

**HUNTSVILLE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Regular Meeting - March 24, 2022 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**City Council Chambers, Municipal Building**  
**Huntsville, Alabama**

**Members Present:** Mr. John Meredith, President  
Mr. Bill Kling  
Mr. Devyn Keith  
Ms. Frances Akridge

**Members Absent:** Dr. Jennie Robinson

**Mayor:** Mr. Tommy Battle  
**City Administrator:** Mr. John Hamilton  
**City Attorney:** Mr. Trey Riley

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President Meredith called the meeting to order at the time and place noted above.

Rev. Peter von Herrmann of Epworth United Methodist Church led the invocation; Ms. Sue Campbell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Meredith stated that Ms. Campbell was 104 years young, and they were thrilled to have her in attendance at this meeting.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Approval of the Agenda. He stated there would be a second presentation at this meeting, given by the North Huntsville Business Association. He continued that items 15.c and 15.f would require a four-fifths vote of the Council; that item 19.a had been deleted; that item 20.w would be taken out of order; and that item 21.f had been added, and the Administration had asked for consideration of this item at this meeting, which would require unanimous consent of the Council.

President Meredith asked if there were any other changes or additions to the agenda.

Councilmember Akridge moved to approve the agenda, with the stated changes, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling and unanimously approved by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated the next item was Approval of Minutes.

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council on March 10, 2022, were approved as submitted.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Council: Special Recognitions and Resolutions.

President Meredith stated an honorary resolution would be presented at this time, and he recognized Councilmember Kling.

Councilmember Kling stated that Ms. Sue Campbell was 104 years young, and they were honored to have her at this meeting.

Councilmember Kling read from the honorary resolution that the Council and the Mayor of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, were amazed to learn that one of their very own Huntsville residents, Ms. Sue Campbell, had reached the age of 104 years. He continued to read that Ms. Campbell was a woman of faith and the last remaining charter member of Southside Baptist Church, and that she presently worshiped at Westlawn Baptist Church.

Councilmember Kling stated they wanted to honor Ms. Campbell for her citizenship in the Huntsville community and wish her a Very Happy 104th Birthday.

Ms. Campbell expressed appreciation for the recognition.

President Meredith stated the Council would be holding a work session on April 20th, at 5 p.m., in the Council Chambers, to discuss citations as an alternative for arrests for certain levels of possession of a controlled substance.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Announcements and Presentations.

President Meredith recognized the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau for a presentation.

Mr. Neville Bohda appeared before the Council, stating he was with Applied Strategies and Principles. He stated they had been doing research studies for the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau for almost a decade, and they were pleased and honored to be able at this time to present the results of their last study. He stated this had been conducted during the fall of the prior year, so these were pretty much what they would say were "fresh off the press."

Mr. Bohda stated he would just highlight some of the overarching overview of what they had found from the visitors who came from near and far to visit Huntsville and Madison County. He stated he would be using the terms "Huntsville" and "Madison County" interchangeably, since this represented both.

(Mr. Bohda made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Bohda stated he would start off with the good economic news. He stated that if they looked at the number in red on the display, they would see that the visitors, per party, spent approximately \$1300 when visiting Huntsville. He stated that the segments they could see on the display were different segments they considered in the tourism field, being Leisure, which was primarily vacationers; the Business Traveler; Meetings and Conventions; and Events. He stated that all of these had a slightly different segment when it came to spending, but overall, it was about \$1200 or \$1300. He continued that if they did it by person, it was approximately \$500 to \$600 per person.

Mr. Bohda stated they had first started this in 2014, and they had done another one in 2017, and that as they could see on the display, the trajectory kept on going upward. He stated that with the figure on the display of \$1281, they could attribute a small portion of it to inflation, about 8 to 10 percent of it, noting that in the prior

year, they had seen an increase in inflation rates.

Mr. Bohda stated they would say the primary motive for more spending was what the Convention & Visitors Bureau did in terms of marketing. He continued that they had been actively marketing all the different shopping opportunities, all the different restaurants, et cetera, within the different areas of the city and county, and that had really helped propel spending, noting that they truly believed tourism was an economic generator for the county and for the city.

Mr. Bohda stated that on the next display, there were four primary recommendations that had come from their research study. He stated that the first one was that the great thing about Huntsville and Madison County was that it had segments for every type of demographic and every type of population that wanted to come in and stay, that there was the high end, the budget, the economy, and the mid-sized. He continued that one thing they had found from their Meeting Planning Study, as well as talking to visitors, was that another full-service, downtown property was needed. He continued that "full service" meant there was a concierge service, a bar, a restaurant, and all the amenities that went into servicing a conference and convention hotel. He stated they were asking for a minimum of 400 to 500 full-service-unit rooms within walking distance of the Von Braun Center.

Mr. Bohda stated that in addition to that, they were asking for 1,000 committable rooms. He stated that a hotel could not give all its available units to one particular conference or event, or the like, but with the totality of what was available in Huntsville, they were asking for a minimum of 1,000 committable rooms, which would help booster the Events and Conference Meetings segment within Huntsville.

Mr. Bohda stated there was a golden opportunity at this time, with an available development site just north of the VBC, at the intersection of Clinton and Monroe. He stated an investment property had purchased the lot just north of there. He stated

they were thinking that was a golden opportunity to raise the level of meetings and conventions, to bring them to that next level, to spur more economic growth within the area.

Mr. Bohda stated the second area that was a primary recommendation was to look at the totality of all marketing efforts when it came to print versus digital. He stated what they had found out of the pandemic was more people were looking at printed pieces for more aspirational travel, that they would have something in their hands they were going to utilize for maybe the next time they were considering coming to Huntsville or maybe for a future visit. He continued that digital was the here and now, that what they had found out from Huntsville and Madison County visitors was that about a third of them had planned their trip within seven days, and about 55 percent had planned their trip within two weeks, hence there was more of a dependency on digital forms of communication. He continued that they were asking that the Marketing Department look at all of the marketing collateral to make sure if it was necessary to print or if they just needed a digital component, noting that this would not be just for the tourism field but pretty much for every industry, when people were so heavily going to the digital sphere.

Mr. Bohda stated the other area they were asking them to look at was to reimagine the visitors center. He stated that lately, they had approximately 50 to 70 people come daily to the visitors center; spring break, March, and the like. He stated that at this time, the visitors center was about two decades old, and what they were planning to do was a total overhaul of it, offering more digital components, a digital wall, and new digital kiosks.

Mr. Bohda stated they were also asking them to take a look at possibly having a mobile visitors center, where they had a representative from the tourism bureau go to where the events were, whether it be a sporting event, a music event, or what have

you, so they would be taking the brochures and the information to the public itself. He stated they were finding that more and more destination marketing organizations were going to the public itself, thereby lessening the dependency of coming to a physical bricks-and-mortar building.

Mr. Bohda stated that their last primary recommendation was marketing mix and diversification. He stated that what they had found from the sequestration in 2013, as well as the pandemic, was that there might be too much of a dependence on federal tourism dollars, which were coming in from the D.C./Virginia market. He stated that they, as well as the hoteliers, were asking for more of a diversification, for conferences, meetings, corporate groups, leisure, and the like.

Mr. Bohda stated there was some extremely good news concerning the rates, that the average daily rate in Huntsville had either met or exceeded the rates they had seen in 2019, and that it was the same thing with occupancy levels. He stated that when they talked to hoteliers, they said the occupancy could not grow any more because they were almost at 100 percent. He stated they had reached the great levels they had seen pre-pandemic.

Mr. Bohda stated some of their secondary recommendations were some things they just wanted to bring up, to notice. He stated the Space & Rocket Center was the No. 1 attraction within the state of Alabama, and it was probably one of the most premier destinations, when it came to attractions, in the Southeast, noting that *Southern Living* magazine had named it the top tourist attraction in the Southeast. He stated that people came in and spent a lot of money at the Space & Rocket Center, but they also spent a lot of money within the city itself. He stated they had found a few people who wanted to see this experience upgraded, that a lot of them had said there was the ability to go ahead and charge for each separate attraction within the Space & Rocket Center, but what they would like to see was just one inclusive price.

He continued that they had also talked about the physical nature of some of the outdoor attractions, and they wanted them to be brought back to their previous standards. He stated that another thing the Space & Rocket Center was looking into at this time was expanding their hours, because many visitors wanted to come a little bit later in the day, and they were trying to accommodate that.

Mr. Bohda stated that the visitors bureau had already been in contact with the Space & Rocket Center, and the Space & Rocket Center had taken a number of suggestions the bureau had given them, to go ahead and bring up the standards to what the visitors were looking for at the Center. He stated that another highlight was Space Camp, noting that the pandemic had brought the numbers for this down a lot lower, but for 2022, they were looking for the numbers to exceed what they had seen in 2019. He stated there was some really positive news concerning the Space & Rocket Center.

Mr. Bohda stated another area they would like to see more development on was discussions with local meeting planners, not just Huntsville and not just Madison County, but what was happening in Alabama and nationwide, when it came to the Meetings and Events sector, because that was truly the door for economic development, for more people to see all that was going on within the city and the county.

Mr. Bohda stated that the CVB had just hosted a hospitality industry reception for meeting planners at Stovehouse, so there were proactive measures to have those meetings.

Mr. Bohda stated that the tourism recovery that had occurred during the past year had occurred due to those persons who were comfortable traveling, not from those who were still leery about contracting COVID-19. He continued that for the next year or two, they were suggesting to the bureau that they use more images that

promoted open, roomy, and spacious venues, that they would continue to use imagery from downtown Huntsville and downtown Madison, to convey that there were accessible areas that, most of all, were safe. He stated that travelers at this time wanted to have a feeling of security and safety. He continued that the CVB had already taken measures to make sure that was in print as well as video.

Mr. Bohda stated, concerning social media promotions, that since about 2017, there had been a drip of negative news when it came to social media, how privacy was used, and how it was affecting young adults, and the like. He stated they had seen a small decline in people utilizing social media to talk about their experiences within Huntsville and Madison County, so they were asking the Marketing Department to go ahead and reengage, reimagine how social media was used so that, specifically, the meeting segment, as well as the business segment, was talking positively about what they had seen so they could spread the word about social media efforts here.

Mr. Bohda stated the one thing that was affecting all hospitality, and actually all industries, was labor. He stated that one area, in terms of amenities, that had gone down was the level of service. He continued that this was not particularly due to Huntsville or Madison County, that it was just that there was a labor shortage all over the place. He stated that what they were suggesting was that the CVB sponsor a job fair, to assist in securing new employees for the hospitality suppliers. He stated this would shine a favorable light when it came to economic development, and also earn good will for the bureau as well.

Mr. Bohda stated that in 2023, the CVB was the presenting sponsor of the Chamber's ReLaunch Job Fair, and they applauded them for taking that proactive measure.

Mr. Bohda stated that one of the things they had seen coming out of the pandemic was more people being amenable to going to a short-term rental, like a



VRBO, Airbnb, and the like, which was fine, but at the same time, they, as an industry, should make sure they were keeping a sharp eye on the tax collections from these short-term rentals, because a lot of these rentals were getting the benefits of the marketing from the bureau itself, and he questioned if they were paying into the system, to make sure it was equitable, that all people were being taxed at the same rate. He stated the CVB was currently working with the Alabama Tourism Department, as well as Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association, on getting lodging taxes from guests using short-term rentals, and the like.

Mr. Bohda stated that some observations they had seen from their last study back in 2017 included, for one thing, that shopping took off. He stated that more than 50 percent of the visitors who had come to the city had participated in some sort of shopping activity. He continued that they applauded the bureau for this, noting that shopping was one of the key components in travel and tourism.

Mr. Bohda stated that craft beer was barely a blip in the 2014 study, but they had now found that 15 percent of visitors went to a brewpub, a craft brewery, or the like, and they were very happy to see that. He stated that about 10 percent of the visitors engaged in some sort of nightlife, whether it would be a club, the music scene, the amphitheater, or the like. He stated that about a decade ago, that had been just a blip, but at this time they were seeing more people participate in that area.

Mr. Bohda stated that while they had seen social media either decline or stay steady, they had seen a number of people using apps, about 50 percent of the populace, that whether it would be Google Waze, a hotel app, the bureau's app, or the like, they had seen many more people engaged in that.

Mr. Bohda stated they had found that hoteliers were very bullish about the future, that they had said occupancy could not really go much higher, but they had said the average daily rates would continue to increase from what had been seen in

2021. He continued that, also, there was a more profitable thing, called "RevPAR," revenue per available room. He stated they were saying that it was good economic news when it came to the hotels.

Mr. Bohda stated what he was displaying at this time were some comments straight from visitors. He read one as follows: "Being from Alabama, Huntsville/Madison, we are able to keep that small-town feel. I would not step foot outside my Atlanta hotel, but I feel very safe downtown." He continued that he loved the second one, from a young professional, and he read as follows: "Our town has improved significantly within Huntsville/Madison. It is more welcoming than it was in the past. I had to fly into Nashville because no flights were open to Huntsville this time around. We are considering moving here. I love this town." He stated they had heard from a couple of people who said they had to fly into Nashville.

Mr. Bohda stated that one comment was that they needed to renovate the VBC, that Huntsville was known as a high-tech center, but there was a low-tech convention center, that the VBC looked like a civic center, and that Birmingham was going to "eat their lunch" with their new convention center. He stated that Birmingham and their new center had come up a lot within their Meeting Planning Study, but what they had found out in their talks with the VBC was that they had multiple plans to upgrade their facilities. He stated that persons might have noticed the swanky new bar on Monroe, and they also had plans to make vast improvements and upgrades to the North Hall, starting in the spring.

Mr. Bohda stated there was also a comment that for visitors from large markets, like Atlanta and Nashville, \$200 was nothing for them to pay, even though for Huntsville it was more on the high side, and while they ran the risk of locals balking, people from Alabama itself, screaming about the high ADRs, Average Daily Rates, this would not be from planners from large markets, like D.C., San Francisco,

and Atlanta, that they knew the brand and were willing to pay for a premium product.

Mr. Bohda stated they were very heartened to see places such as The Curio, 106 Jefferson, and he stated their average daily rates were over \$200, and that was going to bring in a new set of demographics. He stated that when a brand like an AC came to a destination, it created buzz around the city, that something must be going on in Huntsville or an AC would not come in.

Mr. Bohda stated that the Embassy Suites was old and tired, that they had a great location, but they were not maximizing their advantages. He stated that, however, they were renovating, from the bottom to the top, that persons might have seen the renovations to the lobby and the registration area, and they would be starting on the rooms, from the top level down, with completion by 2023.

Mr. Bohda stated the scene was changing in downtown Huntsville, that it was exciting to see the new properties come on line. He continued that they needed a new convention hotel, that it would be a game changer, noting that in hospitality, they said millions of times, "Rising water lifts all boats." He stated that another comment had been that more hotels were needed downtown, that there were about 3500 attendees, and it was hard to find lodging within the downtown center.

Mr. Bohda stated that what he was displaying at this time were the budgets for each of the destination marketing organizations, and Nashville was at the top in the South, that they had been about \$12 million the prior year, but because they had seen tourism bounce back so rapidly, they had decided to put in a little more than 12 million more dollars for 2022, which would be almost back up to their pre-pandemic level of \$30 million. He stated that in the middle of the chart, they would see about \$3.5 million toward Huntsville's marketing. He stated that if Huntsville wished to get to that next stage, they would have to increase the budget to the CVB.

Mr. Bohda stated he would end with a final slide, and he stated it displayed the scores on a 1-to-5 scale, with "1" being "Poor" and "5" being "Excellent." He stated this was overall a 4.9, and on their scale, that was an A+. He stated that, however, to bring it further into contention, many of them were familiar with something called a "Net Promoter Score," an NPS. He stated this was used for all sorts of organizations, to see how people were talking about them in the marketplace. He stated that zero to 30 was good, and over 70 was considered world class. He indicated on the display where Huntsville and Madison County were, and he stated they had a lot to be proud of, that there was so much good going on in the community when it came to the brand of Huntsville and Madison County. He stated that Applied Strategies worked with all sorts of destination marketing organizations throughout the South and throughout the nation, and Huntsville/Madison County had one of the most accomplished and most professional staff and board, that they understood tourism.

Mr. Bohda stated that Huntsville/Madison County was close to being a true year-round destination, not just from business travelers but from leisure as well. He stated leisure trips had soared in 2021 and 2022, and they would continue to do so.

Mr. Bohda stated they had talked about the rising occupancy, and they had talked about the rising average daily rate, and the many amenities they had, whether it would be the breweries, the trails, the new Orion Amphitheater, that they had it all, that the only key that was missing was increased marketing, to get to the next stage. He stated that in the 1980s, Atlanta was the "it" destination; and in the 1990s, it was Dallas; and in the 2000s, it was Charlotte; and in the 2010s, it was Nashville. He stated he firmly believed that the 2020s was Huntsville's "it" destination decade. He continued that because of the staff here and because of the knowledge of tourism, they would get them to be that one "it" destination, so that more young professionals would want to move to Huntsville/Madison County, thereby increasing economic

development.

President Meredith asked if there were any questions for Mr. Bohda.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Kling.

Councilmember Kling stated that in looking at the numbers, they were showing they were kind of lagging behind the others in providing support. He asked if they had taken into account the approximate \$50 million of capital improvement money they had offered to the Civic Center and that had been used.

Mr. Bohda stated the numbers that were shown were just the budgets for the bureaus themselves.

Councilmember Kling stated there might have been some things they had put in that other cities had not, that they had done some parking garage expenditures, to generate hotels, and something extra for Civic Center events.

Mr. Bohda stated that definitely helped, that there was the domino effect there, but the numbers they had shown were toward the marketing efforts, those funds to attract those five different segments of visitors.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Keith.

Councilmember Keith stated that, of course, Nashville's population was a little larger than Huntsville's, and, also, they had an NFL team, and Memphis had an NBA team that was doing very well at this time. He asked if Mr. Bohda's company was seeing nationally that a lot of the comfort for individuals going back had been around sporting events, as well as musical events and/or festivals, and would that be in the understanding that most of these sporting events would be outside, as well as the festivals and music events being outside. He asked if Mr. Bohda thought an investment in that way, as they continued, would have reciprocal value for them, if they continued to invest in those two things.

Mr. Bohda stated that for the rest of the 2020s, he thought it would, just

because everybody wanted to be at an outdoor event. He stated that as they had just seen in the last couple of days, there was a new variant, and people were thinking they wanted to be outside, so the more such events they had, he thought that would play to a certain segment of the population.

Councilmember Keith asked Mr. Bohda what he thought the reasons were, in a discretionary spending perspective, that attracted individuals who were driving.

Mr. Bohda stated it really depended on their stage of life, that if there was a family, they would want family activities and family-friendly hotels, and if there were singles, they would be looking for bars and clubs and outdoor recreation, which was abundant in Madison County.

Councilmember Keith asked if Mr. Bohda thought they attracted more of one group than the other.

Mr. Bohda stated that at this time, according to their numbers, Huntsville was attracting more of the business segment, but that really did not have as much to do with the bureau and their marketing efforts. He stated that in terms of the leisure segment, they thought it was turning into a year-round leisure destination because of the families and because of the young adults, and also because of the buzz. He stated he did not live in Huntsville, but when he told others that they were working with Huntsville/Madison County, their first words were, "That is a great town." He stated he never heard anything negative about Huntsville, because of the planning, because of the community, because of the industry. He stated this was the most educated county in the nation, and people around the world were noticing.

Councilmember Keith asked, in terms of the budget, what it would be like to get 3500 individuals to come to Huntsville. He asked if that was unique, or if it was just, like, rooms and commitments, tickets to the Orion, or what it looked like.

Mr. Bohda stated that those were two separate questions, and one was if they

had the rooms, and that was going to be a primary factor. He continued that the second tier was a question they had asked of their meeting planners, what was the incentive for them to come, and they had said it was good room rates, and also the amenities that were being charged for, whether it would be the rental room for the place, the food and beverage cost. He stated those were the types of incentives the bureau was working on in order to attract more like-minded conferences and conventions.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge asked who had the magic wand to create these 1,000 committable rooms. She asked Mr. Bohda who he would ask to make that happen.

Mr. Bohda stated they would have to talk to a lot of different properties, but what he would say was they would want to go for those large brands that meeting planners were comfortable with, whether it would be the Westin or Hilton, et cetera, those that had the larger footprint hotels that were willing to make the investment into downtown Huntsville. He stated that what they had found was that every hotel that had come to Huntsville had more than made up the investment.

Councilmember Akridge stated they had the Chamber of Commerce that looked for those groups, Downtown Huntsville, Inc., that looked for them, that Shane Davis looked for them, and she asked if the bureau was also looking.

Ms. Judy Ryals, President/CEO of the Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau, appeared before the Council, and she stated that the CVB was a partner with the agencies that had just been named, and that also the Planning Department and the Mayor, and the team that was present, had made so many of these things happen. She stated they really appreciated this, and they just wanted to see some more coming in the future.

Councilmember Akridge asked if they had a site identified for this full-service

hotel. She stated that two years prior, when Councilmember Keith had rattled some cages about the Lodging Tax, they had heard from everyone in the planning business not to do that, that they needed a hotel.

Ms. Ryals stated that the CVB would prefer to have a first-class hotel on the north end of the VBC, connecting to the VBC, just like the Embassy would soon have a more upscale hotel on the south end.

Councilmember Akridge inquired as to the potential for that happening.

Mayor Battle stated there was somewhat of a difference of opinion on this. He stated that when they looked at the hotels in the downtown area, the AC; the Embassy; the Hampton Inn; SpringHill Suites; Homewood Suites; the Hyatt, which might be coming up soon; The Curio; and the Autograph, which would be coming up soon, they were getting about 1200 rooms in the downtown area. He continued that these were not 1200 committable rooms, and that was the problem, not having 1200 committable rooms.

Mayor Battle stated there was the thought that if they had a convention and everyone went to a convention hotel, they would go to the hotel, and they would eat at the hotel, and they would go back to the convention, and then they would leave, and they would never get to the remainder of downtown, that they never would use the restaurants or some of the amenities in the downtown area. He stated there was a little bit of a difference of opinion on some of this because a large hotel sitting in the downtown area would absorb a lot of the average daily rentals that would have been going to some of the secondary sites, when they started looking at the Drury, the Marriott, Hampton Inn, the Radisson, the Westin, and the other hotels in Bridge Street and Providence, that they would have soaked up some of the capacity they could have taken, which would help them to continue to work.

Mayor Battle stated these were the same hotels that had given the City the



money, the Lodging Tax, so there could be a pot of money to bring in sporting events, to bring in all kinds of events that would bring in hotel rooms and hotel nights. He stated he would add that to the amount of money they were spending for the CVB, that he would add the money they were putting with the Sports Commission, because both of them did a very good job of making sure they had people coming to town, staying in town, and spending money in town.

Mayor Battle stated they had probably 60 percent more rooms than they had two or three years prior, and more coming. He stated they were going to work through this very slowly because they did not want to do anything that would be detrimental to those in the city that had brought them to this place, that they were the ones who had provided the tax for them to bring people in, time and time again.

Ms. Ryals stated there was one other point in this, noting that meeting planners oftentimes could go to other communities and sign one or two contracts, and that made it easier for them, and they did not have to worry about transportation, and different things. She stated they had been working with the Mayor and the Administration, and she thought they were on the right track, with some great future plans for the community.

Councilmember Akridge asked Ms. Ryals if they were partnering with the Land Trust, for example, to promote those amenities.

Ms. Ryals stated they worked very closely with them.

Councilmember Akridge stated that something she had brought to them three years prior was the group that specialized in mountain biking, noting that mountain bikers spent a lot of money on local hotels, Airbnb's, or short-term rentals, as well as the beer halls and local restaurants. She stated they had a strong network already existing of people to come to the city.

Ms. Ryals stated they were trying to get all kinds of sporting events more

interested in coming to the city, and she stated part of that was due to the Council planning the great facilities they had, and mountain biking was certainly one of them. She continued that they even had things like motorized surfing coming, motorized skating, that there were some really different events and activities coming in. She stated they were going after all kinds of things, that the CVB was working very closely with the Sports Commission in all the different activities they were bringing in. She stated that sporting events were often long-lasting events, and they were also on weekends oftentimes, and that was helpful to the community because the business community was booking rooms during the week.

Mayor Battle stated they were definitely not against a second convention hotel, but they would move very slowly on it because they wanted to make sure they took care of all the other hotels.

Councilmember Akridge stated that it seemed like this report was to let them know things were looking up, that they still had a wish list of this full-service hotel, and they had reestablished that they needed more of a mix of activities, including sports, and that digital advertising was still the preference. She asked if that was a quick summary.

Ms. Ryals stated they worked with a company that helped to supply information to them, and they changed their marketing based on some of the feedback they got.

Councilmember Akridge stated they were very grateful for all the work the CVB did to bring people to the city, and she asked what citizens could do to help all this growth continue.

Ms. Ryals stated they could invite family and friends to come and visit and get out and enjoy the attractions. She stated there were also probably members of different organizations who could bring their conventions to the city. She stated it

was local people who helped them to bring in almost all of the conventions.

President Meredith stated they had mentioned having the desire for 1,000 rooms that could be used for conferences and conventions, and he asked how many more they needed to have, given the reservation for the non-committable rooms.

Ms. Ryals stated that most hotels were not going to give them more than perhaps 75 percent of their rooms, and that would be if they were very much encouraging them, saying they needed the rooms or they would not be able to book the conference. She stated they would prefer to give them about half, and when they were really needed, they could push them up a little bit. She stated there were conferences that some of their hotel partners knew they wanted to continue bringing back year after year, and they would be more willing to give more of their rooms. She stated this then helped the outlying hotels because that pushed that business out to everybody in the community.

President Meredith stated he agreed with the Mayor that this needed to be done in a way that would not penalize the existing hotels.

Ms. Ryals stated they had been their partners for years and years, and she agreed with him.

President Meredith stated he was very pleased that they were working with all the different entities, particularly the Huntsville Sports Commission, to help drive tourism in the city, and that he looked forward to a mobile unit that could take their materials to where people gathered.

Ms. Ryals stated they would try to make that happen.

President Meredith thanked Ms. Ryals and Mr. Bohda.

President Meredith stated that at this time, there would be a presentation by the North Huntsville Business Association.

Councilmember Keith stated he wanted to give representation to this moment

because he thought it was something to signify the work of the individuals in his community. He stated that to start this off, they would show a short video of some of the conversations they had in the community as they continued to promote Northwest Huntsville, that they had said they wanted to make sure they were partners in the growth of small businesses as they were partners in the growth of big businesses. He stated that approximately a year and a half prior, they had conversations about what they wanted to do in North Huntsville, and that was to make sure they pushed not just the public investment but the private investment, and to actually let the private investment lead the market in their community. He stated he believed the success they had seen in South Huntsville, with the work done by Councilmember Robinson, the roadmap she had given, and working with Mr. Davis and the departments, was that if they went out there and did the work, the City was there to be of support.

Councilmember Keith stated that about a year prior, he had talked to them from this same dais and had said, with the appropriation for the work they had done, they were going to hold off on trying to go after anything else until they felt they were comfortable and ready to give something to the community that everybody could get behind. He stated that the person who was about to speak, Mr. Reggie McKenzie, had been working hard for the past year, and they were about ready to have their application submitted for the Main Street grant, and they had brought on some very big partners because of the work Mr. McKenzie had done, as well as the rest of the community, some of the people they would see speaking in the video.

Councilmember Keith stated they would answer any questions after the presentation.

(The aforementioned video was shown at this time.)

(At the commencement of the video, it was stated, "The North Huntsville Business Association officially opened its doors in November of 2020, with the main

purpose of fostering public and private partnerships, in an effort to drive economic development and vitality throughout the North Huntsville community.")

President Meredith stated that at this time item 20.w on the agenda would be taken out of order.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution authorizing an additional appropriation to the North Huntsville Business Association (NHBA), for the purposes of achieving the designation of a Main Street Alabama Community, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-218)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

Councilmember Keith stated they had taken their time to make this a cohesive perspective about reinvestment in North Huntsville. He stated there were exciting announcements they wanted to make, but they knew it took time, that they could not just throw money at the issue, that they had to get people on board, and they wanted those individuals to care about a community not because they had to but because they wanted to. He stated he wanted to make North Huntsville just like any other place in Huntsville, a place they would all love to live.

Councilmember Keith stated he would turn the floor over to Mr. Reggie McKenzie, President of the North Huntsville Business Association.

Mr. McKenzie stated this had been a long road, that Councilman Showers had initially asked him to step in and kind of guide this process, with no money. He stated he had spent a lot of his own money, which was fine, because he believed in Huntsville, not just North Huntsville. He stated that then Councilman Keith had come in and said they needed some money, and the Mayor and the Council had allocated the first \$15,000, which had helped them get started. He stated that no one

had known COVID was coming, and COVID had kind of delayed them, but in 2020, as they had seen in the video, they were able to get a location and start supporting some other businesses in North Huntsville, and eventually they had gotten \$20,000. He stated that their landlord got all the money the City gave them, so they had to find other ways to do the things they needed to do.

Mr. McKenzie stated they had gotten some things in place, and they had been to four of Main Street's workshops over the last two years, and Main Street had told them they were already Main Street, that they had a director, a place, and public-private partnerships, that they had all the things that met the qualifications.

Mr. McKenzie stated one of the things they had told Main Street was that they had a part-time director who was doing a full-time job.

Mr. McKenzie stated that in May, they would be putting in their application for Main Street, noting there were some requirements that Main Street wanted to make sure they could do. He continued that there were some fees involved, and they had to have a full-time director. He stated that this \$20,000 would not be going toward the director, that it would be going toward making sure they had the other things in place. He stated that they had to have other public-private partnerships. He continued that they had a collaboration with the Committee of 100, that they had been collaborating with them over the last year, that they were on board, and that C12, a Christian business group, was also involved. He stated they had the community engagement, that they needed money to engage the businesses.

Mr. McKenzie stated that most of them had met the director they had at this time, noting that she was doing a good job, working day and night.

Mr. McKenzie stated they appreciated what the City had done, that they were the biggest cheerleaders for the city. He stated they had some naysayers, but he kept telling the folks, even in North Huntsville, that he was not concerned about what did

not happen years ago, that what they were concerned with was what could happen. He stated the City had supported them along the way. He continued that they were aware there had been some commitment for the South Huntsville Business Association, and they had worked with them initially, in the past. He reiterated they were aware there had been some funding, and he stated they were not asking for that type funding at this time, because they wanted to show they were good stewards of the money the City had given them before. He stated that money was used properly, noting they had been through a couple of audits, and everything was in line.

Mr. McKenzie stated what they were asking for at this time was additional funding, to get this funding to help them in putting the application together, that there were some things they needed to do, with the video and with some other community engagements, and some other things they were going to have to have in place. He continued that there were some fees for Main Street. He stated they needed this additional funding to complete that process. He stated they knew Huntsville was the Star of Alabama, and they wanted to be the North Star of Alabama, and this funding would help them get there.

Councilmember Keith stated he wanted to speak to some of the success they had over the year, just working hard. He asked if Mr. McKenzie could speak about some of the partners they had, how they had signed on a number of companies.

Mr. McKenzie stated they had about 20 to 25 at this time, noting that Google Fiber had been really supporting them, and that they had Huntsville Utilities on board, and Redstone Federal Credit Union. He stated Redstone wanted to make a bigger commitment, that they had said when they got Main Street, they were going to do more.

Mr. McKenzie stated they had the folks out there that were ready to make that commitment, like the City had made, but they needed to keep the ball rolling. He

stated that that \$20,000 was not much, and, like he had said, what they got at this time only paid the rent. He stated their facility was not second-class, that they were doing it like Huntsville would do it.

Mr. McKenzie stated that they had about 20 to 25 members, and they had some big sponsors, but they had some bigger sponsors who were waiting, and they had met with Meta, and some others, and when they got Main Street, a lot of those were going to start putting up funding toward this effort. He continued that when they got Main Street, they knew the City was going to do more, so they were probably not asking for enough at this time, but they just wanted to ask for that 20,000, to get the application in, so they could move this process forward.

Councilmember Keith asked Mr. Shane Davis, Director of Urban and Economic Development, to come to a microphone.

Councilmember Keith stated that for those persons who might not know, that for North Huntsville and South Huntsville, they talked about equity and equality, that they wanted success in all the main corridors, with the Parkway being one very important corridor for the city of Huntsville, and, obviously, out west, University, and continuing down 72.

Councilmember Keith asked Mr. Davis if he could speak to opportunities and why this time was probably the most golden opportunity time frame for the investment opportunities for North Parkway.

Mr. Davis stated that on behalf of the Mayor's office, he had been part of the North Huntsville Business Association since it was a conceptual idea. He stated he had to brag on this group, noting that they had come a long way. He stated they had first started meeting in a church, just to have a meeting with local business. He stated there was what Mr. McKenzie had done, in helping to put this together, noting that no one had had any money, and they had come a long way.



Mr. Davis stated that the major corridors were important, with Memorial Parkway and University Drive being the two most important. He continued that if they started to add that up, it was probably 80 cents on the dollar of sales tax. He stated that the little pods throughout the community provided the addition, but all the big revenue streams came across those major arterial corridors, so it was important for them to keep them healthy. He stated that four or five years prior, with what they now knew as the "MidCity District," he had stood before the Council and said they had to think of these corridors like an orchard, that a lot of times they had to prune trees, and sometimes they had to cut them down and plant new trees. He stated that was what they had been doing on Memorial Parkway.

(Mr. Davis made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Davis stated that North Huntsville was no different. He stated that on the displayed map, the portion in green was the Builders Square project that was under design, and that in the summer they would start construction on the roads, and they would soon see some buildings coming forward. He stated they were making some progress in North Huntsville, noting that it had been long overdue for this community. He stated he was proud of this portion of the community because what he had seen in his 22 years was that they now had a district full of what they were doing, and they wanted to do more. He stated they had always had that, and that was why they were seeing new housing starts and multi-family starts, and they were seeing some gains in commercial along the Parkway, but they could do more, and, certainly, the North Huntsville Business Association was a huge part of that.

Mr. Davis stated that all the areas in pink on the display were opportunity areas, and he stated this would just add to the marketability of this corridor, as it had along South Parkway, where they had seen such success.

Mr. Davis stated that the Main Street program had been heavily discussed

during the budget process. He continued that the North Huntsville Business Association had not been quite ready, that they were marching their way through, getting through the State process, and the City had said that when they were ready, they would fund as they had in South Huntsville, and that was why they were before the Council at this time. He stated they had done what they needed to do, that they had taken it as far as they could without help with some seed funding, like Mr. McKenzie had said, to finish the application and finish the fees. He continued that they felt very comfortable they would get this designation, which would only strengthen the ability to continue with positive change on the Parkway.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated that the resolution said this was for matching funds of \$20,000, and she asked if that meant the partnerships that were already part of the organization.

Councilmember Keith stated he could give clarity on the writing of that, that that was on him, and he would apologize. He stated that the "matching" was that they had already put up about \$20,000 in investment, in preparation, that they had actually covered all of the site schematics, review of the site, because of the time frame they had. He stated that was where they really wanted to be, and in that time frame, they had to pay for it ahead of time. He stated that the \$20,000 that was covered in this would go basically to making it pretty, making the application pretty, noting they had seen all of the things that were outside the scope of the things they had already covered to make the application what it was.

Councilmember Akridge asked Mr. McKenzie if it was correct that it enumerated marketing, engagement, and a consultant.

Mr. McKenzie replied in the affirmative. He stated it was for a website and some branding, that they were doing some rebranding. He stated he had kind of paid

for the initial website out of his pocket, but they had some professional consultants involved that were really going to help them get this to where they needed it.

Councilmember Akridge stated she was always leery of consultants, that they typically just took one's watch and told them what time it was. She asked if "consultant" meant a contractor to help them with the marketing.

Mr. McKenzie stated they were using the one Main Street used, that they put together the branding, the website, that they were using them to get them off the ground on this. He stated this was a company that did work for a lot of Main Street designees.

Councilmember Akridge inquired as to what their total budget would be for the year.

Mr. McKenzie stated it would be \$42,000 or \$43,000.

Councilmember Akridge asked President Meredith what they had appropriated for the West Huntsville Main Street program.

President Meredith stated they did not appropriate money for West Huntsville for this current year, that they were going to revisit it at the midpoint of the year, when Ms. Smith did the midyear review.

Councilmember Akridge asked if they were also getting some foundational work done on this without the money.

President Meredith stated that they currently had the Main Street designation, but they were looking at other things. He stated it was just the use of the money that would be different.

Councilmember Akridge thanked Mr. McKenzie for the presentation, noting that she knew the two of them had been working very hard on this.

Mr. McKenzie stated it was a gold mine having Ms. Hardin's expertise, that what she had been doing had really carried the water for them.

Councilmember Akridge stated she would like for people to know a little bit more about Mr. McKenzie, since this was a public meeting. She stated she understood he had been a business owner himself, in the past, and he had been on the Hospital Board.

Mr. McKenzie stated he had actually come to Huntsville to play football, at Alabama A&M. He stated he was retired military, that he had been selected for colonel in 2010, that his wife had gotten ill, and he retired, and he had come back to Huntsville. He continued that he had actually never left because he was in Birmingham and Fort Benning, so he was kind of still in Alabama, and he could go back and forth. He stated he had served on the Huntsville Hospital Board; and he also owned a restaurant, called "Shark's Seafood & Chicken," which they had asked him to put out at NASA, inside the facility where they monitored the Space Station. He stated it was not open at this time, because of COVID, but they were looking at reopening it. He continued that he was also the Executive Director of the Harris Home for Children, noting that he had been on that board for 32 years. He stated the Director had left, so as Chair, he had taken it over for three months, and it had now been three years, because of COVID. He stated he had made that commitment.

Councilmember Akridge stated she thought it was important for people to know he had this depth of experience, and she thanked him for his service to the country, as well as to the community.

Councilmember Akridge inquired as to Ms. Hardin.

Mr. McKenzie stated that she was retired from Raytheon, that she had been over the Small Business Division at Raytheon, that he believed she had been there 35 years. He stated they could not have found a better person who knew the business community, and the connections she was making with the Chamber and other folks she knew in the community.

Councilmember Akridge stated she loved the fact they were talking, within the community, to look forward to what could happen, what was next.

Mr. McKenzie stated that was their motto. He stated they knew what was possible, and that was what they were looking for.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Kling.

Councilmember Kling stated he had known Mr. McKenzie for several years, and he was certainly a leader in the community and had done more than his share of civic duties. He stated he saw this expenditure as being sort of like seed money, that he knew Mr. McKenzie very well, and he knew he was going to water it and take care of it, nurture it, and he thought they were going to see it blossom into some good things for North Huntsville, as well as the city as a whole.

Councilmember Kling stated to Mr. McKenzie that he wished him well, and he stated he knew he would do great things with this money.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Keith.

Councilmember Keith stated that Councilmember Robinson was not present at the meeting, but he wanted to say that she had set a great example as to what it was to understand the private side of this, that she had great partnerships, and they had a great example to look at in South Huntsville, that they, without a doubt, had made an impact on the corridor, the Parkway. He stated they had taken lead from Councilmember Robinson on their perspectives of what their standards should be.

Councilmember Keith stated he would say to his colleagues, as had been said in the video, that they should invest in places where people had pride enough to do the work.

President Meredith stated to Mr. McKenzie that he had made a comment about wanting to operate the North Huntsville Business Association like the City of Huntsville, and he stated they were a part of the city of Huntsville.

Mr. McKenzie stated they just wanted to be the North Star, inside the big star.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-218, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Public Hearings to be Held.

President Meredith stated it was the time and place in the meeting for a public hearing on the zoning of 36.57 acres of land lying north of University Drive and west of Wayne Road to Highway Business C-4 District and Residence 2 District, which hearing was set at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Thomas Nunez, Manager of Planning Services.

(Mr. Nunez made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Nunez stated that this property was located north of University Drive and west of Wayne Road, and it was approximately 36.57 acres. He stated the petitioner was seeking to zone the property Highway Business C-4 District and Residence 2 District.

President Meredith stated the public hearing was open, and he asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to address the Council on this particular matter.

President Meredith stated that seeing none, the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of Ordinance No. 22-75, zoning 36.57 acres of land lying north of University Drive and west of Wayne Road to Highway Business C-4 District and Residence 2 District, which ordinance was introduced at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-75)

Said motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge asked Mr. Nunez if, since this was two different zones, this would be a good example of a place they could offer as a planned development, right up front, so all those uses could be worked on as a unified plan.

Mr. Nunez replied in the negative, stating that with a planned development, they had to establish a bottom line zoning district, and then transition to the planned development. He stated that, however, to her point, there were some opportunities where they had some mixed-development in zoning, that they had done it at the Haysland property, doing various districts, that they had the opportunity to do this without establishing a PD. He stated that the PD process required them to establish a bottom line zoning district, which then, therefore, established the land use intensity ratios.

Mr. Nunez stated that, conceptually, there could be the opportunity to allow for some mixed-use opportunities, that this would be the chance of having some mixed-use opportunities in two different districts, noting that the C-4 allowed for a significant number of different uses, and R2 allowed for multiple styles of residential usage as well.

Councilmember Akridge stated that they would be accomplishing the same goal. She stated that perhaps outside of this meeting, they could talk about just skipping to PDs, so people could have that flexibility, that they would not have to go from this zoning to a rezoning to accomplish the same goal.

President Meredith asked if there was any further discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Ordinance No. 22-75, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated it was the time and place in the meeting for a public

hearing on the zoning of 3.58 acres of land lying on the south side of Cap Adkins Road and east of Norton Road to Residence 1 District, which hearing was set at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Nunez.

(Mr. Nunez made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Nunez stated this property was located on the south side of Cap Adkins Road and east of Norton Road, and the property was overall 3.58 acres. He stated that the petitioner was seeking to zone this property Residence 1 District, as it had been recently annexed.

President Meredith stated the public hearing was open, and he asked if there was anyone from the public who would like to address the Council on this particular issue.

Ms. Joy Johnson, West Arbor Drive, appeared before the Council, stating that on the display, it appeared there were a lot of trees, and she asked what was going to happen to those trees, what was going to happen to all the biodiversity in that spot. She asked if anyone cared about preservation of biodiversity, or if they were only caring about growth and making money, as the bottom line.

President Meredith asked if there was anyone else from the public who would like to address the Council on this particular matter.

President Meredith stated that seeing none, the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of Ordinance No. 22-77, zoning 3.58 acres of land lying on the south side of Cap Adkins Road and east of Norton Road to Residence 1 District, which ordinance was introduced at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-77)

Said motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.



President Meredith asked Mr. Nunez if he would like to address this issue.

Mr. Nunez stated this was a proposal for a single-family residence of one property owner. He stated that to answer the question about caring about the environment, that absolutely they cared. He continued that within that, they also had to balance property rights, that they could not just take someone's property and preserve a significant amount, that of that property overall, they had to balance those particular requests. He stated that this property was one single property owner, and they would evaluate it, and if it was within the Slope Development District, they would have to abide by those areas, but, overall, this was for the use of one, single-family home on this property, which would probably maintain a majority of the trees that were existing.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Ordinance No. 22-77, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated it was the time and place in the meeting for a public hearing on the zoning of 2.22 acres of land lying on the south side of Old Hwy 20 and east of Greenbrier Pkwy to Commercial Industrial Park District, which hearing was set at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Nunez.

(Mr. Nunez made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Nunez stated that this property was located on the south side of Old Highway 20 and east of Greenbrier Parkway, and it was overall 2.22 acres. He stated that the petitioner was seeking to zone this property Commercial Industrial Park. He stated this was recently annexed, and this was consistent with the adjacent property zoning.

President Meredith stated that the hearing was open, and he asked if anyone

from the public would like to address the Council on this particular matter.

President Meredith stated that seeing none, the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of Ordinance No. 22-79, zoning 2.22 acres of land lying on the south side of Old Hwy 20 and east of Greenbrier Pkwy to Commercial Industrial Park District, which ordinance was introduced at the February 10, 2022, Regular Council Meeting. as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-79)

Said motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Ordinance No. 22-79, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated it was the time and place in the meeting for a public hearing on the vacation of a right-a-way along Cecil Ashburn Drive, which hearing was set at the February 24, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Nunez.

(Mr. Nunez made a PowerPoint presentation.)

Mr. Nunez stated that this was a portion of Cecil Ashburn Drive, that during the construction and expansion of Cecil Ashburn, this property had been deeded to the City of Huntsville, and at this time, they no longer needed this. He stated that it was a laydown yard during the construction, and now that the construction was completed, they were seeking to vacate this property and deed it back to the Land Trust, for further preservation and recreational activities.

President Meredith stated that the hearing was open, and he asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Council on this particular matter.

President Meredith stated that hearing none, the hearing was closed.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Public Hearings to

be Set.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution to set a public hearing for PAK Holding, LLC, d/b/a/ Huntsville Brews Cruise, for the operation of one special shuttle, at the April 14, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-188)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated there were no Agenda Related Public Comments, so they would move on to Mayor Comments.

President Meredith recognized Mayor Battle.

Mayor Battle stated that with spring coming on, activities had picked up, that every weekend they were seeing more and more traffic at Big Spring Park, as well as John Hunt Park, and they were seeing more people coming to Huntsville and using hotel rooms and spending money in restaurants. He stated it was great to see people coming to the community.

Mayor Battle stated that on the prior day, they had two ribbon-cuttings, that TriVector had moved to larger facilities and Encompass Health had opened its new rehabilitation hospital on 72 East, at Moores Mill. He stated they would be hiring about 300 workers, that they had a beautiful rehabilitation hospital out there, with 85 rooms.

Mayor Battle stated that a number of conferences had come to town the past week, that Redstone Arsenal had their Advanced Planning Briefing; and the Alabama Auto Manufacturers Association Logistics Conference had happened on the previous day; and they had the Alabama Supreme Court Justices in town, and they had mock trial proceedings at the Von Braun Center.

Mayor Battle stated it had been a very busy time, that on the previous evening, there had been a Huntsville Police Department recruitment event, and they hosted individuals interested in becoming officers. He stated, for persons interested in becoming an officer, they were hiring at this time, and they should contact the Huntsville Police Department concerning this.

Mayor Battle stated that one of the great things he got to go to each year was the presentation of the Service Awards at Columbia High School. He stated that many people did not realize that 25 percent of the student population at Columbia High School was in ROTC. He continued that Colonel Thurman was commanding that unit, and he did a fantastic job, that he built young people up into being the kind of people they needed to be. He stated he was really proud of the young people who were participating in ROTC there.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Councilmember Comments.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated that a lot of people cared about what happened to the land, that one had to own it to be able to control it and look into what kind of zoning it was eligible for after being annexed. She stated that the Land Trust had been started by neighbors because they cared about what happened to the land, and she encouraged everyone to continue their membership and to continue giving generously. She stated there was a matching fund called to action to acquire some property near A&M University that would complete the entire mountain as public space. She stated that the City Council appropriated through its budget some public money, so it was like tithing to the Land Trust. She asked that persons continue to tithe to the Land Trust because it was full of people who cared about biodiversity and the land. She stated this was a great way to counter-balance private property rights,

which were protected by the Constitution, and everyone on the dais took an oath to protect the Constitution. She stated zoning was something that some people who were strict Constitutionalsists thought was a taking, but she believed they had moved past that at this time.

Councilmember Akridge thanked everyone who continued to drive gently in the city, after her town hall related to traffic safety. She stated that both the Police and Traffic Engineering were continuing to meet with some of the people who had called in and written. She thanked everyone for not following too close, noting that that was the primary reason that officers said was the cause of accidents that happened.

Councilmember Akridge thanked citizens for tuning into the Planning Commission meetings every fourth Tuesday of the month. She stated that the agenda was posted online, on the Monday night before the fourth Tuesday. She stated that persons could look at the agenda and see if there was something there they would like to know more about, and they could contact the Planning staff or tune into the meetings to learn, first, how those things went. She stated that was where people struggled with issues and worked with citizens to do the right thing for each person's private property.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Kling.

Councilmember Kling stated he was sad to announce the recent passing of George Bennett, noting that he had been very much involved in the community, that he was the owner and operator of Bennett's Nursery, and he knew everything about plants, that plants were not just his business, that they were his passion.

Councilmember Kling stated that Mr. Bennett was a big supporter of WLRH public radio, and he was also very active in the Huntsville Jaycees. He stated the community was certainly going to miss George Bennett, that he was a great citizen for

the community.

Councilmember Kling stated he believed everyone had been surprised by the percentages of the Hispanic community population in the city, and he thought this was a very important part of the community, and he wanted to wave a flag and make sure they were doing everything they could to assure that language barriers at City Hall were being dealt with, that anyone from the Hispanic community, or any other nationality, who came to Huntsville and came to City Hall would be able to deal with the language issues in order to obtain City services. He stated he believed they had seen in the last Census data, when they were doing the redistricting process, just how big the Hispanic population was in the community. He stated they might need to look at budget-related issues concerning this for the next fiscal year, to make sure they were doing what they needed to do to assure that their departments were accessible to those persons.

Councilmember Kling asked Mr. Davis if he could provide the Council an update on the Holmes Avenue bicycle corridor project that would be going from UAH into downtown, as to what the timetable was.

Mr. Davis stated that the Council had passed a design agreement with Schoel Engineering approximately 14 months prior. He stated the project would start downtown, at Church Street, and would go to Sparkman Drive, into Research Park and the UAH campus area. He stated that construction for that project would most likely be split into two phases, from downtown to Jordan Lane and from Jordan Lane to Sparkman, because there was going to have to be some coordination with UAH, coming through the middle of their campus, and the timing, as to how the utilities would get moved. He stated it would probably be faster to do it in two phases. He stated that the Engineering Department was continuing to work on the design, and he believed it was about 60 percent, noting that it had slowed somewhat

due to Holmes being a major east-west corridor through the city, so there were a lot of utilities. He continued that they were working with different fiber companies, telecommunications, Huntsville Utilities, and others, allowing them time to determine where they needed to relocate, to see if there was any right-of-way they needed to purchase before construction,

Mr. Davis stated it would be a complete street, that it would have either 8-foot or 10-foot walking paths on each side, dedicated bike lanes, and then certainly travel lanes for vehicular traffic. He stated they would carry out their decorative streetlights from downtown into the UAH/Research Park corridor.

Mr. Davis stated he could provide an update on this at the next Council meeting if the Council desired.

Councilmember Kling stated that at the prior Council meeting, there had been some discussion about what it would take to supply the training and the supplying of first responders with Narcan, the drug. He stated that since that time, there had been a big national news story about Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where someone was selling bad dope. He stated that, of course, all dope was bad, but this was very sinister stuff that was being sold, and the emergency responders that had come on the scene had used Narcan in order to revive, and basically to save, the people who had overdosed, who he believed were West Point cadets. He stated that had kind of brought home the importance of this, and the response time the responders had.

Councilmember Kling asked Mr. Hamilton where they were as far as trying to get these first responders up on this.

Mr. Hamilton stated that when they talked about getting Narcan supplied to first responders, that, obviously, there were multiple different departments and agencies that equaled first responders. He stated that, as Councilmember Kling had noted, the Huntsville Police Department had been supplied with it, and HEMSI had

also gotten it, although they were not a City department, that they were just aware they had received a supply.

Mr. Hamilton stated that Huntsville Fire had received a small amount. He stated, as to the difference between Police and Fire, that there were two different State agencies that had programs supplying that, and the Police were eligible through one agency's program, and they were able to get the supply. He stated that the program for which the Fire Department was eligible just did not have enough to supply everybody across the state. He stated they had gotten a very small amount, not nearly enough to even begin outfitting the Fire Department. He stated they believed there would be an opportunity very soon to get more. He stated that Chief McFarlen had an officer who was working on this directly.

Mr. Hamilton stated if they were not able to quickly get what they needed for the Fire Department through the State, they would just begin procuring their own. He stated he expected that within the next few weeks, they would know exactly the direction they were headed and be able to acquire that.

Mr. Hamilton stated there were some differences, also, when there were trained medical professionals, and in this case, EMTs, within the Fire Department, that they certainly had protocols they had to follow in using that sort of thing, and it was different when it was laymen who had been supplied it and used it in emergency conditions. He stated they were going through the appropriate protocols they needed for their processes, and the Chief had a good handle on that, and it was just a matter of procuring it. He stated he did not have a price at this point, but from the information he was getting, he did not believe the budget was going to be a challenge, that it was just a matter of having the supply set up, and not only the initial procurement, but also a program to sustain it.

Mr. Hamilton stated he believed they had a good plan for moving forward to



get the Fire Department supplied, and they also had to monitor the program the Police Department was getting supplied from, and if that did not have a long-term sustainment piece to it, then they would need to keep them supplied as well. He stated both of these departments, obviously, mattered to them, noting that they had already had people in the city whose lives had been saved because the Police and/or HEMSI had it available on a scene and were able to administer it. He stated it was an absolutely important program, and both Chiefs agreed with getting it supplied and getting people trained properly.

Councilmember Kling stated he certainly agreed with Mr. Hamilton about training properly, that they did not want to go into it without that. He stated they were professional, and he believed they would adapt to the training. He stated that one of the things that really stuck out about the emergency responders was that they could be anywhere in the city in well under five minutes, with their response time in the geographical areas they had. He stated they hoped it never came to it, but he believed they all would rather have them prepared and have them save a life than to have a life be lost because someone could not get there in time.

Councilmember Kling asked Mr. Hamilton if he had any idea about how long it would be until they would be on board with this.

Mr. Hamilton stated he could not answer that at this point in time, that he just did not know, in terms of what the supply chain was going to provide, but he did not think it would be very long, that he thought it would happen within the next few weeks, or a couple of months, that they were working toward that. He stated that for the vast majority of these incidents, the Police and Fire were there together, and because the Police Department already had it through their program with the State, there was Narcan on the scene the vast majority of the time, so there would be the opportunity to administer it if it were necessary.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Keith.

Councilmember Keith thanked President Meredith for announcing the meeting on April 20th, noting he was excited to have a conversation around the perspective of trying to make sure they had reform and consideration of proactive and efficient criminal justice reform that supported the citizens, as well as giving support to the police officers, so they could both do their jobs and enjoy their time as citizens in the city, and not being punitive but being effective.

Councilmember Keith stated he would be holding a town hall on the following Tuesday, at 5:30 p.m., and he was excited to discuss economic development coming to Northwest Huntsville, and also their overall plan to finish out the perspective of some of the developments they had at Johnson, and also to discuss Builders Square, what they were doing and what they planned on doing moving forward. He stated this would also be to meet some new District 1 residents, because of the change in the maps and the district lines. He stated they would be excited to have those individuals, who would, without a doubt, be in the best district in Huntsville. He stated that this meeting would be held at the House of Hope and Restoration, off of Grizzard Road.

Councilmember Keith stated their spring cleanup would be on April 9th, from 9 until 11. He stated that every year they did something special, that they had started with just cleanup, and they had ended up painting a mural all the way down Blue Spring, and this year they would have something special as well.

Councilmember Keith stated that Mr. Crawford had stated at the last Council meeting that he would like for someone to follow him up to Brooklyn to get perspectives on integration of police perspectives, community accountability, and policy that supported cohesion in community policing, and he stated he would be going up with Mr. Crawford and his organization, to learn from the Peacemakers of Brooklyn, to learn the progressive perspectives by which they could tailor those

things in integrating individuals into the community, so that they were proactive and made connections between the citizens and the police officers.

Councilmember Keith stated his hat went off to Mr. Crawford, that he was really passionate about making a connection between Huntsville's wonderful police department and the citizens that was positive. He stated he was glad Mr. Crawford had challenged him and said there were things they could learn from others, and he was excited to learn with him, someone who cared about North Huntsville, and, really, Huntsville as a whole, as much as he did.

President Meredith thanked Ms. Emily Peck for the opportunity to address her State and Local Government class at the University of Alabama Huntsville earlier in the week. He stated the class was fantastic, that they had asked great interactive questions, and it was a pleasure and honor to share the panel with Chairman Dale Strong and Madison City Councilwoman Maura Wroblewski.

President Meredith stated he had the opportunity earlier in the week to tour the North Huntsville YMCA Child Development Center, and he stated the work that Adrianna Nichols had done there was fantastic, that it was a first-rate organization and a first-rate, well-run program. He stated he would love to see this expand, and hopefully the Council would help him make sure Ms. Nichols would have the opportunity to expand that program and serve even more people.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Finance Committee Report.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution authorizing expenditures for payment, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-189)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling and was unanimously adopted by

the Council members present.

President Meredith asked Councilmember Keith if he had a report at this time.

Councilmember Keith stated they had a great meeting, and he stated that at this time Ms. Penny Smith, Director of Finance, had a report, as to their status and some considerations moving forward, as they got ready for the midyear budget review.

Ms. Smith stated she had just a brief overview of their financial performance. She stated that the financial performance of the General Fund of the City was strong, that Sales and Use Taxes were up over 14 percent, over the prior year collections, as of the end of February. She stated that 41 percent of the fiscal year had elapsed since October 1. She stated most of the other revenue streams were also up over the prior year, including Property Taxes; Licenses; and SSUT, Simplified Sellers Use Tax. She stated that Lodging Taxes were also doing well, with a 45 percent increase over the prior year. She stated they should remember that was during the pandemic, but they were up 8 percent over FY 2020, which was pre-pandemic levels.

Ms. Smith stated that the City was still making up for the slower growth in revenue over the pandemic years, noting they had been in this for a while, and they were still making up, that they were growing at a rate of around 6 percent to 8 percent prior to the pandemic, and they were at this time making up that growth, as they moved into Fiscal Year 2022.

Ms. Smith stated that Department Expenditures in the General Fund were well within budgets, which she noted included the encumbrances.

Ms. Smith stated that this led her into talking a little bit about the midyear budget process. She stated that analysis would begin in earnest in just a week or two, that they were almost midway through the fiscal year. She stated this was an internal process, that they did not meet with the departments, nor did they have outside

agencies make submissions for adjustments to their allocations. She stated they looked to their known areas of concern, noting that fuel costs were rising at this time, so they would look at the department budgets across that. She stated they also looked at opportunities, as well as challenges, that were in front of them across the city.

Ms. Smith stated that given the timing of their bank reconciliations and everything that had to happen, and the analysis that had to happen, she did not expect to have anything until May, as far as making a presentation.

Councilmember Keith stated they had probably all talked about perspectives of midyear changes, noting he did not like to use the word "pet projects," so he would just say perspectives of projects, perhaps things that had come up. He stated it had been brought up in the meeting that they provide those perspectives directly to Ms. Smith, that if a Council member saw something they wanted to make a change in, invest in, that they give that perspective to Ms. Smith directly so that the Finance Committee could consider it as a whole.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated to Ms. Smith that as she did her midyear review, she would like two numbers, which she thought would be pretty simple. She stated she would like to know the percentage of the budget that included residential property tax and commercial property tax. She stated her goal was to help people understand, when they got mad at her, or at anyone else, and said that they paid their property taxes so they wanted "x," that while property taxes were important, property taxes did not pay their bills, that of all the revenue, at this time property tax was about 20 percent. She stated she would like confirmation if that was still hovering around 20 percent of the budget or if that was changing. She stated they had done a good job of getting people to think about buying local, spending local, because the sales tax was what paid their bills. She stated she would really like to

emphasize to people that property taxes were not what paid the bills, so she would like those two numbers.

Councilmember Keith stated that in their Finance meeting, they had discussed that there were some projects where there was some level of uncertainty concerning the funding source, how much they had committed. He stated that of the projects going on, such as support that had been given to the administrative building at Max Luther, if there was any change in consideration, to have those direct conversations with Ms. Smith. He stated he would suggest that if anyone saw anything like this in the next two months, they should just go directly to Ms. Smith because she knew all the numbers.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Kling.

Councilmember Kling asked if it was correct that they should submit their proposal directly to Ms. Smith and not through the Chairman.

Councilmember Keith stated that was correct. He stated he was suggesting that they should have a conversation with Ms. Smith first.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Board Appointments to be Voted On.

President Meredith stated he would remind the Council Members that items 15.c and 15.f would require a four-fifths vote of the Council.

President Meredith read and introduced a resolution appointing Amanda Burns to the Community Development Citizens Advisory Council, Place 1, to the seat previously held by Richard Mulholland, for a 3-year term to expire April 14, 2025, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-190)

President Meredith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Keith and was unanimously adopted by

the Council members present.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution reappointing Keith Klaus to the Community Development Citizens Advisory Council, Place 2 (his current seat), for a 3-year term to expire April 14, 2025, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-191)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution reappointing Billy Lenox to the Community Development Citizens Advisory Council, Place 3 (his current seat), for a 3-year term to expire April 14, 2025, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-192)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution reappointing Harold Kemp to the Community Development Citizens Advisory Council, Place 4 (his current seat), for a 3-year term to expire April 14, 2025, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-193)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith read and introduced a resolution reappointing Joanne Wherley to the Bingo Review Committee, to her current seat, for a 2-year term to expire April 8, 2024, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-194)

President Meredith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution reappointing Fred Rodrigue to the Bingo Review Committee, to his current seat, for a 2-year term to expire April 8, 2024, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-195)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith asked if there were any board nominations from the floor.

Councilmember Kling stated he believed they had all received an email stating that Brenda Miller had resigned from the Bingo Review Committee, due to illness.

Councilmember Kling nominated John Beard for appointment to the Bingo Review Committee, to fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Brenda Miller, for the remainder of a vacant 2-year term to expire April 8, 2023.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Legal Department Items/Transactions.

President Meredith moved for approval of Resolution No. 22-111, consenting to the vacation of a right-a-way along Cecil Ashburn Drive, which resolution was introduced at the February 24, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-111)

Said motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of Ordinance No. 22-112, vacating a right-a-way along Cecil Ashburn Drive, which ordinance was introduced at the



February 24, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-112)

Said motion was duly seconded by President Meredith and was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated that the next item on the agenda was Unfinished Business Items for Action, and that item 19.a had been deleted.

President Meredith stated there would be a recess at this time, until 7:30 p.m.

(Recess.)

President Meredith reconvened the meeting.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was New Business Items for Consideration or Action.

President Meredith stated that to be held from the consolidation were items 20.d, 20.e, 20.f, 20.g, 20.i, and 20.p.

President Meredith moved for consolidation and adoption of the following items, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Keith and was unanimously approved by the Council members present:

Resolution authorizing travel expenses, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-196)

Resolution authorizing the acceptance of donations, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-197)

Ordinance amending Budget Ordinance No. 21-867 by changing appropriated funding for various departments and funds, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-198)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the City of Huntsville and Garver, L.L.C., for Land Surveying Services for Sanitary Sewer Manhole Mapping, Project No. 71-22-SP23, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-203)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Facilities Solutions Agreement between the City of Huntsville and Cintas Corporation, for Uniform and Work Wear Rental and Laundry Service, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-205)

Resolution authorizing the City Attorney to settle claim of Joshua A. Patrick, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-206)

Resolution authorizing the City Attorney to settle claim of Anthony Kramer, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-207)

Resolution authorizing the City Attorney to settle claim of Christopher Boster, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-208)

Resolution authorizing the City Clerk-Treasurer to invoke Southern States Bank Letter of Credit No. 500073652, for Crown Creek Subdivision, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-209)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Pricing Supplement between the City of Huntsville and TransUnion Risk and Alternative Data Solutions, Inc., as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-210)

Resolution authorizing the City of Huntsville to enter into an agreement with The Ferguson Group, for Grant Writing Services for the Pedestrian Access and Redevelopment Corridor (PARC) Project, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-212)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the

City of Huntsville and John C. Calhoun State Community College, for the Facilitation of EMT Program Training, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-213)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with Mobile Communications America, on behalf of Emergency Management, for siren activation software maintenance and service, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-214)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Facility Use Agreement between the City of Huntsville and Alabama Wildlife Federation, Inc., as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-215)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Facility Use Agreement between the City of Huntsville and Keel Point, LLC., as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-216)

Ordinance amending Budget Ordinance No. 21-867 by changing the authorized personnel strength in a department and fund, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-217)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Special Employee Agreement between the City of Huntsville and Ronnie Dodson, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-219)

Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Special Employee Agreement between the City of Huntsville and Daniel Shea, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-220)

President Meredith stated the Council would now consider the items that had been held from the consolidation.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the City of Huntsville and Schoel Engineering,

Company, Inc., for Engineering Services for The Village at Max Luther Development, Project No. 71-22-SP24, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-199)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Keith.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Shane Davis, Director of Urban and Economic Development.

Mr. Davis stated this was the design contract for the public infrastructure improvements for the redevelopment of Builders Square. He stated there would be two roads, and they would "T" in the middle of the intersection, as he had shown in several previous presentations. He stated they would be divided boulevard style, with grass medians, with landscaping, and decorative streetlights on the exterior sidewalks. He continued that this would also include the design of business center signage, both for Max Luther and the Parkway. He stated that the contract amount was \$216,000, and they were currently anticipating having the design completed by early August, and they would go straight into construction.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Keith.

Councilmember Keith stated to Mr. Davis that this was great work, and he thanked Councilmember Akridge and Mayor Battle for their support for this project, noting that it was going to be big for his community, and there was a commitment to do it right and to do it at a level they could be proud of. He stated this would be the lead conversation for his town hall on the following Tuesday, that people were really excited about this. He stated this was going to be something special that he believed the School System would be proud of, as well as Huntsville would be proud of it.

Mr. Davis stated he wanted to thank the Council for supporting and believing in the Administration. He stated there were times when he came before the Council

with a crazy idea, to cause change, and this was one of those that had now fallen into place. He stated they were aware of how progressive and aggressive he was in creating change, especially in a Memorial Parkway corridor, and he stated this had turned out to be better than he had expected. He stated he had just known it needed to be done, that they needed to get control and figure out how to redevelop that area.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-199, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Amended and Restated Agreement between the City of Huntsville and RSM Design, for Architectural Graphic Design Services for Cummings Research Park, Project No. 71-22-SPO4, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-200)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Akridge.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis stated this was just the amendment of some small typo language in a contract, that the overall contract remained the same, and it was for the design of new gateway signage and pylon signage for Cummings Research Park. He stated those had not been changed out in almost 40 years. He continued that it was wayfinding signage, new gateway signage, going all through both the east and west park. He stated the contract originally had "engineering services," but this was more architectural and logo and design. He stated the main body of this change was changing from "engineering" to "architectural and design." He stated the amounts and the dates all stayed the same.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated she recalled the discussion about a font style,

and since she was on the board of Cummings Research Park, she thought they had finished with this. She asked if someone was more comfortable with making sure it said "architectural" rather than "engineering."

Mr. Davis stated that would essentially be the services that were going to be rendered, and the product they would get back. He stated that as they went through this process, it would be an iterative process. He stated that, of course, they would go through the Research Park Board to get their comments. He stated there would be two or three stylistic designs, and they would start to weigh those down until they got to a final concept of rebranding and new signage for Research Park, and then the company would finish the plans, such that the City could bid that work and actually get it constructed. He stated the funding for this would be coming out of Research Park funds, both for the design and the construction.

President Meredith asked if there was any further discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-200, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute Final Change Order No. 1 to the agreement between the City of Huntsville and Wiregrass Construction Company, Inc., for Resurfacing of Residential Streets-2020, Phase II, Project No. 71-20-RR02, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-201)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton stated that what was before the Council at this time was Change Order No. 1 and Final, to close out the final accounting for the Resurfacing, Phase II, Fiscal Year 2020. He stated that this was a contract the Council had

approved late in Fiscal Year 2020, and it was executed during 2021, and this just closed out the final accounting. He stated it was a Change Order in the amount of \$104,520.37.

Mayor Battle stated there were some subgrade issues that were encountered that were not anticipated, and that was part of the cost; and they had also extended a stub-out, which also added to the cost.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated she was curious about the timing, noting that this was done in 2021. She asked if it was normal for it to be almost a year for this change to be needed.

Mr. Hamilton stated he did not have the dates in front of him as to when Wiregrass had submitted all their final accounting, so he did not know exactly how long it took them, but it was longer than normal, and it was unusual that they would do that.

Mayor Battle stated that when it was hard to find a workforce in the middle of COVID, and everything else, all of that had tied into this, to make it take longer to get that list of streets done than they had anticipated, and because of that, this was finally coming before the Council at this time.

Councilmember Akridge stated she was going to put in a pitch, that they had to do some cutouts, that there were some places that were just falling apart. She continued that was not talking potholes, and that the glue did not work. She asked Mayor Battle if he thought they would end up with a cutout machine that could do some of this.

Mayor Battle stated this was pothole season, that they had just gone through winter, that they had the freezing rain, the rain that got down in the cracks, and they had potholes at this point. He stated it had been too cold to pave, that they were just

getting into the season where they could start to do some paving and repair, and they would be in repair all the way through the fall, and then after fall they would get into leaf season, and then they would go back to pothole season. He stated this was a normal progression they had every year at this time, that this was when it got very crucial for them to fill potholes and also repave many streets. He stated paving season was just coming into being.

Councilmember Akridge stated she was not referring to potholes, that she was talking about open cracks, noting that for cyclists, those things were truly dangerous.

Mr. Hamilton stated that they did crack seals.

Councilmember Akridge stated they could call it glue.

Mr. Hamilton stated they did not call it glue. He stated that one of the things about the program was that the streets they were going through and doing the cracks on were the ones that were paved just a few years ago, that the ones that had been paved a long time ago and had significant cracking were really, in most cases, beyond what the crack seals could effectively do. He stated that the good thing about the crack seal, now that they had that program going and it was year in and year out, was that it really started extending the life of the repaving. He stated that streets that had been repaved in the last two or three years were the ones that would be targeted to come in and fill the cracks, which quickly appeared early in the life of that new wearing surface. He stated that in Councilmember Akridge's district, an example of that would be Taylor Lane, which had been repaved, and then within a couple of years, they had come back and done the crack seals. He stated they were doing that throughout the city, that this was one of the things that had been added within the last few years to extend the life of new pavement.

Mr. Hamilton stated that another thing would be where they had a base failure, that maybe the entire segment of the street was not yet needing repaving, but there



might be an area where there was a base failure, and they would come in and repave the entire width of the lane, for maybe 100 feet or 200 feet, or even less in some cases. He stated a good example of that would be Drake Avenue, from the railroad tracks east to Whitesburg. He stated there were some places there where they had several different base failures a couple of years ago, and they had come in and done exactly what Councilmember Akridge was talking about, to extend the life of that segment. He stated that within the next few years, that would be ready for a full repaving, but that would make that future repaving less expensive because they would have already solved the base failures.

Mr. Hamilton stated the Public Works team was looking for those places where that made sense, and in other places, they would just repave the entire segment, that they would make a good judgment call based on the status of the street.

Mr. Hamilton stated there was an ongoing paving contract at this time that was being executed by the Rogers Group. He stated he would anticipate bringing the next repaving contract before the Council in the August-September time frame.

Councilmember Akridge asked if Public Works had the machinery to do those larger cutouts, part of a road, or if they were contracting that.

Mr. Hamilton stated that was contracted.

President Meredith asked if there was any further discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-201, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Akridge read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the City of Huntsville and Garver, L.L.C., for Land Surveying and Engineering Design Services for Chimney Creek Pump Station Bypass Sanitary Sewer Extension, Project No. 71-20-SM01, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-202)

Councilmember Akridge moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis stated this was a design contract for a new sewer in the Hampton Cove area. He stated that, currently, at the intersection of Caldwell Lane and 431, on the east side, was the main trunk line in the Hampton Cove area. He stated that Old Big Cove Road, to the west of 431, had new residential, and there was some sewer there, and there was an existing pump station that WPC maintained in the Old Big Cove Road area, and WPC would like to take that offline and convert it to a gravity sewer. He stated that in doing so, it would actually pick up some commercial opportunity along 431. He continued that this was the design of that new gravity system that would take the existing pump station offline and save future maintenance costs.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-202, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Keith read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement between the City of Huntsville and EMW Construction, Inc., for the Cavalry Hills Envision Center, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-204)

Councilmember Keith moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Hamilton.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the item before the Council was a construction contract for some improvements to the Cavalry Hills campus. He stated that included in the scope were improvements to the main entryway that fed into the area of the

school where the library was located and where some of the recreational facilities were located, such as the dance room, and also the classrooms that were oftentimes used by community groups. He stated that it would also, most importantly, fix the parking and the site lighting that was necessary for safety around the recreation center and that portion of the school building. He continued that it would get them to an adequate level of handicap parking and an accessible route into the school building, as well as into the recreation center, for those with mobility problems, via the entranceway he had just described. He stated it would add more parking and would specifically add the ADA compliance they needed to make the building more accessible to the community.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Keith.

Councilmember Keith stated he was very committed, if ever possible, to work directly with the Administration to give a finalized perspective of what Cavalry Hills would be, in regard to the community and in regard to the city. He stated he would not dive too deep into that, but he wanted to make sure the Council members would be aware, so they would not be caught off guard in the coming months. He stated he would let Mr. Hamilton decide that time frame. He continued that there were a number of perspectives he would keep close, because he wanted to make an educated statement. He stated this was a site that had an impact on the community, inherently nestled in a way he did not believe any other community center had usage by the internal community, that he believed it had consideration of maybe five agencies at this point, including the School System.

Councilmember Keith stated that without a doubt, he believed they needed to make sure they had a master plan and an understanding of that master plan, in their efforts not to just continue to band-aid the concerns, and to finalize what the campus

would be to the community in its totality. He stated he had spoken directly with Mr. Hamilton about this, and he expected to have something before the Council within the year concerning these considerations.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge asked if the City of Huntsville owned that building or if it was the Housing Authority.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the City of Huntsville owned the entire campus. He stated that, as Councilmember Keith had noted, there were a number of different agencies they were partnered with that used portions of the building and the campus. He stated there was a Parks & Rec facility there, a small center, providing community programming, as well as athletic fields for Little League and multi-use sports. He continued that they also had a gymnasium in the main school building. He stated that the School System had the largest amount of square footage, that at this time Highlands Elementary was meeting there, as they were doing repairs to their school building. He stated that at the end of this school year, they were anticipating that Highlands Elementary would move back to their home campus. He stated that a part of what Councilmember Keith was talking about, in terms of figuring out that Master Plan, was in collaboration with the School System, making sure what their needs were, as well as the community surrounding the school building.

Mr. Hamilton stated that Village of Promise was there, the Boys and Girls Club was there, and there were a number of community groups that used space, not necessarily on a permanent basis, but they could come in and reserve a classroom, for a class or whatever it might be.

Mr. Hamilton stated that at the department level, Community Development was going to take the lead in terms of some oversight on portions of the building that might be needed for social services or other things the surrounding community might

need for enrichment of the community, whatever that might be.

Councilmember Akridge asked Mr. Hamilton to help her with why she associated "Envision Center" with the Housing Authority.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Housing Authority had partnered with them in seeking that designation from HUD. He stated that was something that was there, and he would say that it sat in the background, that it did not come with resources.

Councilmember Akridge asked if that meant "no money."

Mr. Hamilton stated that was correct.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the City of Huntsville, the municipal government, owned every square inch of that campus.

Councilmember Keith stated that no one paid rent.

Mr. Hamilton stated that was correct. He stated, concerning the lease agreements they had entered into with the agencies, that they were essentially no-cost leases.

Councilmember Keith stated the library was there as well.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-204, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

Councilmember Kling read and introduced a resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Project Development Agreement among the City of Huntsville, the Industrial Development Board of the City of Huntsville, and GAN Corporation, as follows:

(RESOLUTION NO. 22-211)

Councilmember Kling moved for approval of the foregoing resolution, which motion was duly seconded by President Meredith.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis stated this was an industrial development agreement between the

City of Huntsville, the Industrial Development Board, and GAN Corporation. He stated he believed this was a prime example of the environment they had created in Huntsville, noting that this corporation had a presence in Huntsville, as well as in four other states, that they were going through rapid expansion and growth of the company, and after careful consideration, they had chosen to put that growth in Huntsville.

Mr. Davis stated the overall project would require the company to construct a new facility, investing no less than \$5.3 million. He stated that the location for this would be Cummings Research Park, and they would add 100 jobs, retaining the existing 93 jobs, so that it would be close to 200 jobs the corporation would have in Huntsville. He stated that the minimum annual salary, without benefits, must be \$90,000. He stated that the company would purchase land from the City at a later date, and he would be bringing before the Council a real estate contract, as he routinely did for Cummings Research Park. He stated they were working on the design of the site plan that would determine the final acreage that needed to be purchased for the project.

Mr. Davis stated that due to the growth of the company, the City needed to provide some stop-gap measures. He stated that due to contracts they had won and having to bring on new employees, their current location could not house them, so they were looking for a temporary solution until they could get the new campus built. He stated part of that solution was that the company had located property in the downtown area, so as part of an incentive, the City would be providing 25 parking spaces for 24 months. He stated the company would be purchasing approximately 75 additional parking spaces.

Mr. Davis stated they had done this before with other corporations, that this was a stop-gap, so the company could choose Huntsville, because office space was

pretty scarce in the city, due to the growth.

Mr. Davis stated that Aid to Construction was also in there, and he knew there was a little bit of confusion on "Aid to Construction." He stated there would be no cash transaction between the City of Huntsville and this corporation. He stated that "Aid to Construction/Utilities" was an in-kind service they did all over the city. He stated what they typically did in these contracts was to put a cap on that. He stated the City of Huntsville would do the sewer and Huntsville Utilities would do gas, electric, and water. He stated that once the design happened, they would have to set certain transformers, as they did in the public rights-of-way, and small water extension and gas extension. He stated they did not know how large an electric user the company would be, so what they would like to do would be to cap the City's participation in that. He continued that it was capped at \$350,000, and should the cost exceed that, the corporation would pay the City for that delta piece. He stated some people might read this to say the City was reimbursing the company for something, but they were not reimbursing for anything, that they would be providing service they would provide for anybody else, but they were capping their exposure.

Mr. Davis stated he would answer any questions any of the Council members might have.

President Meredith recognized Councilmember Akridge.

Councilmember Akridge stated that in his email, Mr. Davis had enumerated that the company would be sending the City \$62,000 a year in taxes. She asked if that would be after the 10-year abatement or during the 10-year abatement.

Mr. Davis stated that was actually during. He stated he had just done that on the first 10 years. He stated that, naturally, it would go up, minus any depreciation that would occur, after the 10-year period.

Mr. Davis stated another thing this added was new buying power in the

community, that the new jobs would add a little over \$18 million a year in new income in the community, and some of that income would be disposable income, for sales tax purchases in the community. He stated these were things that were very important to them, to keep the sales tax in a healthy situation, so they could do the things they all wanted to do for the community.

Councilmember Akridge stated she hoped the world was providing good education for the types of people who would get these jobs, both locally and worldwide, because it looked like they needed these people to move to the city.

Mr. Davis stated he thought it was a testament to the city's workforce, the money they were spending in recruitment, the population growth, and the education system, K-12 and the two-year and four-year colleges. He stated that GAN had, he believed, five locations throughout the United States, and this was a competitive process, to choose where to place this growth of the company, and the workforce was a big issue in their decision, and that choosing Huntsville over the other states where the company had operations he believed said that Huntsville was on the right track as far as workforce development.

President Meredith asked if there was any further discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Resolution No. 22-211, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was New Business Items for Introduction.

President Meredith read and introduced Ordinance No. 22-221, amending Article IV, Division 2, Procurement, of Chapter 2, Administration, of Ordinance No. 96-864, to increase the financial interest and small purchase thresholds from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

President Meredith read and introduced Ordinance No. 22-222, amending the



prices for lots in Cummings Research Park.

President Meredith read and introduced Ordinance No. 22-223, declaring certain equipment surplus and to be sold at public auction.

President Meredith read and introduced Ordinance No. 22-224, to declare property as surplus and no longer needed for a municipal purpose and authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement between the City and Broadway Westside Square, LLC, for the purchase of same.

President Meredith read and introduced Ordinance No. 22-225, to declare property as surplus and no longer needed for a municipal purpose and authorizing the Mayor to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement between the City and Glenn Cope Homes, Inc., for the purchase of same.

President Meredith stated the next item was the one the Administration had asked to be considered at this meeting, and it would require unanimous consent of the Council.

President Meredith read and introduced an ordinance amending Chapter 12, Environmental Management, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Huntsville, Alabama, by adding Article VIII, concerning Maintenance Areas, as follows:

(ORDINANCE NO. 22-226)

President Meredith moved that unanimous consent be given for the immediate consideration of and action on said ordinance, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Akridge, and upon said motion being put to a vote, the following vote resulted:

AYES: Keith, Kling, Akridge, Meredith

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Robinson

President Meredith stated that the motion for unanimous consent for

immediate consideration of and action on said ordinance had been unanimously carried.

Councilmember Keith moved that said ordinance be finally adopted, which motion was duly seconded by Councilmember Kling.

President Meredith recognized Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis thanked the Council for considering this ordinance at this meeting. He stated a similar ordinance had been previously introduced, and this was updating their regulations, per the new State stormwater regulations that affected everyone statewide. He stated that in developing these updates with Legal, there had been one small piece of information that was left out of the introduction, and the only change to this ordinance from the one that had been previously introduced on this matter was grandfathering the existing subdivisions that already had a maintenance agreement. He stated these were brought before the Council, and they said there was no cost to the City, that they just had to record that they were going to maintain those. He stated that the original ordinance did not recognize those people who already had those maintenance agreements with the City, and that was the only change.

President Meredith asked if there was any discussion.

President Meredith called for the vote on Ordinance No. 22-226, and it was unanimously adopted by the Council members present.

President Meredith stated the next item on the agenda was Second Roster Public Comments.

President Meredith stated this portion of the meeting was reserved for persons wishing to address the Council on matters relating to City business, whether or not such items were on the meeting agenda. He stated that persons could sign up to speak on the Second Public Comments Roster prior to or during the meeting. He asked that when called, persons please approach a microphone and state their name,

home address, and city of residence. He stated that each speaker could address the Council for three minutes, and that speakers shall refrain from entering into a dialogue with Council members or City staff and from making comments regarding the good name and character of any individual.

Ms. Yuliya Keener, 143 Silo Hill Road, Madison, addressed the Council, having signed up to speak concerning "Ukraine Support."

Ms. Jackie Reed, 303 Jack Coleman Drive, addressed the Council, having signed up to speak concerning "Gov't Issues."

Mr. Harold Kemp, 3900 Talwell Drive, addressed the Council.

Ms. Sarah Colletti, addressed the Council, stating that her address was listed correctly on the roster.

Mr. Chad Chavez, 7512 Clubfield Drive, addressed the Council.

Upon motion, the meeting was adjourned.

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PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK-TREASURER

**(Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. on March 24, 2022.)**