

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Scott James Matheson called the Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Thomas McIntyre, Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Andy Gibbs, Nick Harden, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Tim Carroll and City Attorney Tim Tanner were absent. The invocation was given by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Gibbs, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE MUNICIPAL AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta is required to have an audit of its books and accounts each year. This year the audit was performed by the firm of Mauldin & Jenkins. Davey King, Assurance Manager with Mauldin & Jenkins is here to present the Municipal Audit for Fiscal Year 2023.

Davey King, Assurance Manager with Mauldin & Jenkins, thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to present the results of this year's audit. He was the Manager in charge of the audit of the City's financial statements this year. The financial statements themselves are the responsibility of management and their job as Auditors is to look at the financial statements and present an opinion on them. The City of Valdosta had an unmodified opinion which is a clean opinion and is the highest level of assurance that they can give the City as an external Auditor. There were two other Compliance Reports that they issue with the first one being the Single Audit Report. The Single Audit Report is required when an entity spends over \$750,000 of Federal expenditures. The City had approximately \$11.2 million of Federal expenditures. As with the Financial Audit, they are issuing a clean, unmodified opinion on the Single Audit Report as well. The second Compliance Report is the Yellow Book Report and that is where they come in with internal controls and compliance with laws and regulations. There were no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. The Government-wide financial statements and fund level statements. The Government-wide financial statements present the operations of the City of Valdosta much like that of a private sector business. The City had assets and deferred outflows of resources of approximately \$431,000,000 and of this, \$336,000,000 is your capital assets net of accumulated depreciation. There was approximately \$53,000,000 of cash which is not all spent and some has restrictions at the fund level. The liabilities and deferred outflows were approximately \$182,000,000. In looking at the segment of activities, the revenues were approximately \$109,000,000 offset by expenses of \$96,000,000. This resulted in an increase of approximately \$13,000,000 resulting in \$249,000,000 of net position most of which is your debt investment and capital assets. The General Fund (water and sewer) is the heart and soul of the operations of the City. The General Fund had assets of approximately \$22,000,000 of which \$4,000,000 is cash and cash equivalents. This was offset by liabilities and deferred inflows of resources of approximately \$4,000,000. The Income Statement had \$42,000,000 of revenue with the bulk of that revenue, \$38,051,124 being property taxes. The revenues are offset by expenses of \$40,000,000. There were also transfers to and from other funds which netted to be approximately \$2,000,000. Overall, the General Fund had an increase of \$5,000,000 resulting in a fund balance of \$17.7 million. They always like to give the good indicator and health of the General Fund. They look at expenditures and how much working capital you have if the doors were to close today. The General Fund incurs approximately \$3,000,000 a month so if the doors closed today you would have about 163 days of working capital which is approximately five months. This is a good place for the City to be considering that most of the property taxes do not come in until October and November. The Enterprise Fund (water and sewer) is approximately 90% of the business-type activity. The Water and Sewer Fund had assets of approximately \$211,000,000 of which \$205,000,000 are the capital assets net accumulated depreciation. Liabilities were \$59,000,000 and of this amount \$47,000,000 are long term meaning that they will not be due next Fiscal Year. The Income Statement in the Water and Sewer Fund, there is \$24,000,000 in operating revenue and \$18,000,000 in expenses. There are also non-operating income capital contributions that netted to approximately \$4,000,000. There was an overall increase of \$1.4 million resulting in a fund balance of \$152,000,000. Mr. King thanked Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, and his Staff for their assistance with the audit. There were no issues with independence, no disagreements with management, and no uncorrected audits/statements. The audit was a great success. The City of Valdosta had another good year.

The minutes of the Regular Meeting held on April 25, 2024 were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.57 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-10) TO SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-6)

