

DeFuniak Springs City Council

Regular Meeting

January 26, 2009

The DeFuniak Springs City Council met in Regular Session at 6:00 PM with the following members present: Mayor C. Harold Carpenter; Mayor Pro-Tem James Huffman ; City Council Members: Don Harrison, James Coffield, Wayne Graham, Henry Ennis; City Manager Kim Kirby, City Attorney Clayton Adkinson, Finance Director Sara Bowers, and Deputy Clerk Vanessa Mitchell.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Carpenter called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: James Coffield gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mayor Carpenter announced an agenda change; Item 4 will move to Item 5 and Item 5 will move to Item 4.

MINUTES:

(A) *January 12, 2009 – Regular Meeting:* There were no corrections.

Motion made by James Huffman to approve the minutes as presented, second by Wayne Graham, motion carried 5-0.

CITY MANAGER, KIM KIRBY:

(A) *Approve Walton County Economic Development Alliance Strategic Plan:*
Kim Kirby announced Ms. Dawn Moliterno was not able to attend tonight to give the presentation. She then introduced Commissioner Sara Comander who gave a presentation on the Walton County Economic Development Alliance Strategic Plan. Ms. Comander pointed out the audience of supporters; Don Brown, Carlene Anderson, Leigh Grantham, Mary Lou Reed, Dwayne Youngblood, Ronnie Bell, and Michelle Tommey.

Ms. Comander gave an overview of what the County and Cities of DeFuniak Springs, Freeport, and Paxton have already done. Ms. Comander explained that the purpose of the alliance is a public - private partnership serving the greater Walton County area whose mission is to establish Walton County as a great place to grow business, attract new investment, and create quality jobs. Ms. Comander said they need funding and they are looking at the private sector in the initial three years to bring \$25,000 by way of membership. She explained they are asking the County and Cities to help the public effort by using a per capita formula. Each portion yearly is; Walton County \$243,500, DeFuniak Springs \$15,396, Freeport \$3,600 and Paxton \$1,000. Ms. Comander said the County, Freeport and Paxton have already agreed to fund their endeavor, they are asking for a three year commitment.

Mayor Carpenter (speaking as a member of the Alliance committee) said this was an outstanding committee of individuals and believes this will be a very successful operation. Dwayne Youngblood, representing the Walton County Economic Development Council (EDC), gave his support for the alliance. Don Harrison commented that when this was first proposed he was concerned about having two groups and said the EDC should be brought on board and now that he has seen that they have been; that was the missing piece of the puzzle. James Huffman said since his involvement with the City Council this has been the most exciting thing he's been a part of. He said when he came here (the Council) he recognized that we needed to raise our wages because we are losing our most valuable resource, our children. He said he also recognizes that we (the County, and Cities) have different assets and we need to put them together. Mr. Huffman said everywhere he goes, he has heard comments on the things that our County has, like the railroad, Interstate, airport, etc.; things where people can access them. Mayor Carpenter turned the conversation back to the request of funding. Don Harrison asked Clayton Adkinson if we could commit

to three years of funding on an annual budget. Ms. Kirby reminded the Council they did the same commitment with the affordable housing alliance with the Walton Area Chamber for two years. Clayton Adkinson said it is not legally binding, either we budget for it or we don't. He said the Council could approve the request but next year's Council may not have the funds to do that (budget for it), but the Council could show the commitment to do it.

Motion made by James Huffman that the City of DeFuniak make a three year commitment to the WCEDA for \$15,396 (per year), second by James Coffield, motion carried 5-0.

REQUEST TO BE PLACED ON THE AGENDA:

(A) *Present Authorization for an Easter Egg Hunt, Covenant Hospice:* Carolyn Williams gave a presentation on Covenant Hospice and the work they do. She said Covenant Hospice wished to provide a service that's fun for the community and to bring them together. Ms. Williams, on behalf of Covenant Hospice, requested to host an Easter egg hunt around the lakeyard and for the Council to waive the fees for the use of the Amphitheater and sound system on April 11, 2009 from 10 am-12 pm. Ms. Williams said Covenant Hospice and other volunteers would be onsite an hour before and an hour after and would provide trash bags and light refreshments and supervision for the safety of the children. She said it would be near the Amphitheater and approximated 75 kids may come.

Motion made by Wayne Graham to approve the request, second by Henry Ennis,

James Huffman thanked Ms. Williams and Covenant Hospice for doing this. Ms. Williams said she was looking forward to it and hoped it could be an annual event.

Motion carried 5-0.

(B) *Request Authorization to Community Garden, April Whitaker:* April Whitaker, Whitaker Gardens, said a group of people would like permission to start a community garden. Ms. Kirby said the proposal in their packets was mirrored after a similar project in Apalachicola and a portion of the plots would be available for anybody in the community and there would be individual gardens. Ms. Kirby said the smaller plots would be rented and the funds would go to support the larger community garden. She also said the food grown in the garden would be donated to the community through Walton Cares.

