

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL  
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Joseph "Sonny" Vickers was absent.

Pastor Martin Collins, Image of God Church, thanked Mayor Gayle for his integrity, his sacrifices, and how he has led the City. His legacy will go on beyond him. Mayor Gayle has served the City for eight years and the number eight in the Bible means new beginnings. Mayor Gayle was a Godsend to the City of Valdosta, and he does not know the ripple effects of what he has done and how his humility will touch the City for years to come. Mayor Gayle will be missed by all.

The invocation was given by Pastor Chuck Owens, First Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF THE VALDOSTA MAIN STREET PROGRAM AS A GEORGIA EXCEPTIONAL MAIN STREET (GEMS) BY THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS OFFICE OF DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT**

Tess Harper, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, stated that Valdosta is one of 16 designated Georgia Exceptional Main Street (GEMS) programs from 115 Georgia Main Street Cities that participated in the highly competitive annual assessment process through Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Valdosta was named as a GEMS by DCA in 2014 and was one of the first five cities designated in the State. These cities serve as leading examples of Main Street-style community transformations and demonstrating considerable economic return on investments. Designated GEMS have demonstrated a strong and positive impact in their communities as measured by the monthly and annual assessment processes. These are programs or organizations that have a proven track record of success in planning, implementing, and measuring results that align with the Main Street Approach and have met a series of rigorous accreditation standards. As GEMS communities, these Main Street programs gain access to special one-on-one technical services offered by the Office of Downtown Development, such as strategic planning sessions, board retreats and work plan development, along with scholarship opportunities and discounted rates for training and design services.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION FOR MAYOR JOHN GAYLE BY THE VALDOSTA YOUTH COUNCIL**

Emily Dinkins, President of the 2019-2020 Valdosta Youth Council, stated that through the leadership and inspiration of Mayor John Gayle, his vision for a Youth Council came to fruition on September 24, 2015 when the Valdosta City Council passed a Resolution to establish the first Valdosta Youth Council. It was Mayor Gayle's desire to help young people build leadership skills, learn about civic responsibility, gain a better understanding of municipal government, and prepare them for a lifetime of public and community service. Now in its fifth year, the Valdosta Youth Council has its largest class of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders from 11 different schools in Valdosta and Lowndes County. The John Gayle Leadership Award will be presented each year to the Valdosta Youth Council Member who exhibits the qualities of leadership, makes a positive difference, inspires others, and is actively involved in community service. This year, the John Gayle Leadership Award is being presented to Mayor John Gayle for his leadership, his commitment, his dedication, and his passion to serve the citizens of our community and make Valdosta a better place to live, work, and play. Emily Dinkins stated that it was an honor for the Valdosta Youth Council to present Mayor Gayle with the first John Gayle Leadership Award and they would like for Mayor Gayle to come back every year to present this Award to one of the Valdosta Youth Council Members who exhibits those qualities.

Emily Dinkins stated that they had one more presentation for Mayor Gayle. Ms. Dinkins stated that this year, the initiative of the Valdosta Youth Council is to focus on The Arts. On November 21, 2019, they held their Regular Valdosta Youth Council Meeting at the Turner Center for the Arts where they were given a tour of the galleries and then participated in an art project at the new Arts Park. They were asked to draw something on small pieces of paper that they liked about their community or something that represents our community. They wanted to share those drawings with Mayor Gayle and what better way for them to do that than to present the Mayor with a special framed artwork for him to enjoy. Mayor Gayle thanked the Valdosta Youth Council for the John Gayle Leadership Award and for the framed piece of artwork.

**PRESENTATION OF THE DECEMBER, 2019 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that Heather Willis began her career with the Valdosta Police Department in November of 2005 and currently holds the rank of Sergeant. Sergeants are responsible for the supervision of Patrol Officers on their day-to-day duties. On September 26, 2019, Sergeant Heather Willis responded as a Supervisor to a residence where Officers were conducting a welfare check on an elderly female who lived there. When no one could make contact with her and they found signs at the house that someone could be home, Sergeant Willis authorized the officers to force entry into the residence to check on the female’s well-being. The least intrusive way to make entry was for a piece of plexiglass that was on a door window to be broken. Sergeant Willis went back by the residence and made contact with a friend of the resident who lived there. Sergeant Willis asked the friend if she had a way to fix the door. When she responded that she did not, Sergeant Willis took it upon herself to measure the window and go get supplies to fix it. Sergeant Willis fixed the window, not only at her expense, but also on her day off. Sergeant Willis exemplifies what it means to be a Police Officer, to protect and serve the citizens of Valdosta. She is an asset to our Police Department and to the City of Valdosta. It is for these reasons and many others that the Employee Relations Committee nominated Sergeant Heather Willis as Employee of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of November 7, 2019 were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**ORDINANCE TO REZONE 6.70 ACRES FROM PLANNED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT (PMD) TO HIGHWAY-COMMERCIAL (C-H) POSTPONED**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 6.70 acres from Planned Mixed Use Development (PMD) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) by Quick Trip Corporation (File No. VA-2019-08). The property is located at 1394 North St. Augustine Road. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their November Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that Quick Trip Corporation is requesting to rezone 6.70 acres from Planned Mixed Use Development (PMD) to Highway-Commercial (C-H). The property is located at 1394 North St. Augustine Road, which is along the south side of the road between James Road and James Circle. The property is currently vacant and uncleared (forest). The applicant is proposing to purchase the property and develop it as a “Travel Center” consisting of a large convenience store (8,292 square feet) with 20 gasoline fuel pumps for automobiles, 8 diesel fuel pumps for heavy trucks (18-wheelers) with expansion room to 10 pumps, a truck weighing scale, and a separate truck parking area. The number of diesel fuel pumps is enough to trigger a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) review, which is currently under review by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and has been extended for an additional 15 days. Council would not be able to take action on this request until after the DRI review is completed. Since Council cannot take action by State law, they will need to table this request until the January 9, 2020 Regular Council Meeting.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to table the request to rezone 6.70 acres from Planned Mixed Use Development (PMD) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) by Quick Trip Corporation until the January 9, 2020 Regular Meeting.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2019-21, AN ORDINANCE FOR  
TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF VALDOSTA  
LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

**12/05/19 CONTINUED**

Consideration of an Ordinance for Text Amendments to Chapter 102 - General Provisions, Chapter 106 - Definitions, Chapter 242 - Zoning Procedures, Chapter 302 - Subdivision and Site Development Standards, and Chapter 332 - Infrastructure and Site Improvements of the City of Valdosta Land Development Regulations (File No. VA-2019-09). The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their November Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that the City of Valdosta is requesting to amend various Chapters of the LDR with an assortment of minor Amendments for mostly “housekeeping” type purposes. The proposed Amendments affect Chapter 102 - General Provisions, Chapter 106 - Definitions, Chapter 242 - Zoning Procedures, Chapter 302 - Subdivision and Site Development Standards, and Chapter 332 - Infrastructure and Site Improvements. In Chapter 102, the changes would affect the administration and adoption of certain codes, in Chapter 106, there were two small changes in the definitions, and in Chapter 242, there were changes to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission which would coincide with the Joint Ordinance that Council approved several weeks ago. In Chapters 302 and 332, changes would be made to private road systems in residential areas and the Health Department approval for subdivision plats. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their November 25, 2019 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve Ordinance No. 2019-21, an Ordinance for Text Amendments to Chapter 102 - General Provisions, Chapter 106 - Definitions, Chapter 242 - Zoning Procedures, Chapter 302 - Subdivision and Site Development Standards, and Chapter 332 - Infrastructure and Site Improvements of the City of Valdosta Land Development Regulations, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2019-22, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF VALDOSTA’S ALCOHOL  
ORDINANCE TO ALLOW SUNDAY ALCOHOL SALES TO BEGIN AT 11:00 A.M.**

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Alcohol Ordinance to allow Sunday Alcohol Sales to begin at 11:00 a.m.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that Senate Bill 17, known as the Brunch Bill, was signed into law on May 8, 2018 and was codified in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A. 3-3-7), which permits counties and municipalities with Sunday alcohol sales, such as Valdosta, to allow Sunday sales beginning at 11:00 a.m. rather than 12:30 p.m. A Referendum to allow the City of Valdosta to approve 11:00 a.m. sales was placed on the Ballot for the November 5, 2019 Municipal Election in accordance with O.C.G.A. 3-3-7 and was approved by the voters. Prior State law and current Valdosta Ordinance allow Sunday sales to begin at 12:30 p.m. if the establishment has a Sunday sales license. With the passage of the Brunch Bill Referendum, the City may now approve establishments eligible for Sunday sales (those deriving at least half of their total annual gross revenue from the sale of food, prepared meals, or the rental of rooms for overnight lodging) to serve alcohol from 11:00 a.m. until midnight on Sundays if they have purchased a Sunday sales license. The Referendum, however, does not make the mentioned change to the City’s Ordinance. It does allow the change, but it does not require the City Council to do so. The proposed Amendment to the City’s Alcohol Ordinance would exercise the authority granted by the Referendum’s passage by expanding the hours for Sunday sales to 11:00 a.m. until midnight. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to amend the City’s Alcohol Ordinance Section 6-82(a) to expand the hours of Sunday alcohol sales as permitted by the Brunch Bill Referendum approved on the November 5, 2019 Ballot, and the implementation date be January 1, 2020. Councilman Howard inquired as to whether this was just for restaurants or any establishment. Chuck Dinkins stated that this was for

