

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 2, 2017**

**Council President O'Keefe** called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll call was as follows:

**PRESENT:** John Callahan, Jerry Coner, Mark Wright, Larry Rolling, Rick Smith, Patrick McMath and Sam O'Keefe

**ABSENT:** None

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council President Sam O'Keefe.

**Council President O'Keefe** welcomed our newest member of the Council, Patrick McMath as Councilman at Large.

**ELECTION OF COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT**

**Councilman Wright** made a motion to elect Councilman McMath as Vice President of the Council, seconded by Councilman Rolling. There was no discussion by the Council or the public concerning this nomination. Roll call was unanimous to elect Councilman McMath as Vice President of the Council. Councilman McMath was elected Vice President of the Council.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Smith** made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Unfinished Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

- 1. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2017-03-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify a 1.0481 Acre Parcel of Land Located on Polders Lane, in Section 38, Township 6 South, Range 11 East, Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, From a Planned Residential District (PRD-Single Family/Duplex) to a Planned Residential District (PRD-Multifamily/One (1) Apartment Building With 38 Units) (Zoning Case No. 17-02-01REZONING/PRD) (Callahan)

**Council President O'Keefe** led a discussion on Item No. 2017-03-01.

Ms. Vanessa Levine, representing Volunteers of America, who is the owner of the site, gave a brief presentation of the proposed project.

**Councilman Callahan made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Coner. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.**

**Councilman Wright made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-03-01, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2017-03-01. Item No. 2017-03-01 was adopted.**

#### **New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-07 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Informing the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality of the Actions Regarding the Sewerage Treatment Facility (MWPP) (O’Keefe)**

**Mike Curtis from Curtis Environmental Services, Inc. led a discussion on the results of the 2016 MWPP Environmental Audit. -**

**Mayor Cooper thanked Mr. Curtis and Curtis Environmental Services for their many years of service to the City of Covington and their help in monitoring our system.**

**Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-07, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-07. Resolution No. 2017-07 was adopted.**

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-08 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Acknowledging Receipt and Compliance with the Louisiana Attestation Questionnaire from the Legislative Auditor’s Office (O’Keefe)**

**Councilman Wright made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-08, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-08. Resolution No. 2017-08 was adopted.**

**3. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-09 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Supporting the Application of a Grant Through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (O’Keefe)**

**Mayor Cooper discussed the Safe Routes to School Grant and pointed out that the grant contains both infrastructure and non-infrastructure portions. He stated that the infrastructure portion of this 100% grant from the state will be used to provide a sidewalk from North Columbia Street along North Filmore Street to West 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Pine View Middle School. In addition, the non-infrastructure portion will be used to promote bicycling for the community with regard to a safe route to school.**

**Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-09, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-09. Resolution No. 2017-09 was adopted.**

**4. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-10** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Releasing the State Fire Marshal and any Other State Entity from Responsibility or Liability for Those Inspections Performed by the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Covington Fire Department, or the Consequences Thereof, Within the City Limits of Covington (O’Keefe)

**Council President O’Keefe** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-10.

Gary Blocker, Assistant Fire Chief of the Covington Fire Department, stated that by adopting this resolution, our compliance with the State Fire Marshal’s office will be maintained and will keep the City as a recognized bureau which is required to keep our fire rating.

**Councilman Wright** made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-10, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-10. Resolution No. 2017-10 was adopted.

**5. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-11** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Use of a Portion of the Unconstructed Right of Way on West 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue Near the Intersection with the Unconstructed Right of Way on Grant Street as a Driveway (Wright)

**Councilman Wright** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-11.

**Councilman Wright** made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-11, seconded by Councilman McMath. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-11. Resolution No. 2017-11 was adopted.

## COMMENTS AND REPORTS

### A. Council District and Committee Reports

#### 1. District A –

**Councilman Callahan** announced that the VFW is sponsoring a fish fry on Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> from 10 A.M. until 3 P.M. at 2013 Ronald Reagan Highway.

#### 2. District B –

**Councilman Coner** gave honor to the Good Lord God and Jesus Christ. Also, he recognized the May birthdays for City employees. Also, he welcomed Councilman at Large McMath to his first meeting of the City Council. Also, he reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. His quote for tonight was, “Put others before yourself, and you can become a leader among men.” Also, he reminded everyone about the Covington Business Association (CBA) meeting which will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the Seiler Bar, social begins at 5:30 and the meeting at 6 P.M.

