



CITY OF WINTER GARDEN

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

CITY COMMISSION

September 23, 2006

A **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Winter Garden City Commission was called to order by Mayor Quesinberry at 11:00 a.m. in City Hall Commission Chambers.

PRESENT: Mayor Jack Quesinberry, Commissioners Theo Graham, Colin Sharman and H. Gerald Jowers (*telephonically*) **Also Present:** City Manager Mike Bollhoefer, City Clerk Kathy Golden, City Attorney Kurt Ardaman

Mayor Quesinberry called to order the special meeting for the purpose of electing someone to fill the vacant seat in District 3 until the next general election. *Qualifying oaths submitted for consideration by the City Commission were: Johnnie Mae Anderson, Harold L. Boulter, Rodney Reynolds, Charlie Mae Wilder, and Henry L. Wright.*

Mayor Quesinberry requested that City Attorney Ardaman suggest the meeting guidelines. Mr. Ardaman stated that this is a special meeting and under extraordinary circumstances as previously determined by the City Commission, Commissioner Jowers is attending the meeting via a two-way speaker telephone. The candidates will each be given time to make their presentation to the City Commission. He suggested setting a five-minute limit for each candidate to address the Commission. He further explained that this is not a public participation meeting and as provided in the City Charter, the City Commission serves as the judge of qualifications of the candidates.

Mayor Quesinberry stated that Winter Garden citizens have been given approximately two weeks to lobby the Commissioners regarding their preference as to who should fill the seat for District 3. He stated there is no requirement that each candidate speak, but if they wish, they will be called alphabetically and given the opportunity to speak for up to five minutes. Then there will be a question and answer period by the City Commission for one additional minute. It was the **consensus** of the Commission to accept the guidelines as stated.

Johnnie Mae Anderson, 249 Center Street, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that she is a lifelong citizen. She taught school for 40 years and is now retired. She stated she previously served on the City Commission for two terms. Her vision for East Winter Garden includes addressing the educational level of residents with grants written with the help of the City and she would like the City to deal with the crime by discovering various avenues to cut crime. She also wants to work

on the growth and work with the Commission on all integral parts of Winter Garden in all the districts.

Commissioner Sharman stated that Ms. Anderson mentioned that she has previously served on the Commission and asked her what she did for education while in office before. Ms. Anderson responded that she worked to get the citizens to finish high school and get their diploma. They set up an adult program at her church and worked with the County to hire the teachers. Commissioner Sharman asked what she would do, if given the opportunity to serve on the Commission again, to further education. Ms. Anderson replied that we have so many dropouts and those on suspension that she would like to do a grant to establish a Forgiveness Program. Instead of these kids being suspended and out on the streets to do anything and everything they wanted to do, they would have the alternative of getting their class work and staying in the program for the duration of their suspension. She stated that there would be teachers available to help them with their homework so when they get back to school they will be caught up on their courses.

Commissioner Sharman stated Ms. Anderson talked about growth in her presentation and asked how she would like to see Winter Garden in ten years. Ms. Anderson stated that she would like to see more businesses and more affordable housing.

Mayor Quesinberry asked Commissioner Jowers if he had any questions. Commissioner Jowers stated no, he knows Ms. Anderson very well.

Harold L. Boulter, 813 East Bay Street, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that he was present to offer himself to fill the seat of one of the great African American female pioneers of Winter Garden of District 3. He feels it is a pleasure to be considered to do so. He came to Winter Garden two years and one month ago and had intended to relax and some of the things he saw that needed to be done perked his adrenalin. He spoke to a few people in the community, and the City, and he has built bridges between the people and the City. He is Vice President of the East Winter Garden Community Development Board, Member of the Code Enforcement Board, Community Redevelopment Agency Advisory Board, and was appointed briefly to the City Economic Development Board. He is also on the Legal Services Board for Mid and Central Florida. He is happy to serve and reiterated that he never thought he would be doing what he is doing but explained that sometimes your path is not led by you but a higher being. There are a lot of things he would like to see changed, not only in East Winter Garden but the district as a whole. He stated that he wants to try and bridge all gaps in the district. There are people who do not know their Commissioner or what district they live in and he is sure this is the case in other districts that needs to be corrected. We are only as good as our weakest link and in his opinion right now the weakest link is East Winter Garden. Until that is recognized, Winter Garden is not Winter Garden.

Commissioner Sharman stated that he had received some phone calls about Mr. Boulter's residency and called Mr. Boulter this week on this issue. Staff has verified his qualification by an affidavit provided by his landlord stating he had been here longer. Mr. Boulter's first water bill shows October and stated that we are almost at two years. He asked Mr. Boulter what is the first

date he moved into 813 East Bay Street. Mr. Bouler stated that his first water bill was for 797 East Bay Street, which is the house he is building. Commissioner Sharman asked if he had been living with his landlord. Mr. Bouler replied yes and explained that the reason there may be a mix up and why the water bill is not in his name is because 813 East Bay Street is a relative's house and they pay the water bill, he pays the rent. He explained that when his parents came to Winter Garden he would periodically leave for a few days and stay in Orlando and he does not think anyone stays in their domicile all the time.

Commissioner Graham stated that he also had quite a few phone calls on this issue. The Charter states candidates must be a resident for at least two years and previously two residents could not be qualified to run because they were a few days short or a month or so short. If the Commission is adhering to the City Charter, the Commission would have to establish at least two years residency. He explained that the dates provided on Mr. Bouler's application would make him fall within the range. He asked Mr. Bouler if he had pulled a Certificate of Occupancy for his home at 813 East Bay Street. Mr. Bouler replied that his home is not finished. Commissioner Graham stated that he thought it was the home next to the one that is not finished. Mayor Quesinberry asked City Clerk Golden if his residency for the two years had been verified. Ms. Golden replied yes.

Rod Reynolds, 1308 Vic Kay Court, Winter Garden, Florida, stated he believes District 3 has the potential to be a great district and in order for this to happen it would need someone to lead it that has leadership skills, a vision, a passion, and the ability to collectively unite the district and instill that vision to the other residents. He stated that he also believes it is critical for that passion to be ignited, that the residents of District 3 are going to have to collectively decide, come together, and elect that person in a fair and untainted election. He stated that he will not attempt to convince anyone that he knows all the individual challenges of the people who live in District 3 but that he understands them because we as a City face some of the same challenges. Keeping a sense of community when families are falling apart, raising children and keeping them in school, drug free, running with the positive crowd, affordable housing for first time homeowners, elderly and single parents, jobs that pay enough in a community so that you can afford to live in that community. All of these challenges are not specific only to District 3 but collective to the City of Winter Garden as a whole. He stated he is here to offer his service to this Commission, if it deems that it would be a wise choice. He stated that he feels it would be prudent to elect him because he is a safe pick, from the standpoint of his prior appointment to the Commission and the fact he passed a level two FDLE background check. There would be no complications that may arise in the future due to litigation. There would be no embarrassing surprises to this Commission about his criminal past. It would be a disservice to the community for this Commission to give any of the candidates the seat who has already expressed an interest in running in March. He stated that he has experience on this commission, education, technological skills, the resources to gather unbiased information that assists him in the decision making process, he has a proven work ethic, attendance record, and independent decision making ability. He is comfortable in working with City staff and is familiar with the "Government in the Sunshine" laws. If this Commission follows this logic he will humbly submit his application to serve and vacate the seat in March so this district can decide for itself who it would like for District 3.

Commissioner Sharman asked Mr. Reynolds if he has ever lived in District 3. Mr. Reynolds stated no, he has not. Commissioner Sharman asked how he feels he could serve the needs of the community when he does not walk in their shoes. Mr. Reynolds stated that he just gave a whole list of reasons on how he could help and that he thinks it is a more complicated issue than just residing in District 3 at this time.

Charlie Mae Wilder, 284 11th Street, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that she has been in Winter Garden for 30 years and has served on many boards since 1985 to include Recreation, Code Enforcement, CRA Board, East Winter Garden CDC and the library board. She stated that she is here because she has an interest in empowering the people to do the job at hand. She is working for the people to start working from the ground floor up, for them to begin to participate in what needs to be improved, expanded, and upgraded. She stated that she is interested in improving affordable housing and that education is one of the district's strong points and they have already put the proof in motion to help people regarding their education. She stated that they feel that if they can get their education, they can replace some of the things that they are doing now. They need industry in order to be able to get good jobs and they are working towards that already. They are looking at various age groups in order to work with them to improve their recreation. She stated that living in District 3 gives you a better insight into working with the residents, but empowerment is her main focus.

