



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

5:30 PM

Municipal Center

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING AT 5:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR PERRIN AT 5:30 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

3. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK DONNA JACKSON

Mayor Harold Perrin was not in attendance. President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore presided over the meeting.

Present 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Gene Vance; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain and LJ Bryant

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilperson John Street, to Approve the Consent Agenda. The motioned PASSED

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Gene Vance; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain and LJ Bryant

[MIN-20:057](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JUNE 16, 2020

Attachments: [CC Minutes 06162020](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

[MIN-20:062](#)

MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JUNE 30, 2020

Attachments: [CC Special meeting minutes 06302020](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

6. NEW BUSINESS[RES-20:094](#)

A RESOLUTION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING TO ABANDON A 40' DRAINAGE AND UTILITY EASEMENT ACROSS PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2610 NESTLE WAY IN THE CRAIGHEAD TECHNOLOGY PARK IN JONESBORO, ARKANSAS AS REQUESTED BY JOHN EASLEY OF ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING ON BEHALF OF JONESBORO CITY WATER AND LIGHT

Attachments: [Abandonment concurrence - 2610 Nestle Way](#)
[Notice](#)
[Petition](#)
[Plat](#)
[utility letters](#)

Councilmember John Street asked to recuse himself from voting or any discussion on RES-20:094 due to being a member on the CWL Board. Councilmember Charles Frierson asked to recuse himself from voting or any discussion on RES-20:094 due to being counsel for CWL.

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

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain and LJ Bryant

Enactment No: R-EN-073-2020

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, I would ask that if anyone at home or watching on tv would wish to comment that they can call our 336-7248 number or they can send an email to councilcomments@jonesboro.org.

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING[ORD-20:021](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 117.35 REGARDING THE REFUND OF REZONING SIGN DEPOSITS

Held at second reading

[ORD-20:022](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO PLACE VARIOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

Councilmember Mitch Johnson motioned, seconded by Councilmember Long, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-20:022 by title only. All voted aye. President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore stated ORD-20:022 was read in full at the last meeting.

Held at second reading

[ORD-20:023](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH WEIGHT LIMITATIONS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CITY OF JONESBORO TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

Councilmember Chris Moore stated that City Engineer Craig Light asked that ORD-20:023 be postponed indefinitely until they can come back and do some more work on this.

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

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[ORD-20:024](#)

AN ORDINANCE ABANDONING AND VACATING UTILITY EASEMENTS AS REQUESTED BY GEORGE HAMMAN OF CIVILOGIC ON BEHALF OF THE HERBERT H. AND SHARON F. STALLINGS LIVING TRUST

Attachments: [signed petition](#)
[abandonment plat](#)
[Stallings Abandonment - Hamman](#)
[Abandonment Concurrence ATT](#)
[Abandonment Concurrence CenterPoint](#)
[Abandonment Concurrence CWL](#)
[Abandonment Concurrence Ritter](#)
[Abandonment Concurrence Suddenlink Altice](#)

Held at second reading

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-20:015](#)

AN ORDINANCE VACATING AN UNDEVELOPED STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY LOCATED IN: THAT PORTION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR MADISON STREET WHICH LIES SOUTH OF THE SOUTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF COLLEGE AVE. (60.0 FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY), LYING IN THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 19, TOWNSHIP 14 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST, CRAIGHEAD COUNTY, ARKANSAS, BY TRALAN ENGINEERING ON BEHALF OF JONESBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Attachments: [Petition signed](#)
[Plat](#)
[ROW Abandonment - Tralan - Madison Street -](#)
[Altice Signed Abandonment Letter](#)
[AT&T Signed Abandonment Letter](#)
[Centerpoint Signed Abandonment Letter](#)
[CWL Abandonment for S. Madison ROW](#)
[CWL Signed Abandonment Letter](#)
[Ritter Signed Abandonment Letter](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, seconded by Councilperson John Street, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain and LJ Bryant

Enactment No: O-EN-026-2020

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Chief of Staff Mike Downing came to the podium to give the Mayor's Report.

On July 4th, the Northside Community Connection event was held with Word Baptist. The event went really well from what I have heard. It was a good event.

The fireworks on the 3rd and 4th had big crowds and no problems that we know of.

The BBQ festival has been cancelled. There was a release on that yesterday because of multiple effects of COVID-19 and the controlling of entrances and exits was going to be an issue.

The Small Business Emergency Grant that the Council approved a few weeks ago, the applications are online on the Grants and Community Development website at the city. These are grants of \$1,000 to \$10,000 for small businesses that are at least two years old and with at least 3-21 employees. So, if you have any questions, contact the Grants and Community Development section of the city.

Veteran's Village, it looks like we are going to have the groundbreaking on July 29, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. We will have formal invitations a little later on, but that looks like the date.

The ADA Consultant, Kirk Tcherneshoff, is working with staff to review sidewalks, parks, streets, fire stations and other applicable facilities for ADA compliance.

The temporary pedestrian crossing on Johnson will be deconstructed starting tomorrow. Cecelie Cochran, MPO Director, is going to report to the council at the July 21, 2020 meeting to discuss that further, the findings and the experiences of that temporary crossing.

Finally, the JET Cares Act Funding that was discussed a while back should be coming soon. We are looking at drafts of it right now. So, that will be coming soon for council discussion then.

Councilmember David McClain said, Mike, I have a quick question. You just mentioned the crosswalk over there on Johnson. You said Cecelie will bring a report. Is it possible to leave that now or is that not possible? Mr. Downing said, I can't, unless Cecelie is on the line. Is she on the line? Communications Director Bill Campbell said, he could answer that. This was a temporary project Mr. McClain that the time has run out. They have taken public comments and Ms. Cochran has gathered those and will be ready to present to you what they said and it will be up to what you guys recommend as well as ARDOT and the MPO as to whether anything is done or what exactly would be done at that intersection in the future. But, this was a temporary installment and it has reached its culmination. Councilmember McClain said, I remember it was and Cecelie is on here now that I can see. I don't know if she would want to speak to that. Mr. Campbell said, go for it. Ms. Cochran said, yes, Bill is right. Can everyone hear me? (Council said yes.) Bill is right. The structure that is there is simply there for a temporary means. It was based on federal funding and we were supposed to leave it there for a year and that year has lapsed. With, currently, it's placement and a lot of the motorist having kind of hit it consistently, it has knocked pieces of the barrier and parts of the structure into the street. And, we don't want it to

be a hazard for any of the motorists driving through there with loose pieces of the structure being there. So, what the Street Department is going to do is on tomorrow morning, they are going to start deconstruction of just the actual lights and those yellow barriers there. But, the paint on the crosswalk and the advanced warning pedestrian signs will remain. So, something will still be there, it just won't be that temporary crossing barrier and lights. I do look forward to speaking with you all at the next council meeting about the findings. I am hoping that we can continue to work with the city and ARDOT to come up with a permanent solution based on the findings from this study so that it can be the most appropriate for the area. It will be safe for the pedestrians, cyclists, and the motorists as well. Councilmember McClain said, that is my hope. Thank you.

Councilmember John Street asked, has the comment period ended for the public survey? Ms. Cochran said, yes sir. We ran from May 29, 2020 to June 22, 2020. Councilmember Street asked, did we get much of a response on that survey? Ms. Cochran said, yes we did. Councilmember Street said, that is good. Ms. Cochran said, we had over 97 active users visit our website and over 200 page views and there were people who were kind enough to submit their comments which I will provide for the council. I have redacted personal information, just for privacy purposes for those citizens. But, I was very pleased. This was the most participation that we have had from citizens in the region, just from previous studies and other meetings that we have done. I was very pleased with this. Councilmember Street said, you and I and Ann know that the MPO is strongly behind this effort and I hope that it comes into some kind of crossing there because it is warranted. I believe the data will show that it is warranted. So, if there is anything that the council can do to support this, I would strongly encourage you to do it. It is a very worthwhile project right there. We have got another one on North Church by Parker Park down there and that is another one that is critical if we ever get it up and tested, but I think the survey results show that is warranted as well. Ms. Cochran said, yes sir. Councilmember Street said, that is all I've got.

Councilmember Bobby Long said, I travel down that road quite a bit. I have noticed that a lot of times that people that use that crosswalk don't press the button to get the lights to flash and sometimes they tend to cross at night and it is difficult to see them if they don't press the button to get the light flashing. That is one thing that I noticed that was an issue. The second thing is not too far East of that crosswalk there is a stoplight by the McDonalds. I can't remember if there is a crosswalk there or not and I was wondering. A lot of times you can see where people can press the crosswalk button and it will change the light or they can cross when the light is red and it is a lot safer that way. Is there a reason why that crosswalk was put there instead of maybe possibly there at that light by the McDonalds and ASU? Ms. Cochran said, yes sir. The current light that is there at Marion Berry and Johnson, right there when you get to ASU is sort of a distance if you are on foot away from that actual area where we erected the crosswalk. Now, the one at Marion Berry is equipped with crosswalks and lights. The reason why we chose placement at State Street was because in 2015, the City of Jonesboro itself did a full downtown pedestrian study due to the connection between ASU and downtown. And, they were looking specifically for safety recommendations in that area. And, when the consultants did that original study in 2015, what they found was there was a lot of people, simply due to the residences that are in that adjacent neighborhood, there are some houses and there are some apartments. They were specifically crossing at State Street where it was more convenient where they didn't have to walk a half a mile to the Marion Berry crosswalk. It is safer for them to use it, but just like with motorists, I know a lot of motorists when they are driving, they like the most direct route to their destination. And, the same can be applied for

non-motorists as well. And, so, we piggybacked off of that 2015 study that instead of duplicating it, we decided to put something there for a temporary measure to see how effective it would be. So, that is exactly why it was chosen. And, we did get some mixed reviews from all people regarding that. Councilmember Long said, thank you.

Chief of Staff Mike Downing said, I have one more item. The combined turnback report came in this morning for July and it was \$461,765, that is .6% less than July of last year, but it is on year-to-date funding, it is 3% more than 2019 year-to-date. And, compared to budget, it is .8% less, but year-to-date, we are 3.3% more than we budgeted. So, I will just say that the reduction compared to a year ago is not as bad as we thought it was going to be, but we are still crossing our fingers there.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, I have an issue about the masks we have been talking about. Are we going to apply a resolution to do that or can we do that this afternoon whether it is up or down? I would really like to make a motion that we do that. President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, right now, we have no motion or ordinance pending on the agenda Dr. Coleman. It would be subject to a 2/3's vote since nothing has been to a committee. Councilmember Coleman said, okay. President Pro-Tempore Moore asked, any other item Dr. Coleman? Councilmember Coleman said, no.

Councilmember Ann Williams said, we have requested and co-sponsored an ordinance for a mask requirement, Mr. Bryant and I have. We would like to address whether or not we can go ahead and walk that on tonight or if it is necessary to do so, have the Public Safety Committee meet and vote on that or have a meeting fairly soon and have Mr. Johnson, the Chairman schedule that. President Pro-Tempore Moore said, okay, are you asking that Mr. Johnson have a Public Safety Committee meeting? Councilmember Williams said, yes, I am. President Pro-Tempore Moore said, okay, I will forward that request to Mr. Johnson. Do you have any other item Ms. Williams? Councilmember Williams said, no thank you.

Councilmember John Street said, earlier at the Public Works meeting, we forwarded a resolution to the council and asked that it be walked on tonight due to the sensitivity of that auction taking place July 13, 2020 which is a week before our council meeting.

[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

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Joe Hafner, to suspend the rules and walk-on RES-20:090. All voted aye.

Passed

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Gene Vance; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain and LJ Bryant

Enactment No: R-EN-074-2020

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, at Ms. Williams and Mr. Bryant's request, if we have a formal ordinance or resolution presented, I can schedule a specially called

Public Safety meeting or they can enter something into Legistar and we can have it at our regularly scheduled Public Safety meeting on the 21st. Councilmember Williams said, it should be sooner because we consider this an emergency and as far as acting as quickly as possible so if we could have a special called meeting, that would be good. Councilmember Johnson said, all I need is an official presentation of an ordinance or a resolution that you desire to have drawn up and I will get that. Councilmember Williams said, Ms. Duncan has drafted that and we can get that to you right away because it was the model ordinance that is the same that was passed by Conway at their city council meeting yesterday, the model ordinance that the governor approved and it was drafted by the Municipal League. Councilmember Joe Hafner asked, could it be and/or a resolution or ordinance? President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, Ms. Williams, will you make sure Mr. Johnson has that please. Councilmember Williams said, yes, we will make sure he does. I appreciate that.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I will be brief. Councilmember Johnson, I think that is great for him to have a meeting as Councilmember Williams said. If we could have a special meeting, so we have plenty of time. I have been out of town. I just got back today. And, of course, I have read the model ordinance obviously. Rogers passed an ordinance that varied just a little bit and I just got a copy of it from Rogers in the last hour. So, I want to look at those a little bit tomorrow and see if there are any lessons that we need to take from that, but I will visit with the city attorney likely tomorrow after I have reviewed some of those things. Councilmember Chris Gibson asked, LJ, can you send that out to the group as well? Councilmember Bryant said, I will. Yeah, I sure will sir. I just got it a minute ago, but I will share that. I think I have Conway's and I have got Rogers. I am trying to collect all of that information.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I will be real quick. I think as Finance Chairman, I was really happy to see our sales tax numbers. I know it was in the paper, but I think we should feel very thankful that our sales tax numbers came in where they did. After the initial projections of being down maybe 30-40% and to see them come in right at budget, I think we are really lucky. Hopefully, we can get some of the capital projects and some other stuff fired up once we get a little bit more comfort level and get things kind of going again. Thank you. President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, I think that goes hand in hand with Mike Downing's report that for the month we might be down, but overall in the year we are pretty close on budget.

Councilmember Bobby Long said, just a few things. First of all, I want to echo what Mr. Downing had eluded to about the 4th of July with Word Baptist out at Northside Ballpark. It was a tremendous success. We had great participation. We had good coverage by the police. Everybody just had a great time. It was just an awesome thing to see at Northside Park. Now, the mosquitoes got a little bad there at the end, but I was expecting them to get a lot worse a lot sooner. So, I am glad that they sort of held out and didn't clock in until around 9:10 p.m. The second thing I do want to stress and my phone also blew up this afternoon concerning masks as well, but I was also at a meeting last night of about 110 in opposition. I think that if we were to push something through without its normal course, I think that it would be a disservice to those citizens that would like to voice their opposition. So, I think that we need to do due process. We have been at this since March. Today, on the CDC's website, the epidemic threshold is 5.9 and I think that is what we are as a country. So, 1/10th of a percent less and we would be below the epidemic threshold. I think that if you look at the median age of Jonesboro residents of 32, there seems to be a misconception that a COVID diagnosis is dire. I think we just need to take our time with this because it will affect 85,000 people. I think when it affects that many people, I think we owe it to those people to at least give them an opportunity to voice their approval or their opposition.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I do have one comment that was sent via email from the NEA Bicycle Coalition President Brent Walker. Comment for 7/7/2020 council meeting on behalf of the Northeast Arkansas Bicycle Coalition. Can you provide an update on the Greenway Trail where it crosses the creek behind the mall? As of last night (July 6) the creek crossing was still barricaded off. We were told over a month ago that the trail would be reopened. It provides a vital link between two areas of Jonesboro for both recreational users and those who use it for commuting purposes. It is even more critical now that construction on the overpass makes it difficult for pedestrians and people on bicycles to use Nettleton Ave. Additionally, the trail along Mathews between Nettleton and the mall entrance is becoming hazardous due to erosion along the creek bank and damage to the trail surface itself. Please let me know if you would like for me to provide photos. Thank you, Brent Walker, NEABC President. Parks Director Danny Kapales said, I spoke with Brent earlier to just kind of go over what is going on out there. What he is talking about, they blocked off the bridge. That is actually a fence that the mall had put in place to keep people from getting into the parking lot and in that area. They have since moved all of the fence, but at that one location, it is driven into the ground and the mall was supposed to get it moved out of the way. It has not been moved yet. So, my guys will go in and move that fence at this point. But, that is the only reason why it has not been moved. I do have a few concerns and those concerns are basically the houses that run along that trail, the fence was completely blown out of that area through the tornado and we are waiting on fence to be delivered so the installer can put it in. Once, we open that section of trail up, we will leave the backside of those houses open to that trail. But, even by opening up that bridge, it is still open on the other side so people can still get to the backside of the houses. We are going to make sure that we take that out and open that up. In talking about where the erosion is located, some of that is down the ditch bank and as you all know that ditch gets full of water a lot of times. Streets Director Steve Tippitt and I have met down there and they are going to come in and do some cleaning of the ditch. We will look at the ditch bank and see what we can do. I am also going to meet out there with City Engineer Craig Light and look at the trail. Some of that is where the utility workers had come in, set their big trucks on that trail to do some of the utility repairs and there have been some damages that are going to have to be repaired during that time period. So, we are not beyond the tornado at this point. There is still stuff that is there. There are still some trees that are down along that area. So, there are things that just have not been completed at this point due to that being a part of the mall and not being done within that ditch. President Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, well, I would definitely echo your concerns about the safety for the adjoining houses. I would want to make sure that we could have that fence up and not funnel people right into the backyard. Do you think maybe in the next 30 days or so? Mr. Kapales said, the installer that got the bid said that the fence should be here in August. So, yeah, we are hoping to have it installed by August.

Tom Haynes, 4217 Oakhill Lane, said, I am here tonight just as a concerned citizen regarding a mask ordinance in Jonesboro and I appreciate the council having given that consideration and focus this evening. I would urge you to seek to get it into committee as quickly as possible because this is not an issue that will benefit the citizens of Jonesboro if there is delay. Just today at UAMS, they released some additional information regarding their updated models. They predict by September, we could have 20,000 new cases per day in Arkansas. That number drops to 6,000 a day if everyone wears a mask in their model. It is really a simple issue in my opinion and this is anyone who knows anything about the pandemic who have committed their

careers to studying the issues involved here who are doctors and medical professionals all currently agree that wearing a mask makes a difference, wearing a facial covering makes a difference. I would support our government supporting folks to do that. Send that message. Convey the message that we support businesses who make mask wearing compulsory and either pass the model language that was drafted by the Municipal League or your own ordinance that you modify to promote mask wearing in Jonesboro. I was out last night at a big box retail store here in town and was one of about five folks that I saw wearing a mask out of about two dozen who I saw not counting employees and this concerned me. It caused me to come to the meeting tonight to speak on this. To not wear a mask right now based on all of the information that is out there is either you know the dangers involved and you don't care about the people around you, you don't know the dangers involved and you need to know so that you will wear a mask, or you have some distrust of authority or some distrust of people who know what they are talking about and I can't really help you much if that is your position. I would say that to have a flippant or nonchalant attitude about mask wearing is a danger to the people of Jonesboro and that it is something that everyone in this community needs to be doing when they are out in public. Finally, I will leave with this one comment and that is I would urge you as you are considering this and receiving commentary and comments and opinions from residents of Jonesboro to consider that not all opinions should be weighted the same. That folks that base their opinions on their feelings or on what they think based on a tweet or rumors or some kind of paranoia or distrust of authority is not what we need in developing good public policy right now. What we need is scientific information, truth, and credible information to base our public policy and that is to wear masks. So, I would encourage you to do what you can to promote that in Jonesboro. This illness, I would argue, is something we should not avow to a misconception that it is not a dangerous illness or that it is a death or nothing proposition because most of the recent reports that I've read have indicated that this could leave scarring of the lung tissue, that this could leave you permanently affected by an illness and to charge ahead as if there are things that cannot debilitate you due to this illness without some kind of guarantee of that would be foolish. So, I would encourage you to pass an ordinance or a resolution to encourage folks in Jonesboro to wear a mask and assist business owners in making that compulsory. Thank you.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain and LJ Bryant

_____ Date: _____

Harold Perrin, Mayor

Attest:

_____ Date: _____

Donna Jackson, City Clerk