

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 28, 2019

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Charles "Corkey" Welch, Andrea Blustein, Susan Wilkinson, Tim Gould, Maryline Blackburn, Ron Fennel, Derek Norton (arrived at 6:25pm)

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Andrews (Asst. City Administrator), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Elsa Thompson (Admin. Svc. Coord.), Richard Garland (Parks & Rec. Director), Terry McCormick (SPD), Ken Suddreth (Comm. Dev. Director), Maxwell Ruppensburg (Spe. Pro. Coord.)

2. Call to Order

Mayor A. Max Bacon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

3. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones asked Major Terry McCormick to give an update on a situation involving SPD that occurred earlier in the day and another situation that was happening as our meeting was taking place.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that House Bill 302/ Senate Bill 172 were causing some concern amongst different municipalities because they were proposing to "prohibit local governments from adopting or enforcing ordinances or regulations relating to or regulating building design elements as applied to one or two-family dwellings". She asked Community Development Director Ken Suddreth to provide more insight on the matter. Mr. Suddreth advised that the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) was not in support of the bills and that he, Ms. Saddler Jones, and Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews discussed drafting a resolution opposing the bills. Mr. Andrews advised that letters were written to all local jurisdiction representatives to gain their support in opposing the bills and that he would be visiting the State Capitol with the Youth Council on Friday, March 1st. Mayor Bacon made note that the bills were an attempt "for the State to tell local government what to do". Mr. Suddreth provided a brief overview on the subject and Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the proposed resolution draft was attached to the Mayor and Council Agenda for their review. She noted that the resolution draft was recommended by GMA. Mr. Andrews provided a brief overview of the planned trip to the Capitol with the Youth Council. Ms. Saddler Jones announced that Mayor Bacon would be throwing out the first pitch the first Campbell High School game of the season along with Principal Walker on Friday, March 1st. Ms. Saddler Jones reminded Council that they were scheduled for a group photo on Monday, March 4th and Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that he would not be present on Monday due to it being Spring Break; Ms. Saddler Jones made note that they would need to reschedule the photo. Ms. Saddler Jones asked Councilmembers to please remember to submit any suggestions or concerns they may have for the Facility Usage Policy that Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland was drafting. She advertised the upcoming Pat Terry Benefit Concert taking place on Friday, March 22nd at the Community Center and advised that tickets were \$25 each, a table for 6 was \$120 and included 2 drinks tickets per person. She noted that the event would benefit a local dog adoption service. Ms. Saddler Jones advised Council and staff that the Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting on Thursday, March 28th would be held at the newly constructed Fire Station 2. Mr. Andrews advised that he attended a workshop regarding the upcoming census and that he would be updating Council soon about what he's

learned. He also advised that there would be a third revision to the Open Container ordinance and listed the proposed areas that would be included. Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired if Smyrna Fire would be getting a new truck for the new fire station. He was advised that it was not budgeted for a new truck to be purchased. Ms. Saddler Jones advised Council of the upcoming Department Budget submissions deadlines and provided Council with a Budget Calendar.

4. GICH Retreat Recap - Susan Wilkinson, Maryline Blackburn, Maxwell Ruppensburg

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Councilmembers Susan Wilkinson and Maryline Blackburn along with Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg and Community Development Planner I Joey Staubes attended a Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Retreat and that the Councilmembers and Mr. Ruppensburg would provide a summary of what they learned. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that GICH was a program that was run by various entities. He noted that the retreat was part of a 3-year program and that Smyrna was 1 of 5 cities selected to participate in 2018 and provided a brief overview of ideas that came for the discussions at the retreat. Ms. Wilkinson advised that Smyrna was considered a "freshman city" in the program and stated that she was impressed by the presenters at the retreat. Ms. Wilkinson noted that she learned a lot about "the importance of assessing and analyzing the needs of your community through housing surveys" and quoted one of the cities as saying, "we have to know what we have to know where we go". She spoke about the different ways that information could be collected in the community to assist in assessing its needs. Mr. Ruppensburg gave an overview of how the process worked. Ms. Wilkinson provided examples of how an Amnesty Day could benefit the City. Mr. Andrews advised that he and Mr. Ruppensburg were proposing an Amnesty Day in the City in May. Ms. Blackburn advised that she learned a lot about the resources available to the City and inquired if the City worked closely with the DDA. Mayor Bacon advised that he did not believe the DDA had anything to do with housing. Mr. Welch inquired if there were any discussions (at the retreat) about communities with residents with home affordability for issues. Ms. Wilkinson advised that although Habit for Humanity builds homes there were discussions for assistance to people that already owned their home. Discussion ensued about housing program resources available to Smyrna residents. City Attorney Scott Cochran gave a brief explanation about affordable housing received their funding. Mayor Bacon suggested that Joe Bland (with the Smyrna Housing Authority) be invited to do a presentation. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she would contact Mr. Bland. Discussions continued about the resources available to citizens.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she and Mayor Bacon attended a luncheon, hosted by Georgia Power and were presented with a 2.3 million dollar check for the City. She noted that the funds came from franchise fees Georgia Power collected. Ms. Saddler Jones then announced that the police activity that was ongoing at the beginning of the meeting was resolved with the suspect being taken into custody and the children were safe.

5. Review of the March 4, 2019 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayoral Report

3A – Mayor Bacon advised that Precious Ojiagbaje, a Campbell High School student, would be presiding over Monday's City Council meeting. He advised that he and City Clerk Terri Graham reviewed the agenda with Ms. Ojiagbaje earlier in the day.

3B – Recognition of Keep Smyrna Beautiful (KSB) and Jonquil Garden Club. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that they would be recognized for the State and National Awards they won. Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired when KSB would be hosting their shredding event. She was advised that it would be held on March 23rd.

Privilege Licenses

5A – Adventure Outdoor; City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that Adventure Outdoor wanted to “have a bar on the inside”. He stated the reasons why the item had to come before Council: 1.) It was the first time Adventure Outdoor would have a license, and 2.) there was a church and school distance requirement that may pose an issue. Mr. Cochran stated that the church, although closed, was required to be 300 feet from the front door of the place selling alcohol and the school was required to be 600 feet; he noted that the school was technically 510 feet from the property but in his opinion the distance requirements were met. He advised that the State “leaves the distance for pouring up to the local government”. Mayor Bacon provided a history on the property and noted that there was already an existing café in the establishment. Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that the distance was measured “door to property line”. There was a brief discussion about the property and distance measurements. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth advised what Council should consider making their vote.

5B – New location for “Your Pie” restaurant at Belmont. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that it was a pizza restaurant.

Formal Business

6A – City Clerk Terri Graham advised that the item was about the contract for the upcoming election in November, she noted that the estimated cost, and advised the cost of a potential run-off could not be estimated.

6B – Ms. Graham advised that this item was for Council to approve holding election qualifications in the Human Resource Conference Room, Tuesday, August 20th through Thursday, August 22nd. Mayor Bacon asked Ms. Graham to include the qualifying fees in the background information for the item. Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired who could sponsor the item since he would not be present. Mayor Bacon advised that it would be “figured out”.

6C – City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that the item was simply to accept the 2019 subrecipient agreement and advised that there was an increase in funds from what was received in 2018. She gave a brief overview of how the funds have been used previously. Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired if the funds could be used for lights. Councilmember Corkey Welch asked Administrative Services Coordinator Elsa Thompson if the City could utilize Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money for low income housing. Ms. Thompson advised the City does not have housing authority and that all citizens seeking such assistance were directed to contact Cobb County. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson noted that information she received listed the City as the contact. Ms. Thompson advised that the City did not participate in the housing aspect of CDBG. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she learned at the GHIC Retreat that some of the cities were participants. Ms. Thompson advised Ms. Wilkinson that she provided the contact information for the CDBG Cobb County Office to Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg.

6D – Mayor Bacon advised that they needed to add Senate Bill 172 to the item. Mr. Fennel advised that language showing support for Georgia Municipal Association’s opposition should be added also.

6E – Approval to lease parking spaces to Campbell High School; Ms. Wilkinson inquired how many spaces. Mr. Cochran advised “53”. Mayor Bacon advised that the spaces were along Belmont Boulevard and noted that he had no issues with leasing the spaces. There was a discussion about the parking areas utilized and maintenance. Ms. Wilkinson inquired what the frequency of payment for spaces were. Mr. Cochran advised that the students paid per semester. Mayor Bacon asked Ms. Graham to update the item title to include the words “Boulevard” and “at Ward Street”.

6F – Item was added to the agenda, late. Major Terri McCormick advised that it was for permission for the police department to apply for the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency Grant for the purchase of an armored truck. Major McCormick advised that it was a reimbursable grant which stated that the City had to pay for the truck first then request reimbursement. Mayor Bacon inquired where the funds would be pulled from. Major McCormick advised that he was uncertain. Ms. Wilkinson inquired if the armored truck would still be purchased if the grant was not awarded. Major McCormick advised that it would not. Mayor Bacon inquired how soon they would have an answer on the decision. Major McCormick advised that he did not know their timeline. There was a discussion of the process for the grant.

Consent Agenda

8A – 8B – no discussion; Ms. Wilkinson stated that page 4 of the February 18, 2018 Council meeting minutes needed to be changed because of the way it was worded on a vote. Ms. Graham advised that the notes were added to the system in a specific way. Ms. Wilkinson stated that she felt the way the minutes “read” was confusing.

8C – Mayor Bacon noted that there would not be an Easter egg hunt this year. Carnival and Movie street closures; no egg hunt, they’ll be handed out; Mr. Andrews advised that they would be showing the movie, “Peter Rabbit”.

No other items were added to the agenda.

6. Other Business

Councilmember Corkey Welch advised that he would not be attending the first Council meeting in April. He stated that over the years he’s received various complaints about people having “stuff in their backyards” and inquired if any other Councilmembers felt that (the City) needed to strengthen its code for Community Development to enforce the “debris” that citizens could have in their backyards. He noted that the most recent complaint he received was from a woman who could see car parts on her neighbor’s roof. Councilmember Andrea Blustein reminded Mr. Welch about the recent appeal they heard where neighbors complained about a structure a woman was constructing in her backyard. He stated that he only wanted everyone’s opinion on the matter. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson advised that (former Lead Marshall) Tim Hardy advised her that if the items were visible from the street it could be enforced and provided an example of a case. Mr. Welch stated that he spoke to Community Development Director Ken Suddreth and got the impression that Mr. Suddreth did not feel that they had much power to enforce the ordinance. Mayor Bacon stated that it would be best to speak to the City Attorney about any concerns to be sure that the City had a right to enforce. City Attorney Scott Cochran noted that the police couldn’t

walk into someone's yard without a warrant, the items must be visible. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that this issue was "visited" a few months prior and that the consensus was that they did not feel comfortable correcting the issue. Mr. Welch advised that he would be speaking with Mr. Suddreth again. Mr. Welch stated that he emailed everyone to advise that he received an email from a property owner in Austin Lakes and that the citizen complained that there were "sidewalks without the beauty strip" and that he did not believe they should be allowed anymore because of potential danger. He also advised that the same citizen was requesting a flashing light across the street from the Austin Lakes entrance and noted that he did not support the flashing light but was in support of the sidewalk issue. Mr. Welch advised that he had spoken to Public Works Director Frank Martin and that it was on his "to-do" list. Mayor Bacon advised that there may be easement issues with the beauty strip additions. Mr. Welch made note of other properties that were able to have the beauty strips installed and had added easements. He also advised that he would send his notes on the Facility Usage Policy to Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson stated that she received an email inquiring about a "cut-through" at Beaver Creek on Windy Hill. Mayor Bacon stated he has not heard anything about that.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein advised that she "ran into" Gene Summerbrook who stated that she had called the Mayor several times about a crosswalk but that it was finally fixed.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn commended Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Rppersburg and ICMA Fellow Ashley Youmans for setting up the retreat. She stated that earlier in the evening, she had an opportunity to see students from Smyrna Elementary and Teasley Elementary give "speeches about things in the community" – the event was called, Project Soap Box. Ms. Blackburn inquired if a proclamation could be done for Women's History Month. Mayor Bacon stated that a lot of proclamation requests are made and inquired who would receive this proclamation. Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired if there were any groups that would be doing any special programs for the event. Ms. Blackburn advised that the Library would be doing something for Women's History Month and stated that she was sure that there was someone in the City that could be recognized. Ms. Blackburn then introduced her intern, Kiara Edwards. Ms. Edwards advised that she was a junior at South Cobb High School and a cheerleader who would like to become a sports management physician.

Councilmember Derek Norton stated that he was looking forward to hosting the Youth Council at the Capitol on Friday, March 1st.

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones reminded the Council that they were scheduled for a group picture on Monday, March 4, 2019. Mayor Bacon stated that the picture should be rescheduled because Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that he would not be present.

7. Adjournment