

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
March 12, 2024
6:00 p.m.

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held on this date at the Council's regular meeting place, the Council Chamber, City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Chairman Ezernack, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Ezernack, Mr. Harvey, & Mrs. Dawson

There was absent: Ms. Woods.

(Mr. Harvey arrived at the City Council meeting 6:01 p.m.)

Chairman Ezernack announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Mrs. Dawson.

The Invocation was led by Councilwoman Dawson.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

Mr. Marshall noted the District 4 clean-up is this weekend on Saturday morning and he said they will begin at the corner of South 8th and Orange Street. He further noted all volunteers are welcome.

Mrs. Dawson stated the District 5 clean-up will start at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo at 8:45 am. She said she is looking for everyone, especially Bryant's Addition, to join the community cleanup. She further stated trash bags, gloves, and safety vest will be provided for the cleanup. She noted there will be a career fair at the Monroe Civic Center Arena on Wednesday March 20, 2024, from 9:00 am until 1:30 pm. On another note, She congratulated the Wossman High School Lady Wildcats and the Wossman High School Boys basketball team who brought the State Championship back to Monroe, LA to District 5. She thanked everyone that supported the Wossman Wildcats, and she stated the City is proud of them all. She said the City will be celebrating them for the rest of the school and for years to come. She said she doesn't think that will be the last one and the City looks forward to another championship coming soon. She said to be looking out for the community engagement meeting for CityStart and she said they want to be sure the Council is getting feedback from the community regarding CityStart. She said there is a survey on the City of Monroe website, and this will help make a difference in our community.

Mayor Friday Ellis said good evening and thanked everyone for coming out to the City Council meeting and also to those watching online. He said at the last Council meeting the City made note to the State of The City and he said he encourages everyone to talk about the body of work that is happening right now in the City of Monroe. He said from community development, infrastructure, and economic development and he said the presentation is a great why to visionally see what is happening and to hear from residents on how projects impact their lives on a day to day basis. He said the State of the City was all done with local talent and he encouraged everyone to go to the stateofthecitymonroe.com to see the entire 30 minutes of the State of City. He said you will get to hear a lot about what the City is doing and the body of work that the people he gets to work with every day are allowed to do.

Mrs. Ezernack stated that the State of the City was magnificent, and the talent of the ballerina was unbelievable. She said the symphony was great and of course Mr. Larry Bell was fantastic as well. She said the whole State of the City was fantastic and she said she urge everyone as well to take a look at the State of the City. She thanked everyone who was involved in putting it together and the employees that were behind the screen. On another note, she congratulated the Wossman High School women and men basketball team for bringing both championships back home to the City of Monroe. She said she thinks it is somewhat of a historical thing were they both won, and she gave kudos to them, the coaches, their parents, and everyone who supported them throughout the entire season. She noted District 2 CityStart meeting is still to be scheduled and it will be posted. She said the Council urges everyone to attend to give input to that process.

Mayor Friday Ellis stated the City have friends from Louisiana Economic Development (LED) to talk about being a development ready community.

Ms. Stacey Duvic, PCED, CLED, MEDP, Senior Director, stated a few months ago they met with the Mayor and put together a committee to do some economic development and strategic planning very specific to the City of Monroe. She said economic development is regional and statewide but at the end of the day, it's done on a local level. She said the Mayor put together a great committee together of small businesses of all kinds of people and there were multiple meetings and some surveys to dive into some reasonable goals that can be achieved by administration, the City Council, and stakeholders in the City. She stated their goal is to always help find resources to help the City get there. She said the committee has put together strong goals in regard to business attraction and the quality of life issues. She further stated the City is now a Louisiana development ready community. She noted that means project managers are trying to map out where in the state people are ready to do business. She said if they bring a project to the City they know what kind of projects the City is looking for or not. She further noted they have people on their staff that take those goals and help the City find resources to achieve those goals. She said on March 1st they announced that community development grant for communities that have gone through this process to use for beautification projects. She said the City of Monroe is the 59th community since 2009 that has done this, and they are so proud to have worked with a great.

Upon a motion of Mrs. Dawson and seconded by Mr. Marshall, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of February 27, 2024, and the Legal and Special Budget Hearing Meeting February 26, 2024, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

Proposed Condemnations:

The following condemnations were considered.

(1.) 1613 Wood Street (D3) – Curator – Owners – S. Birds L.L.C.; Richland State Bank) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this property was presented in environmental court on November 23, 2023, and it's an open dilapidated structure. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the property owner 30 days to bring it into compliance.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if anyone showed up for court.

Mr. James said no.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to clarify there was no communication from the property owners.

Mr. James said no ma'am.

Mrs. Ezernack motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to remove the structure or bring the structure into code removing any obnoxious growth or debris.

The following condemnations were removed:

613 South 2nd St. (D4) – (Curator – Owners – Brown & Sons Realty, LLC; Madison P. Owens) and 308 South 1st. St. (D4) – (Curator – Owners – Anthony Lavelle Jones, Jr.; Elena Jones) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to remove these items from the agenda. (There were no public comments.)

(2.) 400 Moore Ave. (D4) (Curator – Owner – Tiarra L. Kage) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot.

Mr. James stated this is a burnt structure and it burnt in October 2022, and it was presented in environmental court October 2023. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the property owner 30 days to bring it into compliance.

Mr. Marshall motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to remove the structure or bring the structure into code removing any obnoxious growth or debris.

Mayor's Office:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8683 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum, Inc. and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8684 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Miss Louisiana Organization and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8685 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Ouachita Green and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Shelia K. Downhour, Ouachita Green Executive Director, thanked the City for their support of Ouachita Green and she said the involvement of the City and the people has been a wonderful endeavor. She said this past weekend clean-up over 204 lbs. of litter was removed in 3 hours and she said it is amazing the things that are happening right now. She stated there are two clean-ups this weekend and the Household Hazardous Waste event which keep things out of the landfill such as hot water heater. She said the Love the Boot Week is coming up and a business's sustainability workshop is coming up in June. She said Ouachita Green enjoys working with the City and if there is any they can do you can call or visit the website.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Ms. Downhour for all she do as well.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting the fiscal year 2024-2025 Operating Budget and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack stated the City Council had a Budget Hearing that went over the budget and the Council questions were answered doing that particular hearing.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting a five-year Capital Improvement Program for the City of Monroe from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2029, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a Lease between the City of Monroe and Pilots for Patients at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Harvey stated he talked to Mr. Thomas this evening, but he wasn't going to be able to make it to this meeting and he will be at the next Council meeting for final adoption. He stated he couldn't be happier to see them moving into this hanger.

Mayor Ellis said extending services is even better.

Mrs. Ezernack said it is a wonderful service for our community.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Harvey and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

For extended details on the council meeting please call the Council Clerk Monday-Friday at 318-329-2252 to schedule an appointment to listen to the minute recording.

