



Meeting Minutes - Final  
Committee of the Whole

---

Thursday, July 13, 2017

6:00 PM

City Hall

---

1. Roll Call

*Council: Andrea Blustein, Ron Fennel, Derek Norton, Corkey Welch, Doug Stoner, Susan Wilkinson*

*Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Christy Ullman (Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Ken Suddreth (Community Development Director), Rusty Martin (City Planner), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Ashley Youmans (Government Management Fellow), and Maxwell Ruppensburg (Special Project Coordinator).*

*Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering), Jim Summerbell (Jacobs)*

*Absent: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Teri Anulewicz*

2. Call to Order

*Councilmember Corkey Welch presided over the meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.*

3. City Administrator Report

[2017-268](#)

Administration Update

**Attachments:** [Admin Report 7.13.17.pdf](#)

*City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones began her update and said there was an offer made on the City's property on Oakdale. The list price is \$129,050 and the offer the City received was for \$70,000. There was consensus to make a counter offer of \$110,000. She also showed Council pictures of the new roof on the Reed House, which had been completed. She said the house would be complete by August, but site work would not be completed until November. There was discussion about a grand opening event. She introduced the new Government Management Fellow, Ashley Youmans, and also announced Maxwell Ruppensburg's new position of Special Projects Coordinator. She finished by sharing that the Weekly Report was now posted on the City website under the Administration page.*

4. Millage Rate Discussion

*Finance Director Kristin Robinson said the millage rate had been 8.99 since 2007, and the FY18 budget was adopted based on that same rate. She explained that although the millage rate was not changing, due to the increase in value in the property tax digest, it was considered an increase, so it would have to be advertised and then formally adopted by Council. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked if any other entities facing this "increase" were rolling back their millage rate, and Ms.*

*Robinson said none were rolling their millage rate back. She said Cobb County and Austell were increasing their rates. Councilmember Fennel said the City should communicate this on the website and explain that it was not a decision on the City's part that created the "increase." Councilmember Stoner said this explanation should also touch on the homestead exemption and how it is affected. Ms. Robinson said they have to post this on the City's website anyway, so they can include a paragraph addressing those items. Councilmember Fennel also said it was important to mention that this was the 11th or 12th year the City was not increasing the millage rate.*

## 5. Comp Plan Pre-Transmittal Presentation

[2017-269](#)

Comp Plan Presentation - Jim Summerbell (Jacobs)

**Attachments:** [2017-07-13 Guide Smyrna Comp Plan Presentation.pptx](#)  
[2017-07-13 Guide Smyrna Comp Plan Presentation.pdf](#)

*Mr. Ken Suddreth said Mr. Jim Summerbell was present to talk about the Comp Plan process and the document that was created from it. He reiterated that this was a pre-transmittal authorization, and this document was about at 95%, meaning that it is open for changes. He said ARC would check the major items in the plan to make sure it meets state requirements. He said staff was keeping a list of items that needed to be changed or up for discussion. Mr. Jim Summerbell emphasized again that Council would be voting on Monday to authorize the transmittal of the document to ARC so they can review and make sure it complies with what the state wants to see. He said the review period would be about 60 days. He went over the process up to this point, and detailed the many ways they received public input for the project. Mr. Summerbell stated the entire report was made up of 2 sections. The first section was the administrative report, consisting of three elements: a snapshot of where Smyrna is today (including priorities and opportunities the community has identified); where does Smyrna want to be (including the vision plan and land use map); and the community work program (specific action items for the goals and priorities). He said the second section, the bulk of the written material, was the technical addendum, which is required because it includes information on modes of public involvement, sources, accomplishments, etc.*

*He reviewed some of the priorities named in the project with action items to coincide with each, such as bringing in transportation opportunities and maintaining high design standards. He mentioned how the Vision Plan was incorporated into the study and recommendations. He addressed the maps in the study, and stressed they were not zoning maps, but an advisory tool for staff and Council to use when making zoning and annexation decisions. He said each of the different land use categories had an overview, design criteria, zoning info, etc. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked where they could find that section, and Mr. Summerbell said Section 2 of the administrative section. She said she had difficulty opening the document on her iPad, and Mr. Suddreth said they would print her out a copy. In the Community Work Program portion of the document, specific items from the FY18 budget were included, such as major road improvements. He said other action items were a suggestion for an annexation study, a transit feasibility study, and a parks master plan, which the City already has underway. He again said the technical addendum had all the deep detailed data that was used to produce the first section, and it included summaries of workshops and a definition section.*

*He said the document was on the Comp Plan website and could be shared with anyone. He said he would be back on Monday with a brief PowerPoint. Mr. Rusty Martin said that it was also on the City website so people could review it and post*

comments. Councilmember Corkey Welch said he had concerns with people coming from outside the City and offering their opinions, and he was not sure if there was a screening method out there to keep that from happening, but in his opinion the Comp Plan was similar to voting in that the people effected directly should be giving the input, not those from surrounding areas. Mr. Rusty Martin said if they attended the workshop, they had the option to receive a notification when the website was updated.

*\*Please refer to the presentation attachment for further detail.\**

## 7. Discussion for GA Initiative for Community Housing

*Mr. Maxwell Ruppensburg began by explaining that through some discussions in a previous Vision Plan committee meeting, he wanted to find out what was out there to help the City address and understand its housing problems. The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing is something that would tie into the Comp Plan, and it is a learning experience where a City forms a housing team with community stakeholders, city staff, and an elected official. Over the course of three years the housing team attends two retreats a year facilitated by UGA and DCA experts. The team works with the issue experts to discuss specific community issues and options/solutions for them. He said Roswell was a comparable city that has participated in the program, and they just finished a year or so ago and preserved their housing team to keep them involved when various issues arise regarding housing in the city. He said a rough budget number for the housing team was about \$6k a year. He said one of the main outcomes of the program was a housing inventory, which is a task the Economic and Community Development Vision Committee started to do on their own, but struggled with because they did not have the expertise or guidance. Mr. Ruppensburg stated this program was an opportunity to continue that initiative in a more productive and structured, long-term situation that is specific to Smyrna. He said the application to participate was August 11, 2017, and they requested a letter of intent from the City tomorrow. He explained the reason this was last minute was because staff just found out about this program in the past two months and had been working to get all the information together to present to Council. He said the Mayor was supportive of the effort. There was discussion about what the city of Roswell developed and implemented as a result of this program. There was consensus among Council to move forward with the letter of intent.*

## 8. Review of the July 17, 2017 Mayor and Council Agenda

*Councilmember Corkey Welch said he would not be at the meeting on Monday, and asked if someone would make the motion for the rezoning in his ward. He said the only real opposition from the meetings regarding the zoning was from the people to the immediate north of the property, and the builder agreed to a landscape buffer there that he thinks will appease them. Councilmember Fennel said he would handle it in his absence.*

*Item A was for the approval of the transmittal of the comp plan.*

*Item B was a public hearing only, with no vote, on the rezoning and annexation for properties at the corner of Fontaine and East/West. Items B, C, and D were all related. Councilmember Ron Fennel said the neighborhood beside it, Oak Hills, was in favor of it. He said staff and P&Z approved the plans, with some modifications, except for one particular item of contention, being that one of the lots had a width of only 12 feet, and it would be the farthest reach Council has ever approved for such an accommodation. He said this is why staff recommended going from 15 homes to 14 homes, to eliminate that one small and awkward lot. Mr. Ken Suddreth said it*

wasn't an issue about density; it was an issue of shoehorning Lot 13 due to the waivers down to 12 feet. He said they wanted significant decreases to the lot size, which would be directly next to the detention pond, and he said he did not support it. He said if they had a plan that addressed that issue with 15 lots, that would be fine, however they have not contacted Community Development with further plan amendments since the P&Z meeting where this waiver was not granted. Councilmember Fennel said the developer has been told multiple times that this was an issue and would not be supported. Mr. Ken Suddreth said their plan for the 15 lots was beyond reason in respect to that particular lot. He said P&Z supported staff's recommendation of 14 lots and they asked for 5 variances, with staff recommending 3. Councilmember Wilkinson asked about the open space on the plan, and if that was common area for the development. Mr. Suddreth said it was open space for the community, in the center, right out their front door. There was discussion between City Attorney Scott Cochran and Mr. Ken Suddreth on procedurally how Council should make the motion and vote on this item, as it has multiple variances and staff is only recommending 3. Councilmember Corkey Welch asked if this was something Mr. Ken Suddreth should go back to the developer and speak with them about and encourage them to change the plan to 14 lots. Councilmember Fennel said he met with them today and again reiterated that the 15th lot was not going to work for precedent setting and other various reasons. Mr. Ken Suddreth said the developer has known from the beginning of this process that the 15 lots were a problem. There was more discussion about voting for the zoning with the plan, and that a vote for the 14 lots still was a vote for the submitted plan, which had 15 lots. There was discussion about tabling the item should the developer agree to reevaluate the plan and consider the 14 lots. Councilmember Fennel said they had three months to work with the plan and consider staff's recommendations, and they knew from the beginning there was a problem with the variances for the 15 lots. He reiterated that he was appreciative of their investment in Smyrna, but that Council had to maintain integrity and quality in the plans that are approved and the variances and precedents set.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked that Council go back to item A to discuss the Future Land Use Map. She said at the last public meeting, there were two areas that were Community Activity Center categories versus Mixed Use, and based on her involvement with the South Cobb Drive Corridor study, what was emphasized was that the Mixed Use was more appropriate for the intersections, but that they did not want to see that in between intersections. She said it has recently been changed to Mixed Use from Community Activity Center and she was not comfortable moving forward with that on Monday. She said what she understood from the other study is they saw that as potential development but not necessarily mixed use, and it is in the document. She thinks it needs to stay commercial rather than residential (which mixed-use would allow). Mr. Ken Suddreth began by saying that he and Councilmember Wilkinson had discussed this several times previously and that they had a professional disagreement about this issue, for the sake of transparency. Mr. Suddreth stated this was not a zoning map, it was just a guide. He said the zoning was GC as of today, and staff and the consultants feel that a lot of the corridor should be categorized as mixed use, which in essence expands the potential and brings in a residential component, but it is not a residential classification. It just allows a greater option for people to deal with their property, which South Cobb needs. He said this was a 2040 plan, and not the zoning map, and that is where he stands on the issue. Councilmember Fennel asked why someone would want to limit the options on this corridor, and Councilmember Wilkinson said the study on that corridor suggested more of an economic, commercial area, and she said she sees the potential there to have a lot of vibe to it. She referenced the area of Howell Mill Road and Huff Road with the older commercial spaces being revived, and Councilmember Fennel said that was mixed-use with all the residential around it as well.

Councilmember Fennel said the way he read the Guide Smyrna plan was to give the City the option to encourage the mixed use development rather than discourage it. Councilmember Doug Stoner said he had spoken with Councilmember Wilkinson about this issue, and he agreed with Mr. Ken Suddreth that they had opportunity to make changes before it is sent to the state. She said she was concerned about those parcels being developed into townhomes or apartments with very little retail, like what happened with Riverview Landing. Councilmember Stoner added that ARC would not be reviewing the land use map, they would be looking at the broader bigger items, and the City still had 60 days to continue dialog on these items, and that should not hinder Council's approval of the transmittal to ARC. Councilmember Wilkinson expressed the importance of keeping the local standing businesses in this area. Councilmember Welch moved the conversation forward to the next agenda item.

Item E was discussed briefly and Councilmember Welch said he was confident the developer satisfied the concerns of the neighboring subdivision. Councilmember Wilkinson asked about the staff memo on this item regarding a sidewalk, and City Planner Rusty Martin said it was rolled over from a previous zoning.

The next item reviewed was for the rezoning for two homes on Mann Street. Mr. Suddreth said it was two existing lots, recommended for approval by P&Z. He said one of the lots is unbuildable, so they are shifting the lots around and have to use the RAD classification to do so. City Planner Rusty Martin showed the lot lines on the site plan and explained the request to reconfigure the lots and be able to build two houses on them. He said Councilmember Anulewicz is supportive of it and they meet the setback requirements, except for in the front, where they are going down to 25 feet.

The next item was the approval of a subdivision in Forrest Hills on Pinetree Drive. Mr. Suddreth said there were no variances or rezonings associated with it. He said meetings had been held with no objections from residents. Councilmember Stoner said the price point for these homes was going to be around \$750K. He said the developer wanted to cut down as few trees as possible, and there would be an HOA, and it would be called The Grove at Forrest Hills.

The next item was a zoning amendment for a site plan in the Belmont development. Mr. Ken Suddreth pulled up a site plan and showed the area in question, Pod B. He said the area was supposed to be a 4 story senior housing product with deck parking, and Halpern is saying they have not been able to get any senior housing people interested in this. He said David Weekley homes and Halpern collaborated to come up with another residential plan, similar to what David Weekley has already done at Belmont. Mr. Suddreth said it meets minimum requirements and the issue is now to ask Council if they want to do this. He said there is a zoning plan that calls for it to be senior housing, so Council would be voting to remove that part for this new plan. He said the main issue here was whether or not Council wants senior housing on this site or not. There was discussion about the TAD implications. Mr. Suddreth said the amenities would be the pool across the street in the existing David Weekley development, and it would be one HOA. He said he was aware that Councilmember Anulewicz has spoken with them about this, but he was not aware of how she felt about it. Mr. Suddreth emphasized that the plan works as far as feasibility and meeting the City's requirements. Councilmember Blustein expressed concerns that the City is not prioritizing senior housing options, and that this location would have provided walkability for active seniors.

Councilmember Welch moved the discussion to the Formal Business agenda item, the new ordinance regarding no parking stipulations, which had been reviewed at a previous COW meeting.

## 9. Other Business

*Councilmember Andrea Blustein said she had hoped to be able to discuss with Council some lighting on the Spring Road Linear Park. She asked Mr. Larry Terry to share information on that proposal, which would light the multi-use trail from Carolyn Drive to Village Parkway. Mr. Larry Terry said it would be 40 lights, based on previous figures from other proposals, and it would cost about \$336K. Councilmember Norton asked if there would be a gap between Bell and Carolyn, and Councilmember Blustein said yes there would be a gap there and also one between Village Parkway and the CSX bridge. She said she is trying to get the blacked out section of the trail, where there are no lights, to be lit for people who are walking back and forth. She said she realized it could not be done overnight, but she wanted to introduce the topic. She said these are the smaller decorative light poles, the same ones along Spring Road (pedestrian, not street lights). She also mentioned that there were ten new lights put in at Spring and Atlanta Road, which Halpern paid for. She said she realized it would not be done overnight. Mr. Larry Terry said he asked Georgia Power to come up with a design so the City has a hard and fast number, and he added that Georgia Power's design is based on .7 to .8 foot candles, however Public Works Director Scott Stokes thinks they should be closer to 1.5 to 2 foot candles. Councilmember Blustein said she was just asking for Council's support on this if it ever comes up as a real conversation or possibility. Councilmember Wilkinson said in Savannah they use solar lights a lot, and that may be something the City looks into. Councilmember Norton clarified that she wanted the trail lit, and not the street, and she said yes.*

*Councilmember Wilkinson said she had several people comment about the new road, Glendale Place, but people think it looks really bad. Councilmember Fennel asked what that meant, and she said there was no landscaping plan. Mr. Larry Terry said there was no landscaping plan as part of the plan. He said Smyrna Grove had a concept that had landscaping in it in 2014, but it was not a part of the adopted design for Glendale Place. He added there was not a lot of room for landscaping. Councilmember Wilkinson said there was some room, but she knew the island was very thin. Mr. Larry Terry replied that there was no median - it was a concrete strip. He also said there was a 2 foot beauty strip on the sides of Glendale Place. Councilmember Wilkinson said there were a few large grassy areas on the sides, and Mr. Terry said he did not believe that was Right-of-Way and that was private property. Councilmember Wilkinson asked if Council wanted to do something, and said she had members of the DDA confront her about the area saying it did not look good.*

*Councilmember Stoner said he would be holding a Town Hall August 2nd concerning the Atlanta Road Development.*

*Councilmember Fennel said Mayor Bacon did a good job at the State of the City and thanked everyone involved. He added that the Smyrna Sharks were going to the state meet next Friday in Cumming. He also said the Smyrna Blue little league team was playing in the playoffs and going to the championship game for little league baseball.*

## 10. Adjournment

*Councilmember Welch declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.*