

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING

April 19, 2022

The Athens City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Perkinson presiding. The invocation was given by Vice Mayor Lockmiller; and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson

Council Member Curtis was absent due to illness.

The following decisions were made and ordered made a part of the records of the Athens City Council.

- 1 -

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 15, 2022 regularly scheduled meeting were submitted and approved by unanimous consent.

- 2 -

COMMUNICATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ATHENS MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

Mike Simmons, Principal at Athens Middle School, provided updates on the improvements being made throughout the school and on the many accomplishments of the students.

- 3 -

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Perkinson acknowledged receipt of a thank you card from Ralph Swafford, who retired from the City after 25 years of service, and his family, in appreciation for all the City had done for them following the recent passing of his wife.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Perkinson advised that the following items were discussed during the recent study session and are presented as part of the Consent Agenda. The recording clerk read the following items into the record:

- a.) Approve recommendation to award the bid for mowing and maintenance of Athens cemeteries to Total Lawn Care.
- b.) Approve proposal and contract with Gresham Smith for professional services for STBG paving.
- c.) Approve proposal and contract with Stantec for the Public Safety Training Facility.
- d.) Approve a one-time Cost-of-Living adjustment for current retirees.

Mayor Perkinson asked for a motion. **Council Member Pelley moved, Vice Mayor Lockmiller seconded, that the Consent Agenda as stated above be approved.** Roll call vote:

AYES: Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Curtis

- 5 -

ORDINANCES

None

- 6 -
OLD BUSINESS

None

- 7 -
NEW BUSINESS

PROPOSED ORDINANCE ALTERING FREE PARKING TIME LIMIT

ORDINANCE NO. 1109 – FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TITLE 15 OF THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL CODE, ENTITLED ‘MOTOR VEHICLES, TRAFFIC AND PARKING’, MORE SPECIFICALLY CHAPTER 6, SECTION 15-606 (3) ‘DRIVERS IMPLIED CONSENT TO PARKING CONTROL MARKS ON TIRES; ERASURE OR CONCEALMENT OF PARKING CONTROL MARKS ON VEHICLE TIRES PROHIBITED; EVADING TIME LIMITATION PROHIBITED’.

The caption of the above-described Ordinance was read by the recording clerk. Mayor Perkinson asked for a motion. **Vice Mayor Lockmiller moved, Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded, to approve Ordinance No. 1109 on First Reading.** Vice Mayor Lockmiller proposed this ordinance because he felt a change was needed from the current two-hour free on-street parking to four-hour free on-street parking. This change is a happy medium between two-hour free on-street parking and unlimited free parking and would help those visiting the downtown eateries and businesses from worrying about time. Employees working downtown would also benefit from this change as they would not have to move their vehicles as often. Council Member Pelley suggested a six-month moratorium on parking to see what happens when there is no time limit for on-street parking. At the end of the six months, the Council could revisit the issue and decide whether to return to a time limit or remove time limits permanently. Council Member Witt-McMahan stated she had not had an opportunity to talk to business owners downtown but was concerned with a moratorium because it was temporary and could be a problem if they decide they need to set time limits again. Mayor Perkinson commented that he wants people downtown and plans have been developed for downtown. The Council Advisory Committee had taken an in-depth look at this issue back in 2017. According to a report from Main Street Athens, a lot of new businesses have opened since then. **Mayor Perkinson moved, Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded, to commit this ordinance to the Council Advisory Committee and for the Committee to report back to the City Council by May or June.** Council Member Witt-McMahan and Vice Mayor Lockmiller felt they would rather deal with the four-hour parking now because taking it back to the Advisory Board was just going to take more time. Upon roll call, the motion failed by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Perkinson
NAYS: Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller
ABSENT: Curtis

Upon conclusion of the discussion, the original motion failed by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller
NAYS: Pelley, Perkinson
ABSENT: Curtis

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REPORTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY BUILDING REPORT

Mr. Anthony Casteel, Community Development Director, presented the Building Permit Quarterly Report for the City of Athens. The report was accepted as presented.

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FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Mike Keith, Finance Director, presented the Finance Department Report for March 2022. The report was accepted as presented.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Brandon Ainsworth presented the Fire Department Report for March 2022. The report was accepted as presented.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Fred Schultz presented the Police Department Report for March 2022. The report was accepted as presented.

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REQUESTS FROM CITIZENS

John Duggan, 1002 Towanda Trail, made three requests of the Council. The first was regarding the policy and procedures for both the Council and the citizens speaking to make requests or addressing the Council with concerns. The second request was to have the Council look at the source for the defensiveness and disdain towards the citizens speaking. The third request was for the City to change the Charter and work on updating all the policies and procedures to restrict the power of one person, two people, or maybe a small group over the whole city and look at bringing the City into an updated government that has checks and balances like the State and Federal governments. Ford Ector, 185 County Road 654, owner of Sign Reflections, asked the Council not to shut the door on people that care about the City and want to speak their hearts. Glenn Whiting, 247 County Road 655, asked for a public apology for statements made regarding an incident involving Council Member Witt-McMahan and Mr. Whiting. John Ross, 1523 West Madison Avenue, stated his property is between View Street East and View Street West. He has a water drainage problem where the City water is draining off View Street East then through his and his neighbor's yards and winding up in a ditch on Avalon Street. Mr. Ross has spoken with Council Member Pelley and Public Works Director Ben Burchfield regarding this issue, and nothing has been done to resolve the problem. Dick Pelley, 155 Morning Point Lane, asked for a Called Meeting to deal with the slanderous lies that City Manager Sumner has accused him of and for the Council to give Glenn Whiting his five minutes to tell his story so they can avoid him writing on the side of his building again. Elise Howell, 4 North White Street, requested that all public meetings have minutes attached. Lisa Blos-Johnson, 1112 Springfield Drive, asked for clarification on a special parking pass or permit that an employee that works downtown could purchase.

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REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Sumner reviewed the monthly report including the various Parks and Recreation and Public Works projects and activities going on throughout the city.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.



C. SETH SUMNER, City Manager



WILLIAM BO PERKINSON, Mayor