

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 20, 2018**

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, Diane Weiss, 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. Andy Canulette.

APPEARERS

Council President O'Keefe introduced Mr. Craig Babylon, who appeared to personally invite the Council to the Grand Opening of the Reagan Crossing Apartments on Saturday, February 24th from 11 A.M. until 3 P.M., with the ribbon cutting at 11:15 A.M. He mentioned that this apartment complex is the largest privately-funded development in the City of Covington.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by **Councilman Rolling**. 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. 2018-01-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Appendix A – Subdivisions, Article 3. Subdivision Applications and Procedures, Sec. 3.4. Administrative Subdivision (Zoning Case No. 17-12-02TEXT) (Smith)

City Attorney Rod Rodrigue commented that this text change deals with administrative resubdivisions and it gives broader authority to the Planning Director when combining several smaller lots into one or more larger lots.

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

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-01-01, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2018-01-01. Item No. 2018-01-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-01-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify a 1.926 Acre Parcel of Land Bounded by U.S. Highway 190 (Collins Boulevard), West 32nd Avenue, North Florida Street and the Unconstructed West Morgan Street, which Property is Situated in Conolly Addition to the City of Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, from CN (Neighborhood Commercial District) and RM-1 (Three- and Four-Family Residential District) to CR (Regional Commercial District) (Zoning Case No. 17-12-01REZONING) (Coner)

City Attorney Rod Rodrigue stated that the Zoning Commission approved the zoning request unanimously.

Councilman Coner stated that the request for the zoning change is appropriate due to the surrounding zoning districts.

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

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-01-02, seconded by **Councilman Smith**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2018-01-02. Item No. 2018-01-02 was adopted.

3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-01-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2017 Budget for Grants (O'Keefe)

Mayor Cooper stated that these funds are being transferred to the appropriate codes for projects that have been budgeted in 2018.

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

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-01-03, seconded by **Councilman Rolling**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2018-01-03. Item No. 2018-01-03 was adopted.

New Business

Items for discussion:

1. NAACP Annual Convention (Coner)

Councilman Coner requested Council approval to attend the NAACP Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas. He mentioned that pursuant to the Code of Ordinances, Council approval is required for any out-of-state conventions.

Council President O'Keefe confirmed that the cost to attend the convention would be deducted from Councilman Coner's budgeted funds (\$1,500.00) for 2018.

The Council had no objection to Councilman Coner's request and it was approved unanimously.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

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. He recognized the February birthdays for City employees. He reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, he asked everyone to keep the victims of the tragedy in the State of Florida and their families in our thoughts and prayers and to pray for peace on earth. His quote for this evening was, "The heart is the happiest when it beats for others."

3. District C –

Councilwoman Weiss extended appreciation and thanks to Aimee Faucheux and Amy Tucker in the Cultural Arts and Events Department for their assistance with a missing event permit for the 15th Street Flyers and Christ Episcopal. Also, she expressed kudos and thanks to Chief Lentz and the Covington Police Department for their response to speeding cars and a rash of car break-ins in the Oak Alley Subdivision. Also, she commended the Public Works Department and in particular Paul, for their response to a water main leak in a resident's driveway on West 11th Avenue.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling announced that 11 new businesses applied for occupational licenses in January and February 2018. Also, he mentioned that the Covington Lions Club parade and Carnival at the Trailhead were very successful events and many residents and visitors enjoyed Mardi Gras Day in Covington. He thanked the Carnival in Covington Committee members for their work in planning the event. Also, he thanked the sponsors for their support and the City's Police, Fire and Public Works departments along with Randy Perkins for their work on this event. He mentioned there will be a post-parade committee meeting next week and looks forward to planning Carnival in Covington for 2019. Also, he mentioned that the non-profit, Kelly Kicking Cancer, is sponsoring a 5K race on Saturday, March 10th at the Trailhead and encouraged the public to participate in this fundraiser event.

Council President O'Keefe commended Councilman Rolling for the great job he has done over the past two years in chairing the Carnival in Covington Committee.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith commented that the Mardi Gras Day events were very successful and thanked the Police and Public Works departments for their work on the events. Also, he thanked the Public Works Department for handling some recent issues in District E. Upcoming events: Covington Art Market on Saturday, March 3rd from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. at the St. Tammany Art Association on N. Columbia Street; the Second Saturday Art Walk on Saturday, March 10th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. in the Historic Downtown Covington area; Sunset at the Landing concert on Friday, March 16th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M.; the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 17th from noon until 5 P.M. beginning at the Columbia Street Tap Room; the Chef Soiree benefiting the Youth Service Bureau on Sunday, March 18th from 5 P.M. until 9 P.M. at the Trailhead; Columbia Street

Block Party on Friday, March 23rd from 6:30 P.M. until 9:30 P.M.; the Egg Rollin' Kids' event on Saturday, March 31st from 10 A.M. until noon at the Trailhead; and the Kiwanis Youth Health Fair on Saturday, March 31st from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. at the Trailhead. Also, he commended Pam Keller and the Covington Recreation Department for the great job in planning exciting events for the public. He mentioned that the basketball season is underway and registration is open for T-ball and baseball. He reminded everyone about the "Come Play With Us" family event on Saturday, March 10th from 11 A.M. until 5 P.M. at the Covington Recreation Complex.

6. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman McMath announced that the individuals nominated by the Council and Mayor have accepted the appointments to the EOC Advisory Committee. The committee will have its first meeting on Tuesday, February 27th at 6 P.M. in the Council Chambers and all committee meetings will be open to the public.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President O'Keefe announced that the Council meeting on March 6th has been cancelled due to the lack of ordinances or resolutions scheduled for action. The only Council meeting in the month of March will be held on March 20th.

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Cooper's comments:

(a) With regard to Mardi Gras, he thanked the organizers, volunteers, sponsors and participants in the Krewe of Olympia and Covington Lions Club/Krewe of Covington parades for presenting such great events for our City. Also, he thanked the City departments for their involvement in these events.

(b) He announced that as a result of the recent accident at West 8th Avenue and South Harrison Street and the expansion plans for St. Tammany Parish Hospital, the City has engaged the services of a certified traffic planner/engineer to perform a traffic study on the West 8th Avenue/South Harrison Street/South Van Buren Street area. The traffic study will include formal recommendations on how the City can better address pedestrian and traffic safety along with improved traffic flow, which may include turn lanes, signalization, signage, crosswalks and the possible opening of Van Buren Street between West 7th Avenue and West 8th Avenue. He is scheduled to meet with the consultants on Wednesday, February 21st to discuss the criteria of the traffic study and to visit the construction sites. He will update the Council as the project moves forward.

Councilman Smith inquired as to whether or not St. Tammany Parish Hospital is participating in the traffic study.

Mayor Cooper responded that St. Tammany Parish Hospital is not participating in the traffic study, but he has met with officials from the Hospital and they have indicated they will participate with the City in any recommendations that will make this area safer for the public and employees of the Hospital.

Councilman Rolling remarked that this is welcomed news for the neighborhood and extended his appreciation to the City's Administration for moving forward with this study.

(c) He gave updates on projects that are currently underway:

(1) East 9th Avenue Sewer Lift Station Rehab Project – The contractor has mobilized the equipment on site while materials are being assembled off site.

(2) The River Forest Paving and Drainage Project on Lurline Drive – This project started late last year and has been delayed due to weather conditions. The contractor is finishing up the punch list this week. Once the final punch list is approved, the street will be opened.

(3) The River Forest Paving and Drainage Project on Willow Drive, Phase 1 – Rehab will be performed in two phases on Willow Drive. Engineering has been completed on the first phase and bids for construction will be submitted on Thursday, February 22nd at 2 P.M. The project includes concrete removal and drainage improvement on the section of Willow Drive from Hickory Drive to just south of Karen Drive and some sections of Lurline Drive and Karen Drive at the intersections with Willow Drive.

Councilwoman Weiss mentioned that some of the River Forest residents have reported new or collateral damage that has occurred just outside of the construction area from the equipment that has been brought in for the project on Lurline Drive. She asked if this damage would be included in the punch list.

Mayor Cooper responded that he will discuss the reports with the City Engineer and determine if the damage should be included on the contractor's punch list.

(4) West 29th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The new bridge is under construction, but there have been some delays due to weather conditions.

(5) Sidewalk construction repairs were recently completed on sections of North Florida Street and West 29th Avenue. Work is currently underway on sections of North Jackson Street in the West 20s area.

(6) Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead – The project design is 99% complete and upon receipt of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' final permit for the bulkhead and kayak/canoe launch, the project will be bid out for construction.

(7) Theard Street Fire Station Renovation – Bids will be received on Tuesday, February 27th at 2 P.M.

(8) Covington Public Works Barn – The architect has completed preliminary plans and the final plans should be completed by the end of March or early April. Coordinated efforts between Public Works, the City Engineer and the Mayor's office are currently underway for the transition to temporary facilities during construction. Construction should begin in September or October and completed early next year.

(d) He reminded everyone about the election for the vacancy for the Council District C seat on the City Council. Three candidates are vying for the seat and the election will be held on Saturday, March 24th with early voting being held from Saturday, March 10th through Saturday, March 17th, excluding Sunday. He mentioned there has already been one candidates' forum and expects other forums between now and the election.

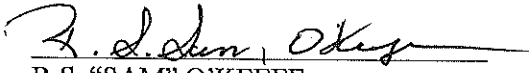
Councilman McMath inquired as to the name of the engineer on the Willow Drive project.

Mayor Cooper responded the engineer is Design Engineering from Metairie.

Councilman McMath mentioned he has noticed that most of the newly-constructed roads in River Forest are concrete-topped as opposed to asphalt. He inquired as to the benefits of the concrete-topped roads.

Mayor Cooper responded that they are curb and gutter concrete streets and the City is replacing same with same. He added that the concrete is probably to a higher grade than the original streets installed in the 60s.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47 P.M.



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



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk