

**CITY OF HELEN
COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2014
3:00 P.M.
AGENDA**

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR JUDY HOLLOWAY
2. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG
4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 7, 2014
6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
7. ALPINE HELEN/WHITE COUNTY CVB MONTHLY REPORT
8. HELEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MONTHLY REPORT
9. ADMINISTRATIVE
 - A. FINANCIAL REPORT
 - B. SIX MONTH REVIEW OF CITY BUDGET
 - C. UPDATE ON DELINQUENT HOTEL/MOTEL TAX COLLECTIONS
10. FIRE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT
11. POLICE DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT
12. PUBLIC WORKS, WATER AND WASTE WATER MONTHLY REPORT
13. BUILDING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT MONTHLY REPORT
 - A. CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL, USE OF CITY PROPERTY AND ROAD CLOSURE, FOR CORVAIR CLUB "SPRINGFEST 2014" SPECIAL EVENT PLANNED FOR APRIL 17, 18, 19, 2014.
14. PURCHASES AND BIDS

15. ORDINANCES

A. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 14-01-01; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL CODE OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, BY AMENDING CHAPTER 34, LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, ARTICLE VII SIGNS; SPECIFICALLY, THOSE SECTIONS PERTAINING TO INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNAGE.

16. RESOLUTIONS

17. CITY COMMISSION COMMENTS

18. ADJOURNMENT

THIS AGENDA WAS POSTED JANUARY 17, 2014 @ 12:00 P.M.

**CITY OF HELEN
COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2014
10:00 A.M.
MINUTES OF MEETING**

The Helen City Commission met on Tuesday January 21, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers at Helen City Hall with Mayor Judy Holloway calling the meeting to order.

City Clerk Marilyn Chastain called the roll and the following were present; Commissioner Helen Wilkins, Mayor Judy Holloway, Commissioner Fred Garmon, Commissioner Jeff Ash. Absent was Commissioner Dona K Burke.

Also attending the meeting were; City Manager Jerry Elkins, City Attorney Carl Free, Police Chief Jim Couch, Fire Captain Lee Poteat, Public Works Director Ross Hewell, Building & Zoning Director Patrick Couch, City Clerk Marilyn Chastain, Finance Officer Debbie Gerchman.

Pledge of allegiance to the Flag was given.

City Manager Jerry Elkins asked the Commission to add as item D under Administrative; Discussion of property values of City owned properties. Motion to amend by adding as item D under Administrative and approve the Agenda made by Commissioner Helen Wilkins, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Motion to approve the Minutes from the January 7, 2014 Commission meeting made by Commissioner Jeff Ash, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Petitions and Communications from the Public; None

Alpine Helen/White County CVB Monthly report; CVB Director Jerry Brown reported to the Commission that the New Travel Guides had been delivered, also that the CVB had added the Travel Guide to its website. He also said there are plans to add a web-camera to the downtown area that would be available for view from the website, as soon as a location for the camera is obtained. A copy of the monthly report is included as an integral part of the Minutes.

Helen Chamber of Commerce Director Renee Chacon informed the Commission that attendance to the 2013 Oktoberfest was up from the previous year, and that new items were being purchased to update the Festhall. She also informed the Commission that the upcoming Fasching Celebration is going to be at the Helendorf Motel because there isn't heat at the Festhall, and has found out there are rules that do not allow patrons to bring their own Alcoholic beverages and would like for the Commission to consider making the Fasching Celebration a City sponsored event this year so that Alcohol could be sold by

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vendors during the event. City Attorney Carl Free said the City can adopt a Resolution that will allow the Fasching Celebration to be a City Sponsored event, and added that other Alcohol license holders could also apply to be vendors at the event. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to allow the 2014 Fasching Celebration as a City Sponsored event, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Administrative;

A. Items A & B were combined with City Manager Jerry Elkins giving the reports to the Commission. There was discussion on the Financial report and of salary increases for employees. City Manager Jerry Elkins reported that the city is doing well financially, that the cash on hand is at \$4,148,984.00. Commissioner Fred Garmon recommended a COLA (cost of living adjustment) to be given to each City employee as a permanent yearly salary increase, at the current rate given by the Social Security Administration. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to implement a COLA (cost of living adjustment) at 1 ½ % beginning January 1, 2014, for each City employee, and City Manager, and to automatically make a COLA (cost of living adjustment) as a yearly salary increase for all City employees and City Manager on January 1st of each year, at the COLA (cost of living adjustment) rate provided by the Social Security Administration, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to increase across the board, all City employee salaries including the City Manager by 2% effective January 1, 2014, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Update on delinquent Hotel/Motel Tax collections; City Manager Jerry Elkins stated that all Delinquent Hotel/Motel taxes have been paid and made current.

Discussion of City owned property values. City Manager Jerry Elkins presented a report to the Commission that included the property values of City owned properties that he, Fred Garmon and Fletcher Holiday had compiled, which shows a decrease of 2 ½ to 3 million dollars in estimated replacement cost, compared with the report of values provided by the Insurance Company on the City owned properties and stated that he has been discussing the reduced values with the Insurance Companies to reduce the appraisals. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to include the report as "Exhibit A" in the Minutes and to give City Manager Jerry Elkins the approval and authority to present the report to GMA Insurance for negotiations of the appraisals, or if the appraisals are found unacceptable, the authority to bid the Insurance out to other companies, 2nd by

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Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

City Manager Jerry Elkins informed the Commission that the Contractor on the Island area project had failed to get a permit from EPD and have stopped work until the permit is obtained, he also said there may be fines from EPD for failure to obtain the permit and has been assured by the Contractor that he would pay any fines since he had overlooked getting the proper permits before beginning the work.

Fire Department monthly report; Fire Captain Lee Poteat presented a report highlighted with the 911 calls that the Helen Fire Department is not currently being dispatched to that he thinks for the public's safety, they should be called on and that he would like to present this report to E911 Director David Murphy. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to allow Fire Captain Lee Poteat the authorization to present the report to E911 Director David Murphy for consideration with the City's support, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Police Department Monthly report; Report included as in integral part of the Minutes. Police Chief Jim Couch told the Commission that the full time Officer position was filled on a trial basis by one of the part time officers and he will reevaluate the position in February which is, in the mean time keeping cost down, he also thanked City Manager Jerry Elkins, and Public Works Director Ross Hewell for allowing, and with help from Public Works on moving items around in the back of the Police Department, also that he was planning on painting the front lobby and has made a sitting area there for guest.

Public Works, Water and Waste Water Monthly Report; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes. Public Works Director Ross Hewell informed the Commission that because of the freezing weather and waterline breaks that Chris Bernier had put in 15 to 16 extra hours making emergency repairs. Public Works Director Ross Hewell reported he had been approached by Wright the Bowl Maker about the wood from the River Birch trees when removed at the Arts center. Mr Wright would like to have the larger part of the trees to make bows from and is willing to donate his time and give the bowls to the Art Center to sell with the proceeds going to the City of Helen for City improvements on a future project, he also told the Commission that the City's landscaper Harry Barton would like to have the upper part from the trees for landscaping projects in the City. Commissioner Jeff Ash made a motion to authorize Ross Hewell to make the proper distribution of the wood from the River Birch trees, 2nd by Commissioner Fred Garmon. Motion approved with a majority vote of the Commission present, with Mayor Judy Holloway voting no.

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Building and Zoning Department monthly report; Report included as an integral part of the Minutes.

A. Consideration for approval, use of City property and road closure for the Corvair Club “Springfest 2014” Special Event. Copy of Permit and request for approval included as an integral part of the Minutes. Building & Zoning Director Patrick Couch told the Commission that the general consensus of the PDRB was to approve item #2 as submitted by the Corvair Club. After discussion from the Commission, Commissioner Fred Garmon made a motion to approve #3 of the proposal as submitted, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Building & Zoning Director Patrick Couch informed the Commission that Bill Adcock has withdrawn his sign appeal request, and that the scheduled meeting with the EPD on the Helen Flood Plain had been rescheduled to the 22nd.

Purchases & Bids; None

Ordinances;

A. FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 14-01-01; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HELEN, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL CODE OF HELEN GEORGIA, BY AMENDING CHAPTER 34, LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, ARTICLE VII SIGN; SPECIFICALLY, THOSE SECTIONS PERTAINING TO INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNAGE; City Manager Jerry Elkins read the Ordinance. Don Stegall, business owner addressed the Commission asking if the 3 foot rule would not be allowed or grandfathered in as permitted in the past, he also stated that he feels the new Ordinance is infringing on his rights to market products inside his stores. Lee Dickson another business owner wants to understand what items will be taken out of the Ordinance that were formally allowed, and intends to bring an Attorney in on the argument if told to remove signage inside his store. City Attorney Carl Free stated that the Ordinance is to preserve the character of the City. Country Café owner Tim Golding inquired about the possibility of having a menu board outside his business to advertise his lunch specials that could be visible from the roadway. Motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 14-01-01 made by Commissioner Helen Wilkins, 2nd by Commissioner Jeff Ash. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

Resolutions: None

Comments; Commissioner Jeff Ash stated that was a good prepared Financial Report.

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Motion to adjourn at 4:48 p.m. made by Commissioner Fred Garmon, 2nd by Commissioner Helen Wilkins. Motion approved with a unanimous vote of the Commission present.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

CITY CLERK MARILYN CHASTAIN