

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 12, 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), Scott Andrews (Asst. 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), Leslie Olejnik (Administrative Asst.), Ken Suddreth (Community Development Director), Rusty Martin (Senior Planner), Eric Randall (City Engineer)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering), Averno Gumbs (Intern), Griffin Miller (Intern), Leonard Robinson

2. Call to Order

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

3. Community Relations Presentation

Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett introduced her staff; Administrative Assistant Leslie Olejnik and Intern Griffin Miller. She stated that she had been with the City for over 20 years, gave a brief overview of her duties and what the department does for the City.

Ms. Olejnik came forward. She advised that she was from Houston and had a background in television news – mostly in sports. She stated that she had been with the City about 1.5 years. Ms. Olejnik thanked Council for their support of the purchase of the hydraulic stage.

Intern Griffin Miller came forward. He advised that he was a senior at Kennesaw State University majoring in Public Relations. He stated that this internship was a great opportunity for him. Mr. Miller advised that he was working on the City's YouTube channel and reviewing items for the City's newsletter. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn suggested to Mr. Griffin to get the City on more social media outlets to reach the youth, namely Instagram. Mr. Miller advised that he had been looking into that.

Council and staff thanked them for their presentation.

4. Sustainability - Leonard Robinson

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn introduced Mr. Leonard Robinson. She advised that she met Mr. Robinson when she was on the campaign trail and that she was very intrigued with his ideas on how to boost Smyrna's economy.

Mr. Robinson advised that he was from California and came to Smyrna to retire. He stated that he loved Smyrna's Strategic Vision and thought that he could help improve it. He advised that he had formed a committee which consisted of likeminded Smyrna residents. He noted that his presentation today was a small introduction to

sustainability and that he would like the opportunity to do a more in-depth presentation for the Councilmembers at a later date. Mr. Robinson advised that sustainability was not about “hugging trees” but about embracing opportunities. Mr. Robinson pointed out all of the things that the City of Smyrna was already doing that were in line with sustainability. He spoke about obtaining solar energy for residents and the City and noted that there was a solar plant in Georgia already. He spoke briefly about green spaces, water conservation and efficiency, and affordable housing. He gave reasons why Smyrna should consider getting a sustainability plan, noting that there were billions of dollars in grant funds available to the City when they get a sustainability plan. He also stated that there were various brands that were looking to fund things such as this. Mr. Robinson advised that the 2019 Super Bowl would be in Atlanta and that “the NFL have gone sustainable” and he felt it would be a prime opportunity for Smyrna to get a solid sustainability plan in order to reap some of the revenue. He spoke briefly about the benefits of a sustainability plan and stated that he would like to improve the community for his grandchildren.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired about the committee that Mr. Robinson mentioned earlier in his presentation. He advised that it was his committee but that they were not official. He stated that the people in his committee were just as passionate as he was about the sustainability initiative.

Ms. Blackburn named some of the committee’s participants and Mr. Robinson noted that and that they were from various walks of life and their ages varied but that they all were from Smyrna.

Council thanked Mr. Robinson for his presentation.

5. Review of the July 16, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Bacon noted that Councilmembers Ron Fennel and Corkey Welch would not be present at the July 12th meeting and expressed his concerns about not having a quorum if another Councilmember was absent at that meeting because he was expecting a large crowd reference a zoning item. He read Item 4A and asked Community Development Director Ken Suddreth to address to come forward.

Item 4A; Mr. Suddreth advised that staff recommended denial for this item and the Planning Commission unanimously denied it as well. He stated that it was a request to change a church property to mixed use. He stated that staff did not believe it was a mixed use project. He noted that the 3 most recent projects Belmont, Jonquil, and Riverview all had at least 15% of the projects being something other than multi-family and with this project 97% was dedicated to apartments. He gave a brief overview of past projects that have been approved by the City. He advised that the developer had 9 variance requests but that staff was only supportive of 2 of them. He noted that Council was not supportive of the Emerson Center project and that this project had very similar requests. He mentioned that this project consisted of 325 apartment units, all surface parking – no underground parking nor garage or a parking deck.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the layout was different from the other 3 projects – Belmont, Jonquil, and Riverview. Mr. Suddreth advised that this project was at the end of a cul-de-sac and that Belmont and Jonquil were on corners and Riverview ran along the river. Mayor Bacon noted the difficulty for traffic flow in this project. Mr. Suddreth advised that this project triggered a traffic study and that City Engineer Eric Randall would speak to them about the findings.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired how many stories the buildings would be. Senior Planner Rusty Martin advised that they would be 3 or 4 stories; some units would have a basement.

Mayor Bacon inquired when the church purchased the property if the building was there. Mr. Suddreth advised that it was. Mayor Bacon noted that the property was initially going to house the "largest entertainment complex in metro Atlanta" and stated that they required the developers to do various studies due to the amount of traffic that was proposed to be flowing through there. He inquired if those records were still available. Mr. Suddreth stated that he was unsure if they were and stated that his department did not find any old records. Mr. Suddreth pointed out a few changes that were made on the site plan. Mayor Bacon inquired how much retail the project would have. Mr. Suddreth advised that it was about 3,000 square feet. Mr. Martin confirmed that it was 3,400 square feet. Mr. Suddreth gave an explanation of the elevation attachments, the aerial view of the project, and addressed parking concerns.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired about elevators and the possibility of a Senior Citizen component. Mr. Suddreth stated that he had not heard anything on either topic.

Mr. Suddreth noted that there were issues with the sewer lines.

City Engineer Eric Randall advised that the sewer lines were on private property but serviced by Cobb County. He noted that there were known issues with the integrity of the system but believed that the letter received by Public Works Director Scott Stokes from Cobb County stated that if they were in good working condition, there was a capacity for this. He stated that there were still some issues that needed to be fixed before they would grant them a permit to discharge into that system during construction.

There was a lengthy discussion about the sewer lines.

Mr. Suddreth asked Mr. Randall to address the traffic study. Mr. Randall stated that the traffic study looked at present conditions and the level of service (relates to the amount of delay you have at a signaled intersection). He noted that the surveyors had a grading system in which they assigned a grade of A through F; "A" being no delay and "F" being an unacceptable delay. He stated that during rush hour they look for levels to be at a D or E as a worst case scenario. He advised that the study had been done at the intersection of Cumberland and Spring Road. Mr. Randall advised that the conclusion was that the intersections were over capacity and would potentially slow eastbound traffic in the mornings. He noted that the study also had comparisons between night and daytime traffic.

There was a brief discussion about the traffic flow in that area.

Mr. Randall gave a brief overview of the traffic study report findings and advised that the numbers were based on when children are in school.

There was additional discussion about the sewer issues.

Senior Planner Rusty Martin advised that there was a sewer analysis attachment that Council could read over that would answer all of their questions.

City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that in the future, Council should limit their

discussions about hearings to the zoning issues and limit their comments.

Councilmembers expressed their concerns about the project.

Mr. Martin addressed the remaining zoning items.

Item 4B; the applicant wanted to rezone property from R-15 to RAD-Conditional in order to subdivide the lot into 2 lots to build 2 single family homes. Staff was not supportive of the variance request because the house can be built without it and the applicant did not provide justification for the request. Ms. Wilkinson inquired about the setbacks and where the frontages would be. Mr. Martin advised that staff recommended approval of the request but with different setbacks as proposed by the applicant. Mr. Cochran made note that Williams Park was against this project but in favor of 81 townhomes being built. There was a brief discussion about project and possible stormwater issues. Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired why the lots were so different. Mr. Martin advised that the applicant was trying to create a backyard for the lot on Spring. Ms. Wilkinson inquired if the larger lot meant the home would be large as well. She was advised that it could possibly be.

There was a brief discussion about the project and affordable housing.

Item 4C will be tabled; Mr. Martin advised that the applicant was working on revising the plan.

Item 4D; City Engineer Eric Randall advised that they spoke with the developer about possible traffic issues related to this project. Mr. Martin advised that this was an annexation and a rezoning request. The project was for 81 townhomes that will front on Roswell Street. He gave an overview of the project which would include a deceleration lane. Mr. Randall stated that he had spoken to the developer and that the deceleration lane may possibly be replaced with a median and/or a radar sign but that they were still sorting through the specific terms. Ms. Wilkinson inquired what the difference of having a deceleration lane or a median was. Mr. Randall clarified that for her. Ms. Wilkinson stated that she was confused as to which Ward the project was in. Mr. Suddreth advised that it would be in Ward 2; there was a brief discussion about how the Ward was determined. Mayor Bacon questioned the traffic concerns that staff had. Mr. Randall advised that he was working with the developer on how to correct the issue. There was a discussion about the traffic concerns and the logistics of the site. Mr. Cochran advised Council that if they voted against the zoning for this project, they should also vote against the annexation.

Items 5A and 5B; Mr. Suddreth addressed the items and advised that they were for Beer, Wine and Liquor pouring. There were no issues or discussions reference either of these items.

Item 6A; Mayor Bacon read the item. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn stated that she felt the item was written incorrectly and should read 12:30pm to 11:00am instead of 11:00am to 12:30pm. Mr. Cochran stated that was the way it was worded in the legislature.

Item 6B; no discussion.

City Clerk Terri Graham inquired who would handle Mr. Fennel's item about the resolution in his absence. Ms. Blackburn advised that she would.

Consent Agenda – Mayor Bacon read Item 8D and inquired how much would be received from the E911 audit. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that it was \$12,001. Mayor Bacon read Item 8E. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that the Hands-Free Law was added to the personnel policy. Mr. Cochran advised that the current employee policy needed to be updated to include the new law and noted that the City had implemented new disciplinary actions for the policy and the language needed to be included as well.

Mayor Bacon inquired if there were any other items that needed to be added to the agenda.

Ms. Wilkinson advised that she had had an item. She stated that she had received a request for a block party to take place on August 12th from one of her citizens and that there was no form online for citizens to apply. She asked if the item could be voted on at today's meeting. Mr. Cochran advised Council that they could vote on the item or informally approve it at today's meeting and ratify the vote at the Mayor and Council Meeting on Monday, July 16th.

Councilmember Ron Fennel made a motion to approve the item; seconded by Councilmember Maryline Blackburn.

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

Ms. Saddler Jones and Mr. Andrews advised that they would make sure to create a form and put it online so this would not happen again in the future.

6. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that there were proposed amendments to the Fireworks Law and asked City Attorney Scott Cochran to advise Council about them. Mr. Cochran advised that legislature had changed the law on fireworks again to allow local government to have more control to regulate fireworks. He gave a brief history of how the fireworks law affected local government in the past and advised that the change related to the City's noise ordinance. Mr. Cochran noted that it was a very simple ordinance revision. There was a brief discussion about this item.

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews stated that he was approached by a citizen about starting an Entrepreneurial Committee. Mr. Andrews advised that he would like to create the committee as part of the incubator. He noted that it would extend beyond the City's Vision, involve Community Relations, Tom Boland, Maxwell Ruppensburg, and key business owners in the community. Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that he knew a few citizens that would be an asset to the committee. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if the Technology Committee was still meeting. Mr. Fennel advised that he had been to a few luncheons with the Technology Committee members and gave a brief update on some of their initiatives. Attorney Scott Cochran recommended that Council appoint the entrepreneurs to the committee if the committee was to form. Mayor Bacon expressed his concerns about having too many initiatives going on at once. Mr. Andrews reminded Council about the upcoming tour of performing arts centers in Suwannee, Sugar Hill and Woodstock on July 27th. Council expressed their concerns about the amount of time that would be spent on the tour. Ms. Wilkinson expressed her concerns about Council not having received the results of the Parks Master Plan and wanted to be sure that the citizens needs/wants were

met before the City moved forward with a performing arts center. There was a discussion about the timeframe that would be spent at each location on the performing arts center tour. Mr. Andrews advised that he would remove the Woodstock stop from the tour.

Ms. Saddler Jones reminded Council about the Little League tournament that would be taking place from July 14th to July 22nd at Brinkley Park and the summer concert on July 14th at the Village Green. She also advised that she would be on leave on July 13th and July 17th through July 23rd. She noted that Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews would be in charge during her absence.

7. Other Business

Mayor Bacon advised that the meeting needed to go into Executive Session.

8. Executive Session - Personnel

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

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

The meeting went into Executive Session at 8:27 pm.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn made a motion for the meeting to come out of Executive Session; seconded by Councilmember Ron Fennel.

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

9. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.