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City of Lake Park
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
July 01, 2025
6:00 pm

Members present were Mayor Jena Sandlin, Council Member Michelle Lane, Council Member Busby Courson, Council Member Oscar Griffith and Council Member Carl Spano

Staff Present: City Clerk Lisa Johnson, Sergeant Matt Colson, Maintenance Technician Eli Johnson, Fire Chief Matt Ryan, Police Officer Art Verdell

Others Present: City Attorney Drew Parrish-Bennett

Mayor Jena Sandlin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the invocation.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the pledge.

Minutes: Mayor Sandlin called for the review and approval of the Minutes. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the Minutes of the June 3, 2025 Regular Meeting and the June 25, 2025 Called Meeting. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Sandlin stated that Council has a request for subdivision on the Agenda and introduced Ms. Alexandra Arzayus with the Southeast Georgia Regional Commission. Ms. Arzayus presented a proposal for the subdivision of three lots on Sheavette Rd consisting of .96 acres to be separated from the Church of Christ property for single family residential lots. The lots in question were originally subdivided in 2006 as lots 15, 16 and 17 in the Sand Ridge Phase II, and at some point in the last 20 years have been combined with the Church property. This is a permitted practice in Lowndes County, where the Tax Assessors may combine properties without a new subdivision plat, however for developmental purposes, there must be a recorded subdivision plat. The original lots were 133' width by 85' depth with the intention to dedicate 15' to the City of Lake Park for the widening of Sheavette Rd. The proposed new lots will be 133' width by 105' depth, which will meet the R-10 zoning requirement of 10,000 square feet. The front yard setback will be 55' from the centerline of the road, the side yard setback will be XX' and the rear yard setback will be 30'. The intent is to create legal lots of record separate from the parent parcel currently owned by the Lake Park Church of Christ. The retention of the 60' right of way width notation is on the final plat. The subdivision is a phase subdivision and is east of Long Pond Rd. and will be served by City water and County sewer. The subdivision road will be dedicated to the City through

the subdivision. The lots are split-zoned R-10 and R-15; both uses do allow for single family residential uses, and the setbacks are the same. Per the subdivision zoning ordinance, there are no requirements for sidewalks. Ms. Arzayus stated that her understanding is that there may be more phases of this development coming up Sheavette Rd. The Commission recommends approval of the final plat; however, Council can approve the plat as is, deny the plat, or approve the plat with conditions. She introduced Steve McGee, who is representing the Church of Christ.

Mr. McGee thanked Council for allowing him to speak and stated that he is an elder of the Church who is in charge of the sale of the lots in question. For the Church, they are excess property that they are maintaining but not using. He reported that the lots sold as soon as they were put on the market, so there is obviously a demand for lots, and the Church agreed to extend the lots by 20' to allow for larger homes and still maintain the required Right of Ways. It is the intent of the Church, if approved by Council to extend the subdivision to the road. These three lots already have water and sewer, but others will need to be developed completely.

Council Member Spano asked Ms. Arzayus if she had anything else to discuss, such as training. She responded in the affirmative, but noted that it is not on the Agenda. He stated that he believed the training is a requirement of the Planning Commission. Council Member Spano made a motion to add Planning and Zoning training to the Agenda immediately following the subdivision question. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. Mayor Sandlin called for discussion and there being none, called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Spano stated that he had reviewed the plats, continuing that it is a preference not to have two zones in the same lot. Council Member Spano made a motion to approve the plats with changes pending the rezoning of all three lots to R-10. He stated that R-10 will meet the minimum requirements and will not preclude them from building a larger home, as the requirements are based on the total square footage of the lot and the minimum lot size for R-10 is 10,000 square feet. His concern is that the lots don't meet the requirements for R-15, which would invalidate the lot. Council Member Spano restated his motion to approve the plat on the condition that the three subdivided lots are rezoned to R-10. Mayor Sandlin called for a second. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Mayor Sandlin called for a vote by show of hands. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Spano made a motion that the properties be deeded on the plat map with the City Attorney's verbiage. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. Mayor Sandlin called for discussion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Ms. Arzayus reported that the City of Lake Park has a new appointee to the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission. As part of the State's requirements, there is training needed for new Planning Commissioners; the Southeast Georgia Regional Commission has coordinated with Carl Vinson Institute of Government and is offering training for Commissioners in our Region in Valdosta on July 29 at a cost of approximately \$260. This will satisfy the training requirement, and there is other training available to further expertise. Council Member Spano asked if there were other potential fees to be included, and Ms. Arzayus stated that there were none, unless there were credit card fees, and the Regional Commission is providing lunch. Council Member Spano made a motion to approve the City's representative to attend the training at the City's cost, not to exceed \$300, with the specific line item to be determined or taken from contingency funds. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. Mayor Sandlin called for discussion. There being none, Mayor Sandlin called for a vote. The motion

