

**Aberdeen City Council Meeting**  
**August 27, 2007**

**OPENING:**

**Roll Call:** The Aberdeen City Council Meeting Roll was called with the following results:

**Present:** Mayor Simmons, Council President Hiob, Councilwoman Elliott, Councilman Kupferman and Councilman Yensan

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Doug Miller, City Manager  
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development  
Matthew Lapinsky, Director of Public Works  
Opiribo Jack, Director of Finance  
Randy Rudy, Chief of Police

Mayor Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The prayer was led by Pastor Nate Johnson of Aberdeen Bible Church and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Elliott.

The Minutes of the August 20, 2007 Council Meeting were approved as submitted.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

1. Presentation by Jonita Shoaff from Harford Family House, Inc.

Councilman Yensan introduced Ms. Shoaff by stating that she and the Harford Family House, Inc. helped families go from homelessness to home ownership. Ms. Shoaff said they provided 16,049 “nights rest” for families with children. The facility is not a shelter. The goal is to eventually provide furnished dwellings for families to call home. There is an 80% success rate working with families with children. Habitat for Humanity has had a very high success rate. Ms. Shoaff stated that in October, a former client will become a member of the Board. Currently, Harford Family House, Inc. has a \$1.5 million Capital Campaign. So far this year, 243 calls for help have been turned away for a lack of facilities. One goal is to establish a Sheltered Workshop and Transition Locations for the people who need them. Ms. Shoaff invited members of the Council to tour the facilities and see the work being done.

Mayor Simmons stated that the City is concerned with homelessness and providing affordable housing. Currently, there are 29 Habitat for Humanity homes in Aberdeen. He would like to see the success rate reach 100%.

Ms. Shoaff was asked what the Council can do to meet their responsibilities. Mayor Simmons said the Wetlands Annexation request failed. This resulted in several lots which were to be donated to Habitat for Humanity being lost.

Councilwoman Elliott asked if Harford Family House, Inc. found jobs for the people. She was told they do not; however, 50% are working and 18% are attending college.

Councilman Yensan asked "Who is a homeless person?". This question is not definable. Often there is a young woman involved who has been abused; and some just need a "break". He noted the three reasons that could result in homelessness, i.e. medical expenses, domestic violence, and natural disaster.

Council President Hiob thanked Ms. Shoaff for her presentation and the folder describing the program.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

1. Mr. John Feroli, Mt. Royal Avenue;

Mr. Feroli is concerned about the right of individuals to run for election. He came before the Council in January and commented on the Hatch Act. This document states that a Federal employee can run for office in a non-partisan election and not in a partisan election. If a candidate accepts money from either the Republican or Democratic Central Committee the election will not be non-partisan. If this is done, the people from Ft. Monmouth will be getting the wrong idea. The City candidates have no reason to run a partisan election. Mr. Feroli urged the Council to act quickly and not divulge their political affiliations.

2. Pastor Nate Johnson, Aberdeen Bible Church;

Pastor Johnson said he has referred many families to Harford Family House, Inc. Currently, two referrals are being helped.

3. Ms. Ruth Ann Young, 445 Doris Circle;

Ms. Young said she was puzzled by an article in the Aegis on August 22, 2007, regarding judgments against the City by Saks in the amounts of \$88,942.50 and \$1,362. She wonders why this is surfacing now and whether or not the bill was paid.

Mr. Miller stated that the judgment has been paid through Saks attorney and the matter is settled.

4. Mr. Barney Backus, Northgate Road;

Mr. Backus experienced a “situation” and called Mr. Lapinsky and Mr. Hall regarding the problem. The issue was settled the very next day and he thanked them for their prompt attention.

Mr. Backus also thanked Chief Rudy and the Police Department for patrolling his home area during his vacation.

Mr. Backus gave Mayor Simmons an article which ran in the Examiner and asked him to discuss it at a later date.

5. Ms. Gail Dawson, 82 Green Avenue;

Ms. Dawson is a new homeowner with neighbors who are Habitat owners. The Quick Care Medical Center, where Ms. Dawson works, has just opened at 219 W. Bel Air Avenue. She left pens and brochures describing the facility.

6. Mr. Robert Price, 615 Gilbert Road;

Mr. Price’s tires were slashed at Klein’s parking lot on Saturday. He commended Officer Watson for his professional handling of the situation. Mr. Price is not a proponent of the camera program, but they may be helpful in identifying the person or people involved in the crime.

**LEGISLATIVE SESSION:**

1. Resolution No. 07-4 – Annexation Plan for 952 Gilbert Road LLC, (For Introduction)

Ms. Grover said this is only the Introduction for Resolution No. 07-4. House Bill 1141 and House Bill 2 establish requirements for municipalities to adopt Annexation Plans. The Annexation Plans replace the outlines for the Extension of Services. The members of the Council received copies of the Annexation Plan for review. Exhibit A is missing which is the Amended Petition for Annexation and also a Plat of the property. The property is less than 1 acre and is known as the Land of 952 Gilbert Road LLC. Additional copies can be obtained at City Hall. This plan will be open to the public for review and discussion at the Public Hearing which will be held in 30 days. The Annexation Plan and Exhibits will be filed with Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning and the Maryland Department of Planning for review and comments. The property is to be zoned IBD for

recreational, entertainment, and residential use. The Harford County 2004 Master Plan and Land Use Element was adopted. Water and sewer will be extended to the property at the cost of 952 Gilbert Road LLC. The construction of the walking trail, bus station, security camera system, the 8 inch public sewer line, the 12 inch water line, fire hydrant, sprinkler systems, and acceptance of Center Field Drive which has been constructed will also be at the cost of 952 Gilbert Road LLC.

Councilman Kupferman asked what would be at the site. He was told it would be the Stadium Town Center.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Elliott and seconded by Councilman Yensan to approve the Introduction of Resolution No. 07-4, Annexation Plan for 952 Gilbert Road LLC.

**The motion was passed with a vote of 5 – yes.**

2. Charter Amendment Annexation Resolution No. 07-5 (For Introduction)

Ms. Grover asked that this item be held until the next meeting. This request was approved by the Mayor and Council.

**BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL:**

1. Unfinished Business – None

2. New Business

A. Appointment of Member of the Board of Elections

Mayor Simmons nominated Ms. Gina Bantam to the Board of Elections. He cited her previous service to Aberdeen and ability to fill this position.

**The nomination was approved by the Council 5 – yes.**

B. Appointment of the Chairperson of the Board of Elections

Mayor Simmons nominated Ms. Gina Bantam to fill the position of Chairperson of the Board of Elections.

**The nomination was approved by the Council 5 – yes.**

Ms. Bantam thanked the Council for their confidence in her ability.

Councilwoman Elliott said Ms. Bantam is very capable and is a good choice.

Council President Hiob, a former colleague, welcomed Ms. Bantam to the position and thanked her for her past and future service.

Mayor Simmons said Councilwoman Elliott suggested appointing an alternate to the above position. This action will take place in the near future.

3. Business from the Director of Planning & Community Development

None

Mayor Simmons commended Ms. Grover and her office for their work on the BRAC programs.

4. Business from the Chief of Police

Chief Rudy said the Department is losing one officer to the Harford County Sheriff's office. A replacement will be hired at a late date. One newly hired officer will attend the Police Academy and be ready for service in December.

The newly hired undercover officer has arrested one major target and will be introduced at a later date.

Council President Hiob referred to an article in the Sun paper regarding Edgewood cameras. Aberdeen was named as an example of the success of these cameras. The cameras are paying dividends and other municipalities are taking notice.

Councilman Yensan said the City is on the right track. The cameras are to monitor police activity and not for public viewing.

Mayor Simmons noted that newspapers are "dancing around" the fact that the Aberdeen model is working in a "fertile" area for crime, the Rt. 40 corridor from Baltimore City to the Delaware line. The police presence in foot patrols and zero tolerance make the success possible.

5. Business from the Director of Finance

Mr. Jack noted that the City is in good financial condition.

Mayor Simmons said the Matrix is in Mr. Jack's hands and a report will be available in the near future.

6. Business from the Director of Public Works

Mr. Lapinsky spoke with Verizon today and they are contacting their Construction Division for a time frame estimate on Beards Hill Road.

7. Business from the City Manager

Mr. Miller announced that there will be no meeting next Monday due to the Labor Day holiday.

September 10, 2007 will be the Public Hearing for the Camera Ordinance and Infrastructural Loan. The Introduction of Gilbert Road Annexation will be delayed.

In September the Council will hold a Work Session to discuss the Annexation Policy and the Water Allocation Policy.

The City will begin to accept Certificates of Candidacy for the offices of Mayor and City Council as early as September 7<sup>th</sup> with the deadline being October 5<sup>th</sup>. The election will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Simmons asked that consideration be given to a polling place on the East side and report sent back to the Council.

Councilwoman Elliott asked if election dates should be advertised per the current Charter.

Mr. Miller said advertisements should be placed in the papers a minimum of two weeks prior to the election. Other components, i.e., voter registration day, receipt of certificates, etc. will be addressed at a later date.

Councilman Yensan asked if political action committees would also be addressed. He was told they would.

8. Business from the Council

Councilman Yensan noted that the curb pan grass is becoming very unsightly in the City and there is no enforcement mechanism in place to deal with this issue. He asked if it was possible for Zoning Enforcement could handle this issue. There also is a problem with grass clippings in gutters being washed into the Bay and better control is needed

Councilman Yensan said none of the current Council members are guilty of violating the Hatch Act. No partisan questions are answered because of neutrality. The New Democratic Club is advertising in the area. Non-partisan status is being accomplished by the Council and is not an issue.

Council President Hiob said partisan issues are being created by the newspapers.

Council President Hiob said he sprayed his entire block with weed killer and noted that the Council is working on a Property Maintenance Ordinance which could possibly include this issue.

Council President Hiob received calls and e-mails regarding an article in the Record entitled "Sidewalk Plan Hits Dead End".

Mr. Miller responded to the previous statement saying the immediate need is how to deal with the maintenance of driveway aprons. This issue should be addressed at a future Work Session. The intern, Steve, did much work on many issues, i.e., Water Allocation Policy, sidewalk and driveway issues. A policy could be established in the future.

Council President Hiob, a County Inspector, spoke with Mr. Lapinsky about requirements after construction is completed. The properties are turned over to residents and/or HOA's. The residents who called and e-mailed were very upset. The Council has not seen a draft of this issue.

Mr. Miller feels that the driveway issues are a more pressing issue.

Council President Hiob said a large yard sale was held at Ripken Stadium last week. This event caused parking and traffic problems for the City.

Councilwoman Elliott said policy and agenda items should not be discussed if they are not having action taken on them. They should not have been removed from the permanent agenda. There have been many increases for taxpayers and issues should not be brought to the floor. Agenda items should not create so many problems.

#### 9. Business from the Mayor

Mayor Simmons thanked Ms. Lynch for helping to keep the City informed.

Mayor Simmons is pleased to see Festival Park being used so frequently. There were 500 – 600 people there for the Zion Church event, the Friday movies, etc.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

1. Mr. John Feroli, Mt. Royal Avenue;

Mr. Feroli thanked Council President Hiob and Councilman Yensan for their comments on the elections.

2. Bishop Barnes, Highway Holiness Church;

Bishop Barnes said the cameras have served his Church very well because it was in a high crime area. The Mayor and some Council members walk through the areas on a regular basis. He asked the residents to give encouragement to those trying to make the City a safe place to live. Many people have told him that the cameras give them a sense of security. Bishop Barnes noted that this is “working, don’t try to fix it”. He also stated that on September 9<sup>th</sup>, three new homes will be dedicated and there will be free food for all who attend.

3. Mr. William Young, 445 Doris Circle;

Mr. Young noted that the problem with the sidewalk issue is enforcement. Also, the City has no way to ensure that repairs are made. The driveway aprons are the residents’ responsibility. The grass in the curbs and gutters should be a matter of civic pride.

4. Mr. Curtis Koon, Bel Air, MD;

Mr. Koon said the comments on non-partisan issues have been observed here and also in Havre de Grace. Statesmanship requires that the process go forward. If the City does not move forward, where will BRAC people live? Larger cities have the problem of people who work there and leave after work. A growth area is needed and the County should be petitioned on behalf of Wetlands and Locksley Manor.

5. Ms. Karen Heavey, 634 W. Bel Air Avenue;

Ms. Heavey commented last week on the sidewalk issue. She felt that a simple answer at that point would have eliminated a lot of speculation and problems. Possibly a lesson to be learned by the City and the Council.

6. Mr. Robert Price, 615 Gilbert Road;

Mr. Price reminded Mr. Koon that the vote on annexation was held, the Council approved it, it was taken to the Citizens of Aberdeen, and was defeated. The applicants should go somewhere else to build their houses. The people have spoken on their wishes.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Unity in the Community, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 12 - 5:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.