

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 13, 2018

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

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

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Andrews (Asst. City Administrator), Jeffrey Tucker (Asst. City Attorney), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to Mayor & Council), Elsa Thompson (Admin. Svc. Coord.), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Man. Fellow), Richard Garland (Parks & Rec. Director), Jodi Mills (Sr. Prog. Coord.), Chris Addicks (IT Director), Jessica Meyers (Dept. Admin. Asst.), Tom Boland (Econ. Dev. Manager), Ken Suddreth (Comm. Dev. Director), Frank Martin (Public Works Director), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Russell "Rusty" Martin (Sr. Planner), PD Command Staff – David Lee (Police Chief), Robert Harvey (Dep. Police Chief), Joe Bennett (Dep. Police Chief)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering), Carlos Perez (Perez Planning + Design, LLC), Robin Crawford (City's Diversity Consultant), Ryan Fender (Georgia Municipal Assoc. Consultant), Eric Lovvorn (ExteNet Rep.)

2. Call to Order

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

3. ExteNet Presentation

Ryan Fender, a consultant for the Georgia Municipal Association, spoke briefly about his role and introduced ExteNet Representative Eric Lovvorn. Mr. Lovvorn advised that he was the External Relations Director, gave an overview of the company (ExteNet) and their background. He explained how "Outdoor Small Cell/ DAS Technology" worked and why small cells were needed. He advised that 9 proposed small cell nodes would be installed in areas throughout the city and noted that only 3 of those 9 would require new utility poles, the other 7 would be added to existing poles. Mr. Lovvorn stated that the nodes would be connected and routed by AT&T (whom ExteNet is contracted with). He pointed out the wireless node locations on a map as well as provided example photo simulations. Councilmember Ron Fennel clarified if the timeline was March. Mr. Lovvorn advised that "it was the goal" and noted that the project was spread out over Metro Atlanta and that some areas were taking longer than others. Mayor Bacon inquired who would benefit from these installations the most and whether or not there would be interference for non-AT&T customers. Mr. Lovvorn stated that everyone would benefit not just AT&T customers. Mayor Bacon also inquired about "dead zones", areas where he would lose cellphone service. Mr. Lovvorn advised that he would be happy to look into that for him if he advised of the areas he was referring to. Mr. Fennel advised that the commercial area of Highlands Parkway experienced a lack of signal. Mr. Lovvorn advised that he would like for them to email him locations of concern so that he can forward that information to AT&T. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones asked Mr. Fennel to send her the information so that she may get it to Mr. Lovvorn. Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired if more hardware would have to be added to the poles if other carriers wanted to boost their signal also. Mr. Lovvorn advised that it could "potentially" happen but that it is difficult to have antennas for more than two carriers on one pole. He noted that they try to have carriers share poles however sometimes what works for one carrier may not work for the other so one may decide that they need their pole to be in a different location. Mr. Fennel inquired if ExteNet was contracted with the "Braves stadium". Mr. Lovvorn advised that they lost the bid for

that stadium as well as the one for the Mercedes-Benz Stadium but that they were contracted with other stadiums throughout the country. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn clarified whether ExteNet would utilize one of Cobb County's existing poles for the installation on South Cobb Drive. Mr. Lovvorn advised that their goal was always to utilize existing infrastructure. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if the poles would also be added to residential neighborhoods. Mr. Lovvorn stated that he believed that they possibly would be placed in some residential areas in the future, especially since most households no longer have landlines. Ms. Wilkinson also made inquiry about AT&T fiber installation in residential neighborhoods. Mr. Lovvorn clarified that ExteNet installed the nodes but that AT&T oversaw all of the fiber installations. Mayor Bacon advised that Council was in agreement with this project and thanked Mr. Lovvorn for his time.

