

Council Meeting  
June 3, 2024

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

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

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the minutes of May 20, 2024 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor.

Ordinance #24-03 (Cryptocurrency and Data Mining): Councilman McClain stated he would like to look at possibly postponing this ordinance and look at the zoning map to try to take a comprehensive look at the zoning map we have for Adel. The last review and update was 2008. He feels we are getting the cart before the horse if we do the noise ordinance now and that maybe we need to get an outside group to take a look and give recommendations before moving forward with the noise ordinance. Several members were in agreement. City attorney Tim Tanner suggested to complete the readings and then make a motion to table or whatever to get through the process. It would then be up to you to not pass it, pass it, or lay it on the table indefinitely. At such time, you could pick it back up off the table, whether that be 3 months or 6 months from now. Councilman McClain asked if we would extend the moratorium? Mr. Tanner replied that the moratorium would need to be placed on the next agenda. We are still operating under that so it wouldn't have to be acted on tonight. He also added that there was a concern about the ordinance not being adequately read at the last meeting. We could read it and then still have an opportunity to pass, not pass, or lay it on the table. Mr. Tanner then proceeded with the second reading of the ordinance. After the reading, Councilman McClain made a motion to table the noise ordinance until we can get a comprehensive study on the zoning map and look at all of it at one time together. Councilman Paige seconded. The decision was unanimous.

AIA Contract (City Hall): City manager Mark Barber presented a standard architectural agreement that you go into when doing a modification amendment to a building such as the new city hall. Altman and Barrett Architects were chosen at the end of 2022 when the city began to talk about a new city hall, whether it be from the ground up or finding a building to modify. They have done a lot of conceptual drawings, of which two are included in the agenda packet. The next round will be more blue print based. He noted it included modifications to the first and second floors. The first floor being mostly the cashier area and the second floor being the renovation of the large open space for the mayor/council chambers. We are to the point we need to enter into an architectural contract to put out a bid for the construction world and development world to look at it to see who wants to bid on the project. Responding to a question from Councilwoman Hayes about office

locations, Mr. Barber advised that he has received some interest in renting out the side offices (incubator type space), on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. If that occurs, we might have to do a little bit there, depending on the needs. Councilman McClain made a motion to approve proceeding with Altman and Barrett. Councilman Greene seconded. All were in favor.

#### Public Comments:

Altheia Paige – Mrs. Paige addressed the council concerning paving and crypto. Before she addressed those she questioned Mr. Barber about the budget, \$400-\$500K for the renovations at the new city hall given the amount already spent for the purchase. He explained for historical purposes that the original approved budget for a city hall was \$5M, so we are still way under that number. As far as the budget, that was just a conversation he and she had in his office which was purely a guess. He advised that until it is bid out, we won't know that number. Concerning the paving, she came to the council about two years ago concerning 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Railroad and the west side of town. They were provided streets that would be paved. However, none of them have been paved except for 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Around a year ago yall started paving out on Bear Creek from one end to the other. Bear Creek is nothing compared to 9<sup>th</sup> Street. There are holes and rocks and everything is always a patch, patch, patch. With the money that has been put in for Alabama and some of these others, she would like for them to do something on their side and pave the streets; otherwise, yall will have a lawsuit with tires. Concerning crypto, it is right behind her house. There is a little pond that separates her house and the crypto, along with the solar farm that came in that nobody knew about. When yall done the zoning, it was passed where it was done on the west side of town. If you look at the west side of town, you have the railroad track. Everything past the railroad track is on the west side and it interferes with where they live because they're right down from the train and when yall finished cutting this road, they already have rock streets now from the railroad. This is only going to affect the ones on the west side. It won't affect those on the east side and Bear Creek because yall won't have any of this out there. She asked them to take a look at the zoning and see if that's something where you would want to live and if you would want that business next to you and the noise. She went to Mrs. Tiveron's and the money they spent to redo that house, you still could not keep the noise out. 65 decibels may not mean much to you but it's like a ton of bricks and rocks for her. She asked them to visit it. "Yall will put profit over people's lives". Think about the sickness and what if it was you or your relatives. Is this something you would want?

Treva Gear – Dr. Gear provided a couple of articles to the council concerning Bitcoin and energy for their review. She thanked them for doing a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on the crypto ordinance adding that on the first page only about 5% had been read on the first reading. She also wanted to state that we really need to look at the ordinance. She thanked those for tabling action on the ordinance. She's grateful for the moratorium and stated there are some things that need to be looked at, particularly the date and times on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page. She added that she knew the SGRC had provided a template for cities in Georgia to use to protect themselves against crypto and lay some things out. She noticed there were some differences, there's something about two phase immersion cooling that Mayor Duke described in detail during the first meeting and that wasn't in the SGRC's template so she's wondering who was consulted to get that information. It sounds like some industry was consulted. Was an industry consulted to put that in this sample ordinance? There's not much

information on it, there's still research being done; however, there is a threat of PFAS, excessive use of water, heat and potential contamination. She wanted to look at the decibels that we say are allowable. The SGRC ordinance suggested 50, we have 65 in the daytime. The Tiveron's complained about the 60 and we couldn't even enforce the 60 in the prior MOU, how will we enforce this? The nighttime was supposed to be 45 not 50, but she guessed it was amped up to make it more feasible for the crypto. We know it does not produce jobs and uses a lot of excess energy. We know that we were putting substations in and had 6 other communities just to help provide the energy. The electrical staff was here a couple meetings ago talking about how much we had left on the line. Enforcement is an issue. It mentions discretion and we know the wholesale light industry zoning has not been upheld. How are we going to uphold this? We are going to get ourselves in a issue and it seems the city is afraid of a lawsuit; however, there are cities that have banned crypto in their cities. They have actually put in things that will help. Lastly, the big thing is that we're putting ourselves in a situation with an industry that is sucking the energy dry. If you look at the flyers she provided, we have 2 nuclear reactors and we're already going to be tapped out of energy. The price is going up. We are MEAG, and when Georgia Power drives it up, it's going to be more here. Our people are already energy burdened. You might have money today because that's what Mayor Duke said, it's from selling the electricity, but we're going to have sorrow tomorrow if we keep this up. With this climate crisis, this is causing a problem, driving the prices up. It hasn't helped one poor person in Adel. She then added if we had done our two years of audits, maybe we would have gotten some grant money and we wouldn't need to depend on crypto. They've been gone for about 18 months now and we're making it, we're doing it and still with people owing money for light bills. So, I ask you, who is the crypto for, we can do without it and another industry will provide multiple, hundreds of jobs and instead of putting all our eggs in one basket. When energy goes up, they're going to leave us. China and other places kicked them out. We need to pay attention. We're just a small town in South Georgia trying to have some rural development and this is the kind of location this industry targets. We're asking you all to say no to crypto. She asked those in the audience that were concerned about crypto to stand up. She added that the people have spoken and asked the council to do more research and read the articles she has provided. We know what has happened in other locations and we know what has happened here. They're gone because the price went up and their materials are still sitting on the ground. We could have another industry already.

#### Staff Comments:

Mark Barber – Today begins the community clean-up for the southwest quadrant of town. We have swa-cars located on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> & MLK as well as on S. MLK near the housing authority that residents can use. If it is an elderly resident, they can place their items on the side of the road and we will pick it up.

Terry McClain – Councilman McClain asked if he could get an idea of what we can do to start with the process of the rezoning study? Mr. Barber explained that we have several options and that he would get the council some reading materials. Everyone first needs to understand the zoning laws before we start with the zoning review. There are some folks that can help with that.

He added you always start with the city's comprehensive plan and narrow it down from there, looking at character areas and going from there.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

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Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

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Luther L. Duke, Mayor

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