

A regular scheduled meeting of the Conyers, Georgia, City Council was held on January 16, 2013, 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 – Mayor Randal S. Mills introduced the Reverend Dr. John Beyers, Senior Minister of Conyers First United Methodist Church, and asked him to give the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Mills led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

New Business:

1. The State of the City Address – “Achieving Excellence” – 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 challenged everyone with the task of improving the appearance, inside and out, of the City of Conyers – and – most importantly, enjoying and taking pride in it. He stated that the Economic Development Council reported that unemployment in our community is down nearly 2% since December 2009 and over 500 employees were hired in 2012 by industries such as Hill-Phoenix and Golden State Foods. Mayor Mills also stated that the housing market seems to be improving and our retail base is strengthening.

Mayor Mills stated that we must support our public safety personnel in their fight against increasing crime in our community, and that our number one job is protecting our neighborhoods at all costs. He also stated that we must take advantage of land use opportunities for future growth and redevelopment; and that we must keep our budget manageable.

Mayor Mills further stated that we must continue to cultivate multi-generational and multi-cultural relationships, and that this community must also accept and embrace the many cultures that make Conyers what it is today and that we must unite for the common good of Conyers and Rockdale County as a whole.

Council Member Gerald Hinesley, Co-Chairman of the Finance Oversight Committee and Chairman of the Transportation Committee, reported that local, regional and national businesses are still coping with losses since the recession that began five years ago. He stated that the City of Conyers has a strong, realistic budget and a budgeting process in place that lends itself to good sound, fiscal practices. He also stated that the City has achieved the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Award for the last 22 consecutive years. Council Member Hinesley reported that the City's employees are working with the budget's financial boundaries that have been set, and that the Council and City employees continue to act in a fiscally responsible manner, and will continue spending wisely and adhering to a set budget.

Council Member Hinesley reported that the City has partnered with Pratt Industries to build a transfer station at their facility off of Sigman Road; and will assume the responsibility for residential sanitation service, solid waste, recycling and bulk materials. He also reported that the City's personnel will continue to provide metal, leaves and limb pick-up; and that this partnership will result in a cost savings for the City.

Council Member Hinesley reported that Public Works and Transportation personnel are working on road improvement projects such as the widening of Railroad Street and intersection improvements and a traffic signal at Sigman Road and Sarasota Parkway.

Council Member Hinesley also reported that in 2012 several stormwater improvements were completed, as well as improvements of the PATH trail.

Council Member Hinesley reported that the City was awarded a \$3.2 million federally funded grant for pedestrian improvements to the O'Kelly and Hardin Streets area.

Council Member John Fountain, Chairman of the Community Development Committee, reported that several public meetings were held with land and business owners regarding guidelines for the Gateway Village District, which was approved this past June and encompasses the Georgia Highway 138/Georgia Highway 20 corridor south of Interstate 20 to Millers Chapel Road and Old McDonough Highway.

Council Member Fountain stated that the zoning district was created to establish criteria regarding land use and architectural and streetscape design. He also stated that the design and landscaping guidelines are required for the new Discount Tire currently under construction on Highway 138 and the remodeling of McDonald's at Flat Shoals Road and Highway 138.

Council Member Fountain reported that the new Publix and surround outparcels on Georgia 20 are part of the Mixed Use Overlay District, and that new standards to create attractive and appropriate development and redevelopment along this major thoroughfare are being established.

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 Cherokee Run Golf Club was restored to its original grandeur. He also reported that the number of rounds played was significantly higher than the previous year.

Council Member Bowen stated that the Georgia International Horse Park hosts in-house events such as the Cherry Blossom and Big Haynes Creek Wildlife Festivals, as well as hunter/jumper horse shows, Fiesta Georgia, the Spartan Race, Great American RV Show and countless other events. He also stated that the Horse Park remains an anchor in this community for tourism and economic development opportunities.

Council Member Bowen reported that a new section of East View Cemetery opened this past summer with nearly 600 gravesites available for purchase, and that nearly a dozen have been sold to date.

Council Member Cleveland Stroud, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, reported that in 2012 the Conyers Police Community Outreach Division hosted the Citizens Police Academy and the first Junior Police Academy. He also reported that robbery prevention seminars were held again by popular demand in the major shopping centers in the city limits. Council Member Stroud reported that the Conyers Police Department obtained a \$50,000 traffic safety grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety to aid in reducing the number of accidents and deaths caused by drivers driving under the influence of alcohol.

Council Member Stroud reported that in 2012 Conyers Police apprehended criminals and dangerous individuals with the public's help, our officers, and 911 dispatchers; and that they will soon be assisted by camera surveillance in the Dogwood Drive commercial business district, with help from vendor Iron Sky and our Technology Department.

Council Member Stroud stated that code enforcement officials have enforced compliance with new ordinances, as well as existing alcohol and special events ordinances.

Council Member Stroud applauded the Conyers Police Department, all City staff, and supportive citizens who were all part of the CALFA application process. Council Member Stroud stated that achieving CALFA accreditation by the Conyers Police Department is a milestone in which the community can take exceptional pride.

Council Member Vince Evans, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and the Arts Committee, reported that 4A International plans to continue development at the Corner Market at Flat Shoals and Parker Road. He stated that these plans include development that will be mixed-use and include elements of residential, retail and commercial development.

Council Member Evans reported that Hill-Phoenix is consolidating plants in Conyers and Covington to a 450,000 square foot facility at Gees Mill and Sigman Roads, which represents a \$20 million investment in our community and 800+ jobs; and that this is a result of cooperation with the Conyers-Rockdale Economic Development Council and Rockdale County to keep Hill-Phoenix in Conyers.

Council Member Evans reported that Pratt Industries will complete a transfer station and Material Recovery Facility on the Pratt campus by late summer of 2013 and will bring 50+ permanent jobs and 225 temporary construction jobs. He also reported that this eco-campus is the first of its kind to be constructed in North America.

Council Member Evans stated that the Conyers Downtown Development Authority is continuing to make efforts to stimulate the downtown economy in Olde Town and fill empty storefronts with new and profitable businesses. Several businesses are already relocating in the Bumper to Bumper building at 941 Main Street, thereby creating new jobs in the downtown area.

Council Member Evans stated that Conyers' reputation as a friendly, easy-to-work with camera-ready community has brought several movie and TV projects to town this past year. He also stated that these projects bring substantial dollars to our community and create excitement for residents and visitors.

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. In 2012 there were musical performances, comedy shows, and a hypnotist. A 5K road race was held, a full scale concert featuring a Beatles tribute band at the Olde Town Pavilion. A children's arts program and Preschool Pops series impacted over 700 children.

2. Recognition of Former CREDC Executive Director Glenn Sears

Mayor Randy Mills and City Manager Tony Lucas recognized and thanked Former CREDC Executive Director Glenn Sears for his untiring service and dedication to the Conyers-Rockdale economic development in our community.

3. Recognition of Conyers Police Department Achieving CALEA Accreditation

CALEA Executive Director Sylvester Daughtry, Jr. addressed the Council and the audience and explained the process for attaining CALEA accreditation.

Mr. Daughtry commended the Conyers Police Department for this achievement and presented the Department with a Certificate of Accreditation.

4. Employee of the Year
City Manager Tony Lucas recognized Lonnie Abercrombie as the recipient of the 2012 Dee Buggay Award of Excellence.

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 8:15p.m.



Randal S. Mills, Mayor

Attest:



Patricia I. Smith, City Clerk

