



Kirby Smith, Council Member
Brian Darby, Council Member
Holly Gray-Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem

Carl E. Gierisch, Jr., Mayor

Steve Heath, Council Member
Angie Grimm, Council Member
David Thompson, Council Member

**MINUTES
ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 28, 2020
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
500 S. OAK STREET
7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Mayor Carl E. "Scooter" Gierisch, Jr. and City Manager Scott Campbell.

PRESENT via VIDEO CONFERENCING:

Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore; Council Members: Angie Grimm, Brian Darby, Kirby Smith, Steve Heath, David Thompson, and City Attorney Jeff Moore.

DEPT. STAFF via TELECONFERENCING:

Assistant City Manager Cody Petree, Fire Chief Chris Addington, Public Works Director Shawn Wilkinson, and Parks and Recreation Director Ronnie Angel.

ABSENT: City Secretary April S. Hill.

A. CALL CITY COUNCIL TO ORDER

Mayor Gierisch called the regular City Council meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Mayor Gierisch was present in the Roanoke City Council Chambers. Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore, Council Members Angie Grimm, Brian Darby, Kirby Smith, Steve Heath, and David Thompson were present via video conferencing.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance given by Mayor Gierisch.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

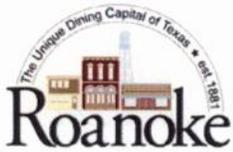
There were no announcements.

C. PUBLIC INPUT

No one wished to speak.

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion regarding Celebrate Roanoke.



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City Manager Scott Campbell stated that this was a follow up to a previous discussion regarding a decision on whether to hold the Celebrate Roanoke event, due to the pandemic. Mr. Campbell further stated that Events Coordinator Mary Jo Tellin has been working on possible alternative options, and gave an overview of these options, other than cancelling the event. Mr. Campbell stated the purpose of this meeting is to receive input from City Council, which would allow staff to know how to proceed.

Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore asked if while conducting the research, did Ms. Tellin reach out to the local businesses to get feedback?

Events Coordinator Mary Jo Tellin stated that she did not speak to the businesses regarding cancelling the event, however she did speak to businesses and vendors about alternative options, and the responses where that they would be interested in participating on some level.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray-Moore asked if Ms. Tellin asked them if they would be interested in a possible December option, or had she discussed it with them.

Ms. Tellin state that she had not discussed that option with them.

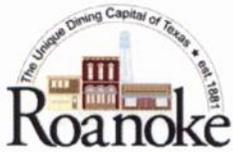
Mayor Gierisch stated that he had spoken with Hillwood, who said, due to social distancing, are considering having an airshow, but not the "traditional" airshow they normally have, which has a large amount of people in attendance. Mayor Gierisch further stated that Grapevine's Grape Fest event, and the State Fair of Texas have both cancelled their events due to this reason as well.

Mayor Gierisch stated that we need to take into consideration the possibility of exposure to city staff if the Celebrate Roanoke event is held "in-person." Mayor Gierisch further stated that there are many things to take into consideration, to determine which direction to go. Mayor Gierisch added that many events in the surrounding area are going to virtual event, and this may be an option.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray-Moore stated that we need to consider our downtown businesses, that are struggling. Mayor Pro Tem Gray-Moore further stated that by cancelling the July 4th event, it caused a loss to our businesses, which will be compounded by the cancellation of this event. At some point we all must get back to business as usual.

Mayor Gierisch stated that he too is concerned about the businesses, and this is why he had suggested, at the previous meeting, to allocate some of the money towards gift cards that could help stimulate the businesses.

Council member Kirby Smith asked if there is a lot of interest from vendors to participate.



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Ms. Tellin stated that we currently have 45 vendor's who have applied to participate, and would like to move them to the December event, if the Celebrate Roanoke event is cancelled.

Mayor Gierisch stated that it would be difficult to put vendors on Oak Street in December, due to the parade.

Council member Kirby Smith stated that we are "kicking the can down the road," and if the virus (COVID-19) is still out there in December, we will be talking about cancelling it too. Council member Smith further stated that he is in agreement with Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore, people are just wanting to get back to business as usual, and he would like to see the city move forward with the Celebrate Roanoke event.

Council member Angie Grimm stated that she doesn't think it is right to expect city staff to work the event, risking possible exposure to the virus, which will expose their families as well. Council member Grimm further stated that it would be difficult to make everyone social distance, and wear a required mask.

Council member David Thompson stated that the reason we wear masks is to protect ourselves and others from the virus. Council member Thompson further stated that essential employees have learned to take the necessary precautions, so is this should protect them. Council member Thompson asked if there has been feedback from city employees.

City Manager Scott Campbell stated there has not been a survey on their thoughts regarding the event and safety, however, the executive staff are concerned for the employees. Other concerns are that of exposure to the employee's families, if an employee should get sick.

Council member David Thompson asked if we could spread the event out onto other streets, to allow for more social distancing.

City Manager Scott Campbell stated that spreading out the event becomes more complicated logistically to maintain.

Event Coordinator Mary Jo Tellin stated that spreading out the event would not alleviate the issue of large crowds gathering at a "favorite vendor's" booth.

Council member Brian Darby stated that, "we want to do everything we possibly can to have this type of event, where we can gather, be together, and grow our businesses, allowing us to get back to what is considered normal. Based on the current conditions, to try having an event with options that places people together, is not moving in that direction." Council member Darby further stated that he would like to see options that take care of our residents and city staff.



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Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore stated that she does not like any of the virtual options, and does not support a virtual option. Mayor Pro Tem Gray-Moore further stated that anyone she has spoken to, is not a fan of virtual events either.

Council member Steve Heath stated that he loves this city because we always try hard to do the right thing. However, if the event is held, he will not attend due to concerns of exposure. Council member Heath further stated that it puts a lot of people at risk. Council member Heath stated that he is not in favor of having the event, but is very proud of everyone's hard work in trying to find a solution.

Mayor Gierisch stated that there has been positive and negative feedback in regard to virtual events. Mayor Gierisch further stated that a lot of surrounding cities have decided to hold their events virtually. Mayor Gierisch asked what the consensus is of City Council regarding cancelling our event.

Mayor Pro Tem Holly Gray-Moore stated that it seems to be split on which direction to go, and it's a tough situation.

Council member Kirby Smith stated that he agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Gray-Moore and Council member Heath, stating he would not participate in a virtual event.

Council member Angie Grimm stated if any money is to be spent, it should be allocated to our local businesses.

Mayor Gierisch agreed with Council member Grimm, stating there have been multiple cities who have done the same thing, to help out through extenuating circumstances.

Mayor Gierisch stated that we need to all have grace and show consideration to others, during this trying time.

City Manager Scott Campbell stated that we need direction on whether or not to hold the event.

Council member Brian Darby stated that things are still up in the air in regard to COVID-19, and anything can happen that is not by our choice, such as the County could mandate no gatherings at all, so we have no control over that. Council member Darby further stated that we need to look at alternate options, as opposed to the traditional event.

After much discussion, a determination was made to cancel the October Celebrate Roanoke event.

E. **ADJOURNMENT**



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Motion made by Holly Gray-Moore second by Brian Darby to adjourn the meeting
at 8:16 p.m.

Motion carried unanimously.

Scott Campbell, City Manager

Carl E. "Scooter" Gierisch, Jr., Mayor