



CITY OF THOMSON
PUBLIC HEARING AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 10, 2023

6:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Waller, City Administrator
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney

Also Present:

Chief Courtney Gale, TPD
Assistant Chief Robert Brown
David Crawley, County Manager
Terrie Bly, TPD
15 Interested Citizens
Erin Burditt, McDuffie Progress

PUBLIC HEARING

At 6:00pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry welcomed all to the Public Hearing concerning the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendations on the variance request for O.C.G.A. 16-12-215.

County Manager Crawley presented the recommendation.

REQUEST FOR VARIANCE OF OCGA 16-12-215 TO DISPENSE MEDICAL CANNABIS LESS THAN 1,000 FEET FROM A SCHOOL ON MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD: Thomson Drug Company requested a variance of the minimum distance a dispensary must be from a school. The distance between the boundaries of Thomson Drug Company and J.A. Maxwell School's parking lot is 245 feet. The distance between the boundaries of the pharmacy and the actual school property is 476 feet. CM Crawley noted that the Planning Board recommended approval of the request with a 3-1 vote.

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: Brice Allfrey, the owner of Thomson Drug Company, spoke on the need for pharmacies to dispense this Low THC, containing 5% cannabis, to qualified patients. Georgia prohibits smokable, vaporable or edible cannabis. Pharmacists have the education needed for this venture and the means to secure the product. He indicated that in McDuffie County there are already 30-50 patients who are approved for Low THC, with no close dispensary.

There being no more comments, questions or other concerns, Mayor Usry closed the public meeting at 6:10pm.

COUNCIL MEETING

At 6:10pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order. Councilmember Smalley gave the invocation, followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

EMPLOYEE 10-YEAR SERVICE AWARD: TERRIE BLY: Police Chief Gale, Mayor Usry and CA Waller all commended Ms. Bly for her tireless work with the Thomson Police Department and presented her with a certificate and honorarium.

CITIZEN COMMENT: Cyndie Locklear asked for a speed limit sign on Lumpkin Street heading west before Grier Circle. There is excessive speeding and perhaps this could help. She also noted that the 35 MPH sign coming east into town on Lumpkin Street has limbs hanging in front of it, and asked that they be trimmed up. Angela Curry requested a speed hump on Mendel Avenue. She will be sent the policy and petition. A question raised by Julie Gerlach as to whether the owner or the resident can sign a petition for speed humps, was answered that either can sign.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: City Council Meeting, July 13, 2023—A motion was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve them.

BUSINESS:

- a. **Recommendation of Planning & Zoning: Request for Variance of O.C.G.A. 16-12-215 to dispense medical cannabis, 501 Mount Pleasant Road:** A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board to grant a variance of O.C.G.A 16-12-215 to allow Thomson Drug Company at 501 Mount Pleasant Road to dispense medical cannabis less than 1000 feet from a school with the condition that all state requirements are met. By a vote of 5-0, the motion was approved.
- b. **Waste Management Contract:** CA Waller requested that the Council approve the contract with Waste Management that was discussed at last month's Council meeting on July 13th. A motion by Councilmember Johnson was made, seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the Waste Management contract as previously presented. A vote taken approved the motion, 5-0.
- c. **Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG):** One LMIG bid came in lower than expected. The total area in the City to pave is 1.2 miles and is part of nine streets. Atlas, who will oversee the entire paving project, presented the Request for Proposal on behalf of the County and City as a consolidated package. The bid from All Star Concrete, Inc on the total proposal came in lowest at \$1,943,298.40 and \$266,860.25 for the City portion. The only other bidder, Reeves Construction, presented a total bid of \$2,299,267 and was proportionally higher for the City portion. A motion made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Corley to accept the lower bid from All Star Concrete, Inc received an approval vote of 5-0.
- d. **Request to Close a Portion of Railroad Street from 4:00 pm until 10:00pm on September 22, 2023:** In order for the Convention and Visitors' Bureau to present a Blind Willie kickoff concert, they have requested the closing of Railroad Street from Main Street to the crosswalk at Hogie Joe's. A motion was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Corley to approve the CVB's request. A vote taken passed the motion, 5-0.

- e. Request to Place an Advertising Sign for the Kickoff Concert at the Depot from August 22nd through September 22nd: The CVB's request to place a sign advertising the concert for one month prior to September 22nd was approved by a 5-0 vote on a motion by Councilmember Whittle that was seconded by Councilmember Belton to allow the sign.
- f. CVB and Activities Council of Thomson (ACT) Request for a One-Day Alcohol License for September 22, 2023 Concert: All paperwork has been received and is in order for the Beer and Wine License requested for the Kickoff Concert on September 22nd. A motion made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the One-Day license was carried by a 4-0 vote. Councilmember Smalley abstained.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council Report: Councilmember Smalley noted that he continues to receive complaints about the Dodge Chargers in neighborhoods.

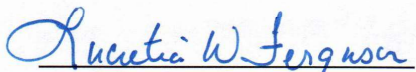
City Administrator Report: CA Waller spoke on the mechanical challenges the City faces when trying to keep the trucks on the road for picking up yard waste. We are behind schedule but working to catch up. With the inclement weather and wind lately, there is a lot of larger yard waste to pick up. Several large trees in the City ROW will have to be removed by professionals. The City is looking into these companies now. HR Director Shanda Reese-Grant is out for several weeks and GMA is sending Artiffany Stanley every Tuesday for six weeks to help us out. The Waste Water Treatment Plant bids came in at \$5,000,000 over our budget. Carter and Sloope are reworking the list of requirements in order to put it out for bid again. Budgets are due in tomorrow from all Directors. GMEBS, who the City has employee insurance with, expects the new contract to be 10% higher than last year. Premiums for Liability insurance are expected to be raised by 20% and Worker's Compensation will go up 10% for the next contract. Speed humps are a popular request with four streets requesting one. All City buildings now have an automated external defibrillator (AED). McDuffie County EMS will host CPR certification classes for the City and will give instruction on the proper use of an AED.


Mayor Report: The Mayor reported that the Archway RSVP meeting went well earlier this week. They are pleased that we are carrying out our programs so well. The Mayor also met with Congressman Rick Allen today in Lincolnton.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

There being no other business before the Council, a motion for adjournment was made by Councilmember Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Belton. A vote taken adjourned the meeting at 6:35pm. (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor

