WORK SESSION MEETING July 31st, 2018

The Bessemer City Council met in work session on Tuesday, July 31st, 2018 at 3:00PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Proper notice was given.

Call to Order
Mayor Becky S. Smith called the meeting to order.

Members Present
Mayor Becky Smith, Council Members: Dan Boling, Joe Will, Sonny Boyd, Donnie Griffin, Kay McCathen, and Alfred Carpenter were all present. Also present were City Manager, James Inman, department heads, and summer intern Mikel Graham.

Department Reports
Bessemer City Department heads gave reports on their department status:

Parks & Recreation Director JoD Franklin addressed Council regarding the employee pool party on August 14th, early pool closing, and Sounds of Summer Concert series success. Council was asked to submit their pool party numbers of family and friends attending to City Clerk Hydeia. Due to the dwindling participation at the City pool, the pool is scheduled to close August 10th. During the "Catalina's" Cruise-In this past weekend over 100 cars were in attendance and the new water barricades provided extra security. Council member Donnie Griffin thanked Parks & Recreation Director JoD Franklin and Police Chief Tom Ellis for their hard work and dedication in respect to the Concert series.

Economic Development Officer Josh Ross informed Council that Dhollandia N.V. of the Southridge Business Park is beginning to complete permits and plans. The Osage Mill development team would like to come to the August 2018 work session to provide Mayor and Council with an update on the redevelopment project.

Karen Floyd, Planning & Zoning Administrator was introduced to Mayor and Council by City Manager James Inman. Karen informed Council that she would be working Tuesday and Wednesday weekly. Progress is being made on various housing permits, the CMAQ Highway 161 sidewalk project, and Code Enforcement issues.

Chief Tom Ellis agreed with Parks & Recreation Director JoD Franklin, that the new water barricades were a success and are very beneficial. Chief also stated that the Cruise-In series is getting a lot of buzz amongst locals and visitors. The May 20th Surf and Turf investigation is still ongoing, and may continue on for several months.

Finance Officer Jenkins informed Council that the 2017-2018 audit is being conducted. Reimbursement from the NC Highway Safety grant has been received.

Summer 2018 Intern Mikel Graham addressed Council regarding the housing project he had been working to complete. Mikel has compiled a list of vacant homes who have been without utility service for over a year. This list was compiled with utility billing data courtesy of Finance Officer

Diane Jenkins. Mr. Graham noted that some houses had been vacant since 1974. Said list will be used to compile a map to identify areas of concern and property owners will be notified of violations. Per City policy it is a violation to have a house vacant for more than a year.

Public Art Project-Ella Mae Wiggins Statue

Economic Development Officer, Joshua Ross informed Council of a public art inquiry he had received. The Ella Mae Wiggins Memorial Committee approached the City for permission to place a 3 foot bronze statue of Ella May Wiggins in the downtown park near the cedar tree (park between W. Virginia Avenue and Norfolk Southern Rail-line). Said statue would cost around $30,000 and the committee has raised $12,000.

Light discussion regarding placement, contract terms, and insurance was held.

By general consensus, the committee will be permitted to place the structure in downtown Bessemer City after imaging drafts and a contract between the committee and the City have been completed.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, James Inman addressed Council regarding the following:

Public Hearings

Public Hearings regarding interim financing and a USDA loan and grant to replace the sewer line that will serve Stinger Park will be held Monday, August 6th at 3:00 PM in Council Chambers.

Other Items of Interest

A September 11th remembrance service will be held in front of City Hall at the flag pole this year. Council member Alfred Carpenter will play taps, and City Clerk Hydeia will provide reminders leading up to the event. The flooding issue at the Kiser Senior Center is currently being addressed. Bessemer City Police Department's 2nd National Night Out (NNO) will be held on Tuesday, August 7th in downtown Centennial Park. City Hall will be without air for two days in the near future to address HVAC concerns. During these two days, staff will be at the Kiser Senior Center. Progress on the purchasing of the SunTrust bank building is being made, the contract is underway.

City Hall SunTrust Bank Building Naming

City Manager Inman addressed Council regarding the possible naming of the SunTrust bank building that would house several City Hall departments.

By general consensus, citizen service center and municipal building were selected.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

City Manager James Inman and Economic Development Officer Josh Ross addressed Council regarding a potential CDBG project. Said project would provide funding for local home owner rehabilitation to dilapidated houses. A committee would need to be formed in order to assist with the selection process. More information will be provided at a later date.

Discussion- Downtown Development, Planning & Zoning Board

Light discussion amongst Council, City Manager, and Department Heads ensued regarding Downtown Development, and Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments.

City Manager, James Inman led the Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments discussion. At the August 13th meeting Council will hold two public hearings. One to dissolve the Planning & Zoning Board and another to re-establish the board. At this time, Council will not be asked to appoint members until September's regular session.

Discussion further ensued regarding potential board members who have applied and ones staff will be reaching out to.

Economic Development Officer Joshua Ross led the Downtown Development Board discussion. Ross informed Council that six (6) people had applied. Staff recommended five (5) of those who applied for Council consideration.

By general consensus, an informal meet and greet will be held amongst potential downtown development board members and Council.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. There was none.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote.

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Becky S. Smith, Mayor Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk