

March 22, 2021
Six o'clock P.M.
North Little Rock City Hall Council Chambers
300 Main Street
North Little Rock, Arkansas

The regular meeting of the North Little Rock City Council scheduled for Monday, March 22, 2021, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Honorable Mayor Terry C. Hartwick.

The roll having been called and the following Council Members answered to their names: DEBI ROSS, NATHAN HAMILTON, MAURICE TAYLOR, LINDA ROBINSON, STEVE BAXTER, RON HARRIS, and JANE GINN (7/0). Council Member Charlie Hight was absent. City Clerk/Treasurer Diane Whitbey, and City Attorney Amy Fields were also present.

Note: the majority of Council Members participated in the meeting electronically. Mayor Hartwick, City Clerk Whitbey, City Attorney Fields and Council Members Ross, Hamilton and Ginn were present in the council chambers.

The prayer was led by Council Member Harris.

On the motion of Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Ross and by consent of all members present, the minutes from the North Little Rock City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, March 8, 2021, were approved, accepted and filed as prepared by the City Clerk (7/0).

On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Robinson, and by consent of all members present, communications #1, 2, and 3 were accepted and filed (7/0).

1. Charlotte Thomas, Mayor's Office memorandum re: Restaurant Mixed Drink Maximum Permit – Change of Manager for Buffalo Wild Wings, 4600 Silver Creek Drive, by Samear Qatium. (*Note: this address is not within NLR city limits*).
2. Ember Strange, Finance Director memorandum to Council Members re: Monthly Financial Update.
3. John Owens, President/CEO, North Little Rock Chamber of Commerce – Economic Development Activity Report Q1 2021.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

R-21-30 and R-21-31 were pulled and called under new business.

NEW BUSINESS

R-21-30 (RESOLUTION NO. 10008 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF OF STAFF TRACY ROULSTON TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF MAYOR OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK IN THE ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF MIKE DAVIS TO PERFORM THE DUTIES OF MAYOR OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK IN THE ABSENCE OF THE MAYOR AND CHIEF OF STAFF; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Hamilton. Council Member Ross had constituents who requested more information. City Attorney Fields said the duties of these staff members are set by the Mayor. State law (§14-43-501(b)(3)) allows the mayor to appoint an employee of the city, with the approval of the council to perform the duties of the office of mayor in his absence. Council Member Robinson asked if the Deputy Chief of Staff was full-time or part-time. Mayor Hartwick said it was part-time, however, in the event of the implementation of this resolution, the employee would work additional hours. On the previous motion, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was adopted (7/0).

R-21-31 (RESOLUTION NO. 10009 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING CERTAIN CITY-OWNED ITEMS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT AS SURPLUS; PROVIDING FOR AUCTION THEREOF; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Ginn and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the resolution was adopted (7/0).

ORDINANCES

O-21-23 (ORDINANCE NO. 9339 – MAYOR HARTWICK)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2021 QUOTA ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 9323) FOR THE NORTH LITTLE ROCK PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Hamilton, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Taylor. Council Member Ross asked about the two (2) new Park Rangers. North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Director Steve Shields said additional coverage of the city's 35 parks which encompass an area including the River House, the Big Dam Bridge, Stone Links, and more. These additional employees would provide coverage when the current Park Ranger, Ian Hope is out and during events that take place on weekends and after regular hours. Their work shifts could fall between 7:00 a.m. and 12 midnight. Mayor Hartwick said he recently drove through Riverfront Park where there were people spending the night. Mr. Shields said various tournaments will begin in April (including baseball, softball, and soccer). Council Member Ross referenced issues at Military Heights

Park where additional coverage would be beneficial. Mayor Hartwick said North Little Rock has one of the largest parks in the United States (Burns Park). On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0).

O-21-24 (ORDINANCE NO. 9340 – COUNCIL MEMBERS BAXTER AND HARRIS)
AN ORDINANCE REZONING CERTAIN PROPERTY LOCATED AT 9600 WHITE OAK CROSSING IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, FROM R1 TO C4 ZONING CLASSIFICATION, BY AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 9263; ADOPTING AN AMENDED LAND USE PLAN FOR THE SUBJECT PROPERTY; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Hamilton, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). On the motion of Council Member Baxter and seconded by Council Member Ginn, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). (*applicant: Joe White & Associates*)

O-21-25
AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A CONDITIONAL USE TO ALLOW A MODULAR HOME IN A R3 ZONE FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 504 WEST 25TH STREET IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Taylor. Council Member Ginn said she drove by the location and spoke with people in the area which is a (residential) neighborhood with brick homes. A few of the residents found modular homes to be less desirable. She said she would like to see an illustration of the home and require a permanent foundation. She also referenced landscaping, driveway, steps, and utility hook ups. She then referenced possible issues with modular homes like Clayton Homes. She wanted to make sure this is a quality home for this location only...not the entire street. Council Member Robinson received a call requesting she vote against this legislation. Residents of Military Heights are very active and protective of their neighborhood. They care about the character of their community. She said a modular home would not go into other neighborhoods like Park Hill or Shady Valley. Council Member Ross heard from some residents in the area who would rather have a modular home than a vacant lot, and others who want to know why this is going into their neighborhood. She has talked to constituents in Dark Hollow who would like to see modular homes on some of the vacant lots. Mr. David Bedford spoke in support of the home. He owns the lot and thought this would be a good home for the area. It would be on a solid foundation with brick (underpinning) and a driveway. He plans to retire in Military Heights. Ms. Belvie Lambert asked if this was a manufactured home. Mayor Hartwick said it is classified as a modular home. The walls are pre-fabricated and shipped, then installed on site. A manufactured home is already constructed (on a frame) and delivered on wheels.

Planning Director Shawn Spencer described the differences between the two types of homes. Manufactured homes are made according to Federal guidelines and the city would only inspect the connection to power and water. When a modular home is built off site it is in accordance to codes of the city and state, and includes two-by-fours, inspections, etc. If it is built from the ground up on site, it would be allowed. The walls, etc. are put together on-site. Council Member Hamilton shared an illustration and said the underpinning would be brick, not vinyl. Ms. Lambert asked why the owner would want to build a modular home instead of brick and mortar. Council Member Hamilton said everyone who opposes the proposal is doing so with a good heart. They are trying to protect the neighborhood. However, he did his research and found this would be a good thing for the neighborhood. As a council member he has to not only protect the neighborhood, but also improve it. He represents a variety of neighborhoods, ranging from low to high income residents. Some residents do not have access to a lot of capital. The city needs to find ways to create opportunities for investors/home owners and owner occupied homes. A modular home will have to follow the same codes as any other home. This home will increase property values in the area. A new construction/site built home would cost between \$175,000 and \$225,000 to build. This price is for the house only, not the lot. Comparable properties in the area are selling for less than \$100,000. Council Member Hamilton said he spoke to the vice-president of the neighborhood association who lives next door to the vacant lot and is tired of late night visitors using the lot as a cut-through. The applicant wants his retired sister to move into the home and retire there himself. Council Member Robinson said this would set a precedence. Diane Bateman and Brenda Hampton were also present via telephone. Ms. Hampton said she researched Clayton Homes and provided copies of the same for the meeting referencing poor workmanship. She asked if manufactured homes would be allowed in other areas of the city like Main Street and Park Hill. She said it would be better to have a vacant lot than a poorly built home. Ms. Bateman is against the proposal. Council Member Baxter said this type of issue has been before the council and referenced a location in Amboy. The residents of the neighborhood did not want the structure and the request was defeated. He also referenced an application in Rose City and Mr. Bobby Taylor who spoke against the proposal. Council Member Ross shared a previous concern regarding setting a precedence (city-wide). Council Member Hamilton said this is an innovative idea that would allow an owner to build a home. Mr. Spencer clarified the home referenced in Rose City was a Butler building, which was basically a shed. Council Member Harris said Council Member Hamilton had done his research and encouraged other council members to do the same. Mr. Spencer said the Planning Commission approved the proposal and referred it to city council. Council Member Ginn said a modular home is about 15% cheaper to build than a traditional brick/mortar home. Council Member Hamilton said factory efficiencies result in savings. Council Member Taylor suggested holding the item and to allow Council Member Hamilton time to meet with residents before the next council meeting. Council Member Ross asked for information about resale value. Council Member Hamilton then held the legislation. (*applicant: Melissa Bedford-Guidry*)

O-21-26 (ORDINANCE NO. 9341 – COUNCIL MEMBER ROSS)

AN ORDINANCE REZONING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4500 NORTH HILLS BOULEVARD IN THE CITY OF NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, FROM PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) TO R2 ZONING CLASSIFICATION, BY AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 9263; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, was read. On the motion of Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the readings were suspended (7/0). A motion to adopt was made by Council Member Ross and seconded by Council Member Hamilton. Council Member Ross said this property was a church, which was going to be sold and storage buildings were planned. It was later discovered in the covenant that the property can only be used as a church. On the previous motion, and the roll having been called, and all members present having voted in the affirmative, the ordinance was adopted (7/0). Emergency clause adopted (7/0). (*applicant: North Pulaski Baptist Association*)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council Member Ross said the annual Burns Park Easter Egg Hunt is coming up. Parks Director Shields said it will be Saturday, April 3, 2021. Admission is \$5 for children ages 2 to 18. The event will take place at Funland and admission includes all of the rides, an egg hunt and visit with the Easter Bunny. Council Member Baxter referenced the opening of the new Fire Station #6 this week.

There being no further business to come before the Council, and on the motion of Council Member Hamilton and seconded by Council Member Ross, and by consent of all members present, the meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m. (7/0), until the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Monday, April 12, 2021, at six o'clock p.m. in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, located at 300 Main Street, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

APPROVED: _____
MAYOR TERRY C. HARTWICK

ATTEST: _____
DIANE WHITBEY, CITY CLERK