

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 2, 2018

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Derek Norton, Andrea Blustein, Susan Wilkinson, Maryline Blackburn, Charles Welch, Ron Fennel

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to Mayor & Council), Elsa Thompson (Administrative Services Coordinator), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Management Fellow), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations Director), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Ken Suddreth (Community Development Director), Rusty Martin (Senior Planner), Roy Acree (Fire Chief), Robert Harvey (Deputy Chief)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering), Tim Gould (Newly elected Councilman), Laura Bracci (Streets Alive Representative), Jason McClure (Co-owner of Wade's Restaurant)

2. Call to Order

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

3. Streets Alive

Ms. Laura Bracci came to the meeting as a representative of the resident groups that were organizing "Smyrna Open Streets". She gave a brief presentation about the Open Street initiative which she stated sought to temporarily transform public spaces and roadways normally reserved for cars into recreational community spaces for everyone, free from automobiles. She noted that the purpose of the event was to encourage residents to get out and be active, to engage with other members of their community, and to enjoy their downtown area as a space for people. She advised that they were seeking to get approval for road closures on August 25th from 7:30am to 3pm and on September 22nd from 2pm to 8pm; the road closures included the downtown areas of Village Green Circle, West Spring Street, and King Street. She stated that they were not asking for financial backing from the City and noted that they had a lot of volunteers for the event. She stated that they were hoping to start with two Saturdays but would like to make this an ongoing event, possibly every other month. Mayor Bacon advised that he liked the idea and inquired how the event would be organized. Council Members expressed interest in the idea but felt that the event taking place on August 25th, which was 3 weeks away, would be too soon. Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett spoke briefly about the requirements that must be met for street closures in the City and suggested to Ms. Bracci that they consider starting small and downsize their event to see how it is received by citizens. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that she felt the September date would be better to start. Mayor Bacon agreed and reiterated Councils' concerns about the timeline and suggested that they consider adding an event in October when the weather is cooler. Ms. Bennett broke down the events that would be taking place in September and October in order to give Ms. Bracci a few options on available Saturdays.

Council and staff were appreciative and thanked Ms. Bracci for her presentation and time.

4. City Administrator Report

Wade's Restaurant – City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that Jason

McClure, co-owner of Wade's Restaurant, had been working with the City's Parks and Recreation Department to plan the restaurant's first annual anniversary/birthday celebration at Concord Road Linear Park. Mr. McClure thanked everyone for a great year and stated that he had reached out to various businesses in Smyrna to take part in the celebration. He advised that they would be selling tickets to the event with the proceeds being donated to an education based foundation and detailed the planned activities for the event. He noted that all of the cooking would be done indoors and that there would be outdoor pouring stations for alcohol. He stated that they would have a DJ but would be sure to have the music stop playing at 6:00pm, to not disturb their neighbors. He advised that they would be utilizing a wristband system; one showing that the individual paid to get in and the other would be to show that the individual is over 21 years of age. Ms. Saddler Jones noted that Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland had already agreed to issue them a permit to use the park. The Council Members advised that they had no issues with the event but expressed concerns about clean up after the event and also, having alcohol at the park. Mr. McClure assured Council and staff that he would be sure that the park was clean after the event. City Attorney Scott Cochran stated that he would like the request to be formally brought before Council on Monday, August 6, 2018's Consent Agenda to be sanctioned. Mr. Cochran advised that if the event was City sanctioned, having alcohol on the park should not be an issue. Ms. Saddler Jones advised Mr. McClure that she would advise him of the outcome of Monday night's meeting since Mr. McClure did not plan to attend the City Council meeting.

City's Birthday Celebration – Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett had given her the itinerary for Council and read timeframes for the day's events. There was a brief discussion about possible weather conditions during the event. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she would print out more parking passes for anyone that needed them.

Community Development Vacancies – Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Building Inspector Adam Dodd had resigned, effective August 17th and noted that Community Development now has 4 vacancies. She stated that Community Development Director Ken Suddreth had advised that both Tim Hardy and Adam Dodd had been recruited by other governmental entities. She noted that Community Development had lost a staff member also.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that due to limited staff presence between the hours of 6:00am to 8:00am, the Community Center would be restricting entry access. She stated that staff would only be allowing individuals who are fitness members, attending scheduled rental events or a programmed activity, participating in Adult Open Gym, or renting time on one of the racquetball courts to enter the facility during those hours. They will also only be allowing entry through one set of doors at the front of the building during that two hour period each morning.

City Hall Selfie Day – Ms. Saddler Jones reminded everyone that August 15th will be #CityHallSelfieDay. She noted that it was a day to take pride in local government and facilities, and advised Council and staff how to participate.

Smyrna Little League Champions – Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the 11U All-Stars had won the Tournament of State Champion in Greenville, North Carolina. She stated that she thought it would be nice to have the team come to a City Council meeting to be recognized. Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that he would like a resolution to be done for them.

Smyrna Memorial Cemetery – Ms. Saddler Jones gave Council and staff an update on Ms. Ashley Shares' progress. She advised that Ms. Shares had repaired 14 headstones despite the bad weather that we had been experiencing and that Ms. Shares expected to be complete with all 60 individual monuments by January 2019. She advised that she had pictures of some of Ms. Shares' finished work but unfortunately could not show them because the Mondo Board was not working properly but advised that she would send them via email to Council.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that there were two guests that would be speaking at the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled on Thursday, August 16th; Eric Myer from Cobb County Department of Transportation and Craig Owens from Cobb County Animal Control. She stated that Mr. Myer would be speaking about transportation and noted that it was something Council had not done yet. She also advised that Mr. Owens would be speaking about how Cobb County Animal Control operated and that if Council had any questions about animal control, that would be the time to address them. Ms. Saddler Jones added that she had met with Cobb County Manager Rob Hosack a few weeks prior and she shared some of the City's concerns and advised that Mr. Owens would also be addressing those concerns during the COW meeting.

5. Review of the August 6, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Item 3A/B – Mayor Bacon welcomed newly elected Councilmember Tim Gould. Mayor Bacon advised that Judge Ann Harris would be swearing Mr. Gould in at Monday night's meeting. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that the reception for Mr. Gould would be held on Monday, August 6th at 5:00pm in the HR Training Room.

Item 3C – Mayor Bacon advised that the Council Committees would not change much and noted that Mr. Gould would fill in all of former Councilmember Doug Stoner's slots then named the committees Mr. Gould would Chair.

Item 4A – Mayor Bacon inquired if this item was tabled at the last meeting. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth advised that he was correct. Mr. Suddreth stated there was no additional information or comments and advised that staff recommended approval but the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended denial. Senior Planner Rusty Martin explained the details of the project by displaying the site map on the Mondo Board. Councilmembers and staff discussed the specifics of the project.

Item 8E – Adoption of the millage rate of 8.99. Finance Department Director Kristin Robinson advised that a few citizens attended one of the public hearings that were held in reference to the adoption of the millage rate expressing concern over rising property taxes. She noted that her department had received very minimal calls in relation to this item and that once the citizens were advised that their homestead exemption would prevent their property taxes from increasing, they were pleased. There were no discussions or comments in regards to this item.

Item 8F – Ms. Robinson advised that the annual financial audit would be conducted by the same company that had been doing the financial audits for the last 5 years. She stated that this item had been put out for bid and they received 4 bids but Nichols, Cauley and Associates, LLC were the lowest bidder. She noted that although the contract would be for a 5 year term, due to issues with the company's work delivery in the past they would be evaluating and renewing the contract annually and would terminate the contract if need be and go with the next lowest bidder. There was no discussion or comment about this item.

Item 8H – Ms. Robinson advised that they included costs for the City to lease equipment to perform maintenance on the park fields in the 2019 fiscal year budget. She noted that the item was put out for bid and 4 bids were received with Jerry Pate Turf and Irrigation being the lowest bidder. Ms. Robinson advised that this would be a 4 year lease for the cost of \$35,331.12 annually but that the City was saving \$139,000 annually by removing the maintenance of the fields aspect from a 3rd party's contract.

Mayor Bacon advised that the City was losing their Park's Superintendent.

Item 8G – Fire Chief Roy Acree advised that these were the last ten 800mhz mobile radios that needed to be replaced in order to be compliant with the Phase II radio system upgrade required by Cobb County. Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired this was a budgeted item. Mr. Acree advised that it was (this is a SPLOST funded project). Councilmember Ron Fennel noted that Cobb County installed 3 towers that were now operational and believed that the City was covered in regards to communication with Cobb County's system. There was no discussion or comment on this item.

Ms. Saddler Jones announced that Deputy Chief Robert Harvey wanted to give an update on a new tower pole project that was already paid for. Mr. Harvey stated that hardware needed to be installed; a wooden pole, a siren, a speaker and the accompanying battery. He noted that this project's \$19,640 expense was a separate purchase but was a part of the SPLOST project that for the 800mhz mobile radios.

Item 8H – Ms. Saddler Jones advised that this item was in regards to the Police Department's Recruitment and Selection Personnel Policy. She stated that in reviewing the policy, it was noted that one word ("active") was missing in the selection relating to Military Incentive. She asked Mr. Harvey to explain. Mr. Harvey advised that some of the recruits they had encountered had only served a minimal time in the military and were not considered "active military" so they were not eligible to receive the Military Incentive. He noted that Command Staff wanted to ensure that the language was corrected. Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired if Reservists were eligible for the incentive. Mr. Harvey advised that they were not unless they had served a specific amount of active duty time. There were no further discussions or comments about this item.

Item 8I – Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett advised that this event had been previously approved by Council however the event organizer, Star 94.1, had made a few additional requests. Ms. Bennett noted that this was a City sanctioned event and that the City was also a partner. She advised Council and staff of the requests which included extending the event area to include multiple areas in Downtown Smyrna, use of the City's mobile hydraulic stage, use of City-owned trash can, public safety - police officers and EMT as needed, water and electricity usage, space in the Community Center for use as a green room for musical guests, and continued use of Atkins Park Tavern for on-site alcohol sales. Councilmembers and staff had a brief discussion about the various requests

City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that he needed to add an item to the agenda. He stated that there was a property adjacent to North Cooper Lake Park that needed an access easement. Councilmember Corkey Welch advised that he had spoken to the property owner and believed that she would be back before Council in regards to a sewer line. Mr. Welch inquired if it was something that needed to be added to Mr. Cochran's item. Mr. Cochran advised that it should be handled separately.

6. Other Business

Mayor Bacon advised that the meeting needed to go into Executive Session but would address "Other Business" first.

Councilmember Corkey Welch welcomed newly elected Councilmember Tim Gould. He also advised stated he had received a letter about recommendations to change a few City ordinances. He noted that he felt they were reasonable requests and would like the City Administrator or City Attorney to look them over.

Councilmember Ron Fennel reminded everyone about the CMA meeting being held on August 14, 2018.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein requested an update on the lighting she'd been requesting at Concord Road Linear Park. She stated that she was concerned about safety issues due to poor lighting at the park. Mayor Bacon advised that SPLOST funds could possibly be used for the project and noted that there were several areas in the City that needed more lighting. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn inquired if anyone had looked into what it would cost for the lighting. Larry Terry from Croy Engineering advised that Georgia Power provided an estimate showing it would cost \$326,370 for installation plus \$949 for maintenance, monthly. Ms. Blackburn inquired if solar lights could possibly be the solution. Mr. Terry advised that solar lighting would not be available through Georgia Power and noted that the quote he received was for 12 foot, mounted pedestrian lights. Ms. Blustein expressed concern that solar powered lighting may be too bright for the citizens that live close to the park. Ms. Blackburn stated that the addition of solar lights could possibly be the start of a "Sustainable Smyrna" and asked Ms. Blustein if she would agree to staff getting a quote on solar lighting for the park. Ms. Blustein agreed.

There were no further discussions or comments.

Councilmember Ron Fennel made a motion for the meeting to go into Executive Session; seconded by Councilmember Corkey Welch.

The motion carried by unanimous vote by all of the Councilmembers present.

The meeting went into Executive Session at 7:40pm

7. Adjournment

Councilmember Corkey Welch made a motion for the meeting to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Councilmember Susan Wilkinson.

The motion carried by unanimous vote by all of the Councilmembers present.

The meeting came out of Executive Session at 8:00pm.

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.