



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole

Thursday, December 17, 2020

6:00 PM

Community Center ****LARGE GYM****

Smyrna Community Center **LARGE GYM**** / 200 Village Green Circle SE
Parking and entrance to meeting on Powder Springs Street Side of Building
MASKS REQUIRED / TEMPERATURE WILL BE CHECKED**

Roll Call

Present 8 - Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Travis Lindley, Councilmember Austin Wagner, Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Mayor pro tem / Councilmember Tim Gould, and Councilmember Lewis Wheaton

Also Present 1 - Jeffrey Tucker

Staff 13 - Joe Bennett, Penny Mocerri, Frank Martin, Russell Martin, Joey Staubes, Kevin Moore, Kristin Robinson, Jered Sigmon, Carol Sicard, Talisha Champagne, Robert Harvey, Brian Marcos, and Tina Monaghan

1. Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called the December 17, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. New Business

While waiting for the equipment to be set up, Mayor Norton announced that some items that could, would be addressed immediately to allow for people to leave or stay as needed.

Public Works Director Frank Martin spoke about the road closing. He answered any questions that were asked.

Human Resources Director Carol Sicard introduced TaLisha Champagne as the new HR Manager. Ms. Champagne took a few moments to speak and noted that she is looking forward to working with everyone.

Ms. Andrea Worthy joined the meeting virtually via Go to Meeting.

Interim City Administrator Joe Bennett provided some background information on Ms. Andrea Worthy and her background in the field of economic development.

Mayor Norton asked if there were any additional questions for Ms. Worthy and there were not.

Councilmember Travis Lindley spoke with her in depth previous to the meeting and was glad to hear of her plans for the city.

Ms. Worthy will be coming from the City of Sandy Springs but was at Smyrna for seven years before that.

A. [COW20-22](#)

ULI - MTAP Presentation by Prestwick Companies - Community Development Director Russell Martin.

Community Development Director Rusty Martin introduced the group that would be making the presentation. He explained a little about the process and that Smyrna was one of seven projects that were accepted. Emerson Center site was originally selected but plans changed so it went to the Nalley Lexus site.

Mr. Paul Flippo is a Civil Engineer and there were others in attendance as well. They studied the comprehensive plan and a lot of research was put into this. Nexus at Cobb Parkway was the site used and it was deemed important in terms of pedestrian connectivity.

Ms. Shara McLendon came up to speak. She stated that there are more millennial's in the city of Smyrna than in any other area of Atlanta. This was a huge factor in the design concept that was created.

Mr. Ethan Royal, an architect with the group, came up to speak about some of the components that they found would be desirable including office space, hotel, residential, and retail along the frontage of Spring Road. Connect all of this to the Battery and have a community open outside space that could be enjoyed by everyone. Art displays and an area where there could be concerts. Boutique automotive showroom included. Goal was to create an elevated lifestyle experience with many dimensions that are in line with what is already taking place at the Battery. An engaging pedestrian walkway that combines and connects everything together. A presentation with photos was given and it gave a visual of what all was described verbally.

Mr. Edrick Harris with Prestwick stated that he brought reality and financial feasibility to the project. One of the things that was interesting was how the car buying experience is shifting to online car sales which means that this property may become available sooner than originally thought. He talked about tax aspects and presented a financial analysis. \$300 million dollar project with all components included. This is a big picture and showed the land costs along with the potential to come up with funding from some of the elements included in the project.

A hotel would go in the southeast corner of the site and the residential wraps around the backside of the property. Restaurant pads line Cobb Parkway. Elevated Plaza helps with a visibility aspect. Elevated pedestrian bridge connects to the existing Battery site. The site plan shows that the plaza is the top level of the property. Plaza becomes on grade with one wall. This will help with costs. There is also a parking deck.

Councilmember Tim Gould said it sounds like a great idea and thanked the group for their presentation.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch inquired if Nalley had been contacted or the owners which are Asbury. He was concerned that they would read about this in the paper and be upset. It is important for people to know that this was just a suggested, creative plan and not something that is carved in stone or set to move forward.

Mr. Martin gave some more background and insight into the project and those that

participated. This is not an actual project but a possible plan.

Mayor Norton made clear that this is just a concept and that there is no reason for anyone to be concerned.

Councilmember Austin Wagner expressed appreciation for the study and asked about transit in relation to this project.

Councilmember Travis Lindley thanked them for the project. He appreciated the ability to see the possibilities of what could be developed at the right time in the right place.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson also thanked the group for their work.

B. [COW20-25](#) Financial Audit Presentation

Finance Director Kristin Robinson began the discussion and introduced the presenter and auditor Ms. Tammy Slay Galvis.

Ms. Galvis brought a power point presentation to show the audit findings. The audit yielded a clean and unmodified opinion that will be submitted to the State and GFOA. Management discussion and analysis letter was included in the audit packet that is prepared annually by Ms. Robinson and is a great overview of what has occurred financially in the city over the year. There is also a ten year history included to show comparison. No material weaknesses were come across. The City may have incurred some costs relating to the CARES Act funding, but the actual revenues will be recognized in the year that the agreement was signed which was FY 2021. She provided information about the fund balance and that it would cover approximately 6 months of the operating costs of the city which puts the city in an ideal place financially. Property taxes make up about 41% of the revenues. Public safety make up about 44% of expenditures. Page 65 of the audit booklet is comparison of budget to actual. She said there will be an additional audit report next fiscal year due to the CARES Act funding that was received. She thanked everyone for their assistance with the audit process.

C. [COW20-24](#) Merit Increase Discussion

Human Resources Director Carol Sicard spoke about the merit increases and what all went into making up the figures that were listed on the hand out.

Finance Director Kristin Robinson also provided some information relating to how the increases will impact the budget.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch asked if there was money left over from the last fiscal year budget. Ms. Robinson explained that there was over \$2 million from last FY that went into fund balance. More details regarding this will be given in the audit presentation.

D. [COW20-26](#) Racial Trust Building Appointments

Interim Assistant City Administrator Penny Mocerri provided some background. The current available start dates are the first weekend of February which would be the fifth and the sixth or the last weekend of February which would be the twenty sixth and twenty seventh. These seminars take place on Friday and Saturday. Mayor Norton said the first weekend would be ideal.

There will be 2 groups of 20 participating and these are made of up elected officials, staff, and members of the community.

Ms. Mocerri read aloud the list of names that were emailed to her by the Mayor. He asked that these people be formally notified to make sure they are able to attend because he wants to ensure all spots are filled.

3. Review of the December 21, 2020 Mayor and Council Agenda

A. [COW20-27](#) Review of the December 21, 2020 Mayor and Council Meeting Agenda.

Mayor Norton announced that some of the items are going to be removed or tabled for various reasons.

Plat approval information was shared by Community Development Director, Mr. Rusty Martin. Due to the stream buffer, they are limited to what they can develop on that parcel of land.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked for any additional details.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch noted the odd shape of the lots.

Mr. Rusty Martin spoke on the lot division request on King Springs Road. The developer wants to keep the same zoning designation with variances. They want to front homes on King Springs Road. There will be a shared drive with rear entry garage access. The back half of the property will not be developed. Planning and Zoning Commission approved and staff recommends approval.

Councilmember Lindley said most of the things requested by those living nearby were agreed to by the developer who is Brad Thompson.

Councilmember Tim Gould asked how to decide if it should be four lots or if three lots are okay. The request is to maintain the same zoning which is R-15. The four lots are 15,000 square feet so that is why the developer make the request. If the developer were to apply for rezoning with additional lots, he would still get a recommendation from staff because it fits in with the land use map but that isn't what he asked for. Density supported by the community. Mr. Martin explained in much detail what factors went into the approval of this request. Councilmember Gould was concerned it would create a problem elsewhere on the road.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if the side variance will effect any other residences already in place. She also asked if there would be an HOA. Mr. Martin explained that there would only be an HOA requirement if there is a community stormwater facility that needs to be maintained.

Councilmember Welch stated that the developer is only building on the first 100 feet of the property so there is plenty of room to the rear of the properties and that this is similar to what the same developer had done on Church Street is what he will be doing there only with reverse entry.

Councilmember Wilkinson inquired about the lot width of the homes directly across the street for comparison.

Councilmember Welch asked about the HOA because the Ed Hatcher homes in the area are part of an HOA because they share the stormwater detention facility.

Mr. Martin offer clarification as to why the Church Street homes came into the conversation. They are not a part of this project but were used as a comparison for the look of the homes.

The request to rezone the property for office space and an indoor batting cage was then discussed. The structure was in an inappropriate zoning in the first place so this will be a correction. The batting cage is indoors but Councilmember Lindley wanted to know if there are hours in place to keep from disturbing those that back the property. Councilmember Wilkinson asked about the uses for that type of zoning. Councilmember Welch asked if improvements would be made. Mr. Martin said yes and provided answers to the questions that were asked relating to this request.

Councilmember Lewis Wheaton provided some background information on the silent railroad crossing in Ward 7. This project is a big quality of life issue and this will be a great improvement to the area.

The resolutions regarding 911 charges were explained by Joe Bennett. There are three: landline, prepaid wireless, and post paid wireless. This is something that needs to be done annually.

Mayor Norton asked Mr. Bennett to explain the CDBG extensions which enable the City to keep funds from previous years.

Councilmember Wilkinson mentioned that she got an email from a resident about speeding on Powder Springs Street.

Councilmember Gould thanked Mr. Frank Martin at Public Works for assisting with issues on Lois Street by fire station 4. The sidewalks were repaired and residents are happy. Mr. Gould concluded his report by expressing appreciation for the assistance from staff.

Councilmember Wheaton said there were some issues brought forward by Vinings Estates residents and gave a shout out to the staff that has helped with these issues.

4. Other Business (as needed)

5. Executive Session (as needed)

There was no Executive Session.

6. Adjournment

Mayor Derek Norton adjourned the December 17, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting at 7:21 PM.