

**June 22, 2021**

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Fairmont was held at 7:00 p.m. on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 2021, at the Public Safety Building located at 500 Quincy Street in Fairmont, West Virginia.

Mayor Mainella called the meeting to order.

Councilmembers present were:

First District	Joshua D. (Josh) Rice
Second District	Anne E. Bolyard
Third District	Karl (David) Kennedy
Fourth District	Richard (Rick) Garcia
Fifth District	Barry H. Bledsoe
Sixth District	Gia Deasy
Seventh District	Blair Montgomery
Eighth District	Thomas (Tom) Mainella
Ninth District	Donna M. Blood

Also present were:

City Manager	Valerie A. Means
City Attorney	Kevin Sansalone
City Clerk	Janet L. Keller
Fire Chief	Ed Simmons
Planning Director	Shae Strait
Building Inspector	Ken Fletcher
Program Manager	Steve Boyce

**IN RE:        OPENING CEREMONIES**

Rev. D.D. Meighen gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Councilmember Deasy.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mayor Mainella noted that each member of Council had received a copy of the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on June 8, 2021. He asked if there were any corrections, deletions, or amendments.

Councilmember Rice moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Blood.

The Mayor declared the minutes approved as submitted by voice vote of Council.

**IN RE:        FSHS GIRLS LACROSSE TEAM RECOGNIZED**

Mayor Mainella recognized the FSHS girl's lacrosse team and their coaching staff on their recent state championship. The coach introduced the team members and congratulations were extended to the team.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**IN RE: AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRMONT PROVIDING FOR THE LEASE TO THE LAMAR COMPANIES OF A PORTION OF THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE OWNED BY THE CITY OF FAIRMONT, SITUATE ON COUNTRY CLUB ROAD IN FAIRMONT CITY DISTRICT, MARION COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA AND BEING PART OF PARCEL 25 OF MARION COUNTY TAX MAP 03-08, WHICH PARCEL IS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS 1.39 ACRES IN THAT CERTAIN DEED FROM THE WEST END IMPROVEMENT COMPANY DATED APRIL 14, 1947, AND OF RECORD IN THE MARION COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE IN DEED BOOK 444, AT PAGE 312; APPROVING THE FORM OF THE TRANSACTIONAL DOCUMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER THE SAME**

Pursuant to a notice duly published in the Times-West Virginian on June 11, 2021, a public hearing was convened to obtain citizen input on a proposed ordinance providing for the lease to Lamar Companies for property on Country Club Road for the rental of a billboard.

The Mayor asked if anyone present desired to speak to the proposed ordinance.

There being no one to speak, the public hearing was called to a close at 7:10 p.m.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**IN RE: MEETINGS BACK IN PERSON**

Councilmember Rice noted that it was nice to have everyone back in person after the Covid pandemic.

**IN RE: COMPLAINTS ABOUT FAIRMONT**

Councilmember Bledsoe stated that he was listening to a radio talk show about two weeks ago and a gentleman called in and complained the way the City of Fairmont looks. He said this was a state-wide program and the man specifically talked about Gaston Avenue and Virginia Avenue. He said that the way he downgraded the City of Fairmont was totally not fair. He then said that he called the City Manager and relayed the conversation to her. He went on to say that he drove down Gaston Avenue and saw two properties with overgrown weeds and then went down Virginia Avenue and only saw one property with overgrown weeds. He stated that the City Manager called him back and said that these few properties are already being worked on and that Code Enforcement is taking care of them. Councilmember Bledsoe went on to say that we

hear a lot of people complain, however, there are a lot of invalid complaints about the City of Fairmont. He said that the City Manager and staff should be commended and that Fairmont looks better than it has in years thanks to these people doing their jobs.

**IN RE: UNITED WAY DAY OF ACTION**

Councilmember Deasy said that she is in appreciation for everyone that came out for the United Way Day of Action. She said that several people donated their time to do some beautification in the City and it was a very rewarding day.

Councilmember Blood reported that over 200 volunteers had participated. She noted that we have great people and that makes her proud of our area.

**IN RE: MISCELLANEOUS CONCERNS**

Councilmember Montgomery reported the following concerns:

- The New York Times had an article referring to Fairmont as a wonderful place to live and it made the front page. He noted that it was a very complimentary article of Fairmont.
- Drainage on Bell Run Road needs to be addressed. He asked to go in there with cameras and look to see if there is blockage in the drains because every time there is a monsoonal type rain, the water is coming into the houses. He said that it was not coming from overflow but coming up from the drains and pushing up the drains in the houses. He then suggested hiring somebody to come in and look at the whole drainage system within the community.
- There has been a request for pickleball courts. He said they can put two pickleball courts in the space of one tennis court and he was thinking with the new park that is going in on East Side, the pickleball courts might be able to avail themselves of the adjacent parking. He asked if pickleball courts could be located in that area. He said that people will come from all over to play because there are not many courts in North Central WV.
- He would still like to hear a discussion of body cams for our police officers. He said that it seems to him that body cams would be a protection for both police officers and people in the community.
- He asked when Council will get together to start planning on how we are going to use this Covid money that is coming into the City. He said that we need to get ahead of the game and be ready for when it does arrive.

Councilmember Rice stated that the basketball courts at Wave Tek are lined for pickleball.

Councilmember Montgomery reported that there is a group that wants to see this happen and they are willing to help fund it and to maintain it. He said the City needs to find some space for it to be located.

Councilmember Rice also mentioned that the Parks Commission was talking about this

and said that when the tennis courts get lined at Morris Park, they will also be lined for Pickleball.

**IN RE: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION**

The Mayor stated that he attended the first official Juneteenth celebration at Windmill Park after it was made an official holiday. He said that it was a great event. He mentioned that the Police Department was there as well as the Fire Department, the Rescue Squad, and the National Guard was there giving vaccines. The Fire Department was there giving kids rides in the aerial ladder basket.

**IN RE: CITY WORKERS COMMENDED**

Mayor Mainella also complimented the efforts of the city employees after the storms we had a week ago. He said a number of trees were down and a lot of water backed up. He mentioned that some police officers that were off-duty were also out cutting trees up as well as some of the firefighters. Staff did a good job to take care of the community and he appreciated all of their efforts.

**CITIZENS PETITIONS**

**IN RE: YMCA BUILDING ; REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

**KAILEE KYLE**, with the Fairmont Community Development Partnership, addressed Council regarding the status of the YMCA building located at the corner of Fairmont Avenue and First Street. She handed out a packet to each Councilmember and included a letter that she had written to the City Manager with their suggestions for the Covid money that is coming through. She asked the City to set aside a portion for non-profits to compensate for the loss revenues. She said that the FCDP has lost a total of \$140,000 in income that they were expecting this year. She said if they had grant funds, they would put that money to good use. She then requested \$750,000 to catapult the YMCA project. She said that the YMCA project is a community and state-wide project and they have many people in their organization committed to make this happen. She went on to say that their vision for that building is to link the success of the High-Tech Foundation and that technology hub type of infrastructure into the downtown area. She added that this will be linking all of Fairmont together and bringing that foot traffic and the economic hub to downtown in a new way that will catapult investment into other buildings. She said that based on the budget, it will be about an \$8 million project and the \$750,000 will set them up for success. If they have the support financially of the City, then they will be able to move forward more quickly. She asked them to look at the packet to see the economic impact that this project will have with nearly 90 jobs created and \$400,000 in state and local tax revenues. She added by saying that this will be bringing in a number of mixed income housing so about 40% of the units will be affordable housing and the rest would have no restriction.

Mayor Mainella mentioned that we will have a lot of competition for where the money goes.

**IN RE: FLOODING AT THE DISABILITY ACTION CENTER**

JULIE SOLE, Executive Director of the Disability Action Center, spoke about the damage the recent flooding has done to the Disability Action Center building and what they have gone through. She handed out pictures of the flooding so Council can see what she is referring to as she makes her presentation. She said it was a pictorial timeline from June 10<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> and what they have gone through but most specifically the condition of the culvert in Coal Run Hollow and the road and the flooding of their Center at that time.

Ms. Sole said that the building was given to them in 2009 by the Hopstein Brothers of Wishing Well when they were selling out and at that time the building was vacant, it was blighted and it had fallen on hard times. She said that she and the board took on the ginormous responsibility, it was a blessing but it was a responsibility, that they took on 12 years ago. Through the hard work of their board, volunteers, and their membership, they invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into that Center. She mentioned some of the improvements that they have made and said that it was then opened up to the entire community not just the disability community at the front door of the downtown Fairmont and not took one dollar from the City, not one dollar in 12 years. They invested a lot of time and energy in making that place a home for our individuals with disabilities and yes, we knew that area was prone to flooding but nothing like we saw in this five-day period. She said that when she said prone, they have had one claim in 12 years and everything else they cleaned up on their own. They also made remedy to their Center to prevent the flooding, they put in flood walls, gates, roof over the gymnasiums door to stop water from coming in there and did all of that on their own dime. She said that the pictures that Council is looking at today are from June 10<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup>. She then walked them through each picture. She said the flooding started on June 10<sup>th</sup>, and she will give the City that one. She showed Council a picture of a pipe that was pulled out and half the pipe laid on the side of the road for that culvert from Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, to June 17<sup>th</sup>. This was the first piece of pipe that was extracted, this was the first remedy that the City could come up with. Next picture, this is what the pipe looked like on Saturday, half of the pipe was left in, half crushed sewer pipe bent and about ready to burst and it did burst on Sunday. Next picture, this hunk of junk laid there until Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, again this was the first piece that laid on the side of the road until the 15<sup>th</sup>. On Sunday, she showed a picture of what the culvert pipe looked like on Sunday, half bent down. Granted they got flooded Thursday and Friday, the pipe looked like this on Sunday when they got it again. On Monday, she met outside their building with Mike Bragg from the Stormwater Sewer Department. Had a pretty nice conversation, not really, with him. Mr. Bragg told her everything is fine and we have done all we can do and she said no, you haven't, look at that pipe in there. She said that she has been hit three times. Mr. Bragg said that we have done everything that we can do and then said "Ma'am, do you think you are the only person that's every been flooded?" She said this is a representative of our City as she was standing there in the street with Tri-City Electrical building a retaining wall to save what was left of her Center after three days of flooding and then after Mr. Bragg returned back, after all he could do, the remaining pipe in that culvert became lodged, lodged clean into the concrete culvert

and left her with this, she held up another picture. She said the water laid against her Center for an hour and a half. She told Council that the pictures show not only the deterioration of the culvert over four days, it shows how much water laid on her building in relationship to how full that culvert was over those four days. Plain and simple. She told Council they could see it, it's right in front of them. She said that it didn't have to happen to her Center and we have been kicking the can down the road for 20 years. Everybody that has been on City Council has talked about how Coal Run has been an area of need but it didn't have to happen to them. On Thursday and Friday, June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, when they were flooded, she thought maybe they could make it. She had a Plan A and a Plan B, she met with Chris McIntire, met with Mike Caputo first thing that week, Monday morning, Mayor Mainella was there and was there Friday evening with her but after she got hit again on Monday, which was absolutely preventable, she has no Plan B for her Center and for her families. She said they need to get to higher ground and need to relocate because not only is it the culvert that has seen years and years of negligence and lack of maintenance, and poor infrastructure, you want to talk about Covid money, let's talk about the poor infrastructure but not only is she dealing with a culvert in that condition, she is also dealing with a condemned house on the top of First Street. She went on to say that this condemned home at the top of First Street is now a gully to where not only does she take water in the front through the gymnasium but now she takes it in the back, now taking it from all sides. Now she has a river now running in front and now behind the Center. This is a condemned home and belongs to the City, she supposed. The water coming off of it yesterday, Councilmember Deasy was there to see it. It took five minutes for the flood waters to start flowing down to the side of her building. She said she had 12 volunteers there for the Day of Action to help us clean up what they have already cleaned up but that is the story of their life. She said that they have cleaned up what they have already cleaned up over and over and over again and they cannot do it anymore. She said that she has had enough of the whole "we knew what we were getting into" when that building was given to them. That is an insult to the hard work, the 12 years that us and our families have put in. I have had enough of the "we should have expected this". That's wrong and that is an insult to our families because we expect more from this. Ms. Sole went on to say that their whole goal at the DAC is to provide our clients with a safe, healthy learning environment where we can improve their overall quality of life and she cannot do that in that building so she only has a Plan A right now and that Plan A is to get us into a new location and she needs help. She reported that they had a good meeting last week with our local officials and the City Manager and the City Planner was there and there were lots of different ideas but she needs help and she needs funding. She said that she needs not invest another dime in that Center and time is of the essence because she is not making coat hangers in that Center, she is serving people with disabilities and they are afraid to return. She said they are anxious and looking at her and asking how much more can we take. They deserve more than this and she doesn't want to hear "we have done all we can" and "you should have expected this" because our families deserve a whole lot more than that.

Ms. Sole went on to say that she is here to ask the City for help. She said that this, holding up pictures, was avoidable. She asked everyone to think for a second to be a family of a person with a disability. Would you send them there? Think about how this

will affect the Center long-term with funding. 90% of their funding comes from grant funding and if you were a funder, would you fund me to stay there. Would you fund me to continue to throw good after bad into that Center? Think about the long-term ramifications. We have a Plan A and our Plan A is to relocate and she will do everything possible to get us to higher ground. We have started a "Go Fund Me" Account and met with local officials and Senators Capito and Beach have planted the seed money of \$88,000 in their discretionary funding and Joey Garcia and Guy Ward are falling behind with the smaller amounts that they may have. We are seeking every course of action we can, through our own insurance and hopefully through some help from the City. She mentioned they are also going to contact the Governor's Office and FEMA.

Mayor Mainella said that he was there for all four events and only talked to her after the first one. He said that everything that she has said tonight, as far as he could tell, was 100% factual. The culvert, had it been removed prior to Monday, I don't know that it would have flooded but the Monday flood was from the totally collapsed culvert, the pictures show it. He said that it was like this on Sunday, holding up a picture, and on Monday, it was like this, like a flap that shut it off, showing another picture. The Mayor said that since 1998, a lot of people have come and gone, City Managers, Councilmembers, he has been here about the whole time. He said that he feels probably more responsible for what's happening to the DAC than about anybody else because although he did not cause the flood, he has been a can-kicker. He said that in the eight years that he was not on Council between the two terms, he was on the Sanitary Sewer Board. He said that he feels pretty responsible for not having pushed the issued before now, but I think we all, around this table, need to make a pledge that we are going to do something about this problem. That culvert needs to be probably three or four sizes bigger than it is to make up for all of the development that has occurred in the last 20 or 30 years. At one time, it would take the water, now it won't. The Mayor also mentioned that maybe you will go two or three years or four years without it happening and you think, well, it's going to be alright but it's not. He then said that if nothing is done, it's going to be a hell of a lot worse than it was on Monday and that's probably the worse flood you ever had. He went on to say that, at some point, it's going to dump five or six inches of rain in a couple hours and it's going to be bad news, not only here but in other places. He then said that he was making the pledge, and he wished everyone else would get on board to push for a correction of some kind to be made.

Councilmember Montgomery asked if there has ever been a study of the drainage system in the City of Fairmont.

The Mayor replied he did not know.

Councilmember Montgomery said that it may be worth looking into it so we can find out where the problems are.

The Mayor said there are a lot of problems in the City. The dumbest hydrologist in the world could figure this one out, the culvert is not big enough, period.

Councilmember Rice told Ms. Sole that anything as a Councilmember or personal, he is behind them 100%.

Councilmember Bledsoe asked if there was anything at all on the radar as far as a potential place to go to.

Ms. Sole said that they have probably looked at half a dozen places so far and people have been really great about coming forth with buildings. They have looked at places large and small and they currently have 11,000 square feet at present. She said the main thing they are looking for is accessibility, being on the bus line, safety, and having a little bit of room to be safe and for our families to feel comfortable. Finding a location is important. It is important for our families to know that we have a plan and that we are working towards that instead of more of a long-term dream of building so she would like to have a concrete plan for them but she also thinks it will help to secure funding as well if we have a secure site.

Councilmember Bledsoe asked if she would want something temporary to get out of that building now until she can find something more permanent or make one move do it.

Ms. Sole said to make one move. She said for now, they can move all of their programs to the banquet hall facility area. She said that even just the visual of not having use of this side of the Center and it being flooded out the way that it is, there is a different level of emotion and a different level of trauma that this plays on our clientele and that is important to mention. She went on to say that they would rather stay where they are, where they are comfortable with in this side that is safe, until we can make one move.

Councilmember Bledsoe said that they have his backing.

Councilmember Deasy said that she and Ms. Sole have been together for a long time and she did not know if everyone realizes how many clients or friends or how many people the DAC serves and that individuals with disabilities and individuals that don't have disabilities. The school system has been a partner with the DAC and we have used that whole facility a grand number of times and people have had celebrations there and it has become like a home. She said that she was with the DAC before they received the gift of that building and that building truly was a gift and Julie truly was a gift and she did not think the DAC would have gone as far as it has had we had not gotten the building. That constant bringing up "it is where it is" and "it is what it is" is not only hurtful but it's not helpful and it is inaccurate because regardless that building launched the DAC into a lot of opportunities for individuals with disabilities that never would have had it. That is her area and she walks by the DAC every single morning, that's my neighborhood. We have come in front of the City Council and different organizations multiple times and maybe all of the homes around her District #6 aren't half-million-dollar homes, but those are our neighborhoods and our homes. Oftentimes, we feel that part of town may not be as important for whatever reason, but that's the Fifth Street Gym and Fifth Street Playground, and it's hurtful when those parts of town, we feel, are not given the level the importance that other areas may be given. So, the water issue, everyone is aware of and some things happen and happen once or twice and you need

to suck it up and it's nobody's fault but when it pressed or pushed aside because it's from that area of town and it gets even worse and then we feel embarrassed that we let it go and it's really harmful to the people who are most vulnerable. She noted that it will be a sad day when we have to move out of there but she can see where it's the next step. The DAC has provided us with almost two decades of wonderful memories.

Councilmember Montgomery recommended the recently vacated Med Express Building on Fairmont Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Mayor said that he has had the privilege of spending time at the DAC and to see the enthusiasm but to see those disabled people and how excited they are to be there, especially for an event, it's not like we are dealing with a beer joint here. This is serious stuff and she is taking care of people that need taken care of and let's go forward and find a solution for this. It needs to be done.

Councilmember Bledsoe said that we are going to have a work session to deal with how we are going to spend Covid money and he would like to ask that the DAC be specifically put on the agenda to be discussed at that session.

Mayor Mainella said that we can discuss it but he had a conversation with Utility Manager David Sago and he suggested that Mr. Sago get an engineer, somebody who deals with this stuff, and let them just look at it and say off the top of their head how much is it going to cost. He said if they could just replace the culvert until they get past the bowling alley parking lot, they could daylight it and put it in the stream and let it go down the middle of Coal Run parking lot to it gets to the river and then it will go under the railroad tracks and go out. If an engineer can just give us an idea. He didn't think it was going to be that expensive, it's mostly excavation and to replace the culvert. He thought that is where we need to start. We all know that something needs to be done and, in the meantime, they are looking to relocate which is sad. The Mayor asked if we come up with a solution to the culvert and this time next year there hasn't been any more floods and the culvert is going to get fixed, would the DAC stay there. He told Ms. Sole not to answer that question, just think about it.

**IN RE: FLOODING ON MARYLAND AVENUE**

**JERRY AND LAURA DAVISON**, 608 Maryland Avenue, said that their home has seen major flooding seven times in the past 20 years, damaging or ruining everything from cars to stereo equipment. They passed around pictures of the flooding so Council could see what they were talking about during their presentation. Ms. Davison said they lost \$75,000 to \$100,000 worth of things. Mr. Davison described how the basement looked during the recent flooding. He said that they have six drains in the basement and they turned into six geysers and there was nowhere else for it to go. He said that they have suffered losses in the past and nothing has been done about it. Ms. Davison said that she wants a fix to the drainage problem. She said that she doesn't want to escalate this and she wants it to be resolved. She then said that she doesn't think the storm drains need upgraded. You are probably looking at that nothing has been done maybe for years and perhaps we need to find that out but you are looking at more homes means

more runoff and don't we all pay an extra \$3.00 a month on our bill for runoff. Where is that money going? Where is it allocated? She asked if it was in the beer fund.

The Mayor responded by saying that it's in a fund that does projects dealing with runoff.

Ms. Davison said that the City said there was going to be funding and that's why we are here. She said that she was getting sick of it and is about ready to move. She told the Council that the City is going to start losing people. She then said that she was going to call the City's insurance adjuster but she wants it to be resolved here. She then said that she is going to start billing the City every time it floods.

The Mayor said that it still needs to be resolved.

Councilmember Bledsoe stated that we do have a stormwater fee but he did not think the stormwater fee that we have is sufficient to cover these things that are now coming to a head. He said that it's probably sufficient to cover what we are doing right now but with the issues that we are having with the DAC, Maryland Avenue, Bell Run Road, and they are popping up everywhere, and he was not talking about the 100-year rain that we had Monday night but it seems to be a re-occurring problem with more than just your average rain. He then suggested to start discussing raising that fee to cover the cost of studying the system that we've got and finding out where it's adequate and where it's not. We need to come up with plans to do some changes because it's not going to get any better. It's going to get worse.

The City Manager stated that to cover these sorts of millions of dollar projects, that fee would not be sufficient.

The Mayor said that hopefully we will take a look at it. He asked Ms. Davison to stay in touch with them.

Ms. Davison said that she did not want to hear that.

The Mayor said that he didn't know what else to tell her.

Ms. Davison said it's just as bad when she wanted to get a deck and wheelchair ramp for her elderly World War II father and was told she could have the wheelchair ramp along side the house but didn't know how it was going to connect onto the deck.

The Mayor replied that was a different issue. He then thanked them for coming and said, hopefully, we can get it resolved. He didn't know what else to tell them.

Councilmember Blood suggested having a study because things are only going to continue to get worse with global warming and the rains that we have been getting.

Mayor Mainella said it makes a lot of sense to start cleaning out the sewers. He knew the City had a truck that did that and he was sure there are some drains that have not been touched in years. He said that cleaning out the drains all over town would

probably be a start.

Councilmember Montgomery said that we have to move on this quickly because people are losing a lot of money. We have to work on this quickly and we can't kick it down the road and we can't put it to a study forever and ever. We have to start dealing with it and making sure these folks get remunerated for some of their losses if it is a City problem and their insurance companies are saying that it is a City problem.

The Mayor said that when water comes up your drain, unless it is an actual 100-year rain, it's not our fault but these 100 years rains have been coming every three or four years. He also mentioned that there is coverage on your home-owners policy for sewer and drain back-up coverage, if you have that endorsement. That will pay it.

Ms. Davison told Council that she was pissed off and they are going to lose good people if they don't act on things.

The Mayor said we don't want that to happened and he is sorry that this has happened.

Ms. Means said that this is a Sewer Board issue and not the venue of Council. She suggested Council having a joint work session with the Sewer Board.

**IN RE: MEETING RECESS**

The Mayor called for a five-minute recess at 8:12 p.m.

**IN RE: COUNCILMEMBER KENNEDY LEFT MEETING**

Councilmember Kennedy left the meeting at 8:18 p.m. to go to work.

**IN RE: MEETING RECONVENED**

The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

**IN RE: CITY STAFF COMMENDED**

The City Manager commended staff for the work that they did after the flooding. She said all departments did a great job.

**IN RE: AMERICAN RESCUE MONEY**

Ms. Means said that the City did allow for the American Rescue Fund through the State portal. She reported that the City will receive about \$8.1 million in funding and will come in two increments, half this June and half next June. She said that she will schedule a work session for Council to discuss possible uses of the funds.

**IN RE: DEMOLITION PROGRESS PRESENTATION**

**SHAE STRAIT, STEVE BOYCE, AND KEN FLETCHER** presented Council with a progress report on Demolition.

Mr. Strait said that he wanted to run through some of the work that they have been doing as far as the demolitions and update Council on some of the data and numbers that we have talked about at previous Council meetings and where we are at moving forward. He had given Council several handouts with all of this information.

Mr. Strait said that there was a little bit of a delay with 2020, with the pandemic. We are currently on track for further demolitions that the staff is working on that will make this number double any previous year. He said in 2015, the City began cracking down on derelict buildings and started to survey citizens asking about buildings that need looking into or are abandoned. The City came back with a number of 126 buildings that were either in poor or worsening condition or should be demolished. Since 2015, of those original 125 buildings, there are only 43 that have not either been demolished or refurbished. That means of that original number, the City has reduced the abandoned buildings by 65%. Of those 43 that remain, 32 are currently in the process of being demolished or refurbished. Adding to that original count of 125, the City has surveyed over 300 properties that need attention. Since 2015, 325 buildings have been demolished by the City, not counting dilapidation due to fires or other disasters. Mr. Strait said staff has made a chart detailing the buildings in the most need of demolition and, at the same time, grouped specific areas that are “hot spots” of abandoned buildings. He went on to say two major hot spots were just up the hill from downtown, near Pine Street, and up off Locust Avenue, around View Avenue. He said the Locust Avenue cluster should be prioritized, as it is visible from a gateway road, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, which connects to the Gateway Connector. He then opened it to the Council for guidance on which hotspot should take priority.

By the end of the discussion, council decided the best way forward may be to do both the hotspots simultaneously.

The City Manager said that we like this direction that Council has given us. It's given us a clear view of how to go so we are not making decision haphazardly.

The Mayor said that if we do 30 structures in the next nine months, he would be happy with that.

Mr. Fletcher said that if things continue like they have, 30 buildings could be demolished in the next nine months.

**CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**IN RE: ADOPTION, AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRMONT PROVIDING FOR THE LEASE TO THE LAMAR COMPANIES OF A**

**PORTION OF THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF REAL ESTATE OWNED BY THE CITY OF FAIRMONT, SITUATE ON COUNTRY CLUB ROAD IN FAIRMONT CITY DISTRICT, MARION COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA AND BEING PART OF PARCEL 25 OF MARION COUNTY TAX MAP 03-08, WHICH PARCEL IS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS 1.39 ACRES IN THAT CERTAIN DEED FROM THE WEST END IMPROVEMENT COMPANY DATED APRIL 14, 1947, AND OF RECORD IN THE MARION COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE IN DEED BOOK 444, AT PAGE 312; APPROVING THE FORM OF THE TRANSACTIONAL DOCUMENTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER THE SAME**

Mayor Mainella entertained a motion for the adoption of an ordinance providing for the lease to Lamar Companies for property on Country Club Road for the rental of billboards.

Motion:

Councilmember Rice moved for the adoption of the proposed ordinance. Councilmember Garcia seconded the motion.

Roll call was taken by the Clerk.

The Mayor declared the ordinance adopted by unanimous vote of those Councilmembers present and the ordinance designated as Ordinance No. 1902 was duly adopted.

**IN RE: ONE APPOINTMENT, HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION, THREE-YEAR UNEXPIRED TERM TO END JANUARY 1, 2022**

Mayor Mainella entertained a motion for one appointment to the Historic Preservation Review Commission for an unexpired term to end January 1, 2022.

Councilmember Deasy moved to appoint Troy Snyder to the Historic Preservation Review Commission for a three-year unexpired term ending January 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garcia.

Roll call was taken by the Clerk.

The Mayor declared Troy Snyder appointed to the Historic Preservation Review Commission for an unexpired term ending January 1, 2022 by unanimous vote of those Councilmembers present.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The Mayor entertained a motion for adjournment.

Motion:

Councilmember Bledsoe moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Blood.

The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned by voice vote of Council at 9:01 p.m.