passed 3-0, with Council Member Oscar Griffith abstaining on the grounds of conflict of interest, as his wife is the City's chosen representative.

Mr. McGee requested permission to ask a question; Mayor Sandlin recognized Mr. McGee and allowed the question. He then asked for clarification on the difference between R-10 and R-15 zoning. Council Member Spano explained that the difference is in lot size, with R-10 requiring a minimum of 10,000 square feet and R-15 requiring a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet. Member Spano explained that by zoning to the smaller of the required lot sizes, they would ensure that there would be no problems in the future in the event there was discovered even a minute difference in measurements that might invalidate the lots.

Mayor Sandlin called for Citizens who have concerns they would like to bring to the Council's attention. She reminded residents that the time was limited to three minutes and asked them to state their name, address and concern at the podium.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

- Arthur Keckley – 315 4-H Club Rd – stated that speeding has increased since the speed bumps have been removed, and that traffic has increased. He also requested an update from the Engineers on the drainage; City Clerk Lisa Johnson responded that she has not heard back from them on 4-H Club Rd, but would follow up. Mr. Keckley then reported that the Fed Ex truck had knocked over the speed bump sign, and it would likely need to be replaced.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Fire Department: Fire Chief Matt Ryan

- Presented the activity report; stated he had added the names of volunteers responding to each call on the activity report.
- Requested payment for the volunteers who helped with fireworks for the Fourth Event equivalent to three Saturday pay amounts. Council Member Spano made a motion to approve three Saturday training pay amounts for the volunteers who assisted with fireworks for the Fourth Event, pending receipt of the list of volunteers. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Police Department: Interim Chief Matt Colson

- Presented the activity report
- Reported that the crime rate in Lake Park had decreased since the previous month
- Stated that not all stops result in a ticket or arrest
- Reported that he had been in conversation with a representative with Flock regarding adding more cameras, stating that the Flock system has aided in finding missing persons, locating stolen vehicles, and apprehending wanted individuals, in addition to identifying other common violations
- Expressed appreciation for the assistance of Lowndes County Sheriff's Office and staff teamwork in making the Fourth Event a success.
- Presented a suggestion for stop signs placed on 4-H Club Road and others in response to complaints of speeders; he reported that a road study had shown 648 vehicles travelling on 4-H

Club Road in a 24-hour period. Some of the stop signs are scheduled to be installed in the future already.

- Reported that work continues to ensure maximum safety in the Police Department, and the department has recently purchased a gun safe.
- Reported that he and others in the City recently attended required FEMA training on disaster operations
- Reported that he is working with other agencies to organize programs to better inform citizens on local laws and citizen safety, including new laws passed in the legislature, and cautions pre- and post-disaster.
- Reported that he is still seeking police officers, but most applicants to date are not post-certified.

Maintenance/Public Works Department: Eli Johnson

- Presented the activity report.
- Reviewed particular needs of the department which have been requested that are needed for safety purposes, including speed bumps, tractor and bush hog, stressing the need for the bush hog to eliminate places where snakes might hide, and repairs to the roof of the pump house, as direct sunlight dissipates chlorine more quickly
- Reported that the blue house has been cleared out and tested for asbestos; the City Clerk was asked and answered that the backing on the carpet tested positive for asbestos and a quote has been received for the removal
- Reported that there has been concentrated efforts to the flushing of hydrants; every hydrant in the City has been flushed and all have safe chlorine residuals; there have been no complaints or work orders regarding complaints since these were completed.
- Reported that there was one broken water line repaired on Essa St.

Administration: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Administration report.
- Reported that the software used for reading meters can no longer be updated; the hardware and software is approximately 12 years old. This is on the Agenda later for approval of the cost for new hardware and software; the yearly maintenance after the upgrade is actually less than the current amount.
- Reported that staff had reached out to the two companies listed at the State's site for asbestos removal, and to date only one had responded; this quote is also later on the Agenda
- Reported that the State of Georgia had opened an additional LMIG funding opportunity again this year. This one has no local match requirements and there is \$27,000 available, the City just needs to identify a project.
- Reported that the alligator in Tom's Pond was reported to have been getting more comfortable around people, and recommended contacting DNR for removal.

Financial Reports: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Financial report and asked if there were any questions.

- Council Member Spano made a motion to accept the Financial Reports as presented for May, 2025. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- Council Member Spano asked for a status report on the Audit. City Clerk Lisa Johnson responded that the auditor had reached out on Friday to say they would not have the audit completed by June 30, but did not give an expected date. She had tried to reach out to them on Monday for a date for completion and reached a recording stating that the office was open for reduced hours for the week.

Unfinished Business

- Tractor/Bush Hog – Mayor Sandlin asked Council Member Busby Courson if he had anything to report; Council Member Courson stated that he had researched the brand and thought that overall the quote presented is a good deal. He also considered the size and attachments available and recommended purchasing the 47 horsepower tractor at a cost of \$34,895 as quoted. Council Member Spano stated that the City has funds available for the purchase in the money market in reserved funds. Council Member Busby Courson made a motion to buy the 47 HP Kioti at a cost of \$34,985 as quoted from funds restricted for Streets and Roads. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

New Business

- Asbestos Removal – Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to approve a quote for \$4,500 to abate the asbestos found on the back of the carpet in the blue house. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- LMIG – Council discussed projects for the LMIG Supplemental funds 2025. Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to dedicate LMIG Supplemental funds for 2025 in the amount of \$27,438.87 to drainage on 4-H Club Rd. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- Master Meter Upgrade – Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to approve upgrades to the Master Meter hardware and software at a cost of \$26,973 to be paid for from funds restricted for Water. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- Stop Signs – Council Member Oscar Griffith made a motion to install stop signs on 4-H Club Rd and Long Pond Rd as presented. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- Council/Staff Meeting – Council Member Oscar Griffith stated that he is concerned about staff morale, noting Chief Yarbrough's recent resignation. He stated that there are other employees also considering leaving and he feels they will not speak for fear of repercussions, but that Council needs to hear their concerns. Council Member Spano suggested Council hold a Called meeting for Executive Session so that employees can feel comfortable speaking their minds and recommended sooner rather than later. After a brief discussion, a meeting date of Thursday, July 3 at 4:00 was set.
- City use of Private Property – Council Member Spano stated that he believed that this should be avoided if possible, adding that if and when the need arises there should be a written agreement outlining the specific purpose and the specific time and applicable conditions and liabilities, and

that the City's attorney should draft the agreement. The City Attorney will draft a general single-use agreement for review. Mayor Sandlin stated that regarding her property at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Main St/Belleville Rd, she will continue to make this area available for the use of residents who are visiting Tom's Pond, but will maintain the property herself.

Mayor Sandlin called for a motion to enter Executive Session for Minutes Review and to discuss Personnel and Real Estate. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to go into Executive Session. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council entered into Executive Session at 7:10 pm.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to reenter regular session. Council Member Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council reconvened Regular Session at 8:55 pm.

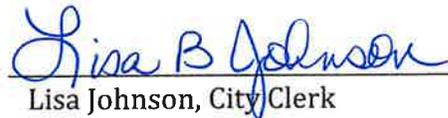
Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes of June 3, 2025. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

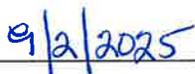
The next regular meeting will be on August 5, 2025, at 6:00 pm.



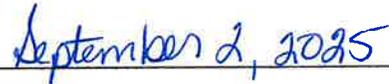
Jena Sandlin, Mayor



Lisa Johnson, City Clerk



Date



Date

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