



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Works Council Committee

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

5:00 PM

Municipal Center

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk Donna Jackson

Present 7 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; John Street; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-20:053](#)

Minutes for the Public Works Council Committee meeting on June 2, 2020.

Attachments: [MINUTES](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Gene Vance, seconded by Councilperson Chris Moore, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

4. New Business

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

[RES-20:090](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT TO PURCHASE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 651 W. HUNTINGTON FROM THE ARKANSAS STATE LAND COMMISSIONER

Sponsors: Planning and Land Bank Commission

Councilmember Gene Vance said to Chairman John Street, I am of the understanding that the minimum bid of what you just read that will not buy that piece of property. I guess if we bid the minimum and someone else outbids us then we get our lean back. I don't know how bad the Land Bank wants this particular piece of property.

Chairman John Street stated that the city lean is in the amount of \$5,359, and you are correct the city will get their money either way. I am sure that the Land Bank would like to have it to develop it. Huntington Street, as you know if you've been up and down it lately it has changed a lot. Councilmember Vance stated, yes and it does need to be redeveloped, Chairman Street said, yes. Councilmember Gene Vance said they can look into that, and if they need to come back to us we can look into it and figure something out.

A motion was made by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, seconded by Councilperson Chris Moore, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

[RES-20:091](#)

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN SUBMITTED FOR THE JETS SYSTEM

Sponsors: JETS

Attachments: [JETS 2021 Public Transit Agency Safety Plan](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, seconded by Councilperson Gene Vance, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

[RES-20:093](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO GRANT EASEMENTS - UTILITY AND INGRESS/ EGRESS TO CITY WATER AND LIGHT PLANT OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Sponsors: Engineering and Planning

Attachments: [Solar Project Easement Across City RR Spur-ADDED 5-11](#)

Councilmember Gene Vance asked if this was the one that is on the Council Agenda to set up for a public hearing. Chairman John Street said no, I don't believe so.

A motion was made by Councilperson Gene Vance, seconded by Councilperson Ann Williams, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

5. Pending Items

6. Other Business

7. Public Comments

Doctor Steven Blanchard, 1000 Rossland, Jonesboro. I spoke to Councilmember Gene Vance today about the issue of the public wearing masks. I am an Emergency Room Physician, and I probably have a higher level of concern than many. I go through the town to different venues, businesses and wear my mask, maybe 20% of the people I encounter are wearing a mask. It is scary, I see this on a regular basis. I know the Governor has made this a municipal issue about wearing mask in public. It needs to be forwarded from here.

I notice everyone here is wearing a mask or is socially distant, obviously we recognize the need to do that in the COVID Pandemic, and it is for real. I have been a Physician for 40 years, and I have been through all kinds of experiences in an Emergency Room. You know if you look at this and you see 130,000 people die within six months, that's

three times the number of people that die in motor vehicle accidents. If you saw that at an intersection in Jonesboro where you suddenly had three times the number of people getting killed at an intersection you would act. You'd put up another stop sign, or a stop light and you would do something.

We need to do something and be proactive rather than reactive. If you wait until Jonesboro's or Craighead County's numbers go up in COVID, and the hospitals fill up then you are too late. The statistics are, if you look at the medical data some people all the way up to the top who want to stick their head in the sand and ignore it, and not wear mask. 25% of the people who have COVID don't know they even have it, it is asymptomatic. They don't have the runny nose, the cough, the fever or shortness of breath. What if that person goes to Target, or Walmart and go shopping, if that person is not wearing a mask and to cross paths, and you are not wearing a mask the chance that you are going to get infected with COVID approaches 70%. If one of you have a mask it goes down too about 30% and if you both have a mask on it goes down to about 5%. Again, if you wait till a lot of these people have it then you are going to fill up the hospitals and you are too late.

Everyone talks about the people's rights not to wear a mask, if you go back the same fight was had about wearing seatbelts in vehicles, thank God they changed that, because as an E.R. Doctor I saw a huge difference in that time when they mandated seatbelts, and you get a little bit of a fine for not wearing one. To be honest with you there needs to be a little bit of a fine here to not wear a mask. There are some states that are fining up to a \$1,000.00 for not wearing a mask in a public place I think that is smart, I think \$1,000.00 is too much, but a \$50.00 fine would be okay, and we need to get the message across that you need to wear a mask in public, it is for all our sakes. You need to act now, and you need to do something now instead of waiting until it becomes a problem. Since the Governor kicked wearing a mask in public down the road, we need our Leaders, our Council Members, and our Mayors to address it, do something.

Chairman John Street said, I know you are passionate about it, and I couldn't agree with you more. But, I will say this, and I think there will be more discussion from what I understand at Council tonight, and I'm sure you are welcome to speak there too. The Governor has tied our hands, we can't put any enforcement mechanisms into this. I guarantee you will probably get a 100% vote from the Council, or pretty close to it. But, all it is going to be is, Would You Please Wear a Mask because we can't override State Law. You can talk to our City Attorney about it, I don't mind passing one. But, again all we are going to be saying is, Would You Please Wear a Mask. I wear my mask, and I wish people did because I am one of those people that is over 65 and I have a heart condition. We can talk about it forever, we do not have the power to put a fine on it. All we are going to do is tax our Police Department, because, people are going to get a false sense of security and call the Police. The Police can only show up and say we wish you would wear your mask, it would be the right thing to do. But, there is not a darn thing else they can do to them. Unless the Governor steps up, and that is where it is right now, there is nothing we can do to enforce anything. I think it is almost useless. For education and everything, heck yes, I am all for it. If we want to pass a resolution or an ordinance to say it would be nice to wear a mask, I'm all for that too. But, again we can't do something to someone who chooses not to wear one. It is aggravating to me, but there is no way we can put any teeth into it. Without any teeth I don't think you are going to get cooperation from those same people that you see at business's not wearing them now. It is my understanding that someone will be presenting a resolution or an ordinance tonight at the council meeting regarding wearing a mask in public, and I wish we could put a fine like you talked about in it but,

we can't override State Law. That is where we are at, and I'm sorry about that.

Doctor Steven Blanchard said, okay, and maybe we need to look at a way of doing that. Chairman John Street said, well I'll tell you if everyone would put the pressure on the Governor's Office that they put on us today, I have gotten so many e-mails today, I am tickled to see them, and there are a few opposed to it, I am for people having their rights just like anyone else. But, when I go out, I look at it just like you said. I don't have the right to infect someone else who is innocent, or maybe in danger or take their life. I think that is reckless and careless. But all we are going to do by passing an ordinance here is give people the idea they can call the Police Department and that the Police are going to be able to go out there and do something about it, and they are not. Our Police Resources are already spread so thin, so then you have a decision to make. Do we send that Police Officer to someone that is being robbed or shot at or out somewhere for not wearing a mask that they can't do one thing about. Doctor Steven Blanchard said, I am just astounded that we can't do more with it than what we can. Chairman Street said you need to get information to the Governor because it is in his hands, and unless he steps up and does something to put enforcement into this, we can't.

Councilmember Doctor Charles Coleman said, to your point, I still think Council as a whole, even though the Governor, I guess I am not really worried about what the Governor thinks, because he doesn't live here in Jonesboro anyway. Chairman Street said, no he doesn't. But, it is a moot point if you can't do anything about it. Councilmember Coleman said, but I think as a Council of whole needs to do something. I am hoping that when we go into the Council Meeting that something will be done about it. But, it's not the point of trying to talk negative about the Governor, and once again I try to tell people when they ask me about certain items that is happening around the State or the United States, it is our job to do what we can here in Jonesboro, and if there is those that don't want to do that it's fine. Those that do, we as a Council need to make a decision. Chairman Street said I agree, and I don't mind doing it, but we couldn't put a fine to it if we wanted to.

Councilmember Doctor Charles Coleman asked, but what about the people that are asking us to do our job? It seems like the comments I am getting, and I am getting about the same amount of e-mails that you are getting, it's more or less into the negative than it is to the positive. Chairman Street said, absolutely and I am one of them. I think that it ought to be mandated. I'd love to put pressure on the Governor. The Governor needs to pass a law that says if you don't wear a mask in Arkansas you can be fined. But instead the Governor actually passed an ordinance that says a municipality can pass an ordinance. But it has no enforcement. Councilmember Gene Vance said, that's a step in the right direction, we can't just do nothing. Councilmember Coleman echoed the same words as Councilmember Vance in stating, we can't just do nothing. Chairman John Street agreed.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilperson LJ Bryant, seconded by Councilperson Gene Vance, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Gene Vance; Mitch Johnson; Chris Moore; Charles Coleman; LJ Bryant and Ann Williams