retail facilities who serve liquor by the drink. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that they would have to have a Sunday Alcohol Sales permit before they can start serving alcohol at 11:00 a.m.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to amend the City of Valdosta's Alcohol Ordinance to allow Sunday Alcohol Sales to begin at 11:00 a.m. The motion was seconded by Councilman Norton. The motion was adopted (5-1) with Councilwoman Miller-Cody voting in opposition to enact Ordinance No. 2019-22, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-16, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSIONER OF THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE TO PROVIDE SALES TAX INFORMATION TO THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S FINANCE DIRECTOR**

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue to provide sales tax information to the City of Valdosta's Finance Director.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that prior to the passage of Senate Bill 371, local governments in Georgia were unable to request detailed information regarding sales tax collection by businesses in their jurisdiction. This lack of information prevented the City from determining if all businesses with licenses were filing sales tax returns and if all businesses collecting and remitting sales tax had a business license. Senate Bill 371 repealed the prohibition on sharing sales tax information. It allows the governing bodies of local governments to request by Resolution that the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue furnish to the designated Finance Officer or Taxing Official of the County, consolidated government, or municipality information included on the vendor's sales tax certificate for all vendors that have filed a report for the designated period, to be used by such designated Officer or Official in the discharge of his or her official duties. The law provides that the information received is to be confidential and may not be disclosed except as specifically authorized. The City of Valdosta is a regional hub and derives significant revenues in the form of Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) and Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) from sales tax that is reported and remitted to the State of Georgia. The City does not receive information from the State about the businesses remitting this tax. Detailed information on tax receipts by the State from vendors doing business within Valdosta would allow the City to gauge compliance with sales tax remittances as well as business licensing requirements. This will allow the City to take any necessary enforcement action for business licensing or request the same from the State for sales tax compliance. It will also aid in the budgeting process for LOST and SPLOST. The attached resolution requests that sales tax information on Valdosta's sales tax filers for the City's 2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) be provided to the Finance Director. A Resolution requesting data for the City's 2020 fiscal year may be passed after June 30, 2020. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the Resolution requesting that the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue provide sales tax information to the Finance Director in accordance with O.C.G.A. 48-2-15 as revised by SB 371.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve Resolution No. 2019-16, a Resolution authorizing the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Revenue to provide sales tax information to the City of Valdosta's Finance Director, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-17, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTRACT WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE EAGER ROAD/JERRY JONES WIDENING PROJECT**

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the Eager Road/Jerry Jones Widening Project.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta has had a longstanding agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to fund the construction of the Eager Road/Jerry Jones Widening Project, with the City being responsible for the acquisition of necessary right-of-way. The final cost estimate for the acquisition of right-of-way was considerably higher than originally estimated. The City began to look at alternate funding sources to offset the higher acquisition cost. GDOT provides some funding assistance to local

governments in the form of contracts for reimbursable expenses related to right-of-way acquisition costs. GDOT has provided to the City a Contract for reimbursable right-of-way acquisition costs for GDOT Project No. PI0014134 up to \$1,000,000. Under the terms of the Contract, reimbursable costs include land and improvement costs and other costs as specified in 23 CFR 710.203(b). Expenses will be eligible with interim reimbursements and final reimbursement will occur upon completion of all land and improvement acquisition, completion of all property management, completion of all demolition (if necessary), relocation of all occupants relocated (if necessary), and the City certifying in writing that all acquisitions are complete. This Contract will expire no later than December 31, 2022. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the Eager Road/Jerry Jones Widening Project. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to where they would start on the Project. Pat Collins stated that it would start at Oak Street and go all the way around to Baytree Road. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to how long the Project would take to complete. Pat Collins stated that it would take approximately one and one-half years, but it will be open for traffic the entire time. The City of Valdosta has two years to obtain the right-of-way so the Project probably will not start until 2022 or 2023.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve Resolution No. 2019-17, a Resolution authorizing the acceptance of a Contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the Eager Road/Jerry Jones Widening Project, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

## **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of bids for traffic improvements at the intersection of Park Avenue and Forrest Street.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assists cities and counties by awarding funds through Education, Economic Development and Emergency (EEE) funding. EEE funding is a part of the LMIG (Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant) Fund that can assist with educational school access projects. It also assists with economic development and emergencies. The City has observed several traffic issues at the intersection of Park Avenue and Forrest Street. School buses from three bused-schools which travel westbound on Park Avenue currently have difficulty turning right onto Forrest Street without hitting the signal pole on the northeast corner (especially when a southbound left-hand turn is pulled up past the traffic stop bar). Crossing guards report they have witnessed school buses having to make three and four point turns during both school and commuter rush hours in an attempt to navigate the right turn. Traffic storage on westbound Park Avenue currently backs up to the railroad crossing at Jaycee Shack Road. The City retained a local Engineer to produce a construction cost estimate for corrective improvements. The total cost estimate, including design, was \$385,000. On March 13, 2019, the City wrote the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Commissioner for assistance and consideration of a request for EEE funding. The City requested funding in the amount 100% of the estimated Project cost. The proposed scope of work includes pulling back both the southbound stop bar and the signal pole off the northeast radius on Forrest Street and aligning the lanes through the intersection on Park Avenue by adding and extending storage and turn lanes for northbound Forrest Street and westbound Park Avenue. Pedestrian/school crossings through the intersection will be upgraded. On March 20, 2019, the GDOT sent a letter to the City acknowledging its commitment to fund \$200,000 or 90% of the Project, whichever is less. The Project was advertised in the local newspaper, on the City's website, and the State procurement website. On November 13, 2019, a pre-bid conference was held. On November 26, 2019, bids were opened. The low bid was submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$244,693. Under terms of the GDOT commitment, GDOT's contribution for the contract is \$200,000.00 and the City's contribution is up to \$69,162.30. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$244,693 plus a 10% contingency (\$24,469.30) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total amount of \$269,162.30.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$244,693 plus a 10% contingency (\$24,469.30) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total amount of \$269,162.30 for traffic improvements at the intersection of Park Avenue and Forrest Street.

Consideration of bids for a Front-End Loading Dumpster Garbage Truck for the Public Works Department.

Richard Hardy, Public Works Director, stated that the Public Works Department needs to purchase a new Front-End Loading Dumpster Garbage Truck for their Department due to age and to assist with their duties. This truck is used for running a commercial route emptying dumpsters throughout the City. This vehicle will replace 27-08 which was built in 1999. This is a Council-approved budget item for this Fiscal Year. Sealed bids were received on November 26, 2019. The low bid meeting specifications was submitted by Performance Peterbilt (New-way Compactor) in the amount of \$257,237. Richard Hardy, Public Works Director, recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Performance Peterbilt (New-way Compactor) in the amount of \$257,237.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Performance Peterbilt (New-way Compactor) in the amount of \$257,237 for a Front-End Loading Dumpster Garbage Truck for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of a request to approve a Contract for new water meters for the City of Valdosta.

Mayor Gayle stated that during a review of the Contract for new water meters for the City of Valdosta, there were a few minor changes that needed to be made. Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to postpone the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to postpone the request to approve a Contract for new water meters for the City of Valdosta until the January 23, 2020 Regular Meeting.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to approve street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assists Cities and Counties by awarding funds for resurfacing as well as other local transportation-related improvements via their Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program. LMIG awards are formula based and proportionate to a combination of a local jurisdiction's population and centerline street mileage. In previous years, the LMIG award requires a minimum of a 30% match from the local jurisdiction; however, in May of 2018, the Southern Georgia region overwhelmingly passed a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. Under State policy, the minimum match from local jurisdictions who pass this tax is 10%, and in this case, the City of Valdosta. This is the second year that the City is required to match 10%. Our 2019 formula-based allotment is \$669,177.90 and, therefore, our required 10% match is \$66,917.79. Consequently, the minimum total required to be spent in 2020 is \$736,095.69. Three years ago, the City Engineer prepared a comprehensive analysis of the conditions of the City's streets. This data, along with public and City Council input, was used to develop a recommended list. The recommended resurfacing list prepared by Staff picks up whole length street segments of the streets in the worst condition while considering expressed Council-member priorities and balancing the total mileage among the Districts. The recommended list resurfaces 5.30 miles total and is estimated to cost \$735,736 to \$999,595. The construction cost range was created by taking our latest costs (using the 2019 recently bid LMIG unit values). The actual amount of base repair/root removal will be field measured and included in the future bid packet once the 2020 list has been finalized. That may cause the estimate to go up or down depending on the conditions of the streets ultimately selected. The final list must be submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and received prior to December 31, 2019. While it is not a GDOT requirement to have the City Council's approval of the submitted list, it is the City's customary practice to get the City Council's approval and buy-in before the final list is submitted to GDOT. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the street segments identified in the list and shown on the map for submittal to GDOT for the 2020 LMIG resurfacing program

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation's Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program.

Consideration of a request from the WWALS Watershed Coalition for a Letter of Support for the Troupville River Camp.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the WWALS Watershed Coalition was established to be an advocate for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee River, Alapaha River, Little Sante Fe River, and the Suwannee River watersheds in South Georgia and North Florida. Through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities, WWALS is able to assist with positive changes and to resist invasive problems using strategies such as environmental monitoring and tactics such as outings and events in that advocacy. The WWALS Coalition takes on stewardship to deal with the pervasive environmental changes people have caused. Our waters support recreation, agriculture, economy, and our very lives, so we must be stewards of our waters. WWALS would like to create a Troupville River Camp which would attract paddling and fishing enthusiasts of all ages. The property they are proposing for the Troupville River Camp is located at the Confluence of the Little River with the Withlacoochee River just off of I-75 and GA 133 just west of Valdosta. The location is historic as this was where Troupville was established as the Lowndes County seat from 1833 to 1860 when it was moved to Valdosta. The property, which is privately owned, contains 74.14 acres of floodplain and has 1.3 miles of river frontage. The property is located next to the existing 49.36-acre park immediately to the north at the Troupville Boat Ramp which is operated by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority. Their model for the Troupville River Camp is the five existing River Camps on the Suwannee River in Florida that have long been popular as part of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail. The initial capital investment would be small, and this endeavor would allow for long-term eco-tourism with minimal operational costs. Maintenance would be by a caretaker in exchange for RV parking space. The property is large enough to hold both a secluded paddle-in-only River Camp, hiking and biking trails, and even a frisbee golf course. Proposed amenities would include five screened-in sleeping platforms, bathrooms, hot and cold running water, picnic tables and benches, outdoor fire pits, and paddle board racks for canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards. This area would also be an ideal outdoor classroom for classes on art, history, and the natural environment. The Troupville River Camp would be a boon not to just Lowndes County, but to the entire region and the states of Georgia and Florida. WWALS is asking that the City of Valdosta provide a letter of support for the Troupville River Camp Project. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve a Letter of Support for the WWALS Troupville River Camp.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a Letter of Support for the Troupville River Camp as requested by the WWALS Watershed Coalition.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Daniel Peters, Highlands HOA, 3964 Applecross, stated that they need to get some clarification on roundabouts for their Subdivision. They were told by Mr. Tillman three years ago that they would have some roundabouts in their Subdivision which are City streets. The streets were to be rebuilt and reconditioned three months ago; however, they have yet to be done and the funds have been used for something else. Also, the waste where water runs into the boxes is causing a tripping hazard and it needs to be fixed. Some are either two to three inches and boxes in his yard are not sealed. If it is not sealed and goes down the pipe, then it creates issues. That is what is happening in their neighborhood because of insufficient engineering to start with and the lack of maintenance. Mr. Peters inquired as to when it would be fixed. They do not want to wait until some child or elderly person trips and gets hurts.

Robin Andrews stated that she recently saw an idea on Facebook and it was something that has touched her heart. There are other countries who have gotten together and they put jackets and scarves on trees for people who cannot afford to purchase these items. Ms. Andrews wanted to get some ideas about how she could do something similar in our City. We have a lot of non-profit organizations like the Salvation Army and The Haven, but a lot of people cannot get to these places. She would like to help our community and these people. Ms. Andrews inquired as to whether there was something they could put in the "Tent City" where the people could just go get the jackets with no questions asked. There was a man on Ashley Street that some people helped last week, and he would have never asked anyone for help. She has quite a few people who are willing to help her with this idea. Mayor Gayle stated that he noticed a box in someone's yard on Oak Street that says the items are free. Ms. Andrews stated that she was wondering if they could put up something like that. Mayor Gayle stated that they would have the City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Department contact her about what they can and cannot do.

Gretchen Quarterman, Executive Director of WWALS Watershed Coalition, thanked the City Council for their Letter of Support. They feel that the new Troupville River Camp will be a great addition to our community if they are able to get the Grant.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Christmas Tree Lighting Event will be held tomorrow night at 5:30 p.m. in the new grassy area across the street from City Hall.

The Annual Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. starting on Woodrow Wilson Drive and will proceed south on Patterson Street to the Downtown area. Council members who are riding in the Christmas Parade will need to meet the Parade organizers in the parking lot of Blanton & Griffin on Patterson Street.

There will be a new ice-skating rink in Downtown Valdosta from December 18-21, 2019 at the corner of Lee Street and Central Avenue. Then on Friday, December 20, 2019, the Valdosta Main Street will host a special "Schools Out" celebration with food, holiday treats, and food trucks in Downtown Valdosta.

The second Annual Kids Craft Event will be held at the Lowndes County Courthouse on Saturday, December 21, 2019. There will Christmas crafts for the children and Santa Claus will be there for pictures. There will also be a free movie sponsored by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority at 6:00 p.m. at the Courthouse Square.

Also, the City of Valdosta will be hosting a Farewell Reception for Mayor Gayle on Thursday, December 12, 2019 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Carroll stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve with Mayor Gayle these past eight years. Mayor Gayle has been exemplary in his leadership and he knocked it out of the park on his second term. He cannot think of a better symbol to speak so highly of what all he has done than what the Valdosta Youth Council did tonight in naming a Leadership Award after him.

Councilman Gibbs stated that he has learned a lot under the leadership of Mayor Gayle, and he appreciated all of his guidance. Mayor Gayle had an open-door policy and he was always willing to answer any questions that he had. He will be calling on Mayor Gayle even after he leaves office.

Councilman Howard thanked Mayor Gayle for his guidance and his open-door policy. They will continue to push for things that were important to Mayor Gayle such as Service Delivery Strategy, and they will make sure that it gets done. Councilman Howard also thanked Mr. Peters for coming to the Council Meeting because it is communities and homeowners who continue to push Council to let them know when there are problems. Also, the Valdosta Police Department and the Lowndes County Sheriff's Department will be playing in a basketball game on Saturday, December 7, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. to raise money for Shop with a Cop.

Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody stated that she had told Mayor Gayle at the Work Session how much she appreciated his leadership and guidance.

Councilman Norton stated that it has been a pleasure working with Mayor Gayle and being a part of his leadership in Valdosta. The word tonight that has jumped out at him is integrity and Mayor Gayle is truly that man. He has seen Mayor Gayle in a lot of different situations, and he has remained that person who is full of integrity. Councilman Norton stated that he appreciated the Mayor's wife, Peggy, and her constant support. Both she and Mayor Gayle are jewels to the City of Valdosta, and he is glad to have been a part of that. He wished Mayor Gayle all the best.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that they have had a wonderful relationship. They started off very rocky but now they are so smooth. They have had a lot of conversations and she has learned a lot from him. Mayor Gayle is a wonderful person and he has a lot of good ideas. It has been a pleasure working with him.

Mayor Gayle stated that most Mayors have a State of the City Address when they leave office. He has often found the State of the City Address is the Mayor tooting his own horn and telling everyone how great he was. He was not going to do that tonight though. He wanted to thank all of the Council members and City Staff for what they have done. They have accomplished a lot in the past eight years. Mayor Gayle thanked City Manager Mark Barber, City Clerk Teresa Bolden, and Associate City Clerk Taylor Marzell for their support. He also thanked City Attorney Tim Tanner for his advice and support and all of the Department Heads for their accomplishments. He thanked his wife, Peggy, for all that she had done to support his role as Mayor of the City of Valdosta. There have been many times that he was not able to travel with her and they have had to decide whether he was attending the Council Meeting or some other event that she wanted to go to.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the December 5, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:21 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the December 5, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:29 p.m. and stated that action would need to be taken on the discussion of real estate.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) for the City of Valdosta to deed Lake Louie, the stormwater pond located by the Rainwater Conference Center, over to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the December 5, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:30 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, January 9, 2020.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta