

**HAMLET CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS ROOM
201 MAIN STREET, HAMLET, NC 28345
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023
6:00 PM
MINUTES**

Governing Body Present:

Mayor	Bill Bayless
Mayor Pro-Tem	Jesse McQueen
Council Member	Eddie Martin
Council Member	Oscar Sellers
Council Member	Abbie Covington
Council Member	Maurice Stuart

Staff Present:

City Attorney	TC Morphis
City Manager	Matthew Christian

Others Present: Margaret Williams, Jo Wallace, Howard Wallace, Amy Guinn, Keri A, Linda Russell, Lisa Luckey, Laura D.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bayless called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Invocation

Pastor Chris Hawks offered the Invocation.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Mayor Bayless asked to amend the Agenda by adding a closed session for Personnel and Attorney-Client Privilege. Council Member McQueen motioned to adopt the agenda with section 12A added, seconded by Council Member Sellers. The motion passed 5-0.

4. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

Council Member Covington motioned to adopt the Consent Agenda, seconded by Council Member Sellers. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Comments from Attendees

Robbie Taylor thanked the Hamlet Fire & Rescue and Police Department for their service and efficiency in assisting him at an incident at his home. He thanked them for their compassion, professionalism, and ability. He personally thanked Richard Lassiter, Fire Chief Trey Goodwin, Carson Gainey, Dan Asbill, and Dalton Millen. After no further comments, Mayor Bayless closed comments from attendees.

New Business

6. Proclamation for National Hospice and Palliative Care Month

Mayor Bayless read the Proclamation. Members of Hospice were present to accept the proclamation, including Lisa Lucky, volunteer outreach coordinator, Linda Russell, outreach and volunteer assistant, and Fretia Flinchum on-call LPN.

7. Proclamation for Sam West, inductee into the National Shag Hall of Fame

Mayor Bayless read the proclamation honoring Sam West as an inductee unto the National Shag Hall of Fame. The proclamation also acknowledged Mr. West's wife and children for their contributions to dance. Mr. West was present to accept the proclamation.

8. Proclamation for Richmond County Teacher of the Year Felisia Gullede

Mayor Bayless read the proclamation honoring Mrs. Gullede as the Richmond County Teacher of the Year.

9. Consideration of the City of Hamlet Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Daniel Ruah presented the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Mr. Ruah discussed the background and process of the long-range planning document, establishing a vision and goals for the city. As of 2022, Comprehensive Plans are also a requirement of the state. Mr. Ruah discussed demographic and community trends that showed a declining and aging population. For more background the team also explore previous planning efforts and focus items that included sewer capacity, regional industrial growth, and intergovernmental relations. Mr. Ruah also discussed the public engagement process which included stakeholder vision sessions, public workshops, and a survey to gain insights and opinions from residents of Hamlet. Some key takeaways from public engagement included the desire for economic development, recreational parks and trails, and downtown enhancement. Mr. Ruah also presented the Future Land Use Map, which differs from a zoning map in that it provides a future vision of the city and guides future growth decisions. Mr. Ruah discussed the plan's 12 overall recommendations and objectives and the action items that accompany them.

Council Member Sellars asked Mr. Ruah about the cost of the plan, to which Mr. Ruah stated that due to the range of action items, their team does not due a cost estimate. However, part of the project is identifying resources, funding, and applicable grants.

Council Member Sellers moved to table the vote to another meeting, there was no second. The motion failed.

Council Member Covington moved to approve the Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Council Member Stuart. Prior to the vote there was some discussion of the procedural requirements for adopting the plan. City Attorney Morphis stated that there was a need for a public hearing. Mayor Bayless opened the floor for a public hearing.

Gerard Morrison spoke about the need for equity and diversity to be considered moving forward, especially with concern to minority and women-owned businesses. He noted several more specific items we wanted to see changed in the plan.

Council Member Covington moved to approve the Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Council Member Stuart. The motion passed 4-1, with Council Member Sellers opposed.

Other Business

10. City Manager's Report

City Manager Christian thanked staff and participants for their time and contribution in making the Seaboard Festival a success. The Manager then gave a reminder that the city will be closed for Thanksgiving on November 23rd and 24th, as well as how trash pick-up will be changed for that week. The Manager discussed upcoming events including the upcoming tree lighting on November 27th at 6:00 pm and the Christmas Parade on December 5th at 6:00 pm.

11. Comments of Council

Council Member Martin wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and extended his congratulations to Mayor-Elect Guinn, who was in attendance.

Council Member Sellers thanked the attendees for their comments and thanked the fire and rescue and police department for their hard work. He closed by wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Stuart congratulated Mayor-Elect Guinn and thanked Mr. Morrison for his comments. He also thanked both Fire Chief Goodwin and Police Chief Dennis for their service to the public.

Council Member Covington stated that the Seaboard Festival was a fantastic success and thanked everyone for their hard work that went into it. She also thanked everyone for their participation in the election as well as the fire and rescue and police departments for their dedication, compassion, and professionalism.

Mayor Pro-Tem McQueen also thanked the fire and rescue and police departments and acknowledged the accomplishments of the citizens that were recognized. He also praised the hard work of the Seaboard Festival and encouraged people to volunteer. He then thanked City Manager Christian and the team for their efforts on the Comprehensive Plan and the quality engagement with the public, however, wanted to clarify that nothing was concrete due to budgeting. He then thanked the work of those who worked on the water main break that occurred at the end of October.

12. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Bayless stated that council is doing a good job managing the budget and things that appeared in the Comprehensive Plan have been discussed before but there has not been funding available. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and thanked the Water Department for their hard work. He also encouraged everyone to attend the Tree Lighting and Parade events. He then congratulated Mayor-Elect Guinn.

Motion to go into Closed Session per NC General Statute §143-318-11(a) (3)(6) Personnel and Attorney Client Privilege

At 7:02 p.m., Council Member Sellers motioned to enter Closed Session for Personnel and Attorney-Client Privilege, seconded by Council Member Covington. Motion passed unanimously.

Return to Open Session

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At 7:20 p.m., Council Member Covington moved to return to Open Session, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem McQueen. Motion passed unanimously.

13. Motion to Adjourn

At 7:21 p.m., Council Member Sellers moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Covington. Motion unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Terry, Clerk

