

## **September 8, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Madison was held Monday, September 8, 2008, at 5:30 PM at the former Senior Center, located at 434 Hancock Street. Present were the following: Mayor DuPree; Council Members Perriman, Blanton, Hunt, Naples, and Booth; City Manager Nunn; City Clerk Thomas; Planner Callahan; Project Coordinator Huff; and City Attorney Reitman. Council Member Perriman arrived late, after the Beer & Wine Catering License.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor DuPree.

Council Member Blanton conducted the pledge of allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting** – Council Member Naples motion to approve the minutes of August 25, 2008, as presented. Booth second. Opportunity for discussion. Vote unanimous. The motion carries.

**Approval of Order of Agenda Items** – Mayor DuPree said the Madison Square Committee Report will be moved prior to the Resolution on a Moratorium on Application for Multifamily Land Uses. He reviewed the items requiring votes and those items available for public comment.

### **Legal Matters**

**Beer & Wine Catering License – Gasa de la Torre d/b/a Town 220 Restaurant – Francisco de la Torre** – City of Madison Business Services Specialist, Michelle Watkins, reviewed the application. Watkins reported all necessary documentation is received and approved. Marco Gonzalez was present at the meeting representing the applicant, Francisco de la Torre. After discussion, Council Member Booth motion to approve the beer & wine catering license for Town 220 that meets all the criteria. Blanton second. Opportunity for discussion. Vote unanimous. The motion carries.

**Proposed Hotel/Motel Tax Increase** – Project Coordinator Huff explained another survey response was received late and this response was also not in favor of the increase. Three responses not in favor of the increase were included in the Mayor and Council's notebooks and, in addition, a handout by Karen Wibell with the Brady Inn B & B was also sent to the Mayor and Council detailing her opposition to the proposed increase. Mayor DuPree explained this is being considered because the Town Park event center is nearing completion and there is a need to market the new park. Another concern is the economic health of the retail community. The other issue was branding and how this should be marketed. The funding mechanisms considered for these needs were the increase in the hotel/motel tax and an increase in the tax for the special tax districts. Council Member Booth said she had originally supported the hotel/motel tax increase; however, after attending the CVB retreat and after

listening to Mary Diletto and Karen Wibell, and after reading Wibell's documentation, Booth said she is thinking differently. She said, since most of the hotel owners are opposed to this, she thinks it would be difficult to get legislative approval. She said she is not certain this is the proper way to approach it. Council Member Naples said there were a minimal number of responses to the survey and only one response was from a hotel on the corridor. He said no one from the Corridor was at the CVB retreat. He also said without the hotel owners' support, he agrees that it would be difficult to obtain legislative support. Project Coordinator Huff said it is difficult to get response and participation from the Corridor Hotels.

Karen Wibell addressed the Mayor and Council about her opposition to the proposed hotel/motel tax increase. She said she had spoken to some of the larger hotel managers at the Corridor and said they had reported to her that they were opposed to the increase. She reviewed her key points and statistics. She offered recommendations and suggested that members of the lodging industry would be willing to help to find the right solution.

Mary DiLetto, General Manager at the James Madison Inn, discussed her opposition to the tax increase. She said she is all about advertising and she likes billboards, but the hotels should not have to pay for about 100 businesses to benefit. After further discussion, Mayor DuPree asked DiLetto for her recommendation. She said the issue needs to be studied and reviewed in more detail. Council Member Hunt asked DiLetto about a previous comment she had made that 80% of their reservations came from the internet. She said it is hard to prove, but based on discussions with staff, the internet is their primary source of reservations and inquiries. Wibell added that her research has indicated that web-based marketing is the future.

Marguerite Copelan, CVB Director, said the Bed and Breakfasts and downtown hotels are very different from the lodging at the interstate. She said they get their customers in different ways. She agreed with comments about web-based marketing and said the Chamber had recently updated their website. She said the business for the Corridor hotels comes directly from people traveling on the interstate and generally is not pre-planned. The billboards would be a useful tool in marketing the Corridor businesses. She said the Corridor hotels have had a lower than average occupancy rate (60%) and the billboards were considered as a means to increase this. Copelan said we are underspending our competition. She said the new legislation allows for an increase in the tax to assist with tourism. She discussed other communities that are considering the increased hotel/motel taxes are Milledgeville, Putnam County, Covington, and Conyers. She said Oconee County is just beginning to collect hotel/motel tax. She said the CVB Steering Committee is already in place to bring the community together to discuss this issue. She said the committee is made up of retailers, restauranteurs, bed and breakfasts, City, County, and community leaders. She

said the next meeting is the end of the month. Mayor DuPree said this committee could consider alternatives and make recommendations.

Mike Conrads with the Brady Inn asked if it had been considered from the perspective that if you spend it, what will come back from an overall revenue standpoint and will that pay for it.

Mayor DuPree said this will be considered again at a later date and that Mayor and Council will look for a report by the Chamber of Commerce.

**Madison Square Committee Report** – City Manager Nunn reported that he and Council Members Naples, Booth, and Hunt had met with the managers/owners of Orchard Grove, Madison Square, and Madison Duplexes. The Chief of Police, the Assistant Chief of Police, the Morgan County Sheriff, and one of the County’s deputies were also in attendance. Nunn said problems and experiences were discussed. The common themes among the properties were reviewed. Another meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 17, at 3:00 PM at the Fire Station. Nunn reported that foot patrols, road checks, and an increased presence in the neighborhood are being utilized. He said Chuck Elder has been assigned as the police officer for this area and will be attending the next committee meeting. After further discussion, Mayor DuPree offered an opportunity for public comments.

Myesha Cole, a resident of Orchard Grove, said the problem is not the residents, but people that come in from outside the complex.

Bill Doyle, co-owner of Madison Square, said his complex is working on a neighborhood watch plan. He talked about the committee meeting and other items such as curfews, etc.

Other residents of Orchard Grove and Madison Square offered comments about security and safety concerns:

Ella King;  
Dustin Price;  
Georgette Smith;  
Amy Cape;  
Bobbi Randall;  
Maurice Walker.

No one was in attendance from the other complex, Madison Duplexes.

Mayor DuPree said the committee needs an opportunity to make this work. He said the committee needs to use its judgment about the recommendations of what things should be focused on first.

Council Member Blanton asked Attorney Reitman if there are legal solutions for some of the items discussed such as curfews, loud music, hanging-out, etc.

Attorney Reitman reviewed the items and offered some recommendations.

After further discussion, Mayor DuPree said at the committee meeting on September 17, actionable steps can be identified and a report from the committee will be added to the next agenda.

**Resolution – Moratorium on Applications for Multifamily Land Uses –** Council Member Naples motion for the adoption of the resolution imposing a moratorium on the applications for multifamily land uses, such moratorium to commence immediately and conclude by December 30, 2008, or when a comprehensive review of the pertinent ordinances is completed and Mayor and Council has acted on any recommendations to modify the ordinances, whichever shall come first. Hunt second. Council Member Naples read the resolution. After discussion, Council Member Hunt said renovations and additions should be clarified. Attorney Reitman said add “additions to individual pre-existing units.” Callahan suggested “units with certificate of occupancy.” City Manager Nunn said there are condos that have not received their final CO and this would create a problem for them and the intent is for “no additional units.” This amendment is in Section I. Naples and Hunt accepted this as a friendly amendment to the motion. Mayor DuPree called for a vote on the motion as amended. Vote unanimous. The motion carries.

**New Business**

**City Manager’s Report –** City Manager Nunn reported capital projects are continuing. He said the City is considering three quotes on a purchase of a backhoe for the water department. The quotes are from \$79,269 - \$79,709. Since the quotes are so close, the equipment will be evaluated and the previous track record of the vendors will be considered. Council Member Hunt asked about the manufacturers. Nunn said they are Caterpillar, Case, and John Deere.

Nunn said there is an opportunity for a gas extension on the southeast side of the county. The development is Kingston on the Lake that is about 750 lots. Nunn said this will be reviewed and researched and he will report at a later date.

**Other Business of Council –** None.

**Public Comments –** No comments.

**Adjournment –** Council Member Naples motion to adjourn. Booth second. Vote unanimous.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom E. DuPree, Jr., Mayor  
Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mellie A. Thomas, City Clerk  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_