



CITY OF  
**Swainsboro** GEORGIA  
*Crossroads of the Great South*



## City Council Meeting

The regular meeting of Mayor and City Council was held **Monday, April 10, 2023**  
at 6:00 P.M. City Hall.

**Members Present:** Bennett, Davis, Parker, Quarterman, Collins, Sconyers, Stafford

**Members Absent:** None

**Prayer of Invocation:** Pastor Gary Hackett, Home of the Apostle Outreach Ministry

## Pledge of Allegiance

### Public Hearing

A public hearing was held on the proposed Blight Ordinance changes. These changes are necessary to put the city in compliance with the upcoming changes that will take place at the state level beginning July 2023. The Ordinance allows the city to utilize the county's process and revenue officer. In addition to that there are issues with regards to the appeal process, that's a state change. So, the way an owner would appeal it for municipal court is a different standard. It also allows the city to provide the powers or use additional powers that may not be in the Ordinance. This is not the only revenue we have. In addition to that there are other code sections which should be considered and language that is consistent with other Ordinances. It also discusses where it will be in the Code section and the sections that it is affecting. We are deleting the sections of the Ordinance that are inconsistent and making them consistent. Someone in attendance asked the question, "Our adoption of this Ordinance will put us in compliance with the state?". Correct, the statute allows us to enforce it. The enforcement side comes from the building inspector. The building inspector will go out and determine if the building is blight. He will send letters out to the tax owner on the digest. They will get so many days to correct the blight issue. Then, if no action is taken a follow-up letter will be sent. After this, if there is no action, the police will follow up with a citation and it goes to municipal court. Then, the municipal court judge often gives them additional time before the property is torn down at the owner's expense. The building inspector must determine that it is a blight before the police can begin to issue citations. The cost to clean it up is assessed on their property taxes. This is not the complete ordinance, only the sections in need of change to meet compliance. Mayor Bennett introduced the new city administrator, Mr. Herman Middlebrooks, and stated that one of the things on his plate was to put everything online, to get us up to date. Councilperson Davis clarified that there is a difference between nuisance and blight, and this strictly pertains to blight issues.

A public hearing was held on the Storm Water Management Extent of Service Policy. With the input of the public works department and city council we looked at implementing or putting together a policy that essentially addresses the responsibilities of stormwater management. In that it essentially puts into a situation which the city's obligation would be consistent based on where the location, who owns the property the function and legal standing in regards to the property and it identifies them as private, quasi-public, and public putting the burden on the city to address and mediate and maintain public sections of the water and stormwater drainage systems and in some quasi-public areas where the city has already taking ownership control and dominion and the city would not be required to takeover private property. This is consistent with Georgia State law and it is spelling out the policy so that it is clear. It also allows the city to act in case of emergency on private property when necessary to prevent damage to property or life. It also allows the city to enter into agreements with homeowners called the drainage improvement agreement that would allow them to address those issues. One thing we have been looking at is trying to have policies so that everybody understands what everybody's obligations are and what can be done. This policy is based off a policy from another larger municipality. We made changes to it to put it in line with what our city is doing. I would imagine that this will need amending downstream, down the road, as we look at the implementation of it to make sure it is addressing issues in a way that we need it

to be effective for the city's drainage system. Councilperson Davis's only concern was about the public water influence zone. Levis stated that was language put in by one of our engineers. Councilperson Parker asked, is this for information only or are we going to act on. The mayor stated it is on our agenda to adopt tonight. Councilperson Parker asked would it affect any pending issues, it will not effective the three pending issues (Bright, Dubberly, Robin Road). This does not prohibit the city from acting in a way which is deemed inappropriate but does give guidance to the city's department of public works (Clearwater) as well as other offices. It does state when and how something should be done, that is what this document is supposed to be doing.

Councilperson Parker made a motion to amend the agenda to add two agenda items under New Business. One the family of Nina Bennett would like to address council and Ronald Moore, Chairman of downtown get down will give an update on their first event.

**Motion by: Parker**

**Seconded by: Sconyers**

**Vote: 6-0**

Minutes of the March 6<sup>th</sup> regular meeting and the March 9<sup>th</sup> Special Call Zoom Meeting were presented. Councilperson Parker made a motion to accept the minutes from both meetings.

**Motion by: Parker**

**Seconded by: Sconyers**

**Vote: 6-0**

#### **A. Old Business:**

1. Council will consider the approval of a game room license application for Maheshkumar Patel dba Mikes Food Mart located at 505 North Main Street. Councilperson Parker clarified that if a person won, the store would provide the winner with a gift card that could be used at the store, no cash out.

**Motion by: Stafford**

**Seconded by: Sconyers**

**Vote: 6-0**

2. Council will consider the adoption of the Storm Water Management Extent of Service Policy. Councilperson Parker asked if it would affect anything that is presently being addressed by council and mayor replied no it would not.

**Motion by: Sconyers**

**Seconded by: Stafford**

**Vote: 6-0**

3. Rita Faulkner will address the council on behalf of the Robin Road Project. At the last meeting she asked about the engineer's report. Since the last meeting she has received the engineering report and the entire Robin Road file. She asked the council multiple questions surrounding the Robin Road project and requested that the council revoke on the subcommittee for this project. A previous engineering report said that the issue could be fixed for about \$75,000 but when the project was bid out. No bids were received. A topographical survey is needed to move forward with this project. The city has received two quotes. The mayor stated that this item will be on the next city council agenda.

#### **B. New Business:**

1. Council will hear from Ron Moore with an update on the downtown get down event. Mr. Moore thanked everyone for their role in making the first annual multicultural, food truck festival downtown get down. The idea was to bring the city together to do things here in Swainsboro. It was a great event it brought a lot of people to shop in our downtown district. Many vendors sold out. Since this event the local college has shown interest in sponsoring future events. The next event will July 1<sup>st</sup> in conjunction with annual Jaycees fireworks show. Councilperson Parker commented that the food was excellent and the people coming to town were excellent. Different bands performed all day throughout the event. All citizens were represented. Mayor thanked Ron Moore for putting all this together. A big thanks went out to all the police involved. The goal is to have these types of events four times a year at no cost to the citizens.
2. Council will from the family of Nina Bennett. Speaking is Pastor Timothy Irving Bennett and he addressed council with a series of questions following the passing of his mother.
  - What is the protocol for someone in distress in Emanuel County who is trying to reach a hospital or EMT?
  - What is the same protocol for that same person in distress twenty minutes later?

- The mayor advised council that they're not to comment on any matter at this time. Mayor Bennett apologizes on behalf of the council for the untimely passing of his mother.

- ### C. Committee Reports:

- The City of Swainsboro is an equal opportunity employer and provider.**

**D. Executive Session:**

1. None

Councilperson Sconyers motioned to adjourn.

**Motion by: Sconyers**

**Seconded by: Davis**

**Vote: 6-0**

Submitted: ***Herman Middlebrooks***, City Administrator