

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 4, 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,  
Edward Fielding and Sam O'Keefe

ABSENT: None

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Covington Police Sgt. Jake Lehman.

**APPEARERS**

1. The Honorable Peter J. Garcia, Judge, 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court, gave a general overview of the St. Tammany Justice Center Sales Tax Renewal Proposition which will appear on the April 29, 2017 election ballot.
2. St. Tammany Parish Sheriff Randy Smith discussed the St. Tammany Jail Sales Tax Renewal Proposition which will appear on the April 29, 2017 election ballot.
3. Clay Madden, representing The Exchange Club of West St. Tammany, discussed the mission of The Exchange Club of West St. Tammany and its initiatives to raise awareness and fight child abuse.

**Mayor Cooper** thanked Mr. Madden and The Exchange Club of West St. Tammany for their efforts in raising awareness of child abuse. Also, he issued a Proclamation declaring the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in the City of Covington.

4. Mr. Robert R. Barkerding, Jr. gave a brief history of his concerns and the City's response regarding the issues with Mile Branch Creek on his property.

**Council President O'Keefe** commented that in January, he visited Mr. Barkerding's property with the Mayor and some Public Works staff to view his concerns with Mile Branch Creek.

**Mayor Cooper** commented that the City is aware of the issues on Mile Branch Creek, particularly between West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and the river. He mentioned that the City is formulating a plan to work with St. Tammany Parish and other entities to identify the issues and perform the necessary stabilization work on Mile Branch Creek.

**Councilman Rolling** stated that the work on Mile Branch Creek is long overdue and offered to help coordinate the efforts with St. Tammany Parish.

**Councilman Wright** stated there have been meetings with residents and Parish officials regarding the issues with Mile Branch Creek. He encouraged the City to take the next steps to address the issues.

Ms. Michelle Creppel discussed her concerns regarding Mile Branch Creek.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Fielding** 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**

#### **New Business**

#### **Items to be voted on:**

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 2017-04** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Appointing Jacob Lehman to Serve as a Member of the City of Covington Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board Pursuant to the Recent Election Held by the Covington Police Department (O’Keefe)

**Council President O’Keefe** led a discussion regarding Resolution No. 2017-04.

**Councilman Fielding** made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-04, seconded by **Councilman Wright**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-04. Resolution No. 2017-04 was adopted.

2. **RESOLUTION NO. 2017-05** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Capital Outlay and Encumbrance Rollovers from the 2016 Budget to the 2017 Budget (O’Keefe)

**Council President O’Keefe** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-05.

**Councilman Smith** made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-05, seconded by **Councilman Wright**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-05. Resolution No. 2017-05 was adopted.

3. **RESOLUTION NO. 2017-06** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Urging the United States Congress to Enact Legislation that will Enable Local Governments to Collect Revenues Already Due that are Essential to the Maintenance and Expansion of Local and Regional Economies, the Creation of Thousands of New Jobs, the Enhancement of the Quality of Life, and the Preservation of Limited Local Revenue Sources (O’Keefe)

**Council President O’Keefe** withdrew Resolution No. 2017-06 from the agenda.

### **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

#### **A. Council District and Committee Reports**

1. **District A – None.**
2. **District B –**

**Councilman Coner** recognized the April birthdays for City employees. Also, he reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. His quote for tonight was, “Forget yourself for others and others will not forget you!”

**3. District C – None.**

**4. District D –**

**Councilman Rolling** announced that there will be another workshop for the business community, probably in June. He will announce more information at the next Council meeting. Also, he announced that three new occupational licenses were issued in March. Upcoming events: A Taste of Covington will be held from Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>; Rockin' the Rails starts this Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> and will be held every Thursday in April from 5 P.M. until 7:30 P.M. at the Trailhead; the Covington Lions Club will sponsor a Car Show on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at the Trailhead; Spring for Art will be held on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. in downtown Covington; Egg Rollin' Kids' Event on Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 10 A.M. until noon at the Trailhead; Sunset at the Landing on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 P.M.; Coffee with the Mayor on Wednesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 9 A.M. at the Trailhead; Columbia Street Block Party on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 P.M. until 9:30 P.M.; and the Farmer's Market every Wednesday and Saturday.

**5. District E –**

**Councilman Smith** thanked the residents who submitted ideas to improve District E and the City as a whole. Also, he mentioned that some residents complimented the Public Works Department for the terrific job they do in the City and he commended Chris Davis and his department. He reminded everyone that there will be a CBA meeting tomorrow night, Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Covington Brewhouse, social begins at 5:30 and the meeting at 6 P.M. Also, he mentioned that Keep Covington Beautiful will sponsor its annual Paper Shredding Day on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9 A.M. until noon in the parking lot of the Bogue Falaya Hall. He thanked Keep Covington Beautiful and Priscilla Floca for sponsoring this event.

**6. At Large (Interim) –**

**Councilman Fielding** mentioned that tonight will be his last meeting as Interim Councilman at Large. He thanked the Council for appointing him and commented that it has been an enjoyable experience. He mentioned that he has been impressed with the operation of the City and thanked the Mayor for his support. He congratulated Patrick McMath on his election to the Councilman at Large seat.

**7. At Large (President) –**

**Council President O'Keefe** thanked Mr. Fielding for serving as Interim Councilman at Large. Also, he mentioned that the swearing in ceremony for Patrick McMath has tentatively been scheduled for Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, pending the promulgation of the election results by the Secretary of State's office. He commented that once the election results are official, a press release will be issued with the details of the swearing-in ceremony.

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

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

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

(1) West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Culvert Washout at Rattlesnake Creek –

A pre-construction meeting with the City Engineer, DOTD and the contractor was held today. The contractor will order the materials and mobilize on May 1<sup>st</sup> which is the Notice to Proceed date. The contractor has 30 working days from May 1<sup>st</sup> or by mid-June to complete the project, pending weather delays.

(2) He reminded the Council that the City has been proactive in addressing issues with bridges as a result of their age and perhaps deteriorating condition. He mentioned that issues with the West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile

Branch, the West 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch, the Covington Point Drive Bridge and the Gratitude Drive Bridge have been addressed. He commented that the City had already started some type of work on the West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch and the West 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch even before the recent issues. He gave an update on bridge projects:

(a) West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – This bridge was closed to traffic last week due to deteriorating pilings that were discovered by DOTD in their bi-annual inspection. Last year, it was recommended by the City Engineer to establish a load rating on the bridge and funding was provided in last year's budget. T. Baker Smith Engineering was hired to perform the load rating and was in the process of conducting physical inspections and collecting information when DOTD performed its bi-annual inspection. Once the engineers analyze the load rating information, the City is hopeful for a quick repair in order to open the bridge to passenger vehicle traffic while permanent repairs are considered.

(b) 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. Last week, a representative of T. Baker Smith Engineering 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. Once the design and specs are completed and the contract awarded, the bridge will be taken out of service until the repairs are completed.

(3) Beech Street Waterline/Fire Protection upgrade – This project is completed.

(4) Waterline/Fire Protection upgrade on West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue between Buchanan and Lincoln streets – A fire hydrant and larger water main will be installed.

(5) First Avenue Lift Station (off Jahncke Avenue) – A contract has been executed with Gottfried Construction for replacement of the pumps and other modifications.

(6) St. Paul's Lift Station – A contract has been executed with Gottfried Construction for replacement of the pump and other modifications. A new pump is on order which will replace the bypass pump that is currently installed.

(7) Cleveland Street Bridge Replacement – Funds are included in the 2017 budget for this project. GEC Engineers is handling this project. The surveys, geotech work and the hydrologic evaluation have been completed and the preliminary engineering is underway.

(8) Bulkhead/Boardwalk/Canoe Launch at Bogue Falaya Park – Funds are included in the 2017 budget for the design and build. This project is part of the Master Plan that was formulated last year. Digital Engineering is the contractor and is in the process of performing the survey, geotech work and preliminary design.

(9) New Park Ranger Cabin at Bogue Falaya Park – A new 700 sq. ft. cabin for the park ranger is under construction.

(10) River Forest Subdivision (portion of Lurline Drive from 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Karen Drive) – Funds are included in the 2017 budget for this project. The engineering is complete and the bid for the contractor will be let later this year.

(11) Downtown Street Striping – Southern Synergy has been selected as the contractor. The striping will be performed at night and should be completed by the end of April.

(b) He discussed some studies 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 hold a public open house in May for feedback, with a final plan being submitted to the City in June.

(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 from West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue to West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. RPC has hired Digital Engineering and Dana Brown and Associates to address the vehicle congestion by analyzing the traffic counts on collector streets, crash data statistics, sidewalks, ADA review, signage and parking, and a traffic circulation plan. The consultants will provide the City with a draft report of their conceptual development and evaluations and a final report will be provided by the end of June. The consultants presented their preliminary results to the Project Management Committee last week. The City will request that DOTD provide some enhancements along this corridor in accordance with the final report.

(c) He mentioned that he will attend a meeting on April 6<sup>th</sup> in which the Bogue Falaya Park will be considered for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Also, he mentioned that the Covington Historic District Commission has granted its approval.

(d) He reminded everyone that DOTD has scheduled a public hearing/open house on Thursday, April 6, 2017 from 4 P.M. until 7 P.M. at the St. Tammany Parish Public Works facility on Tyler Street regarding the US190/Collins Blvd. and US190B/Ronald Reagan Hwy/Hwy 25 Widening project. Conceptual plans for the project will be shown and DOTD officials will be available for public input and to answer questions.

**Councilman Smith** thanked Mayor Cooper for providing assurances to the Council tonight that the City has plans to work on the issues with Mile Branch Creek and will move forward with the plans.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the City has been considering different plans along with the process to navigate the various permits and possible cost. Also, he commented that the City will work with other agencies to evaluate the issues and determine the work that needs to be done.

**Councilman Coner** asked for clarification as to which entity is responsible for Mile Branch Creek – the City or St. Tammany Parish?

**Councilman Wright** commented that he has attended meetings in which St. Tammany Parish committed to take care of the permits, but there may be some joint work between the City and the Parish. Also, he mentioned there is not a clear answer since Mile Branch Creek overlaps both the City and Parish, but basically it was agreed that St. Tammany Parish is responsible.

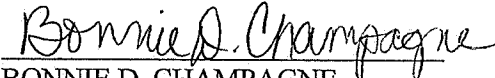
**Councilman Coner** commented that the City should take care of the entire Mile Branch Creek, not just parts of it.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the City will work on the downstream section first and then handle the upstream section.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 P.M.



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



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk