

A special meeting of the Conyers, Georgia, City Council was held on January 9, 2014, at Cherokee Run Golf Club for the purpose of the Mayor's State of the City Address.

Roll Call – Present: Mayor Randy Mills; Council Members Chris Bowen, Vince Evans, John Fountain, Gerald Hinesley, and Cleveland Stroud.

Welcome – City Manager Tony Lucas welcomed everyone to the celebration.

At 7:15 p.m. Mayor Mills called the meeting of the Conyers, Georgia, City Council to order.

Invocation – City Manager Tony Lucas introduced the Reverend Dr. John Beyers, Senior Minister of Conyers First United Methodist Church, and asked him to give the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance – City Manager Tony Lucas led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Oaths of Office – City Manager Tony Lucas asked The Honorable Chief Superior Court Judge of Rockdale County David B. Irwin to administer the Oath of Office to Randal S. Mills who was re-elected as Mayor of the City of Conyers for his fifth term of office in the November 5, 2013, Municipal General Election.

Mayor Randal S. Mills then administered the Oath of Office to Council Members Cleveland D. Stroud (representing District 1) and Mark Chris Bowen (representing District 2, Post 1), respectively, who were re-elected in the November 5, 2013, Municipal General Election

Mayor Mills recognized past and present elected officials, other government officials, and various board members who were present.

Due to a technicality in the administering of the Oath of Office to Mayor Randal S. Mills, Rockdale County Superior Court Judge, The Honorable David B. Irwin, re-administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Randal S. Mills at 8:22 p.m. on January 9, 2014; therefore, Mayor Mills re-administered the Oath of Office to Council Member Mark Chris Bowen at 8:25 p.m. on January 9, 2014, and to Council Member Cleveland D. Stroud at 8:27 p.m. on January 9, 2014.

New Business:

1. The State of the City Address – “Grounded in Tradition. Growing for Generations” – Mayor Randal S. Mills addressed the audience and thanked everyone for their attendance. He thanked and commended the Council Members, Department Directors, and City staff for all they have done in moving our community forward; but more importantly, believing in your vision to make this community the best in Georgia.

Mayor Mills asked the audience to reflect on those that have gone before us, gave of themselves and their time to make this community the best it could be, and evaluate your role in how we can take Conyers to the next level in the year ahead.

Council Member Gerald Hinesley, Co-Chairman of the Finance Oversight Committee and Chairman of the Transportation Committee, reported from the perspective of the city's finance oversight and transportation committees. He stated that the city had received the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Award for the last 23 consecutive years, as well as the Certificate for Annual Financial Reporting for the last 20 consecutive years. Council Member Hinesley also stated that the Council and City employees will continue to spend wisely and adhere to the City's annual budget.

Council Member Hinesley also reported that the City transferred residential and commercial sanitation services to Pratt Recycling on September 1, 2013, and that a small number of the City's workforce has moved to Pratt. He stated that the City receives a small fee per month for the use of Pratt's transfer station which opened this past year.

Council Member Hinesley reported that a Material Recovery Facility (“MRF”) will be constructed and is scheduled to open in August of this year which will employ 50 new employees. He stated that this facility will take food and plant waste and generate energy, and will save the City the cost of grinding limbs and brush.

Council Member Hinesley reported that the intersection improvement at Sarasota Parkway and East Park Drive on Sigman Road will be completed in the next couple of months. He also reported that the widening of Railroad Street and the Irwin Bridge Road corridor improvements are also scheduled to be completed in 2014.

Council Member Hinesley reported that SPLOST-funded improvements include repaying East View Road, and extending the PATH multi-purpose trail from the Nancy Guinn Library to Pine Log Park. He also reported that a study will be done regarding the Green Street/Scott Street/Main Street/Pine Log Road intersection at the railroad tracks and the O'Kelly/Hardin Street project.

Council Member Hinesley reported that stormwater project improvements to Bryant Street, Malcom Street, Baker Street, Main Street and Jimi Lane were completed in 2013 resulting in a total cost of \$30,900.

Council Member John Fountain, Chairman of the Community Development Committee, reported that the approval of the 308 acres of the Four A International development at 1-20, Flat Shoals Road, Johnson Road and Iris Drive, and part of the Corner Market development at the corner of Flat Shoals Road and Parker Road, stating that by changing the zoning from General Business to Mixed-Use Development makes this mixed-use development the first of its kind in Conyers, and will include residential, retail, commercial, and recreational development.

Council Member Fountain stated that there are new standards for appeal and appearance of buildings, which includes color palette, lighting, etc.

Council Member Fountain reported that the issuance of business licenses has increased, as well as the adjustment of the work hours of our Code Enforcement officers to timely correct code violations.

Council Member Fountain stated that this City Council is committed to preserving and protecting our investment – that is the City of Conyers.

Council Member Chris Bowen, Chairman of the Georgia International Horse Park, Big Hayes Creek Nature Center, Cherokee Run Golf Club and the Cemetery Committees, reported that this past year the GIHP staff received awards from the Southeast Festivals and Events Associations for the City's Cherry Blossom Festival and the Big Haynes Creek Wildlife Festival. He also reported that Promoter Bob Bell and his Atlanta Classic Shows were held at the Park for the last 19 years. He stated that popular sporting events such as mud runs, obstacle runs, and color runs were also held at the Horse Park.

Council Member Bowen reported that the North Georgia Live Steamers held their grand opening and Golden Spike Ceremony at the Horse Park, and that this newly laid track runs almost two miles behind the steeplechase.

Council Member Bowen also reported that two large events, the Great Miller Live Chili and BBQ Cook-Off and the Great Bull Run were held at the GIHP, and that both are returning this year. Council Member Bowen reported that the GIHP's notoriety will air on Georgia Public Broadcasting's travel and tourism show "Georgia Traveler" on January 31, 2014. He also reported that the long-time exclusive contract with Proof of the Pudding, caterer and concessionaire, has been renewed.

Council Member Bowen reported that Cherokee Run Golf Club continues to prove it is a championship destination golf course. He stated that in 2013 the Reynolds, Inc. tournament was the largest revenue-generated tournament held at Cherokee Run to date. He also stated that this past year's largest new tournament was by the Georgia Power Company. Council Member reported that Andy Bowman, Cherokee Run's PGA pro, started a Get Golf Ready program which is a PGA program for new players; and that a kids' academy was held this past summer to introduce youth to golf.

Council Member Cleveland Stroud, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, reported Vendor Iron Sky has helped the City in placing cameras in parking areas and on businesses in the Dogwood Drive corridor. He also reported that a License Plat Reader (LPR), which is mounted on a patrol car, has been in use by the Conyers Police Department since last March and has been instrumental in locating missing persons, wanted persons, and stolen vehicles.

Council Member Stroud reported the enforcement of the curfew ordinance to prevent crime and disorder in shopping centers, which has resulted in a reduction of calls to the CPD regarding thefts, fights, car break-ins, etc.

Council Member Stroud reported that the Special Response Team was created this past year to address serious critical incidents as they arise.

Council Member Stroud stated that the City's alcohol ordinance was revised this past year to more closely mirror the regulations of the state's statutes. He also stated that this ordinance requires all servers and managers of establishments serving alcohol to take part in Responsible Alcohol Sales and Service (RASS) training.

Council Member Stroud reported that in 2013 the Conyers Police Department's headquarters was named the O. T. Adams, Jr. Public Safety Building in memory of the late chief who served Conyers for 24 years.

Council Member Stroud stated that the Conyers Police are currently researching vendors and evaluating a new public safety radio/communications system that will enable the department to more effectively serve and protect the people of Conyers over the next 20 plus years.

Council Member Vince Evans, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and the Arts Committee, stated that efforts have been begun, and will continue, to stimulate the downtown economy

in Olde Town to fill empty storefronts with new and profitable businesses. He also stated that the DDA continues to entertain ideas like a community garden and incorporating artwork into the downtown landscape to improve and enhance downtown.

Council Member Evans reported that the Conyers Main Street Program was active in continuing the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Taste of Conyers, the Olde Town Fall Festival, and the Olde Town Christmas Party and Parade and, as part of the Outdoor Summer Film Series, brought in three outdoor movies to the Olde Town Pavilion.

Council Member Evans stated that the Main Street Program also led two free tours regarding the history and preservation in the Olde Town Conyers Cemetery and a tour of the commercial district in Olde Town highlighting what businesses were there and what life was like in the year 1884.

Council Member Evans reported on the transformation of Olde Town to New Orleans for the filming of "The Vampire Diaries," "The Originals", and scenes for a remake of the movie "Endless Love". Council Member Evans stated that this film project has brought substantial dollars and excitement to our community. Council Member Evans also stated that the Economic Development office and the City Council approved a Film Policy

Council Member Evans reported that in November of last year Marty Jones was selected as the Executive Director of the Conyers-Rockdale Economic Development Council. Council Member Evans also commended Gina Hartsell for "keeping things together" for about 11 months at the CREDC until the selection of a new Executive Director.

Council Member Evans stated that the CREDC, United Way, and the Conyers-Rockdale Chamber of Commerce moved into their new location at 936 Green Street in June 2013.

Council Member Evans reported that the Conyers-Rockdale Council for the Arts continues to work with our local theatrical company, The New Depot Players, to host a variety of plays during the season, as well as musical performances, a puppet show, zombie walk, a concert featuring A1A, and a Jimmy Buffet tribute band. Council Member Evans also reported that over 800 children were impacted by the Art's Council's children's arts programs and Preschool Pops series this past year. Council Member Evans stated that the Arts Council is beginning its 25th year in promoting the arts to our community.

Mayor Mills concluded the by saying, "It is on our shoulders now to continue to make tough decisions, continue to turn the tide and mold our community into what it only dreams it can become. In the words of author Andy Andrews, it's up to this community to 'choose a future we create and not one that just happens.'"

2. Employee of the Year

City Manager Tony Lucas recognized Trey Rusk (who was absent) as City of Conyers Employee of the Year and the recipient of the 2013 Dee Buggay Award of Excellence.

3. Recognition of Corporal Shyra Hardwick

Chief of Police Gene Wilson recognized and thanked Corporal Shyra Hardwick for her untiring and dedication to the Shop with a Cop program to provide Christmas for underprivileged children.

City Manager Tony Lucas thanked everyone for coming tonight to hear the Mayor's State of the City address, and invited them to stay for the reception.

There being no further business to come before the Council the meeting was adjourned at 8:10p.m.

Attest:


Patricia I. Smith, City Clerk


Jennifer Edwards, Deputy City Clerk


Randal S. Mills, Mayor

