



City of Smyrna

A. Max Bacon City Hall
Council Chambers
2800 King Street SE
Smyrna, GA. 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Monday, August 1, 2022

10:00 AM

A. Max Bacon City Hall - Council Chambers

SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING - MILLAGE RATE PUBLIC HEARING

Roll Call

Present: 5 - Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Travis Lindley, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Mayor Pro Tem / Councilmember Tim Gould and Councilmember Lewis Wheaton

Absent: 3 - Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Latonia P. Hines and Councilmember Charles Welch

Also Present: 1 - Scott Cochran

Staff: 7 - Joe Bennett, Jill Head, Mike Hickenbottom, Dat Luu, Penny Mocer, Heather Peacon-Corn and Kristin Robinson

1. Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called to order the August 1, 2022 Special Called Council Meeting held at A. Max Bacon City Hall in Council Chambers at 10:00 AM.

2. Formal Business:

A. [2022-349](#)

Public Hearing for the 2022 Millage rate; there will be no vote on this item.

Ward / Citywide

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, presented the following background:

The FY23 budget approved by Council included revenue projections based on 8.99 mills. This is the second of three required public hearings before the formal adoption of the 8.99 millage rate. Tax information was received from Cobb County on June 23, 2022. Per the information provided, the City would need to roll back the millage rate to 8.048 to not advertise a tax increase. In comparison, last year's millage rollback was calculated at 8.468.

The official notice, and all required information, was posted in the Marietta Daily Journal on July 8, 2022. It was posted again on July 17, 2022. A press release was sent to the Marietta Daily Journal on July 7, 2022. It has also been posted on the City website. The first hearing was held on July 18, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Mayor Norton stated that property taxes in Smyrna have not increased since 1993 and approximately 50% of homeowners in Smyrna file homestead exemptions. He asked if those with homestead exemptions will see an increase in their taxes. Kristin Robinson, Assistant City Administrator/Finance Director, stated that those with a homestead exemption will not see a property tax increase. She further stated that the City is

required by law to advertise even though there is no raising of property taxes.

A public hearing was called. City Attorney Scott Cochran swore in two citizens who approached the podium.

Melissa Powell, 3580 Lee Street, stated that former Councilmember Wagner expressed he wished to hear from more people. Children are the reason why many citizens cannot comment or attend meetings to make public comment. She requested that the City implement a permanent system for those who cannot come to the meetings that allows them to comment virtually or otherwise. Ms. Powell further stated that Parks and Recreation have done a great job with new programs (for example, Daddy Daughter Dance, Mom Son Nerf Guns), but she feels the fees attached are too high for those activities. She would like to see more family events without fees attached.

Montserrat Knowlton, 1367 Poplar Pointe, stated she feels there is contradicting information regarding property taxes. She indicated that Ms. Robinson just said that there will be no increase, but the notice reads there will be an increase. Ms. Knowlton also mentioned the added fees for the street lights last year that were on the tax bills. She is unaware how that will be handled this year, but she stated she wants to file a formal complaint because she feels a fee is a choice whereas a tax imposed is not voluntary. Ms. Knowlton also stated that she does not see anything in the budget that addresses increasing spending for the general public, especially for those of advanced age.

Ms. Robinson stated that the language in the release is standard language required from the state. The City is not allowed to deviate from that language because it is Georgia State law. Ms. Robinson reiterated that if you own property and file a homestead exemption, there will be no increase in property taxes.

Mayor Norton addressed the comment about not doing anything for the citizens. He stated that at his State of the City address he listed several projects and events that have been organized specifically for the citizens.

3. Citizen Input:

4. Adjournment:

Mayor Derek Norton adjourned the August 1, 2022 Special Called Council Meeting at 10:11 AM.