

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
January 8, 2015

Present: Mayor Brandon Johnson, Councilmembers Arthur Craft, Bill Griggs, Tony Haynie, Billy Ethridge, and Tray Hicks. Others present included City Manager David Aldrich, City Clerk Jean Turner, Hartwell Sun Representative Lauren Peebles, and Mr. Tom Hardigree.

Absent: Councilmember Mike MacNabb

Upon being duly called and advertised, the Hartwell Council met in special called session on Thursday, January 8, 2015 in the council chambers of city hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell, Georgia. Mayor Brandon Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. and stated the purpose of the meeting was to hear the second reading and consider approval of Ordinance No. 2015-02, permitting and regulating packaged sales of both malt beverages and wine on Sundays, and to also discuss the Hart State Park.

Following the second reading of Ordinance No. 2015-02, a motion was made by Councilman Hicks to adopt the Ordinance. Motion was seconded by Councilman Ethridge and carried unanimously, 5 to 0. As Mayor Johnson pointed out, this Ordinance adoption will allow retailers to sell both malt beverages and wine on Sundays, beginning on Sunday, January 11, 2015 between the hours of 12:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

As discussion began regarding Hart State Park, Mayor Johnson read a summary report from Break Point Consulting on Request for Information (RFI) findings and recommendations on the possible leasing of Hart State Park. As stated in the summary, no master developer filed a definitive response to the RFI, but the general consensus of the respondents was that the City should move forward with obtaining a lease and developing a master plan.

Mayor Johnson stated the City had several options for moving forward, and the City's original approach was to go through the Corps of Engineers and the state to get the primary lease over the property and then try to find one big developer to take over the entire piece of property, as long as it fit into the master plan approved by the Corps. The second option would be for the City to obtain the lease from the state through the Corps, with an approved master plan, but also be able to divide the property with multiple entities for park operations. A third approach would be for the City to lease and operate the entire piece of property.

As explained by the Mayor, Councilmembers felt the better approach would be option number two, to lease the property and find appropriate people to come in and operate the park. He stated that the City would begin the process of moving forward, with the consultant to contact smaller entities to get commitments or letters of intent. He further stated that this may require some strategic action to expend funds, which would come from economic development funds.

Councilman Tony Haynie stated that he felt the City was taking the right approach by putting out the Request for Information (RFI), which resulted in significant interest in various aspects of the park.

Councilman Tray Hicks explained that once a master plan is completed, even if begun today, it would be a minimum of a three-month ordeal, and then going through the Corps of Engineers, another seven-month process.

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Turner
City Clerk