

MONTICELLO CITY COUNCIL
Work Session
Thursday, December 3, 2020
MINUTES
6:00 P.M.

Members Present – Mayor Bryan Standifer, Mayor Pro Tem Gail Harrell, Councilmembers David Wease, Cynthia Miller, Jenny Murphy, and Larry Thurman. Attorney Reitman was present.

Staff Present – City Manager Angela Redding and City Clerk Karen Pennamon

Media Present – Kathy Mudd

Work Session – Mayor Bryan Standifer called the meeting to order. The Invocation was given by Reverend Jimmy Horton, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. City Clerk, Karen Pennamon, called the roll.

Agenda Approval- Motion by Councilmember Wease to add item 4a. Executive Session – Discussion of Personnel (Council Only) to the agenda. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Councilmember Murphy. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Executive Session – Personnel - Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Harrell to enter into executive session at 6:04 p.m. for item 4a.- Discussion of Personnel, seconded by Councilmember Miller. Voting for the motion was unanimous.

Motion by Councilmember Wease to exit Executive Session and return to regular session at 6.26 pm. Voting for the motion was unanimous. No action was taken in Executive Session.

Agenda Items

5. Mine Lake – Robert Jordan of Jordan Engineering presented a proposal for recreation use improvements to Mine Lake. He stated that the project goals are:
 - Create maximum public benefit of a valuable, rare, and currently restricted City resource through limited investment to construct low-maintenance recreation amenities,
 - Create public amenities that would remain in use and maintain or increase the property’s value, maintain the City’s flexibility to sell, repurpose, or develop the property in the future, and
 - Protect the lake as a potential future water source and sensitive environmental area.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

Fax 706-468-1041

Mr. Jordan included a concept plan and cost of the project worksheet in the proposal. He stated that the total budget amount for the project is \$150,000. The cabin on the property requires minimal upkeep and can be used to generate revenue through Airbnb. Jordan Engineering will handle the survey and any legal description type work pro bono because I favor the project and want to support it and will not bill the City. Councilmember Wease asked if the current fishing pier would be removed. Mr. Jordan responded that it would be because it is in bad shape. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell stated there is only one road to get into this area and asked how people would get to the other fishing piers. Mr. Jordan responded they would follow the trails. He said the proposal does not include boat traffic, only shoreline fishing. Mr. Jordan stated he does not anticipate any City maintenance for the proposed project but suggest that they place a drop box on the property for City residents to pay \$5.00 as revenue source. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell stated the City is covered under the Recreation Act so do not charge the public to use that facility. She asked the City Manager if GIRMA had contacted her since their visit to the property. City Manager Redding stated she had not received a report but will forward it to the Mayor and Council as soon as she receives it. Attorney Reitman noted that the Recreation Property Act requires that a sign be posted stating the potential dangers. He mentioned that there are some revenue options such as charging a \$3.00 parking fee. Councilmember Miller thanked Mr. Jordan for presenting the information to the City Council. She stated her vision for Mine Lake is to have something for the citizens to enjoy. Once this takes effect, we will have a better feel for what we can do with the property. People will start asking questions about it and bring new ideas for it. We can also get people involved in focus groups. When everyone finds out about the trails out there, it will also bring business to the City Square. We are not trying to make revenue from this but want to give back to the citizens and make use of something we are not doing anything with. We should be good stewards of this property.

6. MOU – Chamber of Commerce - City Manager Angela Redding stated the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Monticello has expired and is before City Council for approval. Pam Mayer, former Director of the Chamber, stated she is the author of the Memorandum of Understanding and Use of Park Rules. The Chamber of Commerce has set hours and maintains the appearance of the Visitor's Center. The Chamber of Commerce serves as the tourism department for Jasper County and the City of Monticello. When she started working with the Chamber in 2014 there needed to be some revisions to the MOU. She and Peggy Billerman, the City Manager at the time, helped with the revisions. Mayor Standifer stated that one of the concerns was the use of the City Square and turning over City property. They were under the assumption that it was in the M.O.U., but it is not. We need to add a bullet in the MOU to cover that. Mrs. Mayer explained

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

Fax 706-468-1041

that once it became busy managing large groups in the parks, she came to the Council to ask them to approve large events. Councilmember Wease asked how the Market on the Square and Deer Festival fit into the MOU. Mrs. Mayer replied the City would give a supplement to manage the Market on the Square. She read and explained the park rules to the City Council. Mayor Standifer asked Attorney Reitman to advise Council on the MOU. Attorney Reitman replied that it needs to be in the contract for legal reasons and transparency. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell asked if any other cities give up control of city property to an entity that is not part of the city. The property in the City Square and the parks belong to the City. Pam Mayer responded they are your tourism department overseeing the park approvals. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell replied you are deciding for the City. The Chamber is for tourism, but if anything happens in the parks or on the Square, it is the City's liability. The City receives no income from the Market on the Square or the Deer Festival, nor do we have an agreement to receive any money if someone comes into the City and wants to film here. The City also bears the cost of cleanup. The Chamber of Commerce recently billed the City for \$1,500 for marketing the City even though you get the use of the Visitor's Center rent free and this includes the cost of utilities. What do we get for \$1,500 for marketing the City? Mrs. Mayer responded that the tourism department received a grant, which is part of the Scenic Byways Trailhead, to promote and market tourism in the City. We do not get paid for the Camera Ready, because we look at it as, if you bring all these people in to shop, the City gets the sales tax. The money is for the Monticello News, the Jackson Lake Sun, and anything needed to promote the downtown. City Manager Redding stated she had received several calls from individuals saying they were denied permission to use the City Square. One was for a voter registration drive, but later in the year, a rally was held. Another group had requested the use of the City facility and were denied by the Chamber of Commerce. If that is the direction we will go, then it should be stated that if a group or individual is denied, they can appeal to the City Council. Since I have been here, Karen Pennamon has been handling the reservations and contacting the Sheriff Department regarding park reservations. The Square is City property, and we do not know when the events are scheduled. If something were to happen, we would not know about it. I read about the rally in the paper. Mrs. Mayer mentioned that events must be in conjunction with the Chamber events. Why couldn't a group go through the proper procedure to use the Square if they have approval instead of it being in conjunction with a Chamber event? At the last Council meeting, the Downtown Development Authority mentioned requesting approval for an event scheduled for November 29, 2020, because they had reached out and were denied. There needs to be clarification on how things are managed. Pam stated they have never denied anyone for voter registration on the Square. We are not a negative source for the City and like to give a positive result. City Manager Redding stated she also sends letters to the Department of

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

Fax 706-468-1041

Transportation to close the City Square or any State Highway. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell said we have a Downtown Development Authority that is also promoting growth. Attorney Reitman noted the Council had heard the Chamber of Commerce concerns, and he noted the City Council could reference an events ordinance in the MOU. He added to be clear of their responsibilities, the Chamber of Commerce must present a draft MOU to the City Council. Mrs. Mayer stated she would comply with the request.

7. MOU – Get Ahead House - City Manager Redding stated the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Get Ahead House has expired and was before City Council for approval. Mrs. Roberta Anderson, Director of Get Ahead House, discussed the MOU with City Council. Councilmember Murphy stated the Morehouse Grant listed in the MOU ended in 2017 and should be omitted. Mayor Pro Tem Harrell asked if the last audit had been submitted to the City. City Manager Redding stated the City had not received an audit from the Get Ahead House. She said the report states the agency will provide a yearly report. Mrs. Anderson said she cannot give an audit but can provide a report for the \$2,815 they receive every month, which is paid to the five teachers. City Manager Redding said it also states they must submit the annual report by the end of the fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2020. We have not received an audit report for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. Mayor Standifer stated the Get Ahead House must submit a yearly audit report and noted that paragraph 4 on page 4 of the MOU that referenced the Morehouse Grant must be omitted. Mrs. Anderson stated she would comply with the request.
8. Ordinance Regulating Tree Limbs and Yard Debris – Mayor and City Council discussed the ordinance regulating tree limbs and yard debris. City Council consensus is to remove the length and weight in Section 42-1(a) of the Monticello Code of Ordinance.
9. Discussion of Charter Amendment – Attorney Joe Reitman discussed updating to GMA’s model Charter. He stated that the City has had the existing charter for decades, and it is antiquated. It has provisions that are not in any other city charter. In other cities, they will have a single reading or first reading and second reading for a new ordinance. The City of Monticello’s has additional requirements that create roadblocks and have significant advertising requirements. He said he reviewed GMA’s standard model charter, and it would be quicker and easier to use the standard form charter than try to fix what has been done. He stated his recommendation is to take the standard form municipal charter and put in appropriate elements of the old form. The Legislative Session starts in January, and the City Council must be on board. Councilmember Miller stated there needs to be a discussion about it. Attorney Reitman said he could have something for preliminary reading at the December 8, 2020 meeting. Mayor

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

Fax 706-468-1041

Standifer asked the Council to read the Charter by the January meeting then compare the City Attorney's proposal. Attorney Reitman noted the Charter change in 2015 eradicated code enforcement, and this is why he desired the charter amendment. City Manager Redding said she had reached out to the Attorney Reitman because, at the Planning Workshop, they discussed the first and second reading and how it prolonged what we needed to act on.

10. Code Enforcement - City Attorney Reitman and City Council discussed code enforcement and Section 29 – Municipal court dissolution. Attorney Reitman recommended that Jasper County be authorized to enforce the County ordinances in the City and that the City of Monticello approves and adopts the Jasper County Code Enforcement Ordinances. He stated an option is an Environmental Court approved by the General Assembly. City Manager Redding explained that the Environmental Court would be set up to hear any violations related to code enforcement. If that is how the Council chooses to go, they would issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Environmental Court Judge. She added that this court could be held in the Council Chambers. Mayor Standifer stated he did not think the Legislative Delegation would approve an Environmental Court.
11. Comments by the Governing Body
 - Mayor Standifer** stated have a great Christmas!
 - Mayor Pro Tem Harrell** had no comments
 - Councilmember Wease** stated the give back to the citizens notice is going out in the bills tomorrow. Merry Christmas!
 - Councilmember Miller** had no comments
 - Councilmember Murphy** had no comments
 - Councilmember Thurman** had no comments
12. Meeting Adjourned at 8:25 P.M.

City of Monticello
123 West Washington Street
Post Office Box 269
Monticello, GA 31064

Phone 706-468-6062

Fax 706-468-1041