

AGENDA

Mayor & Council Meeting

5pm Tuesday, February 13, 2024

1. Call to Order
2. Prayer
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Adopt Agenda
6. Adoption of Minutes—January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting
7. Clerk's Report
8. Department Reports
9. Mayor's Report
10. Old Business
 - A. City Attorney's Update on Maiden Lane and Beauty Supply Properties
11. New Business
12. Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, March 4, 2024
13. Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, March 12, 2024
14. City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, February 19, 2024 for In-house Work Day
15. Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30pm Thursday, March 14, 2024 in City Hall
16. Citizens' Input
17. Executive Session
18. Adjournment

City of Sparta
Mayor & Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Elected Officials present were Mayor R. Allen Haywood, Mayor ProTem Rav Yisrael, Council Members Brandon Nolley, and Tom Roberts. Councilwoman Sandra Sherrod arrived late at 5:15 p.m.

City Clerk Virigina Webb was present. Attorney John Hitchcock was present.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor ProTem Yisrael at 5 pm followed by a Moment of Silence, The Lord's Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adopt Agenda

Councilman Roberts motioned to adopt the agenda; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Adoption of Minutes – January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting

Councilman Nolley motioned to adopt January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

Clerk's Report

1. The Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant for 2024 has been submitted. Total funds requested: \$28,445.38. Hancock and Boland streets will be repaired, and Hamilton, Adams, and Spring Streets will receive DOT grade patching.
2. On Wednesday, March 13, 2024, two representatives from Senator Jon Ossoff's office will hold a mobile work office in Council Chambers from 10am to 2pm. Case workers will be available to assist citizens with cases from any government agency, including the Veteran's Administration (VA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and Social Security Administration (SSA). More information will be available at the city's website, www.cityofsparta.org.
3. John Hancock Academy has requested a parade permit from the Department of Transportation (DOT) for their 13th Annual Rebel Dash. This event will take place on Saturday, March 9, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. For more information, call Dawn Brake at 706-444-6470.
4. The Black History Banner Project highlights Black History Month in Sparta. The banners have been affixed to the City of Sparta light poles on Broad Street. Beverly Lundy and Lillie Barnes spearheaded this project to celebrate Black History. Take the time to read each banner and learn more about the individuals who made sacrifices and contributions.

Department Reports – Police

Chief Tommie Walker stated the he is planning to organize a neighborhood watch program for the city of Sparta. He also encouraged citizens to get involved and if you “see something, say something.”

Mayor’s Report

1. Water and sewer rate increases may be discussed during the Monday, March 4, 2024, work session. There has not been a rate increase in fourteen years. Chemical and electricity costs have risen by up to 40% over the last three years.
2. GIRMA rates have increased by 15% to 18%.
3. In 2022, the city spent roughly \$250,000 on paving streets and patching others, but in 2023 the city allowed TSPLOST and LMIG account to build up. From 2023, the city has \$24,774.48 in the LMIG accounts in addition to the added roughly \$28,000 for the current year, resulting in a projected total of \$52,774.48. The TSPLOST account current has \$76,095.55; the city receives about \$5,000 in TSPLOST revenue per month. LMIG will help patch sidewalks. The sidewalks included for 2024 are 145 Maiden Lane, and portions of Hamilton Street located across from Ingrams Funeral Home, the old furniture factory, and next to Rocky’s house ending behind IGA. The street repairs pricing quotes will be done with Brannon and Smith Paving. The 2024 TSPLOST list will include the complete paving of Adams Street and Maiden Lane. DOT engineers are examining Gettis Street.
4. The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG) invited Mayor Haywood to Washington, DC, to advocate for natural gas availability. The mayors of Dublin, Hartwell, Covington, Eatonton, and Louisville also spoke out about why Georgia needs to protect natural gas availability. Haywood met with 12 Congressmen, and Senators Ossoff and Warnock, to explain the importance of natural gas to the city of Sparta. Mayor Haywood stated that some of the city's residents who live in older homes may face financial barriers that prevent them from converting to fully electric homes.
5. Jerry Hood, president of EMI, will visit on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 and Thursday, February 22, 2024 to evaluate potential process improvements. The city will have to replace a pump that costs between \$60,000 and \$70,000.
6. Councilman Roberts and Mayor Haywood met with a potential investor who is interested in providing housing and primary care to veterans. There is also interest in building housing areas in the city.
7. According to Attorney John Hitchcock, there should be no junk\sale cars on the property of Hancock Street.

Old Business

- A. City Attorney’s Update on Maiden Lane and Beauty Supply Properties

Attorney John Hitchcock reported that the old beauty supply property located on Broad Street behind the old police station has a new owner. It was sold in a tax sale. The former owner can legally redeem property up to one year.

After speaking with the attorney for Sherie Harriston at the Madian Lane property, he was informed that the residence has an interested party.

New Business

There was no new business.

Mayor & Council Work Session at 4:30pm Monday, March 4, 2024

Mayor & Council Regular Meeting at 5pm Tuesday, March 12, 2024

City Hall Will Be Closed Monday, February 19, 2024 for In-house Work Day

Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting at 5:30pm Thursday, March 14, 2024 in City Hall

Citizens' Input

Glashondra Bell, a city resident, reported that the property across from her on Hancock Street is building a very tall fence with many cars parked behind it. She inquired about any property maintenance ordinances governing the height that fences can be on a property or were there other limits imposed by the city.

She also stated that there is currently a water leak near her residence.

Bell stated that the property's owner, Vasantha Edussuriya, has not removed the cut tree and other rubbish from his property. She asked whether the city may remove a tree from the property from which limbs continue to fall because the neighbors have consistently picked up trash.

Attorney Hitchcock urged her to get representation and sue the owner.

The city has no authority over property other than to enforce ordinances.

DeeDee Hyder, a city resident, noted that the junk automobiles on Jones Street, near Trent Boone's On the Way Motors, are an eyesore and that the city has done little to solve the problem. After engaging surveyors, they were unable to determine where the property started and ended.

Paula McGhee, a county resident, reported a water leak in front of Mr. C's and expressed concern about the ditches on Spring Street and when they will be cleared out.

Charles Jackson, a county resident, praised the Council and the Historic Preservation Commission for giving him the opportunity to rebuild the roof of the historic police station on Broad Street. He submitted a bid and received the contract for the project.

Paula Dixon, a Hancock County resident, said some individuals are interested in developing a home project. She stated that they are elderly and disabled people in need of housing.

Executive Session

Councilman Nolley motioned to go into executive session; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod did not vote.

Regular Session

Councilman Roberts motioned to return to Regular Session; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod did not vote.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Deanta Chatman for employment for Water Plant Operator; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod did not vote.

Councilman Nolley motioned to hire Donald Ingram for employment for Street Supervisor; Councilman Roberts seconded. No discussion. Councilwoman Sherrod did not vote.

Adjournment

Councilman Roberts motioned to adjourn the meeting; Councilman Nolley seconded. No discussion. Vote unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 pm.