



Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission
Minutes: August 30, 2021
City Council Chambers

Attending: Jerry Morgan, David McClain, Bill Hurt, Tom Fielder, Chris Gibson, Tracy Owens, and Dan Das.

Chairman Jerry Morgan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. announcing that an official quorum was present. Mr. Morgan reviewed the minutes of the last meeting held August 17, 2021, which were included in the meeting materials. Mr. Gibson moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Hurt seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Report:

Chairman Morgan did not present a financial update due to the recent update on August 17.

New Business:

Mr. Morgan announced the 2022 A&P Grants Application package is currently posted on the A&P website at www.TourJonesboro.com. It is also available by contacting Christy Appleton at JonesboroAPCommission@gmail.com or from the City of Jonesboro website at www.Jonesboro.org. All applications are due October 1, 2021.

Chairman Morgan opened a discussion on a possible sports complex and the options available.

To raise the money to build the multi-sports complex in Jonesboro, the A&P Commission would request a tax on prepared food in the city. This tax would be voted on by the City Council after three readings at three city council meetings.

Mr. Steve Purtee, Chief Financial Officer for the City of Jonesboro, described the collection process of A&P tax collections. The A&P Commission would be totally responsible for managing the funds raised from this tax. The city would assist the Commission in collecting the tax as they do for the hotel tax currently in place. The city would provide guidelines for A&P Commission's approval.

Howard Weinstock gave a public comment by asking what would happen to the money collected if the project did not happen. It was explained that the funds would go to the A&P Commission and managed by them as current A&P funding is managed. He also questioned the timing of the project with the ongoing pandemic.

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Renee Golas, Sports Marketing Manager for the A&P, gave a report on the current research done for the Sports Complex. Most all cities that have built a complex such as this hire a consulting firm to perform a feasibility study to determine a solid plan for the project. These firms cost approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 in a one-time fee for such a study. Ms. Golas explained that the Arkansas Department of Tourism offers \$15,000 grants to assist with feasibility studies. We will want to apply for this grant.

Supporters of this initiative spoke in favor of sending this proposal to the Council. Tracy Pollock asked the Commission to “look to the future and not the past.” Billy Holland thanked the Commission and stated that the city has needed this for a very long time. He compared it to the “Field of Dreams – Build it and They Will Come.” Dr. Charles Coleman asked them to make the decision to send this to the City Council now. Katie Hill made the point that in the past, Jonesboro did not have the hotel infrastructure to support such a complex, but we now have that because businessmen and companies have built the needed hotels. We now need to support them by building this.

Mr. Chris Gibson recommended that the A&P Commission send a request for a 2 cent prepared food tax to the City Council. David McClain seconded the motion. Motion was approved. Mr. Morgan asked for the authority to move forward with the feasibility study. Chris Gibson moved and McClain seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Brian Richardson with the City explained how the process would work. First the request will go to the Finance Committee for their approval. This meeting will be held September 14. After this approval, the ordinance will be read at three separate City Council Meetings. The final reading and vote will be held November 2, 2021.

Mr. Kraig Pomrenke, general manager for the Embassy Suites and Red Wolf Convention Center then spoke on behalf of an added hotel tax of 1%. He encouraged the Commission to increase this tax because the sports industry is growing. Mr. Naz Kazi, owner of several hotels in Jonesboro agreed and encouraged the increased tax. Bill Hurt moved and Chris Gibson seconded the motion to send this request to the City Council. The two taxes will be kept separate – 2 ordinances. Motion was approved. An RFP will be developed and sent out to prospective candidates for bids on the study.

Chairman Morgan called for questions from the floor. There being none, Mr. Hurt moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McClain. Motion approved and the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Submitted by

Christy Appleton
Administrative Officer

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