Mayor Quesinberry asked if she just recently moved into District 3, stating that he knows she spends a lot of her time in District 3 and the fact she has been on a lot of boards, however, she just recently changed her address from District 4. Ms. Wilder replied yes, her address was changed on June 30th of this year and explained the dates presented on her application from 1976 until 1987 were in District 3. After 1987 she lived in District 4 until June 30, 2006, but she was a resident of Winter Garden this entire period. Mayor Quesinberry stated that he knew this but wanted others to understand.

Commissioner Graham asked if her husband had been the pastor of the Bethlehem Baptist Church for a number of years and if she did live at 55 Center Street. Ms. Wilder stated yes. Commissioner Graham stated that he remembers her husband well.

Commissioner Sharman stated that he had the opportunity to speak with Ms. Wilder on the phone for about an hour and got all the answers on what she would do. He stated that there wasn't enough time for him to go into the details of their conversation, but stated that she had some very sharp ideas and he was very impressed for his first time speaking with her at length.

Mayor Quesinberry asked Commissioner Jowers if he had any questions. Commissioner Jowers stated no, he knows Ms. Wilder very well.

Henry L. Wright, 1651 Lindzlu Street, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that his former address was 397 Regal Downs which is in the heart of District 3 where he served on a couple of boards. The last board he served on was as the Vice President of the Homeowners Association. He has worked very closely with Code Enforcement and the City's fine police officers. He shared his

background and his very successful corporation which was out of Manhattan and New Jersey. He moved to Central Florida 16 years ago and was with Disney management for ten years. For part of those ten years he served their diversity efforts and still can be considered as one of the leaders in diversity, not for just the Disney Corporation but in the whole community. As a military veteran, he served six years in Texas and Germany. That experience started his foundation of what he will do to give back to others. He currently has fiscal responsibility of \$10 million a year as the General Manager of Kane's Furniture. He thinks part of the strength of leading is having fiscal responsibility and the ability to have people follow you. He stated that he had the opportunity to spend last evening with the Ride-Along program with Police Officer Dawkins in the East part of town, not the whole district, and they spent some time talking with some of the citizens. The citizens want the same things as everyone else. They want safe streets, the opportunity for their kids to grow up and have opportunities. He explained that his son will be attending Maxey Elementary School next year and his neighbors, without ever visiting the school, stated that they would not send their kids to this school. He stated that he and his wife decided to visit Maxey Elementary and were happily surprised with what they saw for the "A" rated school and met some of the teachers, unannounced. He told them that he was a concerned parent whose kids will soon be attending and he wanted to be involved. He stated that he is currently on the PTA at his son's school and some of his volunteer work includes Coalition for the Homeless, NAACP, Give Kids the World Foundation, and Breast Cancer Awareness. He stated that as he spoke with citizens last night and the importance was not that your house is right here but what a Commissioner is going to do, that they can believe in their Commissioner. He stated that to understand the inner city, for him, he had to live in the inner city, and he had. He stated that his first job in Florida was that of a housekeeper, a job that a lot of people would not even take and he worked himself up through management to where he is today. He cares about what is going on and is not going away because he is going to be involved with the community, regardless of what happens here today. He stated that he wanted to respectfully end by stating that he had the pleasure of getting mentored by Ms. Dixon last year when she shared with him about some of the things that were going on and he told her he was very interested about being involved.

Mayor Quesinberry opened the question and answer period.

Commissioner Sharman stated that Mr. Wright answered all of his questions in about five minutes.

Mayor Quesinberry stated that petitions were handed to the Commission for Harold Boulter and Charlie Mae Wilder and the Commission has no way of ensuring that everyone is a resident of Winter Garden. He explained that the citizens had 14 days to lobby to the Commissioners and he personally received calls that were 70 percent for Mr. Boulter, 25 percent for Ms. Wilder, and 5 percent for Mr. Wright that included a couple from Orlando. Mayor Quesinberry then asked for any comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Graham stated that he did not keep count of the number of calls he received but stated that he received the most calls for Mr. Harold Boulter.

Commissioner Sharman stated that he had two calls for Harold Boulter, three calls for Charlie Mae Wilder, and three calls for Henry Wright.

Commissioner Jowers stated that he got as many emails as he did calls and did not stop to count them. He just took the comments to heart of those that cared to leave them. He stated that unfortunately he is in Denver today and he will listen and vote accordingly.

Mayor Quesinberry stated that everyone gave a good presentation but he feels that because 70 percent of his calls were for Harold Boulter he would like to submit Harold Boulter for consideration by the Commission and anyone could second it. He stated to Ms. Wilder that it is no reflection on her as he has known her for years.

Commissioner Graham stated that he was thinking of voting on experience rather than the phone calls because the person is only going to serve the remainder of the term which is less than six months. He stated that he does not have anything against Mr. Boulter and thinks he is a good man but others do have experience on the Commission and other boards that have served the City a lot longer. If the selection is by experience, Johnnie Mae Anderson has served on the Commission for two terms which is four years. If you go with total experience in the City, whenever you saw former Commissioner Dixon most of the time you would see Charlie Mae Wilder with her and she is well versed in what former Commissioner Dixon was fighting for and her experience is credible.

Commissioner Sharman stated that he feels the Commission has five candidates that are legally qualified, but there is principle behind this election and that his job is more than just District 4. He has to sometimes look out for the entire City of Winter Garden and how things are perceived. If he had to pick his top two choices would be Harold Boulter and Henry Wright. Unfortunately, if he were to base his choice on principle, there is a cloud that could come back on Winter Garden with regard to Mr. Boulter's residency and Mr. Wright not living in the district but he believes they are both qualified. He stated that he is going to do the wise thing and sit back and listen to more comments.

Commissioner Jowers stated that he served for two years with Johnnie Mae Anderson. She was very astute and very passionate about her causes, and he knows her very well from that experience. He stated that Charlie Mae Wilder was everywhere with former Commissioner Dixon and she is well versed in the causes former Commissioner Dixon had. He knows that she is very adept at what she does and has many years of experience with all different factors of government. He stated that he has spoken with Harold Boulter at length and he feels that he is a very qualified candidate, but yielding to experience, he feels that Johnnie Mae Anderson would be the person for the job.

Mayor Quesinberry reminded the Commission that they have to have an affirmative vote of three members in order to elect a replacement.

Mayor Quesinberry stated that he would go through each one and ask the Commission how they felt about each candidate.

Harold L. Boulter Mayor Quesinberry - Yes
Commissioner Sharman - No
Commissioner Jowers - No
Commissioner Graham - No

Mayor Quesinberry stated that Harold Boulter is out of the race and apologized to Mr. Boulter.

Charlie Mae Wilder Mayor Quesinberry – Yes

Commissioner Graham stated that in order to eliminate polling the Commission on each candidate he would make his motion based upon experience. **Motion by Commissioner Graham to elect Johnnie Mae Anderson as Commissioner of District 3.** Commissioner Graham stated that Johnnie Mae Anderson has previously served two terms on this Commission and there are only six months left in the term of office. All of the candidates can be considered in the March election because currently a candidate does not have to live in the district they run in. The City Charter amendments will be voted on in March that will provide for a change requiring the person running for a District seat to live in that district. Commissioner Graham stated that he liked all of the candidates and any of them would be able to do a good job. He stated that becoming a Commissioner takes a few months to get an understanding of how government runs and Johnnie Mae Anderson was on the Commission for four years and understands how the system works. **Seconded by Commissioner Jowers and FAILED 2-2; favor Commissioner Graham and Jowers; opposed Mayor Quesinberry and Commissioner Sharman.**

Motion by Mayor Quesinberry to elect Harold L. Boulter as Commissioner of District 3. Motion DIED for the lack of a second.

Motion Commissioner Graham to elect Charlie Mae Wilder as Commissioner of District 3. Seconded by Commissioner Jowers and carried 3-1: opposed Commissioner Sharman.

City Clerk Golden administered the Oath of Office to Charlie Mae Wilder.

The special meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.