

On Monday, December 11, 2023 the council meeting for the Town of Gay was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Nash. All members were present at roll call and it was determined a quorum did exist.

The first item was the agenda. There were two changes required, first was the addition of a building permit plan review for Hunter Brown and the second was to delete the further discussion of proposed Land Use Ordinance, as council member Blakeley was ill and unable to complete updates requested. Council member Watts motioned to approve the amended agenda, seconded by council member Askvig. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Next was the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a brief reminder of the rules of decorum.

Next was approval of minutes from previous meetings. Council member Askvig motioned to accept the minutes of the council meeting of November 13, 2023, seconded by council member Blakeley. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Council member Watts motioned to accept the minutes of the work session meeting of November 30, 2023, seconded by council member Keith. The vote in favor was unanimous.

The first item on the agenda for discussion was the plan review for Hunter Brown's house. He wants to build a home for himself of 1500 sq. feet on a lot which is ½ acre in size. Mr. Brown distributed pictures of plans but stated that changes had already been made, including the lot size. After discussion and questions, it determined that more up-to-date information was required and revised plans and drawings will be submitted.

Council member Watts motioned to allow clerk to proceed only after revised plans/drawings are submitted showing all corrections including lot size. The motion was seconded by council member Blakeley and the vote in favor was unanimous.

Prior to the next agenda item, Mayor Nash announced that Shady Days in Gay Arts & Crafts Festival had been honored as a "Best of Georgia" winner for 2023.

Next, council member Keith motioned to go out of council meeting and go into public hearing prior to the second reading of the Special Events Ordinance. The motion was seconded by council member Watts and the vote in favor was unanimous.

Kris Price, owner/operator of Shady Days in Gay fair was present and had questions about how the number of porta potties and trash receptacles is determined. Joe Nash, who organizes the Cotton Fair, was present also and said the figures are estimated by the Health Department, based on fair operator estimates of attendees and vendors for each event. She said she had never been given a number, but always informed the health inspector of her estimates of attendees.

Her next questions had to do with fire/EMS and law enforcement personnel. Currently, the Town covers these costs which is included in the fair license fees, but that is not clear in the ordinance. The Town does not cover those costs for other special events, the event organizers are responsible for providing those services based on kind of event and number of attendees expected. She wants to be sure the Fairs are not going to be confused with the other events and end up paying twice for the services.

Assistant clerk was present at the meeting and suggested she could prepare a document to be part of the yearly application for a fair, which would define the payment from the fair operators as including fire, ems and law enforcement. She expects to have this document ready by the January meeting.

Council member Askvig motioned to close the public hearing and resume the council meeting, seconded by council member Watts. The vote was in favor.

Next was the second reading of the Special Events Ordinance. After reading, council member Askvig motioned to approve the Ordinance, seconded by council member Watts. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Next was the introduction and first reading of the Taxation Ordinance, known as the Hotel/Motel tax Ordinance.

Under public comments, council member Askvig said her RV park is designated a "club" and as such, is exempt from this ordinance. Mayor Nash said our attorney still has to review the ordinance.

Under Committee/Staff reports, council member Keith said there has not been any further action on Historic Preservation as the committee is waiting for finalization of zoning so there can be a Historic District designation.

Next was financial documents. After discussion of the General fund, council member Blakeley motioned to accept the report, seconded by council member Askvig. The vote in favor was unanimous.

After discussion of the Water Fund, council member Keith motioned to accept the report, seconded by council member Watts. The vote in favor was unanimous.

As there was no further business to discuss, council member Blakeley motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by council member Watts. The vote in favor was unanimous.

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Ruth Nash - Mayor

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Sharon Richmond - Clerk