Council Meeting

April 7, 2025

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Walter Cowart, Celestine Hayes and Jody Greene.

Others Present: Mark Barber, Rhonda Rowe, Tim Tanner, members of staff and the public.

Invocation was given by Rev. Lewis.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes (3/17/2025): Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2025 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor.

Public Hearing (Rezoning Request – Francisco Trejo): Councilman Paige made a motion to enter into public hearing to gain input on the rezoning application filed by Francisco Trejo. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor. The application requests that property located on S. Elm Street (Map A003 Parcel 068) between W. 6th and W. 7th Streets be rezoned from Residential (R-8) to Wholesale Light Industrial (WLI). The applicant’s intent is to rezone the property in order to store trailers made at their principal place of business. It was noted the planning commission had unanimously denied the request. Charles Shiflett, previous owner of the property, spoke in favor of the application. He stated that he had tried to build apartments but that was turned down. Mr. Trejo is only wanting to store finished trailers. Where he is currently building the trailers, they are being hauled off before they get finished. The wholesalers will pick up the trailers from the location on S. Elm Street. He noted that Mr. Trejo is trying to expand his business and there is not going to be any chemicals there as has been told. John Sparrow, from Ty Ty, Georgia, spoke in support of Mr. Trejo, stating that his business is growing and all he needs is a place where his trailers can be picked up. There will only be trailers parked in a line. It was questioned where it came from that chemicals would be there. Councilwoman Hayes stated that it was her concern. If the property is rezoned WHI, it could end up with chemicals there. It is a residential area and already zoned residential. He stated every property on that street is zoned general business. The property in question was zoned GB originally and then rezoned to residential. City manager Mark Barber stated that Councilwoman Hayes’ point is that if the business grows and it has to leave this location, it opens the door that anything else could then go in there. Mr. Shiflett then asked if Mr. Trejo enters into an agreement that all he will do with the property is store trailers, why can’t we do that? He’s in a mud hole right now and can’t get his materials in a dry place. He’s trying to expand his business and hire more people. Would yall consider that? Councilwoman Hayes stated that other people before has signed a contract and didn’t stick with it. The city manager stated that the council can put any conditions they want. Mayor Duke stated that the concern is the next owner could put chemicals there and the council doesn’t think that should be considered. Mr. Barber added that if it were rezoned, a new owner would not have to come before the council. Mayor Duke added that we’re not voting on this tonight but the concern is what might happen if it was changed with no protection for the neighbors. Francisco Trejo then spoke in favor the application stating that he just needs a place to park the trailers. He is not planning to use any chemicals. The place where he is at now is full. He has material and steel that is outside because he has no room for it on the inside. He is asking that this property be rezoned so that he can continue to work. He was asked how many trailers he anticipates having stored at one time to which he responded “20 to 30 trailers”.

Altheia Paige spoke in opposition to the rezoning request. She stated that she understands he needs a place for the trailers but there is also an old tractor out there now. There is more already there than what he is asking for. We are running into businesses that are at the end of residential areas. There is not a problem with Mr. Trejo but it is already congested as is and she is asking the council to not vote for this. Rev. Timothy Lewis also spoke in opposition, stating it is nothing personal, but because of the zoning. Once zoned you have no “oopsies”, you can put a stipulation but you don’t get the full concept. He is looking at how it will benefit everybody. He has at least 12 church households near the area. If something comes there 10 years from now, it could be a problem. It looks like there should be somewhere else to go. The council needs to do what is for the greater good. Dr. Treva Gear spoke in opposition to the rezoning. She noted this is not part of the comprehensive plan and if rezoned it can become anything. She stated we are already dealing with that now in that the ordinance and zoning has not been enforced. Years down the road you could have a problem. We are trying to improve the community. She stated there is a great spot for trailers on S. Hwy 41 near Cook County Ford. The rezoning is against the goals of the comp plan and she is asking to vote no. There was no further discussion and the public hearing was declared closed.

Tennis Courts Resurfacing Bids: The FY2025 budget includes the resurfacing of four tennis courts located on N. Forrest Avenue in the amount of $35,000. Quotes for this project were requested with two responses being received as follows:

Court Makers, Inc. $30,710.00

Southeastern Tennis Courts $56,115.60

After a review of the proposals, staff recommends awarding a contract to Court makers, Inc to resurface, replace net posts and nets for four tennis courts. Councilman Cowart made a motion to accept the low bid. Councilman McClain provided the second. Members Cowart, McClain and Greene voted in favor. Members Hayes and Paige opposed.

Housing Authority Board Appointment: Altheia Paige’s appointment to the board expired on March 21, 2025. The Authority has requested the reappointment of Mrs. Paige and she has agreed to continue to serve if reappointed. The term will run from March 21, 2025 to March 21, 2030. Councilman Greg Paige recused himself from any discussion due to Altheia being his wife. Councilwoman Hayes made a motion to reappoint Altheia Paige to the board. Councilman Greene seconded. Members Hayes, Greene and McClain voted in favor of the reappointment. Councilman Cowart opposed.

Other Business:

Mark Barber – Advised the council that a notice has been placed in the local newspaper seeking contractors interested in remodeling the building at Jim Battle Park. We will be working on the playground equipment next.

The zoning training class is still scheduled for April 22, 2025.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

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Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk Luther L. Duke III, Mayor

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