

**10 Robertson St.  
Meeting Number 15 of Radford City Council, F.Y. 2020-2021**

*The "New River" City*  
**February 22, 2021**

**Radford, Virginia**

The regular meeting of the Radford City Council was convened at 7:00 p.m. on October 12, 2020 in the Radford City Council Chambers, located at 10 Robertson Street Radford, VA. The Mayor of the City, Raymond David Horton, was present and presiding. Other members of City Council present were Mr. Onassis Burress, Ms. Jessie Foster, Mr. Forrest Hite and Ms. Huntington.

Others present were as follows:

Mr. David Ridpath, City Manager  
Mrs. Jenni Wilder, City Clerk  
Ms. Melissa Skelton  
Mr. Michael Bedsaul

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

**NONE**

**COUNCIL RESPONSE:**

**NONE**

**PROCLAMATION:**

**SUBJECT: Black History Month**

**SUMMARY:** Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements by African-Americans, and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Since 1976, the country has set the month of February for an official designation. The proclamation establishes a local designation.

**ACTION:** Mayor Horton made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

**AYES:** Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton  
**NAYES:** None-0

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**SUBJECT: Ordinance 1747-Vacation of Right of Way**

**SUMMARY:** Scott Hill has requested the vacation of an unopened portion of Sixth Street adjacent to property he owns between 604 and 504 Robertson Street. The right-of-way is topographically challenged and would not be opened as a street and it does not contain any utilities per our staff evaluation. The applicant has adhered to the application process and fee.

A public hearing was held on February 24, 2020 with no comments or objections. Action was on hold during the COVID-19 outbreak. A Board of Viewers was appointed on August 19, 2020 to review the request and make a recommendation.

The Board of Viewers has met and provided their findings associated with the petition concerning topography, property impact and utilities.

Ridpath Properties, LLC has provided an objection to the vacation request citing access needs to their property located on the unopened portion of Staples Street and Sixth Street. The property is

not considered an adjacent property to the vacation area since it is located about 50' away. The portion of the Sixth Street right-of-way adjoining their property is not impacted by the vacation request.

City Council received the report of the Board of Viewers and authorized the City Attorney to develop an Ordinance for disposal of the property at its meeting on January 7, 2021. Ordinance #1747 was prepared for consideration by City Council.

Due to some advertising issues a new public hearing was scheduled for February 8, 2021.

At the February 8, 2021 public hearing, City Council received comment from a property owner near the request asking that the section of right-of-way remain open. There were no other comments. City Council tabled action to get additional review of the new information by the Board of Viewers and plans from Ridpath Properties, LLC.

The Board of Viewers updated its original report. The Board indicated there were no utility or negative impacts by the vacation to the City. They were split on the impact of the vacation to the non-adjoining property owner.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Ms. Foster stated that she went out with both interested parties to see their vision and what they were looking at with their vision for their properties. One vision is very direct, it is congruent with the roadways and is housing that can be completed quickly, possibly within the year. The other option requires a lot more development work and has many more unknowns. The second option has multiple avenues for access and other options for development of that property. The best interest for the City is the release the property to Mr. Hill for the appraised value and get that project moving. Looking at the property it is going to be a challenge building out in the area they are talking about if the property is not released to Mr. Hill. After reviewing with both interested parties and walking the property, Ms. Foster would like to make the suggestion to sell the property to Mr. Hill for the appraised value to develop.

Mr. Hite thanked both parties for meeting at the site. It was helpful to get a visual of the properties. This is a risk/ reward scenario and Mr. Hite has tried to view this from the best interest of the City as a whole, as that is the job of Council. Mr. Hite stated that while there is potential for a higher reward with Mr. Ridpath's plan, I think it comes with significant risks. I remain unconvinced that the topography is suitable for Mr. Ridpath's plan, despite his arguments; and I'm unconvinced that Mr. Ridpath has fully taken into account all of the expenses needed to make this project a reality—roads, sewer, wastewater, etc.

