**MINUTES OF CITY COMMISSION MEETING**

**MADISON, FLORIDA**

**AUGUST 11, 2020**

The City Commission met in a regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor/Commissioner Rayne Cooks (District 1), Commissioner Ina Thompson (District 2), Commissioner Jim Catron (District 3), Commissioner Terry Johnson (District 4), and Commissioner Judy Townsend (District 5) were present.

City staff present were: Jerome Wyche-City Manager, Lee Anne Hall-City Clerk, Clay Schnitker-City Attorney, Lanee Pike-HR, Reggie Alexander-Police Chief, Tyrone Edwards-Police Captain, and Bruce Jordan-Fire Chief.

Due to the present COVID-19 pandemic, no members of the public were allowed to be physically present. Members of the public who wished to listen to and/or participate in the meeting could do so via telephone or computer by accessing Go-to-Meeting session 966-127-669.

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

During Citizen’s Participation: Jackie Johnson, David Plummer, and Jeanna Bernstein asked the Commission to reconsider their decision on moving the Confederate Monument from the City’s Four Freedoms Park.

Commissioner Johnson moved to adopt the agenda; second by Commissioner Catron. Motion passed 5-0.

Commissioner Catron moved to adopt the consent agenda: (a) Minutes of July 14, 2020 Regular City Commission Meeting, (b) Department Head Reports (including the resignation of VeEtta Hagan from the Planning and Zoning Board), (c) Financial Report, (d) Contract for Sale of Timber Between City of Madison and Genesis Timber, LLC, (e) Audit Service Contract with Powell & Jones, CPA, (f) Designation of Revenues for USDA Development Grant/Loan for Purchase of Fire Truck and Related Equipment, and (g) Schedule FY 20/21 Budget Workshop for August 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and passed 5-0.

Commissioner Townsend moved to approve the fiscal year 20/21 Heatlh, Dental, Vision, and Life Insurance proposal, as presented by Melanie Stegal of PRIA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Catron and passed 5-0.

Lauren Yeatter, Senior Planner with North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, discussed the Fiscal Year 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application. The meeting was opened to the public for comments on the upcoming CDBG Application. There were no comments.

Commissioner Townsend moved to amend the agenda to add “Appointment of two members to the CDBG Citizens Advisory Task Force. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Catron and passed 5-0.

Commissioner Townsend moved to appoint Delores Alexander and Gwen Dobson as members of the CDBG Citizens Advisory Task Force. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and passed 5-0.

It was the consensus of the Commission that city staff schedule a CDBG Citizens Advisory Task Force meeting to discuss and make a recommendation to the Commission on the 2019 Community Development Block Grant Application. It was noted that the second public hearing on the Application would be September 8, 2020.

Commissioner Catron moved to adopt on first reading, proposed Ordinance No. 2020-5 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MADISON AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2019-24 IMPOSING TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON IMPACT FEES FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Johnson and passed 5-0.

City Manager Jerome Wyche gave an update on the progress of removing the Confederate Monument from the City’s Four Freedoms Park.

The Commission acknowledged receiving and reading a letter from John Forester concerning the Confederate Monument. At the request of Mr. Forester, the letter is being included verbatim in the minutes:

*I request that the following be read during the upcoming city council meeting. I further request that it be included verbatim in the minutes.*

*You may not agree with me and, frankly, I don't care. People of Confederate heritage are THE MOST DISCRIMINATED AGAINST GROUP IN AMERICA TODAY!! We have long had to endure our history being rewritten to suit a political agenda. Now, our memorials to our ancestors, Veterans memorials, are being indiscriminately destroyed and/or removed. Our artifacts are being burned and even our graves are being desecrated. What other subgroup in our society has the celebration of its culture and heritage actually openly excluded from events, its statues toppled, its symbols banned from display, and its legacy maligned?*

*Do I blame the ignorance and outright criminal activity of groups like BLM, Antifa and socialist groups? Not really. They could be stopped. However, our politicians condone their behavior and our judiciary system fails to properly prosecute and adjudicate. The thugs are enabled by legislative, judiciary and law enforcement officials from across the political spectrum.*

*I must ask why anyone would want to denigrate an entire heritage and completely eradicate a part of history and culture in our nation? Why would anyone desire to take away the rights of fellow citizens to celebrate their heritage, legacy and ancestry? You don't have to UNDERSTAND a group or culture in order to respect liberty and freedom enough to just leave folks alone!! This nation has a plethora of ethnicities and sub-groups in it. Who gets to choose which ones are "acceptable" and which ones are not? Why is it ok for some people to be "offended" but not others? Why is it ok to show prejudice toward those of us with Confederate heritage? In a free society, it SHOULDN'T be.*

*The irony is that many are appalled to see ISIS knocking down statues, burning artifacts, destroying cultures and obliterating history. Many are outraged at the thought of someone being banned from waving a rainbow flag, wearing a burqa or sporting a Black Lives Matter t-shirt. (All of which I believe a person has the right to do if he/she chooses) But, it's OK to demand removal of historical statues, Veterans memorials, plaques, and flags? It's hypocrisy and in DIRECT CONTRADICTION to the concepts of liberty and justice. You cannot call for equality and diversity in one breath and then advocate the complete PURGE of an entire era of history in the next. Either you believe in liberty or you don't. You can't claim to believe in freedom and tolerance, but, then tell someone what flag to fly, denigrate an entire group of people with ignorant stereotyping, and insult thousands of folks' personal family legacy!*

*Attacking history, whether Colonial, War Between the States, or Vietnam-era, etc will have absolutely no impact on our present issues. In fact, it only adds to the hate and division. The only way to deal with our current problems in this nation is to address what is happening NOW. Violence to protest violence and discrimination to protest discrimination will never bring about positive change.*

City Manager Wyche gave his report.

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

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ATTEST: Rayne J. Cooks, Mayor/Commissioner

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Lee Anne Hall, City Clerk