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.57 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6) as requested by DPI Holdings LLC (File No. VA-2024-07). The property is located at 1613 Williams Street. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their April 29, 2024 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that on behalf of DPI Holdings LLC, Jamey Dewar is requesting to rezone 0.57 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6). The subject property contains an existing single-family rental residence and is located at 1613 Williams Street. This is along the east side of the street about 200 feet south of the intersection with East Moore Street. This is immediately south of the Treeloft Apartments building (also owned by the applicant) along the south side of East Moore Street and directly across from the Carolyn Apartments along the west side of Williams Street. The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing residence and construct a one-story duplex on the property with parking being located behind this new building. This is the same property that was the subject of a previous rezoning request two years ago by the same applicant, but instead for Multi-Family Residential (R-M) Zoning to allow a proposed small apartment building with four dwelling units. The previous request was denied by City Council with a 6-0 vote on 4-7-2022 (File No. VA-2022-05). The subject property is located within an Established Residential (ER) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of R-6 Zoning. The property is also located within the City’s local “Historic District.” The applicant’s proposed demolition and new construction has already been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) at their meeting on April 1st (File No. HPC-2024-33). The subject property is part of the Brookwood North neighborhood which contains a mixture of residential types in a mostly older built-out pattern. The subject property is surrounded on the north and west by existing apartment complexes (one of which is owned by the applicant). To the south there is an existing Duplex, and to the east there is an existing single-family residence which faces Iola Drive. This surrounding pattern alone presents a compelling argument for conversion of the subject property to at least a Duplex level of density. Given the ½ acre size of the property, it being under the same ownership as one of the adjacent apartment complexes, and its design being controlled by the HPC, there is strong argument for higher density residential development than what R-10 would allow. The proposed zoning change is indeed compatible with the use of the adjacent properties and the overall land use pattern along this portion of the Williams Street. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommend approval of R-6 Zoning. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their April 29, 2024 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval of R-6 Zoning (8-0 Vote).

Burke Sherwood, 502 North Ashley Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Sherwood stated that he represented DPI Holdings LLC for this request. His client tried a couple of years ago to be a little more aggressive with what he wanted to do on this property. This is a lot more consistent with the area. He waited two years and due to Hurricane Idalia, it damaged the building in the back of the property which has been there a long time. It is uninhabitable and has been approved to be torn down now by the Historic Preservation Commission. The owner wants to make the property look better and be a productive piece of property for him as well. This will move the structure a lot closer to Williams Street and the only R-10 Zoning touching it is behind the property. There will be some parking behind the new building and there will be a bigger buffer between it and the residential house behind it. There is a duplex on one side and apartments on the other side. This is a nice design and it will enhance the neighborhood. They have spoken with the neighbors and they all seem to be with them on this new project.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2024-11, an Ordinance to rezone 0.57 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Single-Family Residential (R-6) for property located at 1613 Williams Street as requested by DPI Holdings LLC, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-7, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT FROM THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) TO PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a Grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to proceed with construction of a new Air Traffic Control Tower.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority desires to proceed with the construction of a new Air Traffic Control Tower at the Valdosta Regional Airport. There are various sources of funding for this Project that include Transportation Investment Act (TIA) funds, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (FAA) funds, Airport Authority funds, and Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) funds. This Grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is for \$3,000,000. There will be no City of Valdosta funds required for this Project other than those through the TIA. The FAA is preparing a Grant for \$3,000,000 to partially fund construction of the new Air Traffic Control Tower. The Grant will be E-mailed to City Hall. The Grant must be executed in an expeditious manner and returned to the FAA. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor Scott James Matheson to accept the Grant in order to process the document. Richard Hardy, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept the Grant in order to process the document.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Harden, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2024-7, a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept the Grant from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to proceed with construction of a new Air Traffic Control Tower, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request to approve an Environmental Covenant for Saunders Park as requested by Hood Packaging.

Ben O’Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the owners of the property adjoining Saunders Park on its eastern side (Tax Parcel 0119A 026), Hood Packaging, have requested that the City place an Environmental Covenant on Saunders Park. This is being requested because of an environmental response performed and/or being performed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) at the Hood Packaging Property. The Covenant allows either Hood Packaging or the Georgia EPD to place testing wells on City property at Saunders Park and to perform other testing on City Park property to monitor whether pollutants have migrated down gradient and off of the Hood Packaging site. The Covenant also prohibits the use or extraction of groundwater from the City Park property. Copies of the proposed Covenant are being provided by the City Attorney’s office. Given that the City of Valdosta provides municipal water service to the Park, there is no foreseeable need for the City to install groundwater wells within Saunders Park. Any monitoring or monitoring wells installed by others will be that party’s maintenance responsibility and will be under the Permit and Regulatory Supervision of the Georgia EPD. There does not appear to be any negative impacts from such testing and monitoring on the City’s use of the property as a public Park. There are no budgetary impacts presented by this proposed Covenant. Ben O’Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the execution of the Environmental Covenant for Saunders as requested by Hood Packaging.

A **MOTION** by Councilman McIntyre, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve an Environmental Covenant for Saunders Park as requested by Hood Packaging.

Consideration of bids for ten, 2070 LC Controllers for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 26-23-24).

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the Traffic Division of the Engineering Department needs to purchase some specialized inventory to have in stock. These controllers hook into the traffic cabinets to assist with the timing of certain lights throughout the City. Funds are budgeted each year for a purchase such as this and \$52,000 was budgeted for FY2024. Sealed bids were received on March 21, 2024 with the only bid submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$4,100 per controller for a total amount of \$41,000. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$41,000.

A MOTION by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman McIntyre, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Control Technologies in the amount of \$41,000 for the purchase of ten, 2070 LC Controllers for the Engineering Department.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Consideration of appointments to the Central Valdosta Development Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority needs to fill the following slots: Slot 1 (Downtown Property Owner or an Officer at the Time of Appointment of a Corporation) - Fill the unexpired term of Rhett Holmes who resigned in November of 2022 and whose term will expire on December 31, 2025. Slot 2 (Downtown Property Owner or an Officer at the Time of Appointment of a Corporation) - Fill the unexpired term of Daniel Bayman who resigned on February 14, 2024 with his last day being March 31, 2024 and whose term will expire December 31, 2024. Slot 3 (Downtown Property Owner or an Officer at the Time of Appointment of a Corporation) - Fill the unexpired term of Jeff Hanson who resigned but will remain on the CVDA until his slot is filled and whose term will expire on December 31, 2024. Slot 4 (Mayor's Representative) - Fill the slot of Jeff Brammer, Special Project/Historic Preservation Planner, whose last day of employment with the City of Valdosta was on April 16, 2024 and whose term will expire on December 31, 2025. This appointment will be made by the Mayor. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for your consideration in no order of preference are as follows: (1) Downtown Property Owner Slots: Slot 1 - Tiffany Bentley (Self-Employed, Business/Building Owner, Downtown Social), Slot 2 - Susan Mullis (Business Owner, The Flower Gallery), (2) Mayor's Representative Slot: Slot 4 - Matt Martin (Planning Director, City of Valdosta).

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she had three people ask her the procedure for making appointments and why we wait so late. She was not sure which Board they were talking about but they were inquiring as to whether there was a timeframe for putting each person on a Committee. Councilwoman Tooley asked if someone could explain the process. Mayor Matheson stated that he would defer to Teresa Bolden, City Clerk.

Teresa Bolden, City Clerk, stated that we have a Policy for the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees that was adopted several years ago by the Council. In the Policy, it states that the City Clerk will advertise for the upcoming slots whose terms have either expired or are coming up for expiration. The City Clerk is required to advertise 60 days prior to the Council Meeting date slated for nominations to the various Boards. There is a deadline to apply for the slots and that is the Wednesday prior to the Friday that the Council Agenda Packet goes out. This is advertised on the City's website as well as in the Valdosta Daily Times.

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the Council had already made some appointments to the Central Valdosta Development Authority. She was thinking that there was only one slot to fill and now there are three. Teresa Bolden, City Clerk stated that Council had previously appointed Stacy Denmark and Kasandra Hasenauer and that left one slot open that was previously held by Rhett Holmes. Then Daniel Bayman resigned effective March 31, 2024 and Jeff Brammer, Historic Preservation Planner and the Mayor's Representative, resigned. That is why there are three appointments to be made.

Mayor Matheson stated that if there was no objection from Council, Tiffany Bentley, Susan Mullis, and Matt Martin would be appointed by acclamation to serve on the Central Valdosta Development Authority. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of an appointment to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission has a member, Johnny Ball, III whose term will expire on July 8, 2024. Mr. Ball has not expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: (1) George Foreman, Job Development Coordinator (Goodwill SR) - 1st Choice, (2) Rodney Godfrey, Licensed Funeral Director/Embalmer (Godfrey Funeral Home, LLC) - 2nd Choice, and (3) Dexter P. Laird, Chemical Technician Operator (Corteva Chemical Company).

Mayor Matheson stated that he would open the floor for nominations. Councilwoman Miller-Cody placed into consideration the name of George Foreman. Councilman McIntyre seconded the nomination. Councilman Harden placed into consideration the name of Rodney Godfrey. There was no second on that nomination. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of George Foreman to raise their hands. George Foreman was appointed (5-1) to serve a term of five years on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission with Councilman Harden voting in opposition.

Consideration of an appointment to the Hospital Authority of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Hospital Authority of Valdosta and Lowndes County has a member, Sam Allen. whose term expired on May 1, 2024. Mr. Allen has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was not advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: (1) Sam Allen - Retired (Valdosta City Schools), (2) Frank Morman, Jr. - Retired (United States Air Force), and (3) Jerome Tucker – Retired.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would open the floor for nominations. Councilman Gibbs placed into consideration the name of Sam Allen. Councilwoman Miller-Cody seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Sam Allen to raise their hands. Sam Allen was reappointed (6-0) to serve a term of five years on the Hospital Authority of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Consideration of appointments to the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Public Art Advisory Committee has the following slots to be filled: (1) Slot 1 (Vacant) - LVAC Board Member whose term will expire June 1, 2025 (Dr. Beverley Richardson-Blake resigned due to her rolling off the LVAC Board). (2) Slot 2 (Vickie Everitte) - LVAC Board Member whose term will expire June 1, 2024. (3) Slot 3 (Bruce Smith) - LVAC Professional Artist whose term will expire June 1, 2024. (4) Slot 4 (Adonna Smith) - Community At Large whose term will expire June 1, 2024. Dr. Richardson-Blake and Ms. Everitte have both expressed an interest in being reappointed. Bruce Smith and Adonna Smith have not expressed an interest in being reappointed. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: Slot 2 - LVAC Board Member: Vickie Everitte - Graduate Assistant (Valdosta State University), Slot 3 - LVAC Professional Artist: Ramiro J. Santillan - Artist/Arts Instructor (Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts), and Slot 3 - Community At Large: Dr. Beverley Richardson-Blake - Retired (Valdosta State University).

Mayor Matheson stated that if there was no objection from Council, Vickie Everitte, Ramiro J. Santillan, and Dr. Beverley Richardson-Blake would be appointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Public Art Advisory Committee. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta Housing Authority (Resident Appointment).

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta Housing Authority has a Resident Member, DeShonda Jenkins, whose term will expire on July 1, 2024. Ms. Jenkins has expressed an interest in serving again. This appointment

was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The Mayor will make this appointment. The applicants in no order of preference are as follows: (1) DeShonda Jenkins - Direct Staff Support (Rescare), and (2) Telisha Graham - Teacher (Valdosta City Schools, J. L. Lomax Elementary School).

Mayor Matheson stated that he would like to reappoint DeShonda Jenkins to serve as the Resident Appointment on the Valdosta Housing Authority and thanked her for her service.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments & Appeals.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals has a member, Dennis Carlton, Business Owner and HVAC Contractor (Carlton Mechanical), whose term will expire on June 30, 2024. Mr. Carlton has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. Mr. Carlton was the only applicant to apply for this position.

Mayor Matheson stated that if there was no objection from Council, Dennis Carlton would be reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments & Appeals. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority has one member, Alvin Payton, Jr., whose term will expire on June 30, 2024. Mr. Payton has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: (1) George Foreman - Job Development Coordinator (Goodwill SR) - 2nd Choice, (2) Rodney Godfrey - Licensed Funeral Director/Embalmer (Godfrey Funeral Home) - 3rd Choice, (3) Alvin Payton, Jr. - Retired (Technical College Administration), (4) Cedrick Williams - Sales Op Manager (Coca Cola United).

Mayor Matheson stated that he would open the floor for nominations. Councilwoman Tooley placed into consideration the name of Alvin Payton, Jr. Councilman Gibbs seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Alvin Payton, Jr. to raise their hands. Alvin Payton, Jr. was reappointed (6-0) to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals has a member, Samuel Clemons, Sr., whose term will expire on May 8, 2024. Mr. Clemons has expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: (1) Samuel Clemons, Sr. - Retired Educator/ Part-time Administrator, (2) Tony Daniels - Retired, (3) Rodney Godfrey - Licensed Funeral Director/Embalmer, (Godfrey Funeral Home) - 1st Choice.

Mayor Matheson stated that he would open the floor for nominations. Councilwoman Miller-Cody placed into consideration the name of Tony Daniels. There was no second on the nomination. Councilman McIntyre placed into consideration the name of Rodney Godfrey. Councilman Harden seconded the nomination. Mayor Matheson asked that all those in favor of Rodney Godfrey to raise their hands. Rodney Godfrey was appointed (5-1) to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals with Councilwoman Miller-Cody voting in opposition.

Rosena Jenkins, 600 West Adair Street, stated that she is an active community member in District 1 in the beautiful City of Valdosta, and she wanted to extend an invitation to the Mayor and Council to join them at the Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ Way Special Self-Care Health Screen and Family Wellness Event on Saturday, June 1, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. As a member of our esteemed community, we understand the demanding nature of your roles and the importance of prioritizing your well-being; therefore, they are asking for your presence and participation to engage in proactive health measures and self-care practices at this event. Hosting a Health Care Screening Event in Valdosta can bring numerous benefits to the community and its residents. Some of the reasons such an event is important is it can serve as an opportunity to raise awareness about various health issues prevalent in the community and offering screening for conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cholesterol levels, and cancer. Individuals can become more informed about their health status and potential risks that may face and early detection and prevention can promote healthy lifestyles, community engagement, and support. The event features various health screenings including but not limited to blood pressure checks, cholesterol screening, and BMI assessment. In addition, they will have health care professionals available to provide personalized consultations and offer valuable insight into maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Hosting a health screening event in Valdosta is crucial for promoting health awareness, early detection, assessing health care services, healthy lifestyles, community engagement, and reducing disparities. Such events contribute to the overall well-being of citizens and our community. Your presence at this event will not only be greatly appreciated, but it will also be a testament to your commitment to the well-being of our community. We believe that by prioritizing our health we can better serve the needs of Valdosta and its residents. Thank you for considering this invitation and we look forward to welcoming the City Council to our Self-Care Health Screening and Family Well-Care Event.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that we just closed out the Brown Bag Lunch Series today due to inclement weather tomorrow. On May 11, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., the monthly Community Road Cleanup will take place on Melrose Drive from East Park Avenue to Lakeside Drive. The meeting location is 1000 East Park Avenue. On May 18, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., there will be the Annual Memorial Headstone Cleaning Event which will take place at Sunset Hill Cemetery. Also, on May 18, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., there will be a Habitat for Humanity Fund Raising Event at Wild Adventures to assist them in building more houses in our community for families in need.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is holding a Transportation/Pedestrian Meeting at the Southside Library from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Councilman Howard stated that he finds it very disturbing that we get requests for repairs to our parks about every six months because someone in our community is vandalizing them. These parks are here for us. This money could be spent in other parks and add to the ones that we already have. If anyone knows who is doing this, then they should report them. It needs to stop.

Councilman McIntyre inquired as to how many Habitat for Humanity homes are under construction right now and what is the annual projection on how many they will build. Mayor Matheson stated that they could build ten this year and they could only qualify five. Councilman McIntyre stated that there were three in District 3. Mayor Matheson stated that a portion of the proceeds for the Habitat Event at Wild Adventures will go to Habitat. There will be other fundraising auction items as well so that will be a good way to turn another house. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that we should reach out to the churches to see if some of them want to go in together to sponsor one house. Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that the Mayor has a very dedicated program and we will make sure that we contact them. Mayor Matheson stated that this is the second year for a City renewal and of all the churches that are part of the Mayor's prayer group have come together and invited others to take on 15 homes that are the first 15 out of our CDBG Program. The churches will take them on for two full days of minor repair and exterior painting. They will contract with the homeowners themselves to agreed upon repairs and then they will show up on May 31, 2024 and June 1, 2024. There will be about 300 volunteers for those 15 homes. That is a beautiful program. It was a pilot program last year and now it is in full bloom this year. Next year they want to get even more aggressive. All of the homes are identified as somebody who is elderly or disabled who

cannot do the work themselves. If you want to reach out to the Mayor’s Office and contact Teresa Bolden, City Clerk, he will provide her with all the information on how you can register to volunteer.

Councilman Gibbs stated that he wanted to add to what Councilman Howard was saying because a lot of times if you tell exactly what is going on it paints a bigger picture. At one of our parks, someone flipped over all the metal tables and trash cans and broke them. You are talking about heavy duty tables that cost \$4,000-\$5,000 and they are now flipped upside down. Then there was another park where someone went in with a cherry bomb or baseball bat and demolished the mirrors, toilets, and doors. Then there was a bathroom in another park where they went in and set it on fire so now you have a room that is completely black everywhere. This is vandalism and it is not just taking some spray paint and writing on walls even though they did that at Saunders Park as well. The point is that you are talking about big things and not small stuff. When you add up the damages, you are talking about \$20,000-\$30,000 worth of repairs. This happens every three months. It takes away from us being able to put money into other parks and do other things with the money. At the end of the day, it puts us in a hard situation of how we should handle this. Do we close the bathrooms and say enough is enough? It puts the Council in a bad situation as well because on one hand, we either have to shut it down and say no more or people have got to start taking care of stuff. There is value in understanding what we are really talking about versus just thinking it is a little bit of stuff. It is a lot and it is every one or two months that we are dealing with this. If people ask you why money is not being spent on parks and recreation and they inquire as to where the money is going and why upgrades are not being done, there you go.

Councilman McIntyre stated that Fire Battalion Chief Ronald Skrine is still in the hospital and please keep him in your prayers.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the May 9, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:21 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, May 23, 2024.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta