

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room in City Hall.

PRESENT

Barry Dize, Mayor
LaVerne Johnson, Council Vice President
Barbara Ward, Councilwoman
Nelson Sheppard, Councilman
Gail Lankford, Councilwoman
Jimmy Ford, Councilman
Richard M. Pollitt, Jr. City Manager
Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer
Michael Sullivan, City Solicitor

Also in attendance; Valerie Swift, Secretary (see sign in sheet for others in attendance)

CALL TO ORDER, LORD'S PRAYER, PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Dize called the meeting to order, opening with the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. He recognized former Mayor Kim Lawson and former Council Members Charlotte Scott, Sam Davis and Erik Emely, who were present in the audience.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Mayor Dize requested approval of the three sets of minutes. Approval so moved by Councilman Sheppard, seconded by Council Vice President Johnson, and carried unanimously 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 112-20, 112-56, AND ARTICLE IX OF THE CITY OF CRIFIELD CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERMITTING RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the purpose for the public hearing.

Mayor Dize opened the Public Hearing and called for opponents of the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Sullivan advised that he had been contacted by Attorney Robert Benson, representing Tangier Sound Condo Association, who had requested that he be given 10 minutes to speak.

OPPONENTS

Mayor Dize requested that any further opposing speakers not make repetitive comments and called Mr. Benson as the first speaker.

Mr. Benson thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing him to speak. He noted that he had represented municipal governments for 25 years and appreciates the Mayor and Council's job. Mr. Benson commented that he feels the Tangier Sound Condo property will be the only area affected by the Ordinance. He stated that the purpose of the Ordinance was to rectify an omission of the updated code, but he does not see where in the previous code RV was located; only multi-family use in TM.

Mr. Benson went on to review the handout from the proposed RV Park developers and noted inconsistencies with the proposed Ordinance and the developer's proposal. He stated that he does not feel that only Class "A" RV's will be used. He also noted that a 3 foot setback requirement and 6 foot fences are not appropriate. Mr. Benson also commented that the size of the Class "A" RV's will be too large for streets in Crisfield to accommodate.

Mr. Benson stated that he does not believe that this is an appropriate use for the TM district and does not feel that the Ordinance should be adopted for 2nd Reader. He requested that if the Ordinance does pass, it be amended to require that the developer apply for a Special Exception to appear before the Board of Zoning Appeals and prove that the development will not have any impact on its neighbors. Mr. Benson respectfully requested that the Ordinance not be adopted for 2nd Reader and presented a petition of 150 signatures in opposition, collected by Mr. Paul Hanyok, Tangier Sound resident.

Mayor Kim Lawson appeared before the Mayor and Council as an opponent of the proposed Ordinance. Mayor Lawson advised that three former Mayors had worked over the years to eliminate mobile homes from the City of Crisfield. Mayor Lawson commented that the Janes Island State Park, founded by his father, has a campsite for all types of trailers.

Mayor Lawson commented regarding the proposal to raise the sewer rate and the 2014 depreciation of property, as well as the Cohen/Tangier Sound property. He noted that the City would have received \$55,000 per year if the entire property had been developed. Mayor Lawson stated that RV's were not omitted from the Code; they were never included. He also stated that the current investors don't care about Crisfield; they only want to get rid of the property.

PROPOSERS

Mr. Bill Landon stated that we need to look at the jobs that can be created by having an RV Park. He commented that he has been an RV owner for many years and that Parks can be spectacular or dismal. Mr. Landon advised that, speaking for the American Legion, we need what RV Parks can bring. He also noted that all Class "A" RVs are not huge.

With no further comments from opponents or proponents, Council Vice President Johnson made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Motion seconded by Councilman Sheppard and carried unanimously 5-0. The hearing adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

At this time, Mayor Dize requested a 5 minute recess. Councilwoman Lankford excused herself from the meeting at this time.

Upon reconvening, Council Vice President Johnson made a motion to table the Ordinance Amending Section 112-20, 112-56, and Article IX of the City of Crisfield Code for the purpose of Permitting RV Parks. Motion seconded by Councilman Sheppard and carried, 4-0.

APPOINTMENT – GREG CAIN, CONCERNING SUPPORT OF THE HOTEL/CONFERENCE CENTER PROJECT

Mr. Greg Cain appeared before the Mayor and Council concerning the hotel/conference center. He reviewed Census statistics concerning household income and other indications of financial health. Mr. Cain made reference to the need to expand our trade zone and stated that a hotel/conference center would allow trade among each other. He stated that it would allow for the development of tourism. Mr. Cain advised that he had met with Dr. Memo Diriker of BEACON, concerning a feasibility study which shows that a hotel/conference center would be feasible here. Mr. Cain stated that it also follows the City's Strategic Revitalization Plan guidelines and advised that we need the Mayor and Council to be the champion for the City's future.

FIRST SESSION OF PUBLIC INPUT

Mayor Lawson commented that he agrees that the sewer rate increase is necessary.

George Friedley commented that the water meters still don't work and he wants to be billed for the gallons he actually uses. He added that he is ok with the sewer rate increase, but wants the water meters read.

CITY MANAGERS REPORT

Mr. Pollitt reviewed and highlighted his report.

Mayor Dize asked everyone to come out and support the Basketball Opioid Benefit on the 18th.

OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Dize noted the 2nd Reader of the RV Park Ordinance had been tabled at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

FIRST READER OF AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING NEW WATER & SEWER RATES AND SERVICE FEES

At this time, Mr. Sullivan read the Ordinance into the record.

Councilman Sheppard made a motion to adopt this Ordinance for First Reader. Motion seconded by Council Vice President Johnson and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Mr. Sullivan noted that there would be no change in the water rate.

FIRST READER BUDGET ORDINANCE 2019-2020

Mrs. Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer, reviewed the City of Crisfield Draft Budget for the year 2019-2020. She noted that the City's tax rate will remain the same.

At this time, Council Vice President Johnson made a motion to adopt the Budget Ordinance for First Reader. Motion seconded by Councilman Sheppard and carried unanimously, 4-0.

FINAL PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Mr. Bill Brown commented that there had been a good interest by Realtors for the upcoming Realtor Tour tomorrow at 11:00 a.m.

Councilman Erik Emely made reference to the water and sewer hookup fees charged by the City and County and suggested that the City work with the County to reduce these fees.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Ford stated that he is glad to see everyone in attendance.

Councilwoman Ward had nothing at this time.

Council Vice President Johnson made reference to the upcoming Opioid Benefit Basketball Tournament on May 18th and encouraged everyone to attend, donate, or sponsor a team.

She also noted that there would be a workshop concerning the tabled RV Ordinance in the near future.

Councilman Sheppard encouraged everyone to support opioid awareness and the basketball event. He noted that he is sponsoring the Police Department's team. He thanked everyone for their comments.

Councilwoman Ward reminded everyone of the Unity in the Community Event on June 1st.

Council Vice President Johnson also noted that there will be vendors at the basketball game, and they have been asked to give a donation from their proceeds.

Mayor Dize advised that he is glad to see tonight's attendance. He noted that 2nd Reader of the RV Ordinance was tabled because of the opposition and testimony.

Mayor Dize thanked Greg Cain for his presentation. He stated that no one in City government is against the hotel/conference center. Mayor Dize advised that he had received a phone call from the Governor's office last Friday advising him that no State funding will be provided for the hotel/conference center. Mayor Dize made reference to the meeting a few weeks ago with Secretary Holt, who has assured us that they will work with the City to improve infrastructure.

Mayor Dize reiterated his previous statement that the City is in no financial position to help with the construction of a hotel/conference Center, stating that it would need to be accomplished with private funds. He again reaffirmed that the City is in no way blocking its construction.

There being no further business for discussion, Council Vice President Johnson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Ford, and carried unanimously, 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce L. Morgan, Clerk-Treasurer

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary