

**MINUTES – CALLED MEETING
CITY OF CAMILLA, GEORGIA
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022**

The Called Meeting of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Camilla was called to order immediately after the Work Session on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 by Mayor Owens.

Roll call indicated the following present: Councilmember Tucker, Councilman Burley, Councilman Morgan, Councilman Collins, Councilman Pollard, and Councilman Palmer.

City Manager Stroud and City Clerk Ford were also present.

OPENING PRAYER AND PLEDGE

Mayor Pro Tem Morgan gave the invocation and the Mayor and Council led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CITIZENS AND GUESTS

Sign-In Sheet Attached.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Councilman Pollard, seconded by Councilman Burley, the motion to approve the Called Meeting agenda for September 6, 2022 passed unanimously.

SPEAKER APPEARANCES

Mrs. Terrie Shiver introduced herself and commented she has done a lot of thinking and does not have a speech prepared. She has a question and does not understand why they chose to eliminate Paige's position with all the money that has been allocated here and everywhere. She doesn't quite understand the reasoning behind that. She does not know exactly what she wants to say except to ask and request they please visit the fact they suggested it needs to be eliminated from the budget, her [Paige's] position. She wonders if it was their family member that had been here all their life would they vote to tell them to hit the road. She asks them to please look in their heart and just answer that question. She knows they can't answer her but answer to themselves and to their own board. She asks them to think about that. Mayor Owens thanked Mrs. Shiver for her comments.

AMENDMENT OF POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN

Mayor Owens stated the first item on the agenda is the Position and Classification Pay Plan Amendment. The Council has a copy and the document they are looking at is the exempt positions of the plan and what will be voted on tonight, effective tonight. Today is September 6, 2022 and on the backside are changes made since the beginning of the fiscal year. The vote tonight will be the whole position and classification plan and become effective September 6, 2022. He wants to make sure they understand that piece and specifically the communications and marketing position and the assistant utilities director position which are removed from the exempt positions on this document. He asked for a motion to amend the position and classification pay plan as presented,

effective September 6, 2022, specifically to remove the Communications and Marketing Director and the Assistant Utilities Director positions A motion was made by Councilman Morgan and seconded by Councilman Pollard. Mayor Owens asked if there was any discussion. Councilmember Tucker stated she would like to make some comments. She stated we had a public hearing tonight about a little small section of a street. The Mayor commented over and over during that public hearing to the audience that was here, the audience being people that lived in that area that had very good valid points, and the other part of the audience being a corporate citizen who had good valid points, "what you say matters" (she wrote it down and put in quotation marks). It mattered at the public hearing but she can tell the ones who have been faithful to come to the meetings over and over, month after month, it does not matter to the Mayor what you say. Mayor Owens commented to Councilmember Tucker to be very careful. Councilmember Tucker stated she wanted to bring out some points that were brought in the conversation tonight was this position is being eliminated to save money. First, this position was created because in September of last year the Council identified that engaging with the community, communicating what was happening in the city, internal communication, external communication, all of that in September of last year 2021, was approved and needed to happen. This position was formed and Paige Gilchrist was hired in January. None of that has changed, we still need communication, we still need marketing, we still need that every single day and you cannot outsource day-to-day communication, which was the purpose of me asking the city manager who on staff is going to do it. They find out as a Council tonight, even though she requested the information earlier, it is going to happen tonight. Paige's last day will be when she leaves here. With respect to saving money it is hard for the citizens who are calling her to understand the argument of the Mayor saying this is a cost saving measure. She took time to look at the minutes from February 2022 through August 2022. For seven months the majority on the Council, and all of you have been here, know who voted for this. You know how votes have gone, 3 to 3, with the Mayor breaking the tie every time. Five million, six hundred and forty-four thousand dollars has been allocated from this Council in seven months. That is a lot of money for our community. She mentioned to the city manager she is very concerned about the message this sends from the Council to city employees. Our greatest resource is our city employees. The message this Council is about to send is your job is not secure. This Council can change the pay classification and eliminate you out of a position, it is not secure. The Mayor presented to them his plan for outsourcing. She does not see how you can outsource day-to-day communications when things go on in our community and we need to get the word out. With everything said the job is being fulfilled right now according to our strategic plan. The Mayor has a plan to outsource to a company in Albany called R Z Vizion. Capital R capital Z Vizion. She thought she should take a look since they are about head that way and look at some of their material to make sure. She cautioned anyone not to look at their product. It was pornography, it was vile, she could not watch but a few seconds of it. She appreciates so much those who continue to say what a great place Camilla is. It has been her home for over 12 years and she has loved it. We are heading in a dark, dangerous direction in our community. We need to come together as a Council. They can't even agree on something as simple as letting a kid that lives in the city limits participate in a city program, something that minor. She wishes they would listen to the wisdom Councilman Bryant Campbell started the meeting off with tonight. There has got to be some unity and communication. She can't even have communication and they have got to come together as a

Council and work together. Eliminating positions because the Mayor chooses to eliminate is not the way for them to come together and drawing a line. It is not the way to come together but as a community they need to do what is best for the entire city. That needs to be their focus - what is best for the entire city and to please keep that in mind. This vote, the Mayor said last week, is not about people. She wanted everyone to look in the back of the room at somebody who has lived here her entire life, not somebody that lives in a loft apartment that moved here from Atlanta. She is talking about somebody who has lived in this community, gone to school in this community, went off to college, came back to serve in this community, worked in economic development and now with the city. You are saying I agree with the Mayor and it is not about people. We will just bring somebody from Albany in here to do this that has vulgarity on Facebook.

Mayor Owens stated what he is going to do is give her [Councilmember Tucker] the opportunity right now and if not, he will be coming back to Council for some type of action. She has the floor. Councilmember Tucker replied she yields. Mayor Owens stated she has the floor to explain to the public and to this Council when they voted on approving any contract for any video firm out of Albany, Georgia. Councilmember Tucker replied she said he [Mayor] proposed it. Mayor Owens replied no. Councilmember Tucker stated she said he proposed it. Mayor Owens replied no and she put it out there in the atmosphere and asked her if she wanted to take the time to remind the public when they voted on that. Councilmember Tucker replied if you go back and listen to what she said, she said the mayor is proposing to outsource this. Mayor Owens asked when did the mayor of this city propose to award a contract to any video production company in Albany, Georgia? Give the date when the mayor of this city, Mayor Kelvin Maurice Owens, asked for a motion to approve a contract for any video company, regardless of where they are located. Councilmember Tucker stated he did not propose. Mayor Owens replied she just said he did. Councilmember Tucker stated she said he proposed. He has not given a contract, he sent an email and she will be glad to read the email because it is a public record. Mayor Owens stated to the Council he will be coming to them potentially in the next week with an item to ensure the actions of this councilmember and the statements of this councilmember are dealt with appropriately. She has exactly one week and he looks forward to that information. What they are looking for is the date. Councilmember Tucker asked if he is saying he did not send an email saying he will outsource it. Mayor Owens stated what she said is the Mayor is proposing a company, she spelled the company's name, from Albany, Georgia. Councilmember Tucker stated from the email she has in her possession. Mayor Owens stated there were three quotes, or at least two. Councilmember Tucker replied there were two. Mayor Owens replied okay but she said.....and stated he was not going to debate this with her. He will make a motion, potentially next Monday night, but she will have all of this week to find in the record where the Mayor of this town proposed it. Councilmember Tucker asked if he wants her to pull up the email. She has the email and every member of Council has the email. She asked the Mayor if he was denying the email. Mayor Owens replied she will have her opportunity to show he proposed to award a contract. Councilmember Tucker replied he is talking semantics here. He sent an email and if given time she will find it and read into the record. Councilman Palmer stated they want to hear the email. Mayor Owens replied they are going to have more than that. He is asking for unanimous consent to have the councilwoman, and he gave her a week to do it, but she is trying to find it now where the Mayor

of this town proposed to award a contract to a company. Councilmember Tucker stated she would be glad to read the email dated August 19th. It says Hi Councilmembers - I hope all is well. She is making sure that he is ... Mayor Owens replied the floor is hers. Councilmember Tucker continued reading the email which stated as chief policy advocate for the City of Camilla I have included my recommended changes for the upcoming 2022-23 budget, our most important policy document. The justification for my recommendation is as follows: Recommendation – to remove the assistant utilities director and director of marketing and communications from the position and classification plan. Allocate a one-time grant of \$5,000 ARPA funds to the library instead of the requested \$3,000 annual increase from the operating budget. She commented she would move through the utilities director because that position is open and we do not have someone in the position. Number two: Director of Marketing and Communication - I recommend removing this position and salary from the position and classification and pay plan because it creates an operational redundancy. Whereas the thesis and intent of this position are applauded, the reality is this position, estimated at \$70k to \$80k including salary, benefits and departmental budget, is or was already being funded, achieved and contracted by the Chamber, Downtown Camilla, and the Mitchell County Economic Development. That said it is important to note that leveraging the funding previously allocated to future outsourcing can significantly reduce the cost of this position while producing a much more enhanced product. I estimate the core function of this position with a comprehensive marketing and communication plan will reduce this departmental budget by nearly 70% and revised budget to be at 20 or 30. The attachment to that [email] is RZ Vizion LLC from Albany in the amount of \$6,642.00 for six promotional videos and there is another attachment to Rosa Films and she believes they are in Tallahassee and their amount is about \$16,000. There are other attachments giving copies of social media with plans by the month and a photo of the Mayor at the council meeting. Mayor Owens stated to his knowledge, and appreciates her reading for the record, he did not hear anything in there that says he proposes we order or contract any particular company to do anything for the City of Camilla. Councilmember Tucker commented there was an attachment and she is stating when she researched who he recommended, oh - it was just a random attachment and she is sorry. Mayor Owens replied no and as expressed to the councilmember she still has five days to figure this out. Next Monday night there is a real good possibility, and he is not sold on it, but a real good possibility he will be asking Council for action. He asked if there were any other discussion. Councilman Palmer stated since they are deep in to threats and innuendos, the positions they are eliminating, and everybody knows that is part of the Mayor's agenda, he has a question on the proposed 2023 budget. Downtown Camilla has a line item for a marketing employee for 2023 at \$55,000 and asked if that is the money Mrs. Gilchrist had been paid and transferred to the Downtown Camilla marketing employee. Mayor Owens replied no. Councilman Palmer asked what was it. Mayor Owens replied two things. They have been talking tonight about the strategic plan and as he mentioned last week in their last meeting, the strategic plan as presented, he wrote it and knows what is in it because he authored it. There are two documents: the source document he created and this document used to create what is now called the approved strategic plan. There is a consistent statement because in order for a strategic plan they have to say what resources are needed. You have to tell the budget what you need to achieve this particular thing. There has been consistent language in the approved strategic plan. Resources required include consumer video/audio equipment and a dedicated marketing budget - not a dedicated marketing person.

When the position was created it was created without a budget. The only thing budgeted was the \$55,000 salary, what they would pay to get the work done. The piece that says what they would allocate for the work was never done. They had to find somewhere to put it and it was put under the Downtown section because there was no where else to put it. It is strictly salary. Councilman Palmer replied it appears to be the same old shell game. Mayor Owens asked for any other comments. There were none. He stated one thing he has been mentioning is the only thing talked about in the marketing and communications plan was a dedicated budget. That was it and it never existed. It will in the 2022-2023 budget but it was not in this budget and they will fix that. What he recommends is the current position of the Communications and Marketing Director, with \$55,000 in salary, an estimated \$11,000 in benefits and another potential \$15k to \$20k as a budget, is approaching \$80,000, if not already passed. To do Facebook that we are doing tonight, a more enhanced product potentially, will run this city somewhere in the neighborhood of \$6,000. Those are the documents the councilwoman is talking about. He cannot tell the public or the Council they need to do this or that and not tell them how to pay for it. What he did was give examples (quotes) in an email. One quote was for \$6,000 (\$1,000 per video if we had six to ten videos). He outlined in the quote what that would entail: how to videos, visit Camilla and they are talking about regional television. The lowest was \$6,000 and the highest was \$16,000. If you take the \$16,000 and add the \$6,000 for Facebook, you are at \$22,000 vs. \$80,000. He projected \$30k and you still have \$8,000 more. There are professional companies that manage social media. For the term *cost savings* he prefers to use efficiency. We are paying the Chamber somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000, we are doing \$40,000 to the Mitchell County Economic Development, and we have a Downtown department. We are already spending almost \$100,000. As the councilwoman mentioned in my email I said we have to start leveraging that. We haven't been doing that and need to start and what the proposal is about. Some folks around here are mentioning names. The Mayor of this town is talking about a position and that is it. He recognizes some will probably want to make this personal and he can't do anything about that. This has absolutely nothing to do with the terms of his recommendation about any current employee of the City. This is about function and believes they can do it more efficiently. He asked if there were any other comments. There were none and he stated a motion had been made and properly seconded. Mayor Owens asked for all in favor of amending the current Position and Classification and Pay Plan to specifically remove the Communications and Marketing Director and the Assistant Utilities Director as presented effective September 6, 2022 at the vote. Voting in favor of the motion: Councilmen Burley, Morgan, and Pollard. Voting in opposition of the motion: Councilmember Tucker and Councilmen Collins and Palmer. Mayor Owens broke the tie with a yes vote and the motion passed by a 4-3 vote.

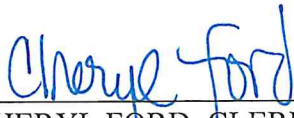
CONSIDERATION OF ELLIS STREET CLOSURE REQUEST

Mayor Owens asked for a motion to approve the request for Golden Peanut to section off that portion of Ellis Street as presented contingent upon having flagmen there to direct emergency vehicles and potentially any school buses. A motion was made by Councilman Pollard. The motion died for lack of a second and failed. Councilmember Tucker asked if she could offer a substitute motion to see if a substitute motion might pass. Mayor Owens stated there is no substitute motion because his [Councilman Pollard] motion failed.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Morgan to adjourn.

BY: 
KELVIN M. OWENS, MAYOR

ATTEST: 
CHERYL FORD, CLERK

CITY OF CAMILLA, GEORGIA ~ SIGN-IN SHEET

DATE: SEPTEMBER 6 TIME: 5:00 ☐ A.M. ☒ P.M.

MEETING: ☒ COUNCIL ☒ WORK SESSION ☒ OTHER: PUBLIC HEARING
 * CALLED

	NAME	ADDRESS	SPEAKER		TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
			NO	YES	
1	Larcene Darius	199 N. Ellis St			
2	Lizzie Hawkins	209 N. Ellis St.			
3	Dawn Clark	5606 Raye Ridge Rd.	✓		Press
4	Michael Lab	1/2 N Ellis St		✓	Road Closure
5	Billy Benton	42 N Ellis St	✓		Road closure
6	LaDarius Yates	42 N Ellis St	✓		Road closure
7	Renee Jenkins	123 E Beacon		✓	Road closure
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CITY OF CAMILLA, GEORGIA ~ SIGN-IN SHEET

DATE: SEPTEMBER 6 2029 TIME: 5:00 ☐ A.M. ☒ P.M.

MEETING: ☐ COUNCIL ☐ WORK SESSION ☒ OTHER: PUBLIC HEARING
GOLDEN PEANUT

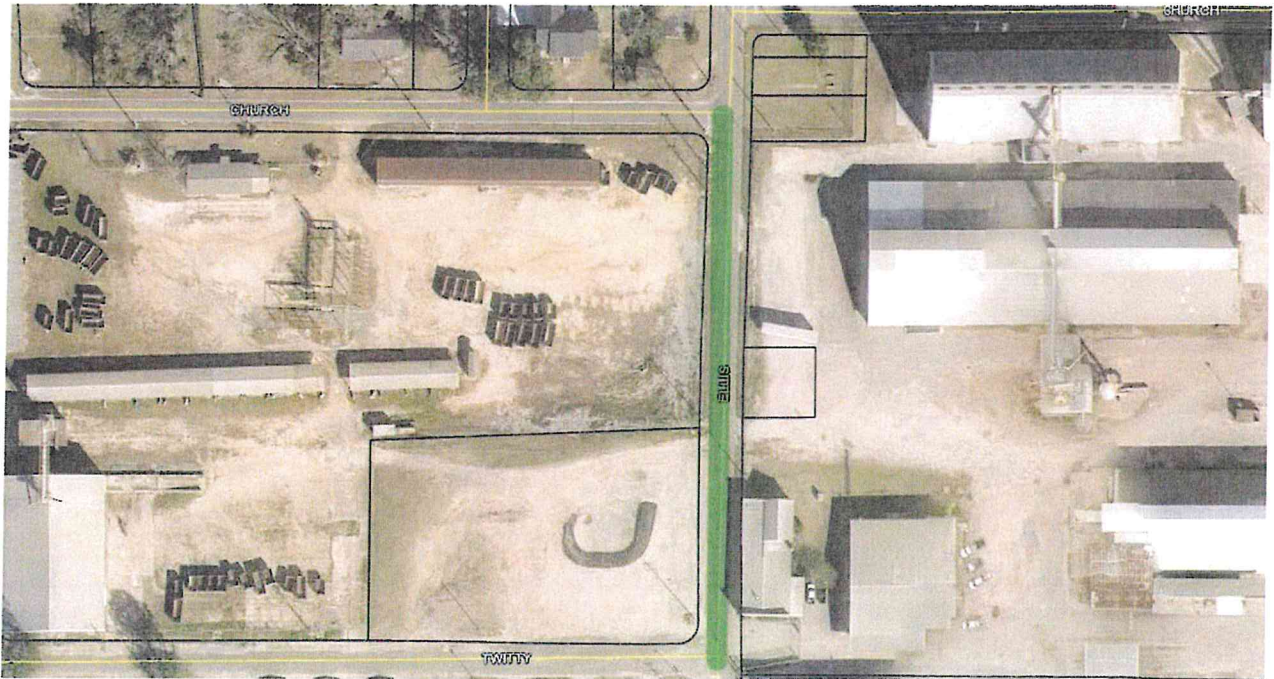
	NAME	ADDRESS	SPEAKER		TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
			NO	YES	
1	Kizmet Burky	56 E. Thompson St		✓	Golden Peanut
2	Scarlette Wurberg	25 Hilltop Cir		✓	Golden Peanut / High Speed Chase
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PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

TUESDAY – SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

To improve efficiency and safety while contributing to our local economy, Golden Peanut requests Ellis Street be closed from Twitty Street to Church Street from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. during harvest season from September 15, 2022 until November 1, 2022.

A public hearing is scheduled for September 6, 2022 in the Council Chambers located on the first floor of City Hall at 5:00 P.M. to receive public feedback on this request. The hearing is open to the public and will be live-streamed on the City's Facebook page.



Date of Posting: August 23, 2022

PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF CAMILLA, GEORGIA
GOLDEN PEANUT ROAD CLOSURE
SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

Mayor Owens announced the public hearing is for potentially closing Ellis Street at the request of Golden Peanut and important for the public to know how we got here. Working with the city manager, they are looking to repair some of the railroads in the city, specifically Fuller near IGA and leading in to Golden Peanut. They are actively working to get the railroads repaired and he went to Golden Peanut to get information of who owned the railroad. While there he had the opportunity to speak with Mike Lamb, who came to him and asked about the potential to close the road. He expressed to him one thing they would have to do is have a conversation with staff, Council, and with our awesome citizens, which is why they are here today.

Mayor Owens called on Mike Lamb to explain why Golden Peanut is making this request. Mr. Lamb addressed the Mayor and Council and stated he appreciated the opportunity to speak. He commented he was born and raised in Camilla, graduated from Mitchell-Baker High School, and is the superintendent at Golden Peanut. Golden Peanut has twenty full-time employees year round and during harvest season they will hire an additional twenty-four employees. Most are from District 1 in Camilla. They have a federal/state inspection service and housed out of their buying point, which is a normal process for most peanut buying locations. They will employ about eighteen people at their location and in all there will be about sixty-two people employed during harvest. They will have an influx of peanuts and people to carry out the procurement/purchase of peanuts. From September 15th to November 1st they are requesting a sixty-yard stretch of Ellis Street be closed from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. seven days a week. The main reason is because they will have from eighty to hundred semi-trailers cross Ellis Street between Twitty and Church. It is a lot of volume in a short amount of time. Their main concern with the citizens of Camilla and their employees is the safety of these people. Every year they hear horror stories about semi-trailers and ag business. He referenced the map and stated at Twitty if you go north (or turn right onto Ellis Street off of Oakland) to head north, Twitty Street and Church Street will remain untouched. The infrastructure is in place to still be able to carry out the needs of the citizens in that district. Golden Peanut owns both sides of Ellis Street and there are not any residences in that area nor will they interfere with any residents coming in or out of their homes. The closure is a sixty-yard distance and them owning both sides of the road there should be little to no interference. They have the infrastructure to go up Harney and turn right to go to the residences or go up Ellis as they would now and turn left on Twitty and make a right. That is their proposal and he appreciates any help they can get, from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., seven days a week, from September 15th through November 1st. He added they run thirty-two semi-dryers and about sixty wagon dryers and use a lot of natural gas from the City. With all that traffic everything that is dried has to go across Ellis Street and comes back across Ellis to be stored in one of their eight warehouses. They only have one warehouse on that side of Ellis Street and it is the smallest. Everything will cross the road at least once and the vast majority twice. With eighty to one hundred semi-trailers you are really talking about one-hundred sixty to two hundred.

Mayor Owens thanked him for coming to the meeting and providing an explanation of the request. Mayor Owens asked councilmembers if they had any questions. Councilmember Tucker stated he mentioned eighty to one hundred and asked if that meant daily. Mr. Lamb replied it did and for a forty-five-day period. They will get eighty to a hundred every day for three weeks straight and then will then start tapering off. Councilmember Tucker asked without temporary closure of the street would that type of activity going back and forth impede traffic anyway. He is talking about safety and the increased volume will impede traffic anyway. Mr. Lamb replied that was correct. She asked the city manager if everything was agreeable with Chief Hendricks with respect to traffic. City Manager Stroud replied he talked to both chiefs and they are onboard.

Councilman Pollard commented they are familiar with the season and asked how many citizens they would pick up during the season. Mr. Lamb stated they employ sixty-two during harvest season. Councilman Pollard asked how many would be within walking distance. Mr. Lamb stated within District 1 about 75%. Almost all of the twenty-four they will hire before harvest. They have two seasons and a lot of the employees that will work during that season will be working overtime. They will work from September 1st to December 1st. They will employ them for about three months and during that time they will get a lot of overtime and about Christmas they will stay out of work. They will come back during the seed treating season. The seed treating season will treat seed already on location and road closure during this season is unnecessary because it is more spaced out. Councilman Pollard asked if there is a retainer of employees who stay as full-time. Mr. Lamb replied yes and it happens often. He has three employees now that are temp to hire. They start out as temporary employees for harvest season and if carried over to seed treater in the spring, two are from District 1 and worked all summer and then hired full-time.

Councilman Palmer stated he is surprised they have not asked for this before and that problem has been there forever. Mr. Lamb replied it is two-folded. Other than Mr. Carl it typically has been ran by a person who is not local. He started in pecans with Marty Harrell in 2010 and been at the pecan plant since then. He started in peanuts this past August a year ago. Billy Benton is with him and a buying point manager. They are trying to do everything they can to work with the city and the city work with them to do their jobs efficiently and safely for their customers and employees. Councilman Palmer stated that is the key point: safety for the people that go up and down there during market season and the business for Golden. Mr. Lamb stated they attempted last year and it was too late and they talked to the wrong people.

Mayor Owens commented while he was at Golden it was about 95 degrees and he was there to get a telephone number and Mike was gracious enough to come up and ask that question. To Councilman Palmer's point he is a little surprised it has not happened before and thought it important to provide a hearing. Mayor Owens asked him how many pounds of peanuts they were talking about during this forty-five day period. Mr. Lamb stated he did not have that number and is a lot. They are one of the biggest buying points in the state. Mayor Owens stated the point he is trying to make in southwest Georgia agriculture is the backbone of our economy, folks like Golden Peanut and the poultry side of the house. Not to mention the resources Mike mentioned earlier like natural gas, power, and energy – a huge corporate citizen in the city. The Council will have the

final word where we go from here approving this or not but considering the footprint and agriculture, this is how we survive. He asked the Council if they had further questions. There being none, the public was invited to comment on the request.

Renae Jenkins introduced herself. She stated Ellis Street has always been the main artery that connects one side of the town to the other to the neighbors in that area. It does not end at Church Street. It serves E. Thompson Street, Walker Street, Short Walker, Lamar, Kennedy, Furlow, Robinson, Jester, MLK and all of the residents in the neighborhood rely on Ellis to get to their property in a timely manner instead of going two miles or more out of the way to get to their residence. The closure of this street will not only make it inconvenient for the residents but will hamper emergency services (medical, fire, police) if they have to enter on Oakland Street side. They will have to go all the way around and those are lifesaving minutes. She does not think they should yield life saving minutes for the convenience of peanuts and should not be inconvenienced by peanuts or put second to peanuts.

Deborah Robinson introduced herself and stated her thoughts and feelings are basically the same. She has been there for years and never had an issue with the traffic. They know what time of the year it is and put up with the dust. It will be a great inconvenience to her and other citizens in the immediate area. It is a connector and takes her from her home to the drug store and Walmart without having to go through town, not to mention the emergency service vehicles. She appreciates the jobs and has dealt and lived with it for sixty-seven years. She does not see a need to deny access or limit access to service vehicles. Mayor Owens asked the city manager to speak about the emergency vehicles. City Manager Stroud stated he has spoken with the police chief and fire chief and their [citizens] safety is paramount. After speaking with both chiefs and understanding which roads were being closed and their response time, they both gave him a thumb up and should be no issue with them responding. After receiving that information he moved forward with putting this on the agenda. Mrs. Robinson stated the ambulances are contracted and know nothing about where they are. If she had to call right now they would end up on Harney Street before they got to her. They rely on GPS and know nothing about the city.

Kizmet Burley introduced herself and stated she is in opposition to temporarily close Ellis Street. All forty-nine years of her life that street has never been closed. When they walked to school they avoided getting hit by the trucks and for the past four and one-half years she drives that street everyday to get to 19. It is a major thoroughfare for everyone traveling north or south. By closing off the suggested area it will not only interfere with residents that use Ellis Street but also the school bus routes. She drives it every day and sees a bus stopping at the different homes. There are eleven houses between Twitty and Thompson and it will definitely interfere with the traffic. It will also cause less safety in the side streets (Beacon, Inman and Thompson) and wants the Council to be mindful that most residents that live in and around Ellis Street are older. The emergency vehicles will have to rerouted, leading to a greater risk of loss of life and/or property due to the impeding access of the emergency vehicles. She wants all of them to think about how long the traffic lane is at Oakland. If it is rerouted they are talking about an additional four to five minutes.

Scarlett Wimberly commented she is a resident on the north side of town and uses Ellis Street. She stated she is a former employee of Golden Peanut back in the mid-90s. The street has never been closed and they are talking about peanut season as an anticipation. A hard rain can come through and damage the entire crop so there may not be a peanut season. All this is done in anticipation but to close those streets as they said, she has been living in Camilla for forty-seven years and the street has never been closed. She walks that street to the middle school sometimes from over on the north side of town. To close those streets would be a harm to the citizens that live there. The ambulance service does not know the addresses. They have come on her street when they were supposed to be two or three streets over. It will not be a good idea to close that street, speaking as a former Golden Peanut employee and this is all done in anticipation and what has gone on in past years. Closing that street is not going to change things.

Councilman Morgan asked if there had been issues or reports of incidents since the street has not been closed in the past. LaDarrius Yates stated he is from Mississippi and started with Golden Peanut in January. They have tremendously increased their production of peanut and understands where they are coming from. A heavy semi carrying numerous pounds of peanuts cannot completely stop. He has been at Golden Peanut and vehicles come through there traveling faster than normal. A big truck cannot completely stop when they have that much tonnage. He has not seen an incident but with the increased production they will have during harvest will make a huge difference in safety. Safety is a big part and making sure employees go home everyday is the number one goal. Mr. Lamb commented one thing he wanted to add in addition to it not being done before is historically peanuts are a wagon-based system. The harvest advancements have gone to semis. Whereas they use to run hundreds and hundreds of wagons daily now it is semis. Basically four to five wagons will fit in a semi. They have not had to close in the past but they have increased their production three-fold in the last three years and 95% of that is on semis. That is why semis is a big deal to the industry. As far as the detour goes it is not a couple of miles but a few hundred yards. As far as school traffic goes, he is there from 7:00 a.m. in the morning and has not noticed school buses traveling Ellis. There may be one but a large volume of school buses he has not seen. Billy Benton, the buying point manager, commented whatever it takes and wants to see how they can work it out. If they know school buses go from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and if they come from 3:00 in the afternoon to 4 they will open up the road and close it back. They want to work with people and are speaking of safety. A couple years ago he had a semi pull out and the car was not paying attention, had plenty of time, and hit the semi. The semi does not move and you are looking at 80,000 pounds and when hit is like a solid wall. They had to take the woman out of the car and now her child does not have a parent. It is all about safety and if there is anything they can do to make it easier on anybody they will do anything they can. There are certain times, such as bad weather, when they don't have peanuts and fine closing it. They are willing to work and do anything they can to make it happen. If they see this year it was a bad decision they will have to figure something else out. If it is a good decision, they are willing to do anything to help the people of the community and employees. They don't want anyone in the community getting hurt and some people come down the road 90 miles per hour. They put in two gates where all they do is cross Twitty Street and got permits to make sure it was 100% by city codes and trying to make it run smoother.

Mrs. Burley commented if safety is a priority why don't they try to get flaggers to assist them across the road. People do travel Ellis Street at 65mph to 70mph and is an issue. There are few people driving that speed that time of the morning. The gates open at seven and about the time she leaves home, between 7 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., and her daily route daily. There is a back entrance on Church Street and not sure if they are using it but it is there. Mayor Owens commented Mike pointed out that Church and Twitty will remain open. One of the reasons why he thought this hearing was important is because he thinks there is an opportunity. Golden Peanut is saying this has never happened before, folks in the gallery saying this has never happened before, but we are living in a different time now from the transition of wagons to semi-trucks. Golden Peanut is a huge corporate citizen in the city and in terms of contributions to the City, as it relates to our services, somewhere between \$5,000 to \$8,000/month. That is approaching somewhere near \$100,000/year that gets poured back in the community some kind of way. Some of the employees in the district are within walking distance. For the citizens and Golden Peanut he asked if it would be fair to do a test run and the request is for 45 days. If they come back (after starting on September 15th) on October 1st to have a conversation how it is working out for the citizens and Golden Peanut, would that be something citizens are willing to do. This meeting is about the citizens and is their opportunity to tell them what is on their minds. What they say matters and what they do as legislators is try to figure out how they can marry two in some kind of way. Both sides are compelling. Because they have never done it before, is it worth testing and if it is a bad idea it is two weeks vs. six weeks.

Lizzie Hawkins commented they are saying it is for safety reasons but is it safety or productivity. Will their productivity increase if the traffic is stopped on Ellis Street. Mr. Lamb stated no and they are running more tons than they ever have. If they want to come by he will be glad to show them the path and what it is like for a semi once they get to Twitty and starts to cross over the street. She asked if they abide by the rules of the road and Mr. Lamb replied they do and hire DOT drivers.

Mayor Owens asked if there was a willingness to try it out and see what happens in a couple weeks and if they try to do this again next year it gives them ten months to figure it out. They have not had an opportunity to look at other options but will over the next ten months. He asked if there was a willingness to try it out. Ms. Jenkins stated when their busy season actually starts it will be four weeks from now. Mr. Lamb commented if they wanted to do a true trial run for two weeks mid-October would be max capacity to truly test it. Councilman Pollard commented he hears both sides and lives in that district. Both have valid points and they put stop signs down Ellis Street to help combat some of the speeding. They still have complaints there is speeding on Ellis Street. If you are behind one of those cars and a semi has already pulled out, because the semi cannot back up, we put lives in jeopardy. He looked at the route and had a conversation with the Mayor and it is only closing a portion of Ellis Street which is adjacent to Golden Peanut where this no homeowner property. You can go on Ellis, turn on Twitty, turn on Fern, and come back up to Church and it is not two miles. He took the route last week and the school bus was out there and came from MLK and all the way around on the back side of Church Street and turned back going north on Ellis Street. He did not turn south. Mrs. Burley commented she meets both buses and a

child is picked up before 163 and comes from Oakland coming north. After additional discussion of traveling with the road closed, Councilman Pollard commented there is opportunity and they are looking at what is best for the city as a whole, for the citizens, and private business owners. They have to take all that in consideration.

Ms. Jenkins asked if Golden Peanut has more power than the citizens and Mayor Owens stated he would not say that. Councilman Burley commented this had been an interesting conversation and his mind has been enlightened. Billy stated they are flexible giving them the opportunity if they need to push back to 9:00 or 8:00 just to compromise and spoke volumes to him. He cares for the citizens over there and hears their voices and they have strong points. If they can come together and do the recommendation of the Mayor and give it a trial at their peak season. They can see if it is comfortable for everyone. He has spoken with some of the citizens and a lot of citizens in District 1 are not in agreement and he feels that. But he also looks at safety as being one of the main things and has driven through there when it is dusty you might almost hit a tractor crossing the road. The visibility of the dust makes it where you cannot see and he was not speeding. Safety is his concern and they have a lot of elderly and middle-aged people living over there. Anything they can do, including using flagmen, to compromise and make it easier for all is worth trying. Councilman Morgan stated he does see that Golden Peanut is willing to do what it takes. Having flagmen is an opportunity for Golden Peanut to truly invest in the community by hiring local people to do the flag work. He hears Golden Peanut say safety is the issue and if the issue, show it to them. Mr. Lamb commented in the spirit of compromise what they would do is if emergency traffic is the issue here, they could have barricades and man each end of the closure and any emergency vehicles that may be coming through, they will move the barricades and let them through. He will have people there from 7 to 7, seven days a week. Councilmember Tucker stated she appreciates all the compromise going on and the comments Councilman Pollard made are in line with what she is thinking. Safety is the most important thing and she drove the area today. It appears the most inconvenience would be one block out of the way and for the safety of our citizens that one block would be a small inconvenience for the hours they would have to do it rather than the concern of someone hitting a semi or a semi hitting a vehicle. She recommends they make certain 911 is aware of the hours of the detour and should be conveyed when 911 dispatches an ambulance. Safety still trumps the subject matter because of the concern of the increase in traffic during the harvest season.

Mayor Owens stated for the residents over there, the biggest piece it appears from listening to the conversations, is the emergency services part. If Golden Peanut is prepared to have the barricades manned and prepared to move them out of the way, even if there is a semi in the road, they can do something to get around. For the residents over there, with the guarantee they will have folks to direct emergency personnel, how does that sound. A resident stated it sounds like the City of Camilla is more concerned about Golden Peanut than for them. It is more than safety for them and some have lived their entire lives there and should not have to be rerouted for the convenience of a company. They understand they are tax paying citizens but so are they. Mayor Owens stated the hearing is proof that citizens of the city matter. They did not make the decision in a bubble and there is no legal requirement for them to have the hearing but there is no way the City Council was going to have a road cut off without citizen input. They matter and he appreciates they came, spoke

their mind, were candid and as a legislative body they appreciate them being honest and keeping it real.

He asked members of the Council if there were any other questions. What they will vote on is Golden Peanut prepared to have manned barricades for the purposes of emergency services and if they will let them through. The vote will be contingent upon that. The vote has not happened and between now and then members of Council will have an opportunity to replay the statements made here tonight. He wanted to make sure citizens have the last word. He asked if they had any final thoughts. Councilman Burley asked if they were going to consider the trial test. Mayor Owens stated he heard from a consensus the biggest point from the Council is the emergency services and looks like that has been worked out. The test will be moot at that time. Mr. Lamb asked if they can have two people to man the barricades 100% of the time would there be a need for a trial run. Mayor Owens replied that is his point, if they have folks there to let emergency vehicles through. Most have driven the area to see what it is. The vote later in the evening is contingent upon Golden Peanut letting emergency vehicles through and asked Mr. Lamb if the school bus requested, and it was safe, to let the bus through and something they are willing to do. Mr. Lamb replied they would. Councilman Pollard stated he had a conversation with the Mitchell County School System Transportation Director Derek Hadley and has a video of the bus and where it went. Mr. Hadley assured him he had already talked with staff and made arrangements with the bus drivers to take a different route. The day he was there the bus went north on Ellis and Mr. Hadley told him he had already spoke to him. They had the conversation last Thursday and Mr. Hadley came to him on Wednesday because the notice was already in the atmosphere. As far as Mitchell County transportation they are good. Mayor Owens stated regardless of the vote if there are citizens that are impacted and sense there is an issue, bring it to them and they will do it again. Their voice is not closed off. If they have to do it again, they will. There is not finality for either side and they will have the vote later on contingent upon emergency services and school buses not being impacted because of Ellis Street.

The public hearing was closed at 6:00 p.m.