4. Parks & Recreation Master Plan - Perez Planning + Design, LLC

Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland advised that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan had been in the works since July 2017 and stated they were ready to present the final master plan to Council. Mr. Garland handed out copies of the master plan to Council and Key Staff members and advised that they should replace the contents of their "notebooks" with the updated version that he was handing to them. He then introduced Carlos Perez of Perez Planning + Design, LLC. Mr. Perez gave a brief overview of the process of developing the master plan and advised that a "more detailed strategy" was in the booklet that Mr. Garland handed out. Mr. Perez advised that the master plan was developed around the social, environmental and economic way of life in Smyrna and stated that the findings of an "in-depth needs assessment" allowed for recommendations to be discovered. He noted that they received feedback from approximately 1,600 residents and that parks and recreation was a "big part of Smyrna" and an "integral part of the City". Mr. Perez stated that the City was diverse in age, culture and economics and that there were some challenges in growth but that he believed that implementing some of the parks master plan could help with that. Mr. Perez advised that although the City had spent a considerable amount of money on Parks and Recreation "in comparison to other communities" it was not a very large amount. He stated that residents advised that they did not know about the facilities or programs and that needed to be improved. Mr. Perez stated that there were not a lot of programs for high school-aged children and that the City needed more family programs as well. He spoke about the needs assessment, listed the high priorities, the long range vision for the city, and the implementation strategy (noted that it would be divided into 2 phases). Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if Council's feedback was in the notebook. Mr. Perez advised that they were listed in the high priorities. Mr. Perez then provided an overview of how the two phases would work, provided proposed dollar amounts and possible funding sources. Mayor Bacon inquired what the dollar amount was to implement all of the projects. Mr. Perez advised that the "realistic number to implement everything discussed was probably in the 100s of millions of dollars, maybe 80 million". He stated that the idea was to start small and focus on the most important project.

Ms. Wilkinson inquired about the possibility of a skate park at Cobb Park. Mr. Perez stated that Cobb Park was a "good site" for a project such as this and listed the positives (close to a high school and 2 major roads) and the negatives (too close to residences). Ms. Wilkinson expressed her concerns about constructing a skate park, lack of parking, and the possibility of attracting too many people into a residential neighborhood since there were not many skate parks. Mr. Fennel stated that skate parks were "more destinational" and mostly drew people for events – he stated that he felt that another site could possibly be more suitable. Mr. Perez stressed the importance of resident input and advised that the City inquire if there was a desire for

such a park and noted that one of the things they discovered during the creation of the master plan was that some of the facilities were not being utilized as much as they could be. Ms. Wilkinson reiterated her concerns. Mayor Bacon interjected and advised that the meeting needed to proceed onto other matters. Mr. Garland came forward and asked that Council approve the master plan at the upcoming Council meeting and inquired if the Parks and Recreation Department could continue to utilize the "Recreate Smyrna" logo as a secondary logo. Council advised that they did not foresee an issue with his request.

5. Proposed Black History Celebration - Maryline Blackburn

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn advised that she contacted the City's Diversity Consultant, Ms. Robin Crawford, to "get her thoughts and opinions" on requesting that the City do a more elaborate Black History celebration and asked Ms. Crawford to come to tonight's meeting to do a presentation for the Council. Ms. Crawford introduced herself and advised that Ms. Blackburn inquired if the City was doing anything for Black History month. Ms. Crawford stated that it took her some time to research what the City had done in the past for Black History month because "it was not a very vibrant occasion here in Smyrna" and made note that the library had done some "nice things over the past few years". Councilmember Andrea Blustein did not agree with Ms. Crawford's statements and made note that she read a proclamation for Black History month every year. Ms. Crawford proceeded to say that she would like to look at the "possibility" of having a Black History program not just a proclamation "being read" and "stories" being told at the library. She also noted that she would like to consider putting on celebrations for other minority groups and cultures. Ms. Crawford advised that she worked jointly with Ms. Blackburn on the presentation for the Committee of the Whole meeting for Council. She gave an overview of how the event would be organized (location, vendors, etc.), what the program would consist of, as well as provided a tentative date of February 23, 2019. Ms. Crawford also gave an overview of different topics for the program. In her presentation, Ms. Crawford also detailed the other "heritage months to consider". Councilmember Susan Wilkinson advised that there were a lot of people from India in Smyrna as well. Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that they were considered as part of the Asian category. Councilmember Charles Welch stated that he did not believe that the City should utilize tax dollars to "promote one particular race, ethnicity or religion". Councilmember Derek Norton inquired how much the cost would be. Ms. Crawford stated that as of the date of this meeting there was no cost. Mr. Welch stated that if it there was no cost to the City, he "would have a different opinion". Ms. Crawford stated that the vendors and businesses were not asking for anything but that there may be costs incurred from advertising. Mr. Norton inquired if Ms. Crawford would be paid to put on the event. Ms. Crawford advised that she would be paid. Mr. Norton made note that there would then be a cost and stated his concerns about the cost increasing over time. Ms. Blustein stated that she did not feel that the event was all inclusive. Mr. Welch reiterated his concerns. Councilmembers Blustein and Welch made note that the schools in the area reflect the diverse ethnicities in Smyrna. Mr. Fennel stated that he felt that "celebrating that diversity daily, 365" was what Smyrna was "all about". Mr. Fennel also noted that he was excited to appreciatively "spotlight" different groups "to show the diversity of the City". Mayor A. Max Bacon stated that he felt that the library's Black History program was "great" and that Smyrna was "more progressive than other cities in the area". Ms. Crawford disagreed and listed other cities that she felt "did more". Ms. Wilkinson inquired how much the menorah lighting ceremony cost the City. Mayor Bacon and City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones simultaneously advised that the City incurred no costs. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she had been approached by various citizens with nothing but positive comments about the menorah lighting ceremony. Ms. Blackburn

stated that “many citizens were under the impression that the City of Smyrna sponsored” the menorah lighting ceremony. Ms. Wilkinson advised that she was bothered by what some “Jewish constituents” told her they and their children experienced here in Smyrna. Ms. Crawford stated that “many African Americans don’t feel that Smyrna is welcoming either”. Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that he had “never heard that”. Ms. Crawford stated that “black businesses that try to get contracts with the City and get rejected without being given proper consideration”. Mr. Fennel inquired whom Ms. Crawford was speaking of as the City “does not do many contracts”. Ms. Crawford stated that she would be “happy to share” what she knew. Councilmember advised that they would like to know whom Ms. Crawford was speaking of. Ms. Crawford inquired if they City had a program where they gave “special consideration to small, women or minority owned businesses”. Mr. Fennel made note that the City Administrator was a fair-minded, egalitarian African American woman and stated that if there was a “citizen, business or constituent that felt slighted” they should help the City understand “how to do better”. Ms. Crawford stated that she proposed to Administration that the City survey Smyrna citizens to see how they feel about living in Smyrna. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that they had done so but that the City could utilize their new POLCO tool to survey the citizens as well. Councilmembers expressed their astonishment to Ms. Crawford’s consensus of how she says African Americans felt about living in Smyrna. Ms. Crawford made note that she has consulted for various companies and stated that there was always a difference with how “the C-suite” saw things versus how “the people” saw them and that “the City has a very poor reputation when it comes to African Americans”. Mayor Bacon stated that he would “challenge” that statement. Mr. Fennel stated that diversity statistics would reveal that Smyrna is diversely strong. Mr. Norton stated that he did not like Ms. Crawford’s comparison of “the C-suite and the people” because Council was engaged with citizens daily regardless of race or religion. Ms. Crawford inquired if Mr. Norton felt that “people” were comfortable telling him how they felt. Mr. Fennel made comment that Council “get it from both sides”. Ms. Crawford reiterated her thoughts about surveying the citizens. Councilmembers expressed their thoughts about why they felt Ms. Crawford’s statements were invalid. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that the Task Force would be utilizing the survey tool soon and reminded everyone that the conversation should be about the possible Black History program. Mayor Bacon agreed, made note that there was “a good program for 2019” and made note that if there would be any changes, it would have to go into next year’s budget because there would be incurred costs. Ms. Blackburn made comment about Mr. Norton’s question earlier in the meeting about Ms. Crawford being paid and stated that she would be paying for Ms. Crawford’s expenses. Ms. Wilkinson made note that she was “in favor of the event”. Mayor Bacon stated that he was not in favor of the event. He advised that Library Director Mary Moore had put “a lot of work” into the library’s Black History program, made note that he was “ok with doing the survey” and that he was shocked at some of the comments made earlier in the meeting. Ms. Crawford thanked Council and staff for their time. Mr. Andrews commended Ms. Crawford for an event she hosted earlier in the week; a few Councilmembers and staff members concurred with Mr. Andrews’ statement.

6. Police Department Presentation

Police Chief David Lee presented his Command Staff which consisted of & Command Staff – Deputy Chief Robert Harvey advised that he had been with the department 28 years and advised what his role was and noted that he oversaw 3 budgets – Communications Center (911), the Police Department and the Jail. Major Terry McCormick advised that he was with the department 29 years, “handled the admin side” of 911, police operations, as well as writing grants. Chief Lee advised that

McCormick was selected to the international law enforcement exchange program and would be training Israel with the Israel Police. Major Frank Durrance advised that he had 34 years with the department, gave a brief overview of his duties and his background. Major Durrance made note that jail numbers had "tripled" due to the jail not only housing for Smyrna but for Powder Springs, Sandy Springs and Marietta as well. Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired if they accepted "ICE referrals". Major Durrance advised that they did not. Councilmember Tim Gould inquired if any of those municipalities were in the process of building their own jail. Major Durrance stated that they were not. Chief Lee advised that they also handled "GCIC operations" for Hiram and Powder Springs. Deputy Chief Joe Bennett advised that he was with the department for 23 years, gave an overview of his job duties and responsibilities. Major Rick James stated he had 20 years with the department and gave an overview of his job duties and responsibilities. Major John Carter advised that he was in charge of the uniformed officers, that they work four 12 hour shifts and stated that "911 took in about 92,000 calls" so far this year. Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired if they received calls about the earthquake. Councilmember Derek Norton inquired if they were already handing out "hands free" citations. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn inquired what the turnaround time was from the time an officer is hired to when they are patrolling the streets. Chief Lee responded advised what the training process involved and noted that the police department was "pushing education" and that come Jan. 1st, they would be requiring that officers would need at least an associate's degree. Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that the Finance Committee would be recommending that they financially assist the Police Department in acquiring "all tools needed" in order for them to be fully staffed. Mayor Bacon thanked the Police Chief and Command Staff for what they do - Councilmembers and staff applauded.

7. City Administrator Report

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that the "Meet & Greet for Peace" went well. He advised that the "Streets Alive" event organizers would be coming to Council to request to have the event again. Mayor Bacon stated that he hoped that "this time around" the event organizers will be more involved in the planning and implementation process because he felt that ICMA Management Fellow Ashley Youmans had done most of the footwork for them. Mr. Andrews assured that staff would express the City's expectations about the time, budget, etc., to the organizers. Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired if the event had been well attended. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn advised that a "few hundred people" were in attendance. Mr. Andrews advised that staff would get the numbers to them. Mr. Andrews advised that there would be a Volunteer Banquet on a Thursday evening in April (no date yet) and noted that the date had been moved a few times due to a variety of factors. He advised that staff was in the process of acquiring "more permanent" Jonquil Historical Trail Markers as well. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones reminded everyone of the holiday closure dates for City Hall and thanked Council for approving December 31st, 2019 as a staff holiday. She advised that she would be out of the office December 26th through January 2nd and that Mr. Andrews would out December 26th and 27th. She also advised that Glenn Page from Cobb County/ Marietta Water Authority would be presenting at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on January 3, 2019. Mayor Bacon advised that Mr. Page did a presentation for the City "many years ago" and that it provided very good information. Mayor Bacon inquired who would be "in charge" while Ms. Saddler Jones and Mr. Andrews were out of the office. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she would advise Council once she appointed a department head.

8. Review of the December 17, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Items Discussed -

Mayoral Report - Proclamation in Recognition of Rotary Club's 55th Anniversary. Mayor Bacon advised that Councilmember Corkey Welch would read the proclamation. Mayor Bacon also advised that Cecil Pickens, a long-time Smyrna resident, had passed away that morning.

Land Issues/Zoning/Annexations - Items 4A – 4C – Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that his personal property was involved in these items and he had to recuse himself. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth advised that the items pertained to annexations and rezoning and that staff recommended approval. Senior Planner Rusty Martin stated that the overall property was annexed in 2006 to add 14 homes and that Mr. Fennel's portion of the property was being annexed in to add an additional 5 homes. Mayor Bacon inquired if the Planning and Zoning Board had already approved. Mr. Martin advised that they had and that the vote was 5 to 1.

Item 4D – Mr. Suddreth advised that the brewery issue was divided into two parts of the agenda; Item 4D was the zoning component of the request and the other portion was in relation to the alcohol ordinance and noted that that staff was "comfortable" with this request.

Privilege Licenses

Item 5A – Mayor Bacon inquired what type of business this was. Mr. Martin stated, "it was similar to the Crusty Crab".

Formal Business - 6A – Interim City Engineer Kevin S. Moore was selected by to be the new City Engineer. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews gave positive comments about Mr. Moore.

6B – Mr. Fennel advised that the specific project use was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting earlier in the day – asked Finance Director Kristin Robinson to elaborate. Ms. Robinson advised that the City ended fiscal year 2019 with 3.5 million dollars in surplus funds. She went over the proposal of how the funds would be utilized which included the purchase of 2 police vehicles that were in accidents. Mayor Bacon inquired if the vehicles that were not insured. Ms. Robinson noted that insurance was on the vehicle not all of the added equipment. Ms. Robinson advised that there would be a 5.6% buffer left over and that the City had 30.6% of unallocated funds for a total of 15.8 million dollars.

6C – Ms. Robinson advised that the item pertained to merit raises which were already budgeted for and noted that the dollar amount was under budget. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones stated that the merit increases were based upon a rating of 1.5% to 3% as in previous years.

6D – Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland advised that the playground was being redone do allow for wheelchair bound children to be able to have access and enjoy the playground. Councilmember Derek Norton inquired if any of the playground equipment being replaced was reusable. Mr. Garland advised that staff would be reviewing that and stated that the park would also include an ADA compliant from the parking lot that would allow access from the parking lot onto the playground via the trail. He noted that staff was also "leaving room" for additional elements to be added to the playground at a later date if needed.

6E – no discussion; Mr. Welch stated that the plan (Parks and Recreation Master Plan) should be revisited often, would like to see a project from the plan happen in 2019.

6F – no discussion; Councilmember Tim Gould inquired “why was ExteNet selected”. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that they approached the City and submitted an application.

No items were added to the agenda.

9. Other Business

Councilmember Andrea Blustein advised that she received word that the fire marshals would like to have the body cameras proposal revisited. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones stated that the Fire Chief advised that they do not need any cameras. Mayor Bacon stated that he did not feel that they needed them.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn announced that she attended an event at the Reed House and commented on how “fabulous” it was and noted that there were no lights on the Reed House signage and that it was hard for the sign to be seen at night. She also inquired how many people the Reed House could accommodate.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson advised that she was contacted by citizens in the Beaver Creek area because they heard there may be a “cut-through” in their neighborhood. Croy Representative Larry Terry advised that there would be a temporary traffic light at the Windy Hill intersection and stated that it was in the contract for the on-going project. Ms. Wilkinson stated that “no one was aware of the cut-through” and noted that the lights were not working at the park in the area.

Councilmember Ron Fennel announced that Ms. Blackburn had been elected to be the secretary for the Cobb Municipal Association and congratulated her.

City Clerk Terri Graham advised Council that the Campaign Disclosure Reports would be due later than initially thought because 2019 was Council’s election year and advised that the reports would be due January 31st.

10. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.