

CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 03, 2022

Council President Rolling called the regular meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: Councilman Peter Lewis Sr., Councilman John Botsford, Councilman Joey Roberts, Councilwoman Cody Ludwig, Councilman Mark W. Verret, Councilman-At -Large, Vice President Rick Smith, and Councilman At Large, President Larry Rolling.

ABSENT: None

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman At Large, Rick Smith.

Councilman Rolling recognized Mr. Jimmy Kohn, Public Works Street Supervisor for his retirement from the City of Covington. He was given a plaque of recognition. Mr. Kohn has worked for the City of Covington for 29 ½ years .

APPEARERS:

Councilman Verret made a motion to move appearer number 5, Mr. Roland Gallatin to Items for discussion due to the fact he has a PowerPoint presentation. Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Roland Gallatin who was originally the number five appearer was now move to New Business, Items of Discussion.

- 1. Councilman Botsford introduced Mrs. Diane Amos with the Free Nola Project** spoke about the increase in sex trafficking in the Gulf Coast Region. The Free Nola Project works close with Law Enforcement. For more information, please go to www.freenola.org.
- 2. Councilman Lewis introduced Mrs. Elizabeth Garland who is the Community Outreach Coordinator at The Start Corporation.** Ms. Garland spoke of all the programs Start Corporation offers. For more information, please go to www.startcorp.org.
- 3. Councilman Rolling introduced Ms. Kim Bigler Founder of James Samaritan.** James Samaritan works with children aging out of foster care. For More information , please go to www.jamessamaritan.org
- 4. Councilman Botsford introduced Covington Tree Board Members Mrs. Billie Stanga and Mr. Bruce Davidson.** They spoke of the preservation and the importance of the care to the beautiful trees in the City of Covington. Councilman Verret spoke of his concerns of recently removal of several trees on Gibson Street. Tree Board President Mr. Bruce Davidson explained why

they were removed. For More information on the Covington Tree Board, please go to www.covla.com.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll Call: Yeas- 7 Nays-0 Absent-0 to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

A. Items to be voted on:

- 1. PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO. 2022-04-01**— An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Covington Code of Ordinances Appendix B. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance Part 3. Use Districts Section 3.18. CR-Regional Commercial 3.1802. Permitted Uses and Adding 3.1803. Conditional Uses. Zoning Case #22-03-01TXT (Botsford)

Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney gave a overview of Item# 2022-04-01.

Councilman Botsford made a brief comment.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Roberts. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2022-04-01 seconded by **Councilman Ludwig. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-04-01. Item No. 2022-04-01 was adopted.**

- 2. PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO. 2022-04-02**-An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending Section 8-01 of the Home Rule Charter for the Redistricting of the Single Member Council Districts for the City of Covington, Louisiana in Accordance with the 2020 Census (Rolling)

Councilman Rolling stated in March, the Council had two public workshops that was open to the public dealing with redistricting which has to be done every 10 years with the Census. The meeting were held on March 16, 2022 and March 23, 2022. He thanked the Council for working so hard on this process and thanked the public who came out and their inputs.

Mr. Mike Hefner with Geographic Planning & Demographic Services, LLC gave a brief overview and explanation of the redistricting process that he completed for the Council Districts in the City of Covington. He thanked the Council for working together so hard and making this a very smooth process.

Councilman Rolling made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Botsford. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt Item No. 2022-04-02 seconded by **Councilman Smith. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-04-02. Item No. 2022-04-02 was adopted.**

3. **PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO. 2022-04-03-** An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify Lot 10 in Square 31, Connolly Addition in the City of Covington , Parish of St. Tammany, State of Louisiana, From RM-1 (Three and Four Family Residential) to CN (Neighborhood Commercial) (Zoning Case No. 22-03-01ZC) (Botsford)

Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney gave a overview of Item No. 2022-04-03.

Councilman Botsford gave a brief comment.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Roberts. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2022-04-03 seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-04-03. Item No. 2022-04-03 was adopted.

B. Items for Discussion: None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Items removed from the consent calendar: None.

