

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 18, 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 Mr. Joey Roberts.

APPEARERS

Mayor Cooper introduced Mr. Joey Roberts, representing the Mayor's Council on Healthy Lifestyles, who gave an update on the Council's progress in the past year and its future plans.

Mayor Cooper thanked the individuals who serve on the Mayor's Council on Healthy Lifestyles for their efforts in facilitating the program.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Councilman McMath made a motion to elect Councilman O'Keefe as President of the Council, seconded by Councilman Callahan. There was no discussion by the Council or the public concerning this nomination. Roll call was unanimous to elect Councilman O'Keefe as President of the Council. Councilman O'Keefe was elected President of the Council.

Councilman Wright made a motion to elect Councilman McMath as Vice President of the Council, seconded by Councilman Coner. 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 Rolling made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Wright. 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. 2017-06-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Levying, Imposing and Adopting the Current Millage Rates on all Property Subject to Taxation in the City of Covington, State of Louisiana, for the Year 2017 (O'Keefe)

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2017-06-01.

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

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-06-01, seconded by **Councilman Wright**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2017-06-01. Item No. 2017-06-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2017-06-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2017 Operating Budget for Election Costs, Rev. Peter Atkins Park Bathrooms and Water and Sewer Rate Study (O'Keefe)

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2017-06-02.

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. 2017-06-02, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2017-06-02. Item No. 2017-06-02 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-16 -- A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Mayoral Appointment of Lisa Condrey Ward to the Covington Historic District Commission for an Additional Term of Four (4) Years (Mayor)

Mayor Cooper requested the Council's confirmation of the appointment of Lisa Condrey Ward to the Covington Historic District Commission for an additional term of four years.

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-16, seconded by **Councilman Rolling**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-16. Resolution No. 2017-16 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-17 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Appointing Cody D. Ludwig as the District D Appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for a Term of Five (5) Years (Rolling)

Councilman Rolling led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-17 and welcomed Mrs. Ludwig to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-17, seconded by **Councilman Rolling**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-17. Resolution No. 2017-17 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-18 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Reappointing Donald (“Don”) Mastio as the District B Appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for a Term of Five (5) Years (Coner)

Councilman Coner led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-18.

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-18, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-18. Resolution No. 2017-18 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A – None.

2. District B –

Councilman Coner gave honor to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Also, he acknowledged the July birthdays for City employees. Also, he reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, his prayers go out to Congressman Steve Scalise and his family as he is recovering and to the families of the seven United States Navy personnel and the nineteen United States Marine Corps personnel who lost their lives in an accident. Also, he commented that President Mandela of South Africa was born on this date and became President after being in prison for many years. He admires President Mandela for not retaliating or causing a war and that his mission was to unite South Africa and improve living and financial conditions for citizens. He mentioned that he had the opportunity to meet President Mandela in person during a visit to South Africa.

3. District C –

Councilman Wright commented that the recent “Sparks in the Park” was a great event and well-attended. Also, he commented that the residents of River Forest are quite happy about the re-opening of West 15th Avenue to vehicular traffic.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling thanked Dr. David Moores for serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission for many years. Also, he mentioned that six new occupational licenses were issued in June. Also, he announced that the seventh Business Resource Workshop will be held on September 21st from 8 A.M. until noon in the Bogue Falaya Hall. The topic for this workshop will be, “The Changing Workplace” and it is a free event for the business community. Also, he mentioned that the Mardi Gras Committee has started planning the Mardi Gras Day experience for 2018 and hopes to grow the event from last year. Upcoming events: Friday, August 18th – Sunset at the Landing concert at 6 P.M.; Saturday, August 19th – Covington’s White Linen event in Downtown Covington at 6 P.M.; Friday, August 25th – Columbia Street Block Party at 6:30 P.M.; Thursday, August 31st – New Business Ribbon Cutting at 9:30 A.M.; and the Farmer’s Market every Wednesday and Saturday. Also, he encouraged the public to buy local to support our local businesses.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith requested that everyone continue to pray for Congressman Steve Scalise as he recovers. Also, he mentioned that St. Tammany Parish District Attorney Warren Montgomery is sponsoring a blood drive for Congressman Steve Scalise on Thursday, July 27th from 11:30 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. in the Blood

Center bus which will be located on the south side of the Justice Center. Also, he announced that the Covington Recreation Department is holding registration for football and cheerleading from June 29th until August 10th. Boys who are between the ages of 6 and 11 are welcome to register. Registration is also available online at covingtonrecreation.recdesk.com.

6. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman McMath commented that his thoughts and prayers are with Congressman Scalise, his wife, Jennifer, and their two children. Also, he congratulated Cody Ludwig on her appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission and looks forward to working with her.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President O'Keefe requested that everyone keep Steve Krentel and his family along with Congressman Steve Scalise and his family in their thoughts and prayers. Also, he mentioned that the population in the City of Covington was adjusted recently and is now estimated to be 10,759. He added that the new estimate will be used in accordance with state statutes for distribution of State Revenue Sharing and other funds in the 2017-2018 year. Also, he mentioned that due to yesterday's rain event, the west side of the City including parts of River Forest Subdivision experienced some serious flooding. Mayor Cooper, City Engineer Daniel Hill and other City officials toured the area and are working on a remedy for the problem.

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Cooper's comments:

(a) Concerning the drainage issues in River Forest and the surrounding area, the City is in the process of determining the problem and its remedy. In addition, funds will be included in the 2018 budget to address drainage issues including de-snagging and clearing the Mile Branch and its tributaries in accordance with the required permits.

(b) He recognized that Gina Hayes, Chief Administrative Officer, and Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney, are absent from the meeting this evening. He thanked other members of the City's Administration who are in attendance this evening: Police Chief Tim Lentz; Mayor's Executive Assistant Bridget Watson and Planning and Zoning Administrative Assistant JoAnn Rucker.

(c) He congratulated Councilman O'Keefe on his election as Council President; Councilman McMath on his election as Council Vice President; Cody Ludwig for her appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission; and Don Mastio for his re-appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

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

(1) Mile Branch – Concerning the legal responsibility for maintenance and repairs, City Attorney Rod Rodrigue has researched and reviewed the records and advised that Mile Branch is a St. Tammany Parish drainage servitude and the City of Covington has no obligation to maintain or repair it. City and Parish officials met recently to discuss a mutually-agreeable approach to address the maintenance of Mile Branch for the short and long term. As a result of the meeting, the City offered assistance to St. Tammany Parish for maintenance of the Mile Branch. A cooperative endeavor agreement will be entered into between the City and Parish which will reflect the details of the mutually-beneficial endeavor. All parties agreed that moving forward with the delegated tasks in the quickest possible time is of utmost importance to addressing the maintenance challenges of the Mile Branch. He will keep the Council updated on the progress.

(2) West 15th Avenue Culvert Washout – The roadway is open for local traffic while some finishing work is completed. The project is being managed by DOTD and should be completed in the next two to three weeks.

(3) West 11th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The contractor has completed the repair work and the St. Tammany Parish Engineering Department has inspected the bridge on behalf of DOTD. Upon receipt of final approval and authorization from DOTD, the bridge will be opened to vehicular traffic with a five ton restriction.

(4) West 29th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The consultant engineer, T. Baker Smith, is developing final plans and specs. During their inspection, it was determined that a three ton restriction should be placed on the bridge which allows for only passenger vehicles and small pickup trucks. The project should be bid out in September with construction beginning in the fall.

(5) Sewer lift station projects:

(i) East 1st Avenue – Gottfried Construction has begun work on the rehabilitation of this lift station, which is located next to East 1st Avenue Park on Jahncke Avenue. The project should be completed in two to three months.

(ii) East 9th Avenue (off Jahncke Avenue) – Advertising is underway for the contractor for this rehabilitation project and bids will be opened on August 9th. Construction should begin in the fall.

(iii) St. Paul's Pump Replacement – This is one of the largest lift stations in the City. The manufacture of the oversized pump is complete and once the pump is received by Gottfried Construction, it will be installed. The project should be completed within four to six weeks.

(6) River Forest Paving and Drainage – Designs and specs are complete for a section of Lurline Drive from West 21st Avenue to Karen Drive. The engineers are GEC and advertising for the contractor is underway. Bids will be opened on August 3rd with construction beginning in the fall.

(7) West 8th Avenue Lift Station with emergency generator and platform (between Jefferson Avenue and Tyler Street) – Due to the slope of the ground on West 8th Avenue near Simpson Creek, it was necessary to elevate the generator and place it on a platform. This generator was one of seven which were partially paid for through a grant from GOHSEP. The area around the platform will be fenced and security measures installed.

(8) Land Use and Transportation Study – This study was conducted by the RPC to determine some enhancements for transportation on South Tyler Street between West 11th Avenue and West 21st Avenue once the widening project is completed. The study has been completed and will be delivered to the City this week. After a review of the study, the City will make recommendations to DOTD for enhancements along this corridor.

(9) Covington Traffic Calming and Connectivity Plan – CPEX hosted an Open House on July 10th for public input and recommendations. They will provide the City with their final recommendations in the coming weeks.

(10) The City, including Planning Director Nahketah Bagby and the Covington Historic District Commission, is advertising for a historic resource inventory survey consultant to perform an intensive level survey and inventory to identify, record and evaluate historic properties in the Covington Historic District. The goal of the City is to re-survey and update the inventory of properties within the Division of St. John which is on the National Registry of Historic Places. By updating the inventory, it will allow more properties to be eligible for historic tax credits and other benefits in the future. The proposal due date is August 2nd.

(11) He reminded the Council and public that DOTD will host an Open House Public Meeting on Thursday, July 27th from 4 P.M. until 7 P.M. in the St. Tammany Parish Council Chambers on Koop Drive to provide information and obtain input regarding the proposed I-12 Widening LA 21 – LA 59 project.

(12) He reminded everyone about the important election scheduled for October 14th and discussed the races which affect the City of Covington community. Also, he wished Councilman Mark Wright the best in his endeavor for the State Representative District #77 seat.

Councilman Wright requested confirmation that school busses will not be allowed to use the West 11th Avenue Bridge at the present time.

Mayor Cooper confirmed that the West 11th Avenue Bridge is not open to school busses at this time. He stated that the repair project is complete but not the total project. The City will seek options from T. Baker Smith to bring the bridge up to the standards for all vehicular traffic. Also, he mentioned that funds will probably be included in the 2018 budget for the additional repairs.

Councilman Coner commented that it is his understanding the State plans to widen I-12 to six lanes between Baton Rouge and Slidell.

Mayor Cooper confirmed and mentioned that the I-12 widening project has been moving west from Slidell and east from Baton Rouge. He mentioned that the State has prioritized the widening of the portion of I-12 in the Covington area and it has already been funded.

Councilman Smith inquired as to when it was first determined that St. Tammany Parish Government was responsible for maintaining Mile Branch.

Mayor Cooper responded that once the research was completed and he had definitive statements from the City Attorney, he made the public statement that Mile Branch was in fact a Parish drainage way. Also, he stated that the Parish acknowledged it was their responsibility in the recent meeting. Also, he stated the City will work with the Parish in addressing the problems with Mile Branch.

Councilman Rolling commented that he was very impressed with the Parish officials during the recent meeting regarding Mile Branch. He felt they were receptive to moving forward in the right direction. Also, he mentioned that he appreciated the Mayor's efforts in scheduling the meeting and working on this issue.

Councilman Coner's quote for this evening was, "Men are like fish, neither would get into trouble if they kept their mouths shut."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 P.M.



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



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk