

February 2, 2021

The Regular February meeting of the Danville City Council was held on February 2, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present: James B. Buckner, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (9).

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken F. Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Tommy Bennett, President of the Danville Branch of the NAACP, who noted it was Black History Month, thanked those who paved the way, and the sign in front of the courthouse commemorates Bloody Monday; a lot of people in Danville participated in that.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Campbell and **second** by Council Member Buckner, Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on January 5, 2021, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF GRANTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT AT 1208 PINEY FOREST ROAD

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding a Special Use Permit at 1208 Piney Forest Road. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on January 19, 2021 and January 26, 2021. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Council Member Buckner **moved** for adoption of an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-02.01

GRANTING SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION PLSUP2020-284 FOR WAIVER OF YARD REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 3.M SECTION C.21. OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED, AT 1208 PINEY FOREST ROAD (PARCEL ID #54171) ALSO KNOWN AS GRID 1808, BLOCK 004, PARCEL 000075 OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE ZONING DISTRICT MAP.

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Saunders and carried by the following vote:

VOTE: 9-0
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler and Whittle (9)
NAY: None

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COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking explained the ongoing efforts, working in collaboration with the local health department, SOVAH, Averett University and Pittsylvania County, to make sure there were vaccines available to the public as quickly as they arrived in Danville. They have established a good procedure regarding vaccinations through events that have been held; the next one will be in the County. Danville has been noticed at the state level that they have the ability to administer vaccines when they receive them. Danville receives their allotment, and on occasion were able to get a little extra because they were able to get them to the public. Mr. Larking noted they have a lot of volunteers and Averett University has coordinated the volunteer effort, to make sure things flowed smoothly and he was very pleased with that. The City created an online portal for people to sign up for the vaccine and about 8,000 people have signed up. The City gets about 1,000 vaccines every week, sometimes a little more, and it will take a couple months before they get everyone the first dose. Mr. Larking noted his appreciation to everyone involved making this happen, and encouraged the public to be patient going through this process.

In response to Mr. Saunders, Mr. Larking explained the portal was established by the City and located on the City's website at www.danvilleva.gov/pittdansignup. Citizens answer a few questions to determine if they are phase 1a or 1b, and enter their contact information. If a citizen was unable to fill it in themselves they should ask a friend or family member to help. Tommy Bennett and others actually knocked on doors signing people up, to reach the underserved communities as much as possible; the State has recognized that effort. The Governor has established a portal at the state level and he will be working with Dr. Spillman from the health department to determine how to get people who were on the City's portal, onto the state portal. Mr. Bennett explained they have received calls all week about seniors in their eighties and nineties who don't have email or computers. He has signed them up, printed out and brought back to their homes, a copy of the time they were scheduled to get their vaccine. Tammy Warren has also offered her bus service to pick people up. Mr. Saunders thanked Mr. Bennett for what he has been doing, as well as Mr. Larking.

There were no communications from the Deputy City Manager, City Attorney or City Clerk.

Council Member Hood noted he wanted to acknowledge the City moving forward together and as communication came together, getting the vaccine out. Mr. Hood thanked Mr. Bennett, Dr. Miller and the City Manager; when the City was on one accord the strength they have together was key. Today, giving out laptops to students at DCC was phenomenal; there were a lot of things happening in Danville, and Mr. Hood thanked the essential workers for helping out.

Council Member Mayo noted today was incredible at DCC passing out the laptops to students, and thanked Dr. Gill-Powell and Shannon Hair for doing that; they were moving forward to make sure the students get the best education possible. Mr. Mayo thanked Dr. Miller for his guidance and leadership, he was doing a great job for Council and the City. DCC was partnering with Feeding Southwest Virginia, with PATHS, this Friday from 1- 3 p.m. They will be giving away food boxes by the Temple Building in the parking lot. All Virginia residents qualify, no ID or income requirements, and food will be distributed on a first come first serve basis.

Vice Mayor Miller noted Tommy Bennett got a lot of people from Cardinal Village and other places registered. Some races were hit harder by this disease including African Americans and Hispanics, when they get it, they do worse; it was very important that they get people of all races vaccinated. Mr. Bennett had done an outstanding job and thanked him for all he does. Today, they gave away two hundred computers to Danville City residents at DCC; the county gave away three hundred to county residents last week. Dr. Miller thanked DCC and the City for doing that.

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Council Member Saunders noted he received a communication from Richmond, they know the pandemic issue and the vaccine issue was chaotic all over the world. The call he received was that in Virginia, Danville was leading in terms of getting people vaccinated. Mr. Saunders thanked the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, and the City Manager and his staff, as well as the Council Members and all the volunteers for making this possible.

Council Member Vogler noted he was listening to a podcast yesterday that indicated that currently there were thirty three children in the Danville Public School system identified as homeless; that was not counting the number of children that were currently living in hotels day to day. Mr. Vogler questioned what could be done in the short and the long term; he will do what he can to be a part of the solution to do what they can to help. Mr. Vogler noted several months ago Shannon Hair at DCC called him about how DCC has been working through COVID, having to do virtual, the strain on their students and access to devices and internet. He and Mr. Hair reached out to the City Manager to get discussions going and the City Manager did a great job, they were able to hand out several hundred laptops to the City residents. It was a tremendous event.

Council Member Whittle noted Danville Public School system has 250 children that were homeless and they need to find some sort of wrap around program to bring those kids into; it was a serious problem and thanked Mr. Vogler for bringing this up. Mr. Whittle noted his agreement with what has been said, staff and Council have worked hard, trying to do the best they could.

Council Member Buckner noted he could not say enough about the volunteers, the City Manager, city, hospital, and health department staffs, and the volunteers in the clinics helping people. It was a selfless thing to do to help somebody during these times. Mr. Buckner encouraged citizens who were able to, to go and help out others.

Council Member Campbell noted his agreement with other Council Members, commending Dr. Miller, Tommy Bennett and the NAACP. The most joyful thing in this pandemic was to see citizens in Danville working together; the City will overcome this, will move forward and Danville will be better. Mr. Campbell noted his mentor, Apostle Campbell's birthday was tomorrow, he will be 91 years old and wished him Happy Birthday.

Mayor Jones thanked the City Council for all they do. On Saturday the Deputy City Manager and he were in a meeting of citizens in the community who want to help move the community forward. On Sunday, he received a call about the homeless shelter and the numbers there, they were starting to see more, and more people on the streets as well. They talked about people at Coleman Marketplace pan handling, and had a very in depth conversation he will be sharing with Council. Mayor Jones thanked the City Council, City Manager, and City Staff for all they were doing.

ADJOURNED: 7:43 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK