned citizens and potential new citizens. Criswell also noted their concern regarding the road closure on West Mountain Street within the previous week. Criswell praised the city for an amazing Juneteenth event, noting their excitement with potential events on the green space in the future. Criswell also noted that the city administration should work with the county towards cleaning and fixing memorial drive signs (West Mountain & JBR).

Review of the Journal (Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Edmondson)

1. Request Minutes from City Council Meeting [06.04.2024] be approved (Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Shawn Edmondson)

Reading of Communications

Adoption of The Agenda of The Day

City Manager Tyus requested that city council work adopt the agenda of the day with the following items:

NEW BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS

Committee Discussion Items

2. Planning Commission

N/A

3. Economic Development/Downtown Development Authority

Next DDA Meeting Monday June 24th at the old Depot. Last meeting discussed and approved the IGA between the DDA and the City. CM Bryant asked how many positions were still open. To which the Wright noted that there was only one remaining position open. CM Freeman requested Wright regarding the status of the DDA, the training status of the members, etc... Wright answered CM Freeman's questions.

4. Historic Preservation Commission

N/A

5. Parks and Recreation Committee

N/A

Staff Reports

6. Public Safety- Police Chief- James Westerfield Jr

Chief Westerfeld discussed the statistics regarding crimes and police department statistics. Westerfield additionally discussed various initiatives that the SMPD have ongoing.
(Statistics are posted monthly on the City of Stone Mountain's Website)

7. Administration- Assistant City Manager-City Clerk- Shawn Edmondson

Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Edmondson spoke about the statistics that City Administration had for the month of May.
(Statistics for the Administration are listed on the City Website and Packet)

City Manager's Report

8. City Manager - Darnetta Tyus

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - Spoke about the Juneteenth event and thanked the following departments: Public Works, Police, Special Projects Manager, and City Mayor

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - Noted the three public hearings regarding the milage rate hearings.

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - Provided an update regarding the Baltic Street Update. Tyus noted that the next road project would be to fix Main Street.

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - Noted that there was no update regarding the Depot Cleanup Initiative nor the signage update.

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - Noted that the outdoor gym will begin construction ion June 24th, with a competition timeline of 1-2 weeks. The city is planning a grand opening in mid-July once the outdoor gym has been completed.

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - noted that the city is currently looking for nonglare alternatives for the mirrors on the intersection of Ridge Ave and Stonebush Terrence.

City Manager Darnetta Tyus - provided updates regarding the April 2024 Finance Report. Additionally, City Manager Darnetta Tyus provided updates regarding the budget amendment.

-----Discussion with Council-----

CM Crowe asked for a specific update regarding the lights on the trees on Mainstreet. City Manager Tyus provided an update noting that a 3rd party contractor loves the idea.

CM Bryant asked for an update regarding SPLOST II. City Manager Tyus noted that one payment of SPLOST II came in. City Manager Tyus noted that there will be \$100K in payments a month from SPLOST II.

Council Policy Discussion Topics

Unfinished Business

9. Continued discussion on the DDA (CM Freeman)

CM Freeman moved to postpone discussion regarding the DDA, in light of the time spent on the Executive Session.

Motion made by Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Seconded by Council Member: Post 5 Bryant.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe

New Business

CM Freeman motions to postpone all matters on the New Business.

Motion made by Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Seconded by Council Member: Post 5 Bryant.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant

Voting Nay: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe

MOTION FAILED, NEW BUSINESS WILL CONTINUE.

10. Discussion on the Adoption of the Lil Pharaohs (City Manager Darnetta Tyus)

11. Applicant Elisabeth Richmond requests a Special Use Permit for a Vacation Home Facility at 1103 Forrest Avenue (Parcel ID: 18 090 01 001). (Interim City Planner Tania Celis)

Interim City Planner Tania Cellis informed council regarding the application that Elisabeth Richmond's request. Staff recommended that the city move to approve contingent on requirements set by them.

THIS IS THE FIRST READING. THERE WILL BE A SECOND READING.

Applicant Elisabeth Richmond spoke to council regarding the property. Richmond noted that the owners of the applicant had ran an illegal AirBNB, and that Richmond is making sure that it is legally operating, and within compliance.

CM Crowe asked for additional clarification regarding the property and property owner.

Richmond provided context.

MPT Smith asked Richmond for clarification on if there is plumbing and electricity in the Tiny Home.

12. Karen Patton Requests a Road Closure in front of sweet potato café. (Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Shawn Edmondson)

Assistant City Manager & City Clerk Shawn Edmondson notified Council that the owner of Sweet Potato Cafe is requesting a temporary road closure; due to, a sudden increase by 30 additional patrons.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Seconded by Council Member: Post 1 Bass.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe

MOTION PASSED from 08:00 AM -> 08:00 PM there will be a street closure.

13. Georgia Lottery requests the blockage of West Mountain Street to film a promotional video. (City Manager Tyus)

Police Chief Westerfield spoke to council requesting that there is a road blockage to accommodate the filming of the Georgia Lottery filming to occur. Westerfield noted that filming will be one day from 09:00 AM till 01:00 PM

Motion made by Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Seconded by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe

MOTION PASSED ALLOWING FOR THE ROAD CLOSING ON THE 21st OF JUNE

14. Discussion on City Credit Card Usage (CM Marianos)

CM Marianos spoke to council informing them why he is bringing this issue to council. City Manager Tyus spoke to council and provided additional context to council regarding the Mayor's Credit Card. City Manager Tyus noted that the Mayor's card was reactivated without prior authorization from the City Manager. City Manager Tyus noted that she suspended the Card, but the bank noted that Mayor Jones reactivated the card without authorization. City Manager Tyus noted that there are three new charges on the card after the activation of the card.

City Mayor noted that all the charges relating to the credit card were related to a conference. City Mayor noted that she has been in constant contact with the City Accountant regarding to the charges in the card. City Mayor also noted that she is in the process of creating an Affidavit. City Mayor noted that she had reached out to City Attorney Strickland and requested that Strickland create a full Affidavit, which has since been created. City Mayor also noted that all documents have since been notarized.

City Manager noted that the card was activated, and that the prior charges were under the Affidavit. City Manager noted that the City Accountant has no authority to discuss or authorize a process or an Affidavit that has not existed within the city since.

CM Marianos noted that the City Manager is the manager of the city's finances. CM Marianos also noted the concern that they have regarding concerns that may arise from the precedent created. City Attorney Strickland spoke to council regarding the process of the affidavit. City Manager Tyus noted that she has been speaking to council regarding the progress of the situation.

Assistant City Manager & City Clerk noted that there is no form nor affidavit that the city has in regard to the city policy. Assistant City Manager & City Clerk noted that there needs to be a policy or process in place regarding this matter.

City Mayor noted that this is a stressful situation, and that the reason she had contracted the City Attorney was to create an affidavit that is legally binding and from a legal professional. City Attorney noted that the affidavit could become a legally binding process.

City Manager read the email from the Bank for the record, 11:03 AM ET 06/18/2024

"Good morning Darnetta, as mentioned yesterday. We have on record that you called in on 03/26 to freeze Mayor Jones card. On 04/25, Mayor Jones went into the branch and lifted the hold on the card; due to a conference that she was traveling to. Since the card was in the mayor's name then she was authorized to do Maintenance on the card, given that her name is on the card." -Representative from the Bank.

CM MARIANOS MADE A MOTION TO REMOVE THE MAYOR AS A SIGNATURE ON THE CITY'S ACCOUNTS UNTIL A RESOLUTION HAS BEEN CREATED.

CM MARIANOS WITHDREW THE MOTION.

City Manager requests that the record shows that the council cannot understand nor confirm that the city manager is no longer in charge of the accounts.

City mayor request that there be a process and forms that are created in order to prevent this from happening in the future... noting that there is a process in place moving forward.

CM Bass noted that the important piece of information is that the Mayor had reactive the card by herself. City Mayor noted that the rationale behind visiting the bank would be to receive a bank statement. CM Marianos noted that the reason behind the motion is to safeguard the city and the city mayor as well. City Mayor noted that that she had went to the City Attorney to get the affidavit from them.

CM Crowe asked the City Mayor why the mayor had not originally gone to GMA for the missing receipts rather than not getting the requested receipts. City Manager Tyus requests that council give guidance on if the City Manager should be in charge of the City's funds.

City Mayor noted that the city needs to standardize the process. City Mayor noted that there are 100+ affidavits online that do not fit the criteria that was requested. CM Marianos noted that the issue is the fact that the City Manager is the administrator of the City Finances. CM Freeman noted that there needs to be full reports from the other departments and committees. CM Marianos then asked if there needs to be a full report.

CM MARIANOS MOTION TO GET AN INDEPENDENT 3RD PARTY INVESTIGATION INTO THE TURNING ON OF THE CITY CREDIT CARD AGAINST THE WILL OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR.

Discussion and debate occurred between Council and Mayor.

CALL TO QUESTION BY CM MARIANOS

SECONDED BY CM CROWE

Motion made by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe
Voting Nay: Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant
MOTION FOR A 3RD PARTY INVESTIGATION PASSED.

New Ordinances and Resolutions

Remarks of Privilege

MPT Smith noted that on Saturday the City Manager was verbally attacked by a private citizen. Mayor Jones noted that there are two sides to every story.

Announcements by The Mayor

Executive Session to Discuss Personnel, Legal, and/or Real Estate (if needed)

Adjournment

CM Marianos Motioned to Adjourn.

Motion made by Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith.

Voting Yea: Council Member: Post 1 Bass, Council Member: Post 2 Marianos, Mayor Pro Tem: Post 3 Smith, Council Member: Post 4 Freeman, Council Member: Post 5 Bryant, Council Member: Post 6 Crowe