

CITY OF PINE LAKE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2021
7:00 PM
VIA ZOOM

Call to Order – Mayor Hammet called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Present – Mayor Melanie Hammet, Mayor pro tem Jean Bordeaux, and Council members Brandy Beavers, Tracey Brantley, Brandy Hall and Augusta Woods. Also present were Acting City Administrator Peggy Merriss, Chief Sarai Y’Hudah-Green and City Attorney Susan Moore.

Announcements/Communication

Mayor Hammet announced that she had attended an Iftar at the newly opened Mosque in Clarkston and that she appreciated and was grateful for the invitation.

Mayor Hammet also stated that she had met with DeKalb County Commissioner Steve Bradshaw and had a useful and productive conversation.

Mayor Hammet recognized State Representative Viola Davis.

Adoption of Agenda

On a motion by Council member Woods, second by Council member Hall and all voting “aye,” the agenda was adopted.

CONSENT AGENDA

Adoption of the Minutes of the regular meeting of April 27, 2021 and the Special Called Meeting of May 7, 2021.

On a motion by Mayor Pro tem Bordeaux, second by Council member Woods and all voting “aye,” the agenda was adopted.

OLD BUSINESS

COVID-19 Pandemic Report – Mayor Hammet

Mayor Hammet provided an update from the last two weekly statewide mayoral calls.

NEW BUSINESS

Opening of Beach and Lake.

Mayor Hammet introduced the agenda item and stated that decision needed to be made taking into consideration the goals and the vision of the City intersect with the financial resources and public health and safety. She added that the lake area is an important part of the City's environmental system that requires maintenance and attention. Mayor Hammet added that she has a strong interest in what the capacity is of the lake is, specifically with an emphasis on heads in the water. She said that the outcome should be a good policy for this year that sets a foundation for the future.

Mayor Hammet stated that based on the discussion at the April 27, 2021 meeting, there was agreement that not opening the lake was not an option. She indicated that there was agreement that providing access for persons with mobility issues would also be provided.

Mayor Hammet opened the discussion on capacity and a schedule for opening.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux stated that she favored the least costly option and that if capacity limits were instituted, then beach monitors would be required and that would be expensive. She indicated support for short sessions of 3 hours preferably in the morning but possibly in the afternoons. Mayor pro tem Bordeaux added that monitors would probably not be needed in the mornings but would be on the weekends. Mayor pro tem Bordeaux pointed out that funding for opening the lake and beach was not included in the current budget and that the City was already using funds from the reserve for this year.

Council member Hall stated she would like to see capacity controlled through limiting hours and days and not through using personnel. She indicated support for making sure there were one to two days a week with no use so that that the

lake could rest for environmental purposes. She suggested 3 blocks of time each week in the mornings and two blocks of time each week in the evenings. Council member Hall added that the City should be trying to get away from using Police Department staff as monitors.

Council member Beavers stated that there should be morning and afternoon/evening hours to accommodate work schedules and community needs within reason. She did add that monitors would be needed and suggested that it might be possible to use volunteer monitors.

Mayor Hammet asked stated that capacity could also be restricted due to limited parking availability.

Ms. Merriss stated that there are a total of 35 parking spaces, with 22 available for parking. With an average of 4 persons per vehicle, 88 persons could be accommodated. If the beach load was 125 persons, then approximately 70% of users would be accommodated with existing parking and 30% would need to walk or bicycle.

Mayor Hammet stated that based on past discussions with Chief Green, afternoon hours had the highest demand.

Mayor pro tem Bordeaux stated that she was interested in limiting the financial impact of opening the lake and that a port-a-let was a major expense. She stated that we should post that no bathrooms are available, only open for short sessions and that parking was limited.

Mayor Hammet stated she preferred that we not take the "see what happens" approach but instead, take a more thoughtful and deliberate approach. She added that it would take a lot of administrative time and effort from other activities if the program was constantly changing and being reworked.

Council member Hall said that the decision needs to be made to operate at the level it needs to be operated at with fiscal responsibility and maintaining safety.

Mayor Hammet added she would prefer a shortened time of 8 weeks for this year's opening.

Council member Hall stated she would prefer not to be opened at peak times but just during the morning on weekdays, for example Monday – Friday, from 7am-11am so that capacity is controlled without monitors.

Council member Brantley stated that she would prefer being open five days a week, Thursday – Monday with morning sessions from 7am – 11am and evening sessions from 3pm – 8pm and monitors for the weekend afternoon sessions.

Council member Woods stated she wanted to open in the right way but still considering budget implications. She indicated that she did not support being open seven days a week so that there would be rest days for the lake and beach. She indicated support for keeping the parking the same. Council member Woods said it should be as safe as possible for everyone and that 6 weeks of operation is enough for this year. She added that the opening should not coincide with a holiday weekend.

Chief Green added that the decision should consider that the beach and lake should not be seen as an all-day destination but instead we should consider what we could reasonably manage.

Mayor Hammet asked for a show of hands for a Thursday – Monday schedule with 2 shifts. Councilmembers indicated a consensus support.

Further discussion occurred regarding operating shifts and hours.

On a motion by Mayor pro tem Bordeaux, second by Council member Brantley and Mayor pro tem Bordeaux and Council members Beavers, Brantley and Hall voting “aye” and Council member Hall voting “nay,” opening for the beach and lake was approved as follows:

- Open from July 8, 2021 – August 30, 2021.
- Open Thursday – Monday. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday.
- Two sessions per open day. Mornings from 7:00am – 11:00am and Afternoons from 4:00pm – 8:00pm.
- Beach monitors will be provided for the afternoon sessions on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- Public parking availability will remain in its current configuration.
- Purchase of mat for accessibility to the beach for persons with mobility impairments.
- One port-a-john will be in place while the lake is open.
- Improvements will be made to the beach entrance.

Approval of Proposal for replacement of iron railing at Courthouse.

On a motion by Council member Woods, second by Council member Hall and all voting “aye,” the proposal was approved as recommended.

Approval of Proposal for opening City Hall to the public.

On a motion by Council Member Brantley, second by Council member Woods and all voting "aye," the proposal was approved as recommended.

Reports and Other Business

Staff

Ms. Merriss requested approval for removing the "one-way" signs on the walking trails around the lake. By consensus, approval was provided.

Public Comments

Meg Grady asked about the closed status of the inner berm small bridges. Ms. Merriss responded that she would investigate.

Sue Horn stated she appreciated the respectful and thoughtful way the Mayor and Council handled the discussion and decision about opening the beach and lake.

Mayor and City Council

Council member Beavers asked that the City consider the environmental impacts of discarded and used masks.

Adjournment

On motion by Mayor Pro tem Bordeaux, seconded by Council member Hall, adjournment was approved unanimously at 8:30 pm.