Mr. Huffman said he thought this would be a great addition for those activities that go on at the Senior Center. He said he has seen something similar in another community and when the seniors are involved they get really proud of their plots. James Coffield said he also thought this would be a great thing for the community and was very much in favor of it. Wayne Graham asked about the location on 12th St and West Main Ave. Mayor Carpenter asked what the legal obligation was for this. Clayton Adkinson asked if they were charging to rent the spaces. Ms. Whitaker said the plan was for the people who used the individual, smaller, plots would pay rent that would go to fund the community plot. Ms. Kirby said it will be self sustaining and the funds would go toward the fencing and anything to do with the project itself. Mr. Adkinson asked what the selection process would be for the ten plots (being rented out). Ms. Whitaker said she didn't know that yet, they had not found ten people yet.

Mr. Harrison asked about the selection of the site. Mr. Harrison commented that there were lots of trees on the site and its in the Historic District, he wasn't sure if we wanted this in the Historic District. He said there was lots of space on Walton Road, room to expand. Ms. Kirby said when she and Ms. Whitaker met they had not discussed other sites besides the well site or where the old hospital was. She said she hadn't mentioned Well site #5 because that was a fenced in area and didn't think it was appropriate to give the public access into a secure area. Mr. Harrison pointed out that they are planning a

fence and could section off a portion so that they wouldn't have access to the Well site. Discussion followed about the location. Clayton Adkinson said he understands the request to be use of City property, whether it be that site (12th and W. Main) or to look for a location. He said the City could give their blessing tonight to use an area that the City Manager or staff determines to be in the best interest of the City; the City Manager could then discuss with Ms. Whitaker the various areas that the City could authorize to use for that purpose. Mr. Huffman asked them to keep in mind that we don't need another Gene Hurley, a place that is not readily accessible to the public. Ms. Kirby added they had a garden at the Boys and Girls Club and they do not have much land to work with but they have done an amazing job there and the kids love it. Mr. Harrison reiterated the concern about the Historic District and the viability of it. Clayton Adkinson said he didn't see the problem with the Historic District. Ms. Kirby said she believed the concern was with proximity of irrigation, if it was a good location. Mr. Huffman said if it didn't work the first year, they could always move it and thought it would be an asset to have it so visible.

Motion made by James Huffman to grant the request of Ms. April Whitaker to have a Community Garden at the so stated site, second by Henry Ennis.

Mr. Clayton Adkinson asked for clarification if it would be her or an organization. Ms. Whitaker said they would umbrella under Walton Cares to set up the account. Ms. Kirby said Ms. Whitaker wanted to partner with a non-profit and Walton Cares agreed to it. Ms. Kirby asked for clarification if Ms. Whitaker was asking for location only or property and water. Ms. Whitaker requested for the City to supply the water.

Mr. Huffman amended his motion to include water, second by Henry Ennis.

Mr. Huffman commented that it was refreshing to have someone come before them volunteering to do something; it felt good. He then thanked Ms. Whitaker.

Motion carried 5-0.

FINANCE DIRECTOR, SARA BOWERS:

(A) *Expenditure and Revenue Reports:* Sara Bowers advised the Council this was for their information and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

(B) *Bills:* Sara Bowers requested a motion to pay all bills in order.

Motion made by Wayne Graham to pay all bills in order, second by James Huffman, motion carried 5-0.

CITIZENS COMMENTS: There were none.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Kim Kirby asked the Council if they had preference for days of the week to tour Site C-6. Council suggested a Wednesday morning. Ms. Kirby announced the first issue of Walton Life came out in the paper and discussed its distribution through Walton County. She said she attended CARFIT at the Senior Center and there was a great turn out. Ms. Kirby reminded the Council the Housing Forum would be tomorrow at the Chautauqua Building. She said the Department of Community Affairs cannot praise the Walton County Communities for a Lifetime effort enough; they have become a model for other communities. Ms. Kirby also reminded the Council the Cemetery Board meeting was tomorrow at 5:00. She gave a hand out for lobbying dates and said the Council could RSVP with her.

COUNCIL COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS:

James Coffield -- attended the Life Enrichment Center meeting. The numbers continue to grow. He said the CARFIT event was a real success and then gave a Calendar of Events for the Life Enrichment Center to the Council. He encouraged them to join them one day if they had the opportunity.

Don Harrison -- none

James Huffman – none

Henry Ennis – none

Wayne Graham – none

There being no further business, Mayor C. Harold Carpenter adjourned the meeting.

ADOPTED this 9th day of February, 2009

C. Harold Carpenter

C. Harold Carpenter, Mayor

ATTEST:

Vanessa Mitchell

Vanessa Mitchell, Deputy Clerk