Mr. Hill's plan does not yield a particularly high reward, but it comes with essentially no risk—we know what we're getting (and that we'll get it quickly), and we know it will be a positive for Radford, which needs more such homes ASAP. Mr. Hill's plan (in my estimation) falls more in line with how the City has historically viewed the lot than Mr. Ridpath's plan. Logically, aesthetically, realistically—building a house on that vacated lot just makes sense.

As I said, I do sympathize with Mr. Ridpath, and I felt it important for their side to heard and considered; however, I also do not feel that a decision to vacate would represent the proverbial nail in the coffin for their efforts. There are other options, and I hope that they would still explore them, as I obviously want to see as many projects as possible! I am no expert and I hope you will continue to push forward in your efforts.

Mr. Burress asked if the properties are rentals or homes to be sold. Mr. Ridpath stated his are to be sold and Mr. Hill is to be rentals.

**ACTION:** Ms. Foster made a motion to approve Ordinance 1747 on the first reading, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: None-0

**ACTION:** Ms. Foster made a motion to dispense with the second reading of Appropriation Ordinance 1747, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: None-0

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update**

**SUMMARY:** A brief update of the Coronavirus testing and vaccination process was provided.

**SUBJECT: Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

**SUMMARY:** The Member and Alternate to the New River Valley Jail Board have resigned and need replacements appointed.

**ACTION:** Ms. Huntington made a motion to appoint Bill Fleischer as the member and Don Goodman as the alternate, Mr. Burress seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Ms. Foster, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: None-0

**SUBJECT: Special Use Permit**

**SUMMARY:** Ellett Valley Investments, LLC has requested a Special Use Permit for the former Bondurant Center at 1905 East Main Street. The company plans to develop 11 residential units on the second floor of the commercial building. The property is zoned B-3, Central Business, and requires a Special Use Permit for residential upper floor use. The Planning Commission has requested City Council hold a public hearing on the Special Use Permit on March 22, 2021. The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on March 15, 2021

**ACTION:** Mayor Horton made a motion to schedule a public hearing for March 22, 2021, Mr. Burress seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: NONE

**SUBJECT: Ordinance 1748-Continuity of Government**

**SUMMARY:** On March 30, 2020, Council adopted a "Continuity of Government" Ordinance pursuant to Virginia Code § 15.2-1413 that provided authority for Council to hold virtual

meetings on essential matters and other measures to support administrative tasks that may be impacted by COVID-19. The COG Ordinance was set to expire within 6 months of the declaration of local emergency—the declaration of local emergency was on March 18, 2020, which results in an expiration date of September 18, 2020. Unfortunately, the City's number of COVID-19 cases have grown, office closures are in place, and, at least for September, virtual meetings are necessary. On September 10, 2020, the City Council approved Ordinance #1739 extending the COG to March 2021.

Ordinance #1748 extends the Continuity of Government provisions parallel with the State of Emergency declared by the Governor and will expire six months after the declaration has ended.

**ACTION:** Mr. Burress made a motion to approve Ordinance 1748 on the first reading, Ms. Foster seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton  
NAYES:

**ACTION:** Ms. Foster made a motion to dispense with the second reading of Ordinance 1748, Mr. Hite seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: None-0

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Ridpath appreciated council's time leading into the budget season. Thank you staff for all the efforts this winter season, we have seen it all. Repairs and spring cleanup will be underway as the warmer weather approaches.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Mr. Burress thanked the Electric Department for their work on the power line near his house. As it is still Black History Month let's focus on black knowledge on a daily and monthly basis so that over time we become more aware of each other's cultures and become one culture united.

Mr. Hite thanked Mr. Ridpath for the presentation earlier and wished Happy Birthday to Ms. Huntington and Ms. Foster.

Mayor Horton thanked city staff for all their hard work this winter. It is still black history month and I would like to think about getting some black historical markers throughout the City to recognize those important members in our own community.

Mr. Burress made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 seconded by Mr. Hite

**VOTE:**

AYES: Mr. Burress, Ms. Foster, Mr. Hite, Ms. Huntington, Mayor Horton  
NAYES: None-0

ATTEST:

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Jennifer Wilder, City Clerk