B. Items to be voted on: None

C. Items for discussion:

1. **Councilman Verret introduced Mr. Roland Gallatin a resident in the City of Covington who presented a power point over his concerns of his neighbor on S. America St in Covington involving a variance that was given in 2020 and trees and demolition of structures on the property done without permits. Neighbors of the property were also present and voiced their concerns. There was a lengthy discussion between Administration, Council and Mr. Gallatin and his neighbors on this issue.**

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A -

Councilman Lewis stated he would like to thank the VFW and project Blessing for the Adult Prom that was this past weekend. It was a huge success. The next think coming up is Dazzling Diamonds are having a fund raiser at the VFW on Saturday, May 7, 2022. A Car Wash from 10:00am to 2:00pm. They are raising funds to get new uniforms. On May 24, 2022 , Start Community Health Center will be offering free testing for multiple health issues at 1505 N. Florida St. in Covington. On June 11, 2022 Godly Theatrics will be hosting a Dance Camp ages 5-16 at the Firehouse Event center from 9:00am to 2:00pm. Starting at 3:00 they will perform . For Junteenth this year we have added a fashion show for the youth. It will take place at the Furman Theatre located at 317 N. Jefferson on June 12, 2022 from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. Participants will be from ages 10-18. Everyone is welcome to join. The younger children will also participate by writing a short paragraph and they will be judged 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The winners will each be given a gift card, certificate, and trophy. Ages 17 and 18 with the best essay will receive each a 3000.00 scholarship (1 to a boy and 1 to a girl). On June 18, there will be

the regular Junteenth event starting at 9:00am with the Freedom Parade. At 11:00am at Peter Atkins Park there will be the Educational Programs, Speakers , Entertainment, Free Food, Vendors, and Resources. He stated the flyers for all the events will be on the table in the lobby .

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford stated the update for the foodbank. They went from 106 houses to 114 compared to 2021. Their daily boxes went up as well. Just a reminder that all the kids are getting out of school and donations tend to drop off, but this is the time they need more. So please if you can, donate. The most needed items are their canned vegetables, corn muffin mix, tomato sauce, rice, and oatmeal. The Food Bank is also looking for volunteers for the 9:00am to 12:00pm shifts. You can go to the food bank and register or go to www.northshorefoodbank.org/donatetime. On Tuesday, May 10, 2022 they will be having there Annual Golf tournament at the Beau Chene Country Club. Individual and team golfers are available. On May 24, 2022 is the Fool’s Fest in which the proceeds from the event will benefit the Northshore Food Bank. He wished all the Mom’s a Happy Mother’s Day and also a Happy Memorial Day.

District C –

Councilman Roberts stated he cannot say thank you enough to Public Works for always answering the calls. The speed trailer that was placed on 15th Ave. is working. Councilman Roberts asked Councilman Lewis, “How dis you get the money for your scholarships?”

Councilman Lewis stated he started out at his house of worship and just created a road from there.

Councilman Roberts stated so someone helped him acquire those funds. He stated he is giving away approximately 1000 swim lessons this year. Someone is helping me do that. He stated that today is Give Nola Day. Its about helping each other and doing it if you have the means to do it. You can go to www.givenola.org and pick a non-profit that fits what your passion may be or there are people in the audience from non-profits that just spoke, and you can choose to help them . He stated he leads with his heart and he loves this community because we put people first and we help each other. He encourages everyone if you have the means , help them. We can change the world.

3. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig stated there will be a ribbon cutting for a Teen Center for the Boys and Girls Club which is fueled by Chevron. It will be on May 12, 2022 at 4:00pm at the Harrison Curriculum Center located at 706 W 28th Ave. in Covington. We always talk about the Boys and Girls club for younger kids so she stated she is really excited there will be something for the older kids. She stated that St.Tammany Hospital has only two covid cases at this time. She wished everyone a Happy Mother’s Day.

4. District E –

Councilman Verret stated that the appearers were great today. The appearers are very important at the City Council Meetings and for each of the Council Members to have the ability to have an appearer means a lot to the community. He stated he would like to “Give a Shoutout” to Councilman Rolling and Councilman Lewis for they along with Councilman Verret were at the state capital doing a little lobbying and he is hopeful there will be a major announcement for infrastructure coming down the pike. He stated we have excellent State Legislators and two are alumni of this esteemed City Council. He stated it is awesome to have Senator Patrick McMath and State Representative Mark Wright both heading the infrastructure committees, especially what they did on Boston Street. He stated he is going to schedule a meeting with Administration concerning Jahnke Avenue. Kudos to Callie Baker the City Engineer for her phenomenal job of getting through these projects. One particular project is the Menetre Boat launch in which we continue to have issues. Please reach out to Senator McMath and Representative Wright thanking them for all their efforts. He wished everyone a Happy Mother’s Day.

5. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith stated that the Covington Business Association will be having a meeting Wednesday May 4, at Cilantros Mexican Cuisine located at 321 N. Columbia Street. The meeting starts at 5:30. From 5:30pm to 6:00pm is the socializing and the official meeting starts at 6:00pm. It’s a good way to know your business owners in the community and as always support the small businesses. He stated that he does have two requests to Administration. The first is to line up the liaison to DOTD in regard to the Boston Street bridge concerning the zipper merge. Mayor Johnson Stated he had requested a sign for the Zipper merge and was told it was not a approved sign. The second request was that residents like to exercise in our city parks, and they are requesting signage to show the distance and feet of the walking trails.

Mayor Johnson stated that we have an Eagle Scout project on 15th Ave. that going to do that very same thing. **Amy Tucker, Facilities Director** does a fantastic job at coordinating Eagle Scout projects throughout the City of Covington. She is sort of our liaison that does that. Maybe we can tie them in on doing that.

6. Councilman At Large (President)

Council President Rolling stated May 30 is Memorial Day and the City of Covington will be having an event at the Bogue Falaya Hall at 10:00am for Memorial Day. The public is invited. He stated the business community is so important to the City of Covington so, keep in mind to support your local businesses. Also, we have two birthdays coming up on May 22, Council Clerk JoAnn Rucker, and Councilman Rick Smith. He stated we had a lot to talk about tonight and we appreciated the publics input and each Councilman’s input. This city is a great city and everyone up here on the council loves this city and has a great heart for the city.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Mark Johnson

- a.** He stated that for the past couple of weeks have been marvelous and productive. The hard work and focus of our City Engineer, Callie Baker and our Public Works Department has led to several engineering and construction contracts being executed.
- b.** He stated for the Dutch Alley Harrison Street Drainage Project, we have selected the engineer.
- c.** He stated for the Menetre Park Boat Launch slips and pier, we have selected the engineer.
- d.** He stated for the city wide bridge inspections in which we are required to inspect those bridges on a regular basis, the contract has been signed.
- e.** He stated that we have also executed the engineering contract for the compacity study of the wastewater treatment plant. If you recall, we have asked ourselves a couple of years ago how many houses we can add to plant, and the answer was we do not know. So, it is good that we have that underway.
- f.** He stated that we have also signed a construction contract for subsurface drainage at Harrison Street near St. Tammany Parish Hospital where the drop off is and the asphalt drops into the ditch.
- g.** He stated there is a construction contract for a new sewer force main from Ronald Reagan Highway to the treatment plant which will address our Privett land agreement situation.
- h.** He stated we have also executed a contract to clear and de-snap Blue Swamp Creek which affects Barkley Park and Oak Alley.
- i.** He stated we have an instrumentation shed at 16th Ave water well which needs to be climate controlled and renovated. We are waiting on the bids for that.
- j.** He stated for Lurline Dr. in River Forest which requires to be rebuilt at this time we are going out for bid.
- k.** He stated for William Pitcher Jr. High on 17th Ave. and St. Scholastica Academy on Boston Street, both need pedestrian crosswalk lighting and permitting is complete and the devices are on order.
- l.** He stated the projects that are wrapping up include the miscellaneous bridge guardrail repairs around the city. Replacing the highway style guardrail on W 11th Avenue with a cement one and a waterline main replacement on Beth Dr. in River Forest.
- m.** He stated additionally road panels have been replaced in the Savannahs and Oak Alley.
- n.** He stated there are major sidewalk repairs wrapping up in downtown Covington.
- o.** He stated at the wastewater sewer plant we have effluent pumps that pump out over a million gallons of treated wastewater into the Tchefuncte River on a daily basis. They have aged out and both pumps need replacement, and we are waiting on the bid documents from the consultant.
- p.** He stated to create redundancy over treatment plants belt press (that is the device that removes solids from treated effluent prior to being pumped into the river) we have a centrifuge styled device in the final design process. Your point about senator McMath and Representative Mark Wright, that was a \$900,000.00 grant from the state capital outlay with a \$300,000

match by the city. So, this is huge without that redundancy and had the belt press gone down, we would have had to rely on trucks being brought in do it for us which would have been enormously expensive.

- q.** He stated it is hard for him to believe that River Forest is 60 years old. The sewer lines are Terre Cotta . those have been smoked tested and videoed and due to River Forest having a typically large homesites, they have atypical large lateral lines where additional video is being created as we document what we have. This is going to lead to breaks in the sewer lines being repaired and synthetic lining inserted into each pipe to make the pipes like new.
- r.** He stated we have installed a new generator at the wastewater sewer plant and at the Bollfield Water Well Pump station. The Bollfield Generator is being permanently mounted to an existing trailer and electrically fitting to serve the sewer lift stations at the Nose Park and Barkley Park. This was the idea of the new sewer line Supervisor named Zach Brown.
- s.** He stated the old plant generator from the wastewater treatment plant will be permanently assigned to the Recreation Center.
- t.** He stated we will be looking to install a new generator at the Ozone Subdivision. A lift station fun fact is the city has 62 lift stations pumping millions of gallons of wastewater to the treatment plants on a daily basis.
- u.** He stated he would like to give a special thanks to Chief Administrative Officer Erin Bivona and the City Engineer, Callie Baker, and each of their staffs for getting these projects underway and completed.
- v.** He stated he would like to give a second shout out to public works for the cleanliness of the city. He stated he reminds everyone the city does not physically have all the manpower to pick up all the litter on our roadsides. He is particularly thankful for the residents that pick up the trash in front of their homes or in their blocks.
- w.** He stated the signs that were on the telephone poles and the yard signs that were in the right ways all the time are gone. A special thanks to Kemmione Callahan, Kevin Bradford, and Calvin Bickman for tackling this.
- x.** He stated a congratulations to Jerry Hudgeons for being named Public Works Employee of the Month. Jerry's work ethic and mechanical prowess are a great addition to the wastewater sewer plant team.
- y.** He stated that Public Works had just completed the de-snagging of Frederick Creek in Old Landing, most of Cherokee Creek near Cherokee Lane and are currently knocking out Kathleen Ellen Canal in River Forest.
- z.** He stated a big thanks to the City Council for the purchase of the new Spider Machine which actually makes this work possible.
- aa.** He stated the city new May/June newsletter is now available. On page three is the list of events coming up in the city.
- bb.** He stated that Saturday, May 7th, 2022 is the Northshore Heart walk that has moved to Covington from the Fontainebleau State Park.
- cc.** He stated the following events coming up:
 - *May 13, 2022-Beatles Tribute at Christ Episcopal Church at 7:30pm
 - *May 20 2022- Sunset at the Landing Friday6:00-9:00pm
 - *May 20, 2022- Hamburger Festival Friday and Saturday 10:00am St. Tammany Fairgrounds.
 - * May 27, 2022 Columbia Street Block Party 6-9:00pm

* May 30, 2022 Veterans Appreciation Luncheon Monday, 11:00am
Bogue Falaya Hall

**2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of
Administration-None**

- **Council President Rolling reminded everyone of the June 2022 City of Covington Council Meeting which will be held on Tuesday, June 07, 2022 at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03PM.

Video of this meeting can be found on www.covla.com.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk