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**Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**May 5, 2014**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Roanoke Rapids was held on the above date at 5:15 p.m. in the first floor conference room of the J. Reuben Daniel City Hall and Police Station.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

Carl Ferebee, Mayor Pro Tem

Ernest C. Bobbitt)

Suetta S. Scarbrough)

Carol H. Cowen)

Wayne Smith)

Joseph Scherer, MPA, MS, City Manager

Lisa B. Vincent, MMC, City Clerk

Gilbert Chichester, City Attorney

Kathy Kearney, Deputy City Clerk/Human Resources Manager

MeLinda Hite, Finance Director

Tommy Hathaway, Police Chief

Larry Chalker, Public Works Director

Kelly Lasky, Planning & Development Director

Stacy Coggins, Fire Chief

Christina Caudle, Main Street/Development Director

Kelly Manning, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

John Simeon, Parks & Recreation Director

Mayor Doughtie called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.

With no one indicating a conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda, motion was made by ­­­­­­­­­­­Councilwoman Cowen, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to adopt the business agenda for May 5, 2014.

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*Before Public Comment, Mayor Doughtie explained the ground rules for making comments including the time limits for both “Scheduled” and “Unscheduled” Public Comment. He stated the Council wants to hear comments from everyone but asked that if the same comments have already been made by a previous speaker that the time be yielded to other speakers.*

Ms. Theresa Eileen Paglia of 404 Lake Pointe Drive, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she is very new to Roanoke Rapids. She stated she loves the Aquatic Center and like so many other people, is extremely upset about the possibility of it closing. Ms. Paglia stated she had never heard of Roanoke Rapids before five and a half years ago when she decided to move south from New York. She explained that she needed an indoor pool for her back and her daughter went on the computer and googled indoor pools. She stated they found the Aquatic Center in Roanoke Rapids and purchased a house here nine months later. She stated she would not be here if not for the Aquatic Center. She stated she has met many wonderful southern people through the Aquatic Center.

Ms. Paglia stated the pool is necessary for every age group from babies to seniors. She stated little ones need the pool to learn to swim and the high school students need it for the swim team and to help keep young people off the streets and out of trouble. She stated working people need a safe place to work out since walking trails are not safe. Ms. Paglia stated many people use the indoor pool for therapy. She stated one-half of the population of Roanoke Rapids is made up of people 55 years of age or older, and the Aquatic Center provides many, many health benefits. She stated in some cases, it gives many seniors a reason to get up in the morning. She asked that the City not take away the Aquatic Center from the many that need it.

Ms. Paglia stated she is sure everyone would like to know why no money was allocated in the past 14 years to replace the dehumidifier. She stated the current one had a life span of just 10 years. She stated the Aquatic Center draws people from Henderson, Northampton County and even Emporia, Virginia. She stated it is the number one drawing point for Roanoke Rapids. Ms. Paglia stated it would be a total disgrace to

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have to close the Aquatic Center due to poor financial management. She stated this could have been avoided. She stated the City should use the Aquatic Center to bring more people like her to Roanoke Rapids. She pleaded with the Council to not make her go back to the cold and stressful state of New York.

Ms. Ruthie Gregory of 631 Arbutus Drive West, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she has lived in Roanoke Rapids for almost 51 years. She stated approximately 10 years ago, she could not get out of bed. She stated she made an appointment with Dr. Pandarinath, and he said he thought she had polymyalgia. She stated the doctor wanted her to take prednisone but she had heard many negative things about the drug. She explained that she got a second opinion and went back to Dr. Pandarinath who told her to go to the Aquatic Center to exercise. She stated he too went to the Aquatic Center. Ms. Gregory stated the Aquatic Center has helped her, and people marvel at the difference in her now. She stated she would hate to think what would happen if she were not able to go. Ms. Gregory stated a number of people here knew Rudy Williams, the former manager of Leggett’s Department Store who worked in this very building. She stated Rudy would say that he was afraid to miss even one day at the Aquatic Center in fear of how it would affect him. She stated he would even schedule his golf matches around his visits to the Aquatic Center. Ms. Gregory stated rheumatoid arthritis is a side effect of polymyalgia. She stated her aunt walked with a cane because of this disease but was amazed that she did not need one.

Ms. Gregory stated one day recently she took a count of the people at the Aquatic Center. She stated there were 20 people and 15 were from outside of Roanoke Rapids. She stated those 15 people shop and often eat at restaurants in Roanoke Rapids. She stated the indoor pool brings people and business to Roanoke Rapids. Ms. Gregory stated she met a person that was just driving through the area and wanting a break, decided to come to the Aquatic Center. She stated the internet and the Aquatic Center have put Roanoke Rapids on the map. She stated it is an asset and we should be proud of it. Ms. Gregory stated she also knows of someone that moved to the area because of the Aquatic Center.

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Ms. Mary Jordan of 1640 Macon Price Road, Garysburg, NC stated her parents moved from Smithfield to Roanoke Rapids to work in the textile mills, and she moved to Garysburg after graduating from Roanoke Rapids High School. She stated she shops in Roanoke Rapids and supports the area. Ms. Jordan stated the pool keeps a lot of seniors moving with less pain. She stated many people come from Lake Gaston, Conway and other places. She stated firemen learn to swim there. She stated people from outside of Roanoke Rapids that come to the Aquatic Center spend money here. She stated they have made new friends and feel like a part of a big family. Ms. Jordan asked that the City keep the pool warm.

Ms. Denise Beaver of 739 Raleigh Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she is probably the youngest one at 43 in the arthritis class. She stated due to an injury when she was very young, she developed arthritis in her hips. She stated for the last two years, she has suffered with debilitating hip pain. She stated for six months she spent 15 or more hours a day in bed. Ms. Beaver stated she is a wife and mother of two young children and this has taken a toll on her. She stated her doctor suggested swim therapy as it is the only exercise she can do with minimal impact on her joints. She stated the exercises and the warmth of the pool help loosen her joints and relieve the pain. Ms. Beaver stated it is the only thing that brings any relief and she is more active than she has been in two years. She stated the impact of these classes is immeasurable to her and these seniors. She stated she is worried about what will happen without these classes. She stated if these classes help her, imagine how they help men and women 30 and 40 years older than her. Ms. Beaver asked the Council to consider how important they are and how much they are needed.

Ms. Becky Beaver of 207 Long Circle, Roanoke Rapids, NC yielded her time indicating that her comments had already been covered.

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Mr. Hugh Carroll of 45 Vance Street, Roanoke Rapids, NC yielded his time indicating that his comments had already been covered.

Ms. Brenda Spragins of 208 Beechwood Drive, Roanoke Rapids, NC stated she had neck surgery and the pool is the only thing that saves her from pain. She stated she had a child on the swim team in high school and it was the only sport he participated in. She stated the Aquatic Center is very important.

Ms. Lisa Peacock of 156 Sycamore Lane, Halifax, NC stated her child took swim lessons at the Aquatic Center, became a lifeguard and continued to work at the pool. She stated the pool means a lot to her family. She stated she also represents the Halifax Academy Swim Team which would not exist without the pool. Ms. Peacock stated at least 100 children have participated in the past and that does not include the Roanoke Rapids Swim Team. She stated the pool gives children something to do. She stated it provides a lot of guidance and structure which is very important.

Mayor Doughtie thanked everyone for coming. He stated he had a chance to speak with a couple of ladies before the meeting and explained to them that we do have to adopt a budget and that we try hard not to use taxpayers’ money unwisely. He stated this City Council has done a good job with this. He stated we have done this without increasing taxes but it is becoming more and more difficult. Mayor Doughtie assured everyone that the members of the City Council, the City Manager and the Department Heads want to do everything they can to provide citizens with the best service possible. He stated when you look at the demographics, our population is decreasing and the statistics indicate that trend will continue. He stated we need to do something to set ourselves aside. Mayor Doughtie stated we will continue to try and use the taxpayers’ money as efficiently as possible. He stated all of the comments seemed very sincere and Council will take them into consideration.

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An unidentified member of the audience asked how citizens could help and suggested a fundraiser.

Mayor Doughtie stated we are looking at a fairly large expenditure with the replacement of the dehumidifier. He stated one option could be to reach out to the entities that use the Aquatic Center.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Bobbitt and unanimously carried to approve the following Council Minutes: *April 15, 2014 (Regular Meeting) and April 22, 2014 (Special Meeting)*.

A ballot vote was taken and the Clerk announced that Dom Fenner received the unanimous vote for appointment to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to appoint Dom Fenner to the Canal Museum Advisory Committee.

City Manager Scherer stated with the adoption at the last meeting of an amendment to Chapter 91 to allow beekeeping within the City limits, the wording in Section 91.11 needs to be amended to remove bees from the list of certain animals not allowed within the corporate limits.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Councilwoman Cowen and unanimously carried to adopt the following Ordinance:

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 91 “ANIMALS” OF THE ROANOKE RAPIDS CITY CODE.**

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROANOKE RAPIDS that:**

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**SECTION 1.** Section 91.11 be amended to read as follows:

**§ 91.11 KEEPING OF CERTAIN ANIMALS REGULATED.**

It shall be unlawful for any person to keep, maintain, house or allow upon his premises, whether such premises is owned outright by such person or leased from another, within the corporate limits, cows, horses, mules, chickens, or other non-domesticated animals, unless activity was in operation or existing prior to 1975.

**SECTION 2.** This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Planning & Development Director Lasky stated as part of the Community Development Block Grant for the Vine Street area, the project called for the abandonment and closure of Piland Street from US 158 to Andrews Street. She stated the grant is in the process of being closed out. Ms. Lasky stated this right-of-way has no asphalt or physical street structure. She stated a Resolution of Intent is provided for Council’s consideration which provides for advertising for four weeks and the notification to adjoining property owners of a public hearing on June 3 to consider the closing. Ms. Lasky pointed out that this closing will not limit access to individual property owners.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if there are any homes on Piland Street.

Ms. Lasky stated no. She stated they were all taken down as part of the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked if any of the properties are large enough to build on.

Ms. Lasky stated access to this property will be off Andrews Street so there would be nothing to prevent future development.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adopt the following resolution:

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**RESOLUTION OF INTENT**

**A Resolution Declaring the Intention of the Roanoke Rapids City Council**

**to Consider Closing the 30' Wide Right-of-Way of Piland Street from US 158 to Andrews Street**

**WHEREAS**, G.S. 160A-299 authorizes the Roanoke Rapids City Council to close public streets and alleys; and

**WHEREAS**, the Roanoke Rapids City Council considers it advisable to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of giving consideration to the closing of the 30' wide right-of-way of Piland Street from US 158 to Andrews Street;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Roanoke Rapids City Council that:

**(1)** A meeting will be held at 5:15 p.m. on the 3rd day of June, 2014, in the Lloyd Andrews City Meeting Hall to consider a resolution closing the 30' wide right-of-way of Piland Street from US 158 to Andrews Street.

**(2)** The City Clerk is hereby directed to publish this Resolution of Intent once a week for four successive weeks in the *Roanoke Rapids Daily Herald*, or other newspaper of general circulation in the area.

**(3)** The City Clerk is further directed to transmit by registered or certified mail to each owner of property abutting upon that portion of said right-of-way a copy of this Resolution of Intent.

**(4)** The City Clerk is further directed to cause adequate notices of this Resolution of Intent and the scheduled public hearing to be posted as required by G.S. 160A-299.

Upon motion duly made by , and duly seconded by , the above resolution was duly adopted by the Roanoke Rapids City Council at the meeting held on the 5th day of May, 2014.

Upon call for a vote, the following Council Members voted in the affirmative:

and the following Council Members voted in the negative:

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**ADOPTED** this the 5th day of May, 2014.

Emery G. Doughtie, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lisa B. Vincent, City Clerk

City Manager Scherer reported that the public access channel is now functioning. He stated it can be found on Channel 193.

City Manager Scherer reported that BARC will be holding a fish plate fundraiser on May 14 at Pro Build. He stated plates can be picked up at 12:00 Noon.

City Manager Scherer reported that the Public Works Department is working with the Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District on repairs at First and Franklin Streets. He stated the Sanitary District’s water line will be moved further away from our storm water line.

City Manager Scherer reported that the Fire Department recently conducted a live burn at a house next to Calvary Baptist Church. He reported on the firefighter day event held this past Saturday at Becker Village Mall. He also reported that the department is currently testing fire hydrants.

City Manager Scherer reported that Liz Parham, the State’s Main Street Director, will be here on May 14 working with Ms. Caudle and the RABA Board Members. He stated a breakfast will be held at Oscar’s that morning and asked that those wanting more details to contact Ms. Caudle.

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City Manager Scherer reported that recently the County Economic Development Director executed an agreement with the owner of the WestPoint Stevens Mill property to allow her to market the property.

City Manager Scherer reported that he will be attending a meeting tomorrow in Edenton regarding DOT’s strategic transportation corridors initiative.

City Manager Scherer encouraged City Council to continue to review the Comprehensive Land Use and Community Health Plan and to provide any comments to Ms. Lasky. He stated this is a very important document for the City.

Councilman Smith commented that the railroad tracks at Marshall Street are already coming up.

City Manager Scherer stated Mr. Chalker will contact CSX.

Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee asked how we are letting the citizens know about the public access channel. He also asked about a larger font size.

City Manager Scherer stated through the media.

Human Resources Manager Kearney stated the information on the channel is all new and she has used a larger font.

Motion was made by Councilman Bobbitt, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to go into closed session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) & (5).

**Minute Book Page 17246 contains Minutes and General Account of a Closed Session which have been sealed until such time as public inspection of those minutes would not frustrate the purpose of the Closed Session.**

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Motion was made by Councilwoman Scarbrough, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee and unanimously carried to return to open session.

City Council consulted with the City Attorney on contract matters. No action was taken.

There being no further business, motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Ferebee, seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried to adjourn.



5/20/14