

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 5, 2020**

**DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, THIS MEETING WAS  
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE AND  
YOUTUBE LIVE STREAM**

**Council Vice President Rolling** called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: Peter Lewis Sr., John Botsford, Joey Roberts, Cody Ludwig,  
Mark W. Verret, Diane Weiss and Larry Rolling

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Mark R. Johnson, Chief Administrative Officer Erin  
Bivona and City Attorney Rod Rodrigue

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Mark Johnson.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.**

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-08** -- A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Mayoral Appointment of Peter Link to the Covington Historic District Commission (CHDC) for an Additional Term of Four (4) Years (Mayor)

**Mayor Johnson** requested confirmation of his appointment of Peter Link to the Covington Historic District Commission for an additional term of four (4) years.

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-08.

**Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-08, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-08. Resolution No. 2020-08 was adopted.**

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-09** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Mayoral Appointment of Peggy DesJardins to the Covington Historic District Commission (CHDC) for an Additional Term of Four (4) Years (Mayor)

**Mayor Johnson** requested confirmation of his appointment of Peggy DesJardins to the Covington Historic District Commission for an additional term of four (4) years.

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-09.

**Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-09, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-09. Resolution No. 2020-09 was adopted.**

**3. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-11** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Appointment of Philip G. Smith as the District E Appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for a Term of Five (5) Years (Verret)

**Councilman Verret** requested confirmation of Philip G. Smith as the District E appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for a term of five (5) years.

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-11.

**Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-11, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-11. Resolution No. 2020-11 was adopted.**

**Councilman Verret** thanked Bert Duvic for his outstanding service as a member of the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission.

## **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

### **Council District and Committee Reports**

#### **1. District A –**

**Councilman Lewis** stated that some face masks were given out in District A last week, but there is still a need. He would like to be notified if additional face masks become available for the public.

#### **2. District B –**

**Councilman Botsford** mentioned that the Food Bank has doubled its registrations during the pandemic and donations are needed.

#### **3. District C –**

**Councilman Roberts** requested an update from Mayor Johnson about when Coastal will resume the pickup schedule for recyclables. Also, he mentioned that the installation of a center turn lane is underway on Hwy 190 from Hwy 25 to Covington High School and expressed his appreciation for the safety improvements. Also, he commented that the Fire, Police and Public Works departments are essential to the City of Covington and thanked them for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and the stay-at-home order.

#### **4. District D –**

**Councilwoman Ludwig** mentioned that Melissa Hodgson from St. Tammany Parish Hospital has been sending out daily updates during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, the hospital census was 142 with 18 COVID-positive cases and 80 total inpatient COVID cases have been discharged. Also, she commented that she is excited to see some of the local businesses opening their doors for business and looks forward to the opening of other businesses. Also, she thanked Mayor Johnson for scheduling roadwork throughout the City during the stay-at-home order when there is less traffic.

#### **5. District E –**

**Councilman Verret** thanked the first responders for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, he expressed his appreciation to the Public Works Department for their continuous work across the City. Also, he mentioned there have been some issues with the Menetre Boat Launch and looks forward to the Mayor's comments this evening.

**6. At Large (Interim) –**

**Interim Councilwoman at Large Weiss** mentioned that there has been some initial survey and prep work along Lurline Drive in River Forest and she looks forward to the street improvements. Also, she encouraged the public to support businesses who are helping other businesses and organizations in our community during these difficult times. Also, she encouraged the public to sign up for Mayor Johnson's email updates which contain important City information. In addition, she reminded everyone that the City's website is a good source of information as well.

**7. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Council Vice President Rolling** reminded everyone that the election primary has been changed to July 11<sup>th</sup> and one of the Covington Council at Large seats will be on the ballot. Also, he looks forward to the Mayor's comments this evening with regard to the street repairs on Boston Street. Also, he thanked Melissa Hodgson from St. Tammany Parish Hospital for her daily updates during these trying times. Also, he thanked the essential workers in every industry and expressed his appreciation to them. He encouraged the citizens of Covington to support our local businesses over the next several weeks as they open their doors for business.

**Administrative Comments and Reports**

**1. Mayor Johnson**

- (a) He mentioned that Chris Davis, Director of Public Works, underwent surgery this week and will be recuperating at home over the next several weeks. He asked that we keep Chris in our thoughts and prayers as he recovers from surgery.
- (b) He mentioned that the State of Louisiana recently provided masks to parishes across the state and St. Tammany Parish Government distributed the masks to the municipalities. The City of Covington was given 3500 masks and due to the overwhelming need, all of the masks were distributed in a very short period of time. He added that he gave out several masks to residents in District A prior to the distribution on April 30th.
- (c) In response to Councilman Roberts' inquiry, he has no information from Coastal as to when the pickup schedule for recyclables will resume.
- (d) He thanked Councilwoman Weiss for the nice compliments on his newsletter. He commented that he tries to strike a balance between giving the public important information as well as some City history. He feels the newsletter has turned out to be an effective means of communication between the City and the public.
- (e) He mentioned that the sales tax revenue declined 2.2% in March due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order and he anticipates the sales tax revenue for April to be significantly lower.
- (f) He gave some updates regarding issues at the Menetre/4th Avenue Boat Launch:
  - (1) Public Works has striped parking areas and cleared out some additional space for individual cars as well as boat trailers to park;
  - (2) Police Chief Culotta has scheduled additional patrols on Jahncke and 4th avenues to monitor the increase in traffic;
  - (3) Trash pickup has been increased to every Friday, Monday and Wednesday as well as adding some trash barrels; and

(4) He will introduce a "Launch Ranger" at the boat launch during the busiest times on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays to direct traffic and to monitor the use of the launch. The Police Department will check with the ranger periodically and will assist with any issues that may arise.

(g) He gave some updates on infrastructure projects:

(1) The sewer line repairs in downtown Covington have been completed and they have been temporarily back-filled with asphalt. The sidewalk repairs have begun and once they are completed, the permanent street repairs will begin.

(2) The survey work has begun on the Lurline Drive street improvements.

(3) Work on the West 11th Avenue Bridge replacement continues and the scheduled completion date is late August.

(4) The West 15th Avenue Bridge replacement between Tyler Street and Jefferson Avenue has been completed. Due to extra funds in the budget for this project, a sidewalk component was added to the edge of the bridge.

(5) The 2020 Street Overlay Improvements are near completion.

(h) He received some concerns from residents near the Nose Park about the condition of the pavilion. As a result of their concerns, our Director of Park Maintenance Aaron Dougherty made some repairs and pressure-washed the pavilion. He thanked Aaron for his efforts in making the pavilion look great.

**Councilman Botsford** expressed his kudos to the City Administration for the repairs to the Menetre boat launch. He mentioned that as a result of the additional police patrols in the area, motorists have slowed down and are more aware of bicyclists. Also, he asked the Mayor to update the public about the cypress trees near the Trailhead.

**Mayor Johnson** commented that there were some cypress trees and knees near the Trailhead parking lot that had become a safety hazard for people walking around the Trailhead. Due to the safety hazard, the cypress trees and knees have been removed and sod will be added to the area.

**Council Vice President Rolling** inquired as to the proposed completion date for the street improvements on Boston Street.

**Mayor Johnson** responded that he does not have a completion date, but added the project has been moving along very well.

## 2. **Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer – None.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
LARRY ROLLING  
Council Vice President

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk