

August 10, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Edwards with prayer and salute to the flag. In attendance: Edwards, Lewis, McKenzie, Roddenberry, and McClendon.

Councilman Roddenberry made a motion to approve the July 13, 2020 minutes as presented by the Clerk, second by Lewis, 5/0.

Several individuals, (some citizens, some not), addressed the Council regarding the taproom Elliott Seidler would like to open in downtown Sopchoppy. Sopchoppy Pastors Dunning, Taylor, James, Sharp, Jetton, and Vause all spoke against it. Each one stated reasons they and their respective Churches oppose the idea and urged the Council to not amend the existing ordinance. Some have talked to neighbors, who say they also oppose the idea. Others pointed out the proximity to churches and a city park. All feel nothing good can come from the City revising the existing ordinance and allowing the taproom to open.

Jamie Martin, Chuck Hess, and Robert Seidler all spoke in favor of the taproom. Each feels it will bring more visitors to the City as well as economic growth.

Mayor Edwards informed everyone the 1<sup>st</sup> public hearing will be advertised and held September 14, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> hearing and possible adoption will be in October.

At this time, the City held the 1<sup>st</sup> public hearing **on Ordinance 2020-01 – An Ordinance to Adopt the Operating Budgets for the General Fund of the City of Sopchoppy and the Water Fund of the City of Sopchoppy. To Provide a Reasonable Anticipated Revenue and Expenditure Schedule for the 2020-2021 Operating Year.** Following the budget workshop, Clerk Schilling spoke with Alan Hart, BDI, and increased the Water Fund Capital Outlay line item to \$200,000 to cover the remaining cost of the engineering task order related to the new elevated water storage tank. Clerk Schilling is also researching interest rates associated with loans to construct the new water tank. The 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing will be held September 14.

Attorney Dan Cox presented proposed changes to **Ordinance 2020-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Sopchoppy, Florida, amending the City of Sopchoppy Code of Ordinances Sections 4.5 and 4.6 Related to Sale of Alcoholic Beverages and Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages on Premises; Providing for Severability; repealing all Ordinances in Conflict; and Providing an Effective Date.** Attorney Cox stated a distributor can not own a place where beer is sold, but you can have a taproom within the premises of a brewery. If approved, Mr. Seidler can only sell what is made on the premises.

Councilman McKenzie asked if “no distilled spirits” needed to be added. Attorney Cox said that the State regulates no outside alcohol can be brought in. The proposed change included “and the sale of alcoholic beverages”, Vice Mayor Lewis stated alcoholic beverages is very broad. Mr. Cox will strike the wording.

Mr. Lewis believes the changes are crafted specifically to taprooms and leaves no room for the establishment to become a bar (as feared by some) without changes to the ordinance. Bars sell food, and federal and state regulations prohibit taprooms from serving food. Councilman Lewis has spoken to Pastor’s of adjacent churches and Mr. Seidler has stated he wants to work with the community and not conflict with church services. Mr. Lewis urged everyone to speak directly with Mr. Seidler and express their concerns, so no one is being discounted.

Councilman McKenzie reminded the Council the current ordinance prohibits the sale of beer on Sunday’s.

Pastor Greg James has spoken to Seidler and opposes the business, however, if approved, they will work together. Mr. James stated he and Mr. Seidler will be “good neighbors” however, the Council should consider writing the rules as if a “bad neighbor” moves in.

Attorney Cox informed the Council comp plan data analysis has been gathered and he is still waiting on an answer to the DEO extension request. The Council may need to hold a workshop in October. Attorney Cox will have a draft ready in September for the Council.

The financial and adjustments reports were approved by signature of the Council.

Public Works Director, Leonard Tartt said the plans are complete for the new tank at well 3 and he will be signing off to proceed. There is a new 44 lot subdivision going in right down the road from the new tank. Mr. Tartt also reported the stormwater grant is moving along better and the contractor has around 25 days left in the 40-day grant period.

Vice Mayor Lewis said there are dead trees at Gulf and Orange that need to be taken down before they damage lines or homes.

Councilman McClendon asked about the swim at own risk sign at the City Park and wondered if it was expandable for events via a waiver. The City itself always carries extra event insurance.

Councilman Roddenberry stated he is in favor of the brewery and is surprised at the amount of opposition. No one wants change, but City needs to give the taproom a chance.

Councilman McClendon is against changing the ordinance, not because of the taproom but because of the close proximity to a church. Attorney Cox reminded the Council they have the option to look at two different things – changing the ordinance and approval of the location. Mr. Cox stated the Council can put conditions on approvals. The ordinance could pass but the Council can still deny the location of the establishment.

Mayor Edwards commended Elliott Seidler for understanding the atmosphere and family feel of the community. Mrs. Edwards is glad to see all the citizen’s present, whether for or against.

Councilman McKenzie agreed with Mayor Edwards and stated it would be nice to see more citizen’s involved with other decisions too and present at future council meetings. If the community feels that convicted about the taproom, they could be that passionate about everything.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. Motion by Lewis, second by Roddenberry.