#### 3. District C –

**Councilman Wright** congratulated and welcomed Councilman McMath to the Council and commented that he looks forward to working with him over the next couple of years. Also, he mentioned that the new contract for the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue washout project began on May 1<sup>st</sup> and the residents of District C are looking forward to its completion in the next 30 working days, pending weather.

#### 4. District D –

**Councilman Rolling** announced that six new occupational licenses were issued in April. Also, he commented that the recent Antiques Festival was a great success and appreciates all the City employees who volunteered at the festival. Also, he

announced that the Council on Aging St. Tammany (COAST) is sponsoring a free senior resource festival on Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> at the Castine Center. Over 60 vendors will take part in the festival and there will be music and food for the seniors. Upcoming events: Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> – Art Market sponsored by the St. Tammany Art Association from 9 A.M. until 1 P.M. at the Trailhead; Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> – OnStage series continues with a performance by “Mike Super – Magic & Illusion”, at 7 P.M. in the Fuhrmann Auditorium; Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> – LPO concert at 6 P.M. in the Bogue Falaya Park; Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunset at the Landing at 6 P.M.; Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> – Jumpin’ Into Summer children’s event at 10 A.M. at the Trailhead; Saturday, May 26<sup>th</sup> – Covington Street Block Party at 6:30 P.M.; and the Farmer’s Market every Wednesday and Saturday. Also, he welcomed Patrick McMath to the Council.

**5. District E –**

**Councilman Smith** welcomed Patrick McMath to the Council and commented that he will be a tremendous asset to the Council. Also, he announced that the Covington Firefighters Association is sponsoring their 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Abita Country Club. Also, he extended his gratitude to the members of the Covington Firefighters Association for everything they do to help the community.

**6. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Councilman McMath** thanked the Council, Mayor, Council staff, Administration and City employees for the warm welcome. Also, he commented that he looks forward to working with everyone in addressing the concerns of the residents of Covington and continue to make Covington a wonderful place to live.

**7. At Large (President) – None.**

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

**1. Mayor Cooper's comments:**

(a) On behalf of himself and the City Administration, he welcomed Patrick McMath to the City Council. Also, he commented that he looks forward to working with him.

(b) He gave an update on some local projects:

(1) West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Culvert Washout – He received a clarification of the project schedule this afternoon. The contractor, Barriere Construction, has been issued a Notice to Proceed for May 1<sup>st</sup>. The DOTD contract provisions allow for the contractor to utilize a 30 calendar day assembly period; therefore, actual field work may not begin until on or about June 1<sup>st</sup>. An assembly period is the time the contractor is given to acquire the approvals of the required shop drawings and other submittals and begin the purchase and assembly of the materials. Contract time will not be charged during the assembly period. Barriere has elected to utilize the assembly period in order to procure the pre-cast box culverts. If Barriere starts on-site construction operations prior to the expiration of the assembly period, the assessment of contract time will start at the time construction operations begin. The contract time will begin once the assembly period is over unless DOTD grants an extension. The project is underway and the anticipated completion date is for the street to be opened before school starts in August.

**Council President O’Keefe** commented that Kehoe-France School should be notified about the clarification of the project schedule. Also, he stated that the contractor had plenty of time since February 7<sup>th</sup> for the assembly period.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that he will advise the school.

**Councilman Wright** commented that the information was unclear as everyone expected the work on the project to begin on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

(2) West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – This bridge was closed to traffic recently due to deteriorating pilings that were discovered by DOTD in their bi-annual inspection. Last week, an engineering agreement amendment was signed to allow T. Baker Smith Engineering to design the plans for immediate repair of the deteriorated pilings. Once the pilings are repaired, the bridge will be open to vehicular traffic, 3-5 tons. The project is underway.

(3) West 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – Due to the deteriorating condition of the bridge, funds were budgeted in the 2017 budget for rehab of the bridge, including engineering. T. Baker Smith Engineering was selected to provide the scope and design for the rehab of this bridge. Recently, a representative of T. Baker Smith advised that their initial inspection revealed that the pilings have significant decay and the rehab work would include removal of the deck and replacement of all the timber piles, abutment curtain walls and wing walls. It was recommended that the bridge remain open, but be posted for a maximum of three tons, which would allow for passenger vehicles and small pickup trucks. At the present time, the quickest and most cost-efficient means of repairing the bridge is being considered. Once the repairs are completed, the bridge will be returned to service for all types of vehicles.

(4) Cleveland Street Bridge Replacement – GEC Engineers have completed their hydrologic, survey and technical work. They are working on plans to submit with permit applications to the Corps of Engineers and Scenic Rivers.

(5) Waterline/Fire Protection upgrade on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between North Buchanan and North Lincoln streets – The project has been completed. An inadequate section of a two-inch waterline was replaced with a six-inch water main and fire hydrant. The citizens in the area now have upgraded fire protection and water service.

(6) Bulkhead/Boardwalk/Canoe Launch at Bogue Falaya Park – The survey, geotech work and preliminary design are underway with Digital Engineering. The funds for this project were included in the 2017 budget for the design and build. This is the first phase of the recently-adopted Bogue Falaya Park Master Plan.

(7) New Park Ranger Cabin at Bogue Falaya Park – A new 700 sq. ft. cabin for the park ranger is under construction. At this time, the concrete block piers foundation has been completed.

(8) Downtown Street Striping – Most of the striping and pedestrian crosswalks have been installed on the downtown streets. The contractor should complete the project tonight.

(c) He discussed some planning initiatives that are underway:

(1) Covington Traffic Calming and Connectivity Plan – The City is working with the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) to create a detailed plan outlining specific recommendations and the actions needed to make improvements in the downtown area. The plans call for slowing traffic down on Boston Street to make it easier for people to access businesses. CPEX has been receiving public input and will meet with City representatives later this month to discuss the feedback before proceeding with the final plan.

(2) Land Use and Transportation Study – The City is working with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to study the area along the corridor of South Tyler Street between West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. A study by

the consultants, Digital Engineering and Dana Brown and Associates, is currently underway. A project management committee meeting was held several weeks ago and another meeting is scheduled for next week. When completed, the City will request that DOTD provide some enhancements along this corridor in accordance with the final recommendations on the report.

(3) Jefferson Avenue Roundabout at US 190 Business/Boston Street – DOTD is currently working on the task order and the consultants will submit their final plans for this 100% funded project by DOTD. Updates will be provided as the project moves forward.

(4) LA 21/South Tyler Street – The latest update from DOTD stated that the concrete has been poured on the northbound lanes of the new bridge and the contractors are planning to do final median configuration and traffic shifts to help move this project forward in the next couple of months. Estimated completion time frame is late spring 2017.

(d) He commented that there have been some successful events in the City recently, which include the Antiques Festival, Chef Soiree, Roux-Ga-Roux, Quack-a-Falaya Rubber Duck Race, St. Patrick's Day parade and many others.

(e) He reminded everyone that there is a non-profit fair, Give Nola Day, Northshore, at the Trailhead today in which over 30 local non-profits are participating in a one-day event where donations may be made online or at the fair to support our local non-profits. He commented it is a great event that brings awareness to the non-profits that support our community.

(f) In recognition of the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, he issued a Proclamation declaring Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> as the National Day of Prayer in the City of Covington.

(g) He mentioned that the Covington Community Prayer Breakfast will be held on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 7 A.M. at the St. Paul's Briggs Assembly Center. He invited our citizens and business leaders to attend the event which is in its fifth year.

(h) He mentioned that on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, the Robert H. Burns American Legion will host a program at the St. Tammany Parish Justice Center. After the program, there will be a Veterans Appreciation Reception in the Bogue Falaya Hall which is sponsored in part by the Covington Heritage Foundation.

**Councilman McMath** inquired as to which phase T. Baker Smith is in with regard to the work on the West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge. Also, he asked if the decision has been made as to what repairs are needed to permanently repair the bridge for all vehicles.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that T. Baker Smith had been hired to do a load rating before the inspection was made by DOTD in March. Since T. Baker Smith was already on site, the City amended the contract to include the repair of the bridge. They are in the process of determining a quick fix to get the bridge open for passenger vehicles, 3-5 tons. Once it is open for passenger vehicles, the determination will be made as to the best remedy to reopen the bridge for all vehicular traffic.

**Councilman McMath** requested information on the recent replacement of the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge and if we made the same determination to do a temporary fix to get it open briefly.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the bridge inspection did not allow for that on the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge since there was more deterioration than on the West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge.

**Councilman McMath** requested a time frame as to the length of time for the process.


**Mayor Cooper** responded that they are currently in the design phase and when he receives information on the project schedule, he will update the Council.

**Councilman Coner** wished all the mothers on the face of this earth a blessed, happy and safe Mother's Day, including all of the aunts who are raising their nieces and nephews.

**Councilman Callahan** welcomed Patrick McMath to the Council.

**Council President O'Keefe** commented that the project on Hwy. 21 will be probably be finished before the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue washout project. Also, on behalf of himself and the Council, he extended our sympathies to Rod Rodrigue in the loss of his mother.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 P.M.

  
R.S. "SAM" O'KEEFE  
Council President

  
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk