



# City of Smyrna

A. Max Bacon City Hall  
2800 King Street  
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

## Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole Work Session

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Thursday, December 2, 2021

6:00 PM

A. Max Bacon City Hall - HR Training Room

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### Roll Call

**Present** 8 - Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Travis Lindley, Councilmember Austin Wagner, Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Mayor pro tem / Councilmember Tim Gould, and Councilmember Lewis Wheaton

**Also Present** 1 - Scott Cochran

**Staff** 12 - Joe Bennett, Penny Mocer, Jennifer Bennett, Dat Luu, Heather Peacon-Corn, Frank Martin, Russell Martin, Enoch Serna, Roy Acree, Patrick Quigley, Paul Osburn, and Andrea Worthy

### 1. Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

### 2. New Business

#### A. [COW21-88](#) MSPLOST Update - Drew Raessler, Cobb DOT Director

Item A. COW21-88 MSPLOST Update - Drew Raessler, Director of Cobb County Department of Transportation, presented the following:

Comprehensive Transportation Plan: Required by the Atlanta Regional Commission

- \* Understanding today's travel patterns and transportation infrastructure condition
- \* Determining the community's transportation needs today and in the future
- \* Developing projects and policies to address the transportation needs of Cobb communities

Universe of Projects:

- \* Roadway
  - Roadway capacity
  - Grade separation
  - Interchange improvements
  - Operations improvements
  - New roadways/connections
  - Realignments
  - Intersections
- \* Active Transportation
  - Bicycle facilities
  - Pedestrian facilities
  - Trails
- \* Transit
  - Local

- High capacity
- Stops
- Routes
- Maintenance facilities
- Park & Rides
- Transfer centers
- \* Alternate Evaluation/Policy Decision
  - Asset management
  - Bridges
  - Drainage/maintenance
  - Freight
  - Parking
  - Emerging technologies
  - Intelligent transportation systems (ITS)
  - Micromobility
  - Policies
  - Studies

Funding Options:

- \* Local Funding Opportunities to Consider
  - Existing: Countywide SPLOST, General Fund
  - Potential: Mobility SPLOST - Surface Transportation (HB 170) and Transit (HB 930)

Mobility SPLOST Scenarios Being Considered

- \* Surface Transportation (differing funding levels)
  - 5-year, 1 penny
  - 5-year, 1/2 penny
  - 5-year, 1/4 penny
- \* Transit (differing strategies, same funding levels):
  - Balanced scenario, from the CTP
  - Coverage scenario
  - Productivity scenario, including Heavy Rail

With 1 penny, they are able to do a lot of large projects. 1/2 penny projects are smaller.

What can a transit system look like?

- Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) - High speed and operates on fully grade separated rail lines
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - Rubber-tire vehicles in primarily dedicated lanes; enhanced stations, queue jumper lanes and transit signal priority, station every 1/2 - 1 mile
- Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) - Rubber-tire vehicles in some dedicated lanes or queue jumper lanes with transit signal priority; stations 1/4 to 1/3 mile
- Local Bus - Mixed flow traffic, shared right-of-way, stops every 1/2 miles
- Commuter Bus - Rubber-tire coach vehicles; serves long-distance, commute flow' limited stops
- On-Demand Service - Demand responsive bus/shuttle; operates in a defined geographic area without fixed routes

Councilmember Wheaton stated that the Circulator Task Force has had conversations about some of these micro-transit options as well. Councilmember Wilkinson asked specifically about S Cobb Drive. Mr. Raessler stated that at this point there are no specifics. This is more of an illustrative presentation to see what could potentially happen over a 30-year plan and project. Joe Bennett, City Administrator, stated that the City has been in contact with Cobb County and they are familiar with the plan for S

Cobb Drive.

Mr. Raessler stated that they have done a number of town halls, met with many staff from different cities, including Smyrna. They will be meeting with the Board over the next few weeks to really narrow down whether or not the Board wants to proceed with that November 2022 referendum. If they move forward with the 2022 referendum, everything will have to move very quickly - a lot will have to get done between now and June 2022. He stated that the Commissioners would certainly encourage elected officials to give any thoughts and recommendations.

**B. [COW21-97](#)**

**Proposed Brewery Discussion**

**Item B. COW21-97 Proposed Brewery Discussion**

City of Suwanee, GA City Manager Marty Allen and Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson were present to discuss their experience with Stillfire, their challenges, etc. They have been in partnership with Stillfire for about 3 1/2 years. Stillfire has delivered on their promises, and it has been an asset to the community. He asked if there were specific concerns or questions from the Mayor and Council he could address.

Mayor Norton asked that they address the structure of the land/building lease/sale deal, the partnership with the community and Stillfire, and address the concerns about DUIs, etc.

Mr. Allen: The building that Stillfire went into was the former fire station.

- The first agreement was that they would lease the building from the city for a period of time, then after that time they would have the right to purchase the building from the city. The city did not have funding to add to or renovate the building. Stillfire funded the tenant improvements. The city was able to offer free rent for a period of time - Stillfire first gets free rent, then they pay a negotiated rent for a pre-determined period of time, then they purchase the building from the city at the appropriate time. It was a lease with an option to purchase.
- To help protect the city from the unknowns, they placed covenants to restrict the types of businesses it could be in the future, and they added a first right of refusal so the city could purchase the site back if Stillfire were to close, go out of business, or attempt to sell to a business the city did not think was good for the area.
- There are series of easements that were granted for utilities and parking. Stillfire sits among their municipal complex area. The city shares parking with Stillfire. The city uses the parking during normal business hours, and patrons of Stillfire use it after business hours. It has worked really well.
- There is a license agreement in reference to the park next to the brewery. They formalized that Stillfire can take beer to the park, their patrons and patrons' children can use the park, but in exchange Stillfire has to maintain the trash. The park belongs to the city, it is used by the community, but they maintain the trash because much of the trash is from the brewery.

Mayor Norton stated that Smyrna's plans include having a park as well with a playground, stage, and a dog-friendly area.

Mr. Allen: Suwanee had very similar concerns and unknowns. This is not a bar. It's a family-friendly, "third place" that is enjoyed by many. He stated that there have been more calls about the Taco Bell than Stillfire. Suwanee receives about half the phone calls about Stillfire than their Taco Mac gets. It has been a clean and smooth operation.

Mayor Norton asked about food trucks and any other concerns that go along with food trucks.

Mr. Allen: Suwanee really wanted it to be a restaurant, but with the food trucks, it has worked out quite well. The variety is great, and food trucks bring people to the area that would not normally come there because food trucks have a following. Mr. Allen stated that he himself was someone that was disappointed that Stillfire did not have a restaurant component. But as he has seen how it works, he realized that a restaurant is a completely different place - there is a formality in a restaurant that eliminates some socialization. The Stillfire concept allows mobility and an informality that supports easy socialization and movement. For example, one can move from table to table as the atmosphere changes throughout the day. Ms. Brinson stated that Stillfire is very particular about which food trucks come, they make sure that they show up and that they are good quality. She stated that it adds value to the downtown area.

Mayor Norton asked what has it meant to their economic impact. Ms. Brinson stated that they have not seen a true sense of their success because they opened just before the pandemic, and there has been a years-long construction project on Buford Highway that has impacted the area. Mr. Allen stated that anecdotally he knows that other businesses have come to Suwanee and invested in the area because of the brewery.

Councilmember Welch asked how many residential areas are nearby. Mr. Allen stated that there are residents within 100 yards in most directions. Mr. Welch asked them to discuss the buy-back option in further detail. Mr. Allen explained that if Stillfire were approached by another business who wanted to purchase that establishment, Stillfire would have to first approach the Suwanee DDA and offer the same deal to them. The DDA has right of first refusal. There is a lease in place, they pay rent, and at some point they can purchase it from the City. There is an established floor price and ceiling price. The space cannot be sublet.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if the Suwanee facility has an event space. Mr. Allen stated that they have the ability to have event space, but there is not a dedicated event space. Ms. Brinson stated that Stillfire coordinates with the city's schedule so as to not create event conflicts. Ms. Brinson expressed that this is an added presence that has people wanting to come to the area more. The working relationship has been very pleasing. Mayor Norton asked about odors emitted, truck deliveries and traffic, safety concerns. Mr. Allen and Ms. Brinson stated they have not had one call concerning those issues. None of the concerns have materialized because the owners are not interested in having those issues themselves. Councilmember Wheaton asked if there were any concerns from other established businesses. Ms. Brinson stated there were no concerns from other businesses. Councilmember Welch stated that the difference between Suwanee and Smyrna is that Suwanee had an old building that Stillfire could go into. The land in question in Smyrna is one of the last pieces of vacant land. He stated he does not want to place a brewery in front of the Community Center. Councilmember Wilkinson expressed a concern that the shared parking would be with the Community Center which often has after hours events. Mr. Allen stated that people will park far away and walk to a brewery. Ms. Brinson stated that this is more of an amenity. Councilmember Welch stated he likes the brewery, he just does not like the location.

Aaron Bisges from Stillfire Brewery stated that the base square footage is 12,000 sq ft. The way it becomes 24,000 sq ft is because the building will have three floors. This is

not a production facility. The type of trucks for deliveries, etc. are box trucks that may come in twice as often as those that come through Suwanee. There will not be 18-wheeler trucks. Mr. Bisges also expressed that there will likely be only two silos. One silo holds the grain, the second silo would automate the process of getting the grain from the first silo into trucks to be sent to farms for fertilizer and feed. The silos will be sealed, so there will be no emanating odor. Mr. Bisges stated he wants to work with the Smyrna Arts and Culture Task Force to be able to place a beautiful mural on the silos. Councilmember Welch asked about the funding. Mr. Bisges stated that along with him, there are two couples - Mr. Bisges' Aunt and Uncle - and a local couple who are marketers and started the Suwanee magazine.

Councilmember Wheaton asked for details of the business model and to give a sense of what their production expectations are. Mr. Bisges stated that in 2021 they produced and sold 1,500 barrels of beer. They sold 1,100 barrels on-site and sold 400 in distribution. They are considered a microbrewery. He expects the ratio to remain the same in Smyrna. Mr. Bisges stated he is not a restaurateur. Suwanee fought them hard and wanted them to be a brewpub or restaurant. But he was able to ask them to let him try it as a brewery for a time with the food trucks to see if it could be a success, and it has been a huge success. This business model provides flexibility. There is no formality; it is casual and communal.

C. [COW21-94](#)

Discussion regarding acceptance of the GEFA Solar Resiliency Program Grant - IT Asst. Director, Dat Luu.

Dat Luu, Assistant Director of IT, presented the following information:

GEFA is offering phase three of the Solar Resiliency program to increase resiliency for critical facilities in communities across Georgia. This program is offered to government entities, including cities, counties, K-12 schools, and state agencies. Phase three will incentivize the installation of solar PV and backup batteries at critical facilities. GEFA will reimburse selected applicants for up to 85% of the balance of backup battery and solar PV costs, up to \$200,000, for one installation per selected applicant. Applicants that already have solar PV installed onsite or who are entering into a third-party financing arrangement for solar (under HB 57, Solar Power Free-Market Financing Act of 2015), are eligible for reimbursement of 30% of backup battery system costs, up to \$30,000.

GEFA opened a competitive application process. Applications were evaluated based on their positive impact to the community's critical facility resilience. Disadvantaged communities were given extra points in the scoring process, based on the community's median income, population growth, and unemployment rates. Each entity may only submit one application. Please note: Applicants must be a Georgia city, county, registered local government authority, K-12 school, or state government entity. Only one study per community/applicant will be funded. The funding is provided by the U.S. DOE. Critical facilities can vary from community to community, but often include transportation, water, energy, and communications. Examples include public safety buildings, water and wastewater facilities, IT/data centers, healthcare/public health facilities, emergency management offices, government facilities, transportation systems, shelters, and community hubs. The applicant must include a clear description of the facility, and state why it is critical to the community during an emergency.

Johnson Controls submitted an application on Smyrna's behalf. It was determined that the Community Center was the best facility for this program. It is the city's facility

where citizens gather for health and fitness activities. There are provisions for public meeting rooms and a working kitchen. It is the desire of the city to make the Community Center more resilient and be able to classify it as an emergency shelter for citizens during major weather events or loss of power in the community. Today the facility cannot be classified as an emergency shelter do to the lack of backup power. By receiving a solar grant, Smyrna will configure one of the wings of the building to be an emergency shelter. The gymnasium and restrooms will provide a safe gathering place for our citizens in time of need. We anticipate that solar backup power will allow for a portion of the building to be a shelter. In receiving this grant, the Community Center will be able to install solar panels and batteries with reimbursement at 75% of the cost. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$235,000.00 which would mean Smyrna would come out of pocket totaling around \$58,750.00. Selected applicants will be reimbursed after the installation is complete. All applicants must complete installation and invoice GEFA by September 30, 2022. GEFA will not reimburse for installations that are in process prior to selection.

There is a contract between Smyrna and Johnson Controls. If the City chooses not to work with them, a penalty of \$4,500.00 will be assessed, regardless of accepting the grant. Chief Acree is fully in support of this project. Richard Garland, Parks and Recreation Director, expressed concerns about installing solar panels on the roof that was recently installed. The vendor stated they use S5 clamps. There is no drilling. They would be installed on the large gym side of the Community Center on the west side. Councilmember Welch expressed concerns about the battery life. Chief Acree stated that the Community Center is to be viewed and designated as a local emergency shelter, not a regional shelter. This would be a short-term, transitional shelter.

D. [COW21-95](#)

Presentation of Website Update - Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett / IT Asst Director Dat Luu.

Item D. COW21-95 Presentation of Website Update - Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett / IT Ass. Director Dat Luu

Dat Luu introduced Enoch Serna, Website Administrator. Dat Luu and Jennifer Bennett presented the following:

Three Things to Look For:

- 1) It's Useful
  - The content should fulfill a direct user need
- 2) It's Usable
  - The site is intuitive and easy to use
- 3) It's Desirable
  - Users enjoy using it

The team took community surveys and performed analytics.

The Community Survey Conclusions:

- Most used are Smyrna residents.
- Users reported the difficulty of site's navigation, primarily on the megameu. They have found the search tool to be helpful.
- Top reasons for visiting: Events, Trash Schedule, Bill Pay, Library info, Council Agendas, and News.
- Users click on the image carousel feature.

Most Popular Links:

- Both MOBILE and DESKTOP users utilize the search bar
- WATER / SEWER (UTILITY) BILL most clicked
- PARKS & REC and UTILITIES are 2nd and 3rd in mobile.
- Most hovered Main Navigation Menu "I Want to" and "Services"
- Most users scroll to bottom for "Contact Us" link (staff directory)

Heatmap Clicks:

- Search Bar
- Utilities
- Employment Opportunities
- Library
- Parks
- Events

Top Wireframe:

- Simplified Menu
- Search Bar Centered
- Photo Slider (HERO)
- Top 5 Hyperlinks
- Services

Mid Wireframe:

- Top 3-5 main events
- Events & Meetings Calendar
- News (What's Happening)

Bottom Wireframe:

- Widget - Address Lookup
  - \* Ward
  - \* Trash Schedule
  - \* Voting Location
- Newsletter signup
- Bottom Footer

Technology Committee Review - They reviewed the proposed wireframe and approved it on 11/15/2021.

Next Steps:

- We will sign off on the wireframe and move in the visual design phase.
- Development occurs around the beginning of 2022.
- Anticipated Go Live date will be in May of 2022.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if the multiple steps that it currently takes to get to agendas and minutes will be easier going forward. Ms. Bennett stated that they will look at those issues and also launch a test site for staff to use and critique.

Mr. Luu stated that the City needs to be careful about placing images on the website because the website cannot search words within images.

Councilmember Wagner asked what the internal pages will look like. Ms. Bennett stated there is a pattern it follows. There will be more robust tools. The design phase will handle the internal pages, and during these processes the Mayor and Council will be kept up-to-date as they move through these phases.

Discussion took place concerning the search bar and how it pulls from Google now versus how it will be integrated and more useful in the new design. Joe Bennett, City Administrator, stated that the receptionists are currently writing down questions that are often asked when they receive phone calls so they can use that information to include in the Frequently Asked Questions portion of the website.

E. [CON2021-15](#)

Authorization to approve the purchase of new Rubrik backup system from PC Solutions & Integration, Inc. (4937 SW 75th Ave, Miami, FL 33155 · (305) 667-0633) in the amount of \$113,665.55 (NCPA cooperative 01-96) with an annual maintenance fee of \$31,000.00 and authorize the Mayor to sign and execute all related documents.

**Ward / City Wide**

Dat Luu, Asst. Director IT, presented the following:

Our file server has grown in capacity over the years, which is normal and our new Dell servers can handle the storage growth (we still have about 40TB of free space left).

Situation:

The problem we are running into now is that our backup systems have run out of space due to the amount of data that has accumulated. We were hoping that we could hold off on requesting a new backup system until next budget year, but we are no longer able to back up the file server because of the storage space issue on the backup system. This means our network drives (Z drives and other department file shares) have not been backed up since last week. If we run into a situation where the file server becomes corrupted or a ransomware attack occurs, we would only have the backups from last week (11/1/2021) to restore to our production servers. All new data after last week would be lost.

ThinkGard is proposing upgrading our appliance at no cost but the annual cost would go up significantly. The IT department has been exploring new technology that is considered next generation backup solutions and we came across Rubrik. Our recommendation is to move to Rubrik because of the annual cost savings and new feature sets that we are receiving that will greatly improve our cybersecurity posture.

Current Backup Provider - ThinkGard (Budgeted)

- Backup and Restore Services (MSP) - \$50,976.00 per year
- The minimum increase to fix our situation would make backup services \$61,524 per year
- Office 365 Backup (not yet implemented, but budgeted) - \$14,832.00 per year
- Total cost of annual services for ThinkGard services after upgrading the backup appliance - \$76,356 per year

Top reasons for the decision

- Annual cost savings
  - o ThinkGard Backup Services - \$76,356 per year
  - o Rubrik Backup Subscription and Azure Cloud Backup - \$31,000 per year
- ThinkGard currently does not backup all of our virtual servers due to capacity. The Rubrik system has enough space to backup all of our virtual servers.
- Rubrik integrates with our Hyper-V infrastructure with APIs. This results in faster backups and restores.
- Immutable Backup System - There is no way to alter or delete the backups on the Rubrik system.



Mayor Norton stated that is everyone is okay with this, it will be added to the agenda.

### 3. Review of the December 6, 2021 Mayor and Council Agenda

#### A. [COW21-96](#) Review of the December 6, 2021 Mayor and Council Meeting Agenda.

Item 4A. Replacing existing wall mural at Ben's Crab. Mayor Norton stated that he spoke to the owner and expressed that the owner is very excited and nearly ready to open, and any support they can get from the City will be appreciated.

Item 6A & B. Frank Martin, Public Works Director, discussed the change orders for the Windy Hill project. The first is a concrete cap. This prevents the roadway from collapsing. The second is undercutting and stabilization work.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if these are increases in the amounts already approved. Mr. Martin confirmed that these are increases from the original which is why there is a change order.

Item 6C. Discussion took place earlier in the meeting.

Items 6D-N. These are several appointments to the different boards. Councilmember Wheaton asked if the reappointments could be placed under the consent agenda. City Attorney Scott Cochran stated that these reappointments can be placed under consent. Mayor Norton concurred and stated Items D-N on the draft Mayor and Council agenda be moved under the consent agenda.

No discussion took place about the consent agenda.

### 4. Other Business (as needed)

Chief Roy Acree discussed the Omicron variant of Covid-19. It was discovered a month ago in South Africa. There are currently just over 400 cases worldwide. The first US case was discovered. There are more variants coming. Variants become more transmissible but also less lethal. There could be a fifth spike.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if the vaccines are still effective. Chief Acree stated that there are boosters available, and it is suggested people get the booster.

Dat Luu, Asst. Director IT, updated the Mayor and Council about SeeClickFix. Enoch Serna is going to be the technical lead on this oversight. This will replace eGov. Mr. Serna is taking the information from eGov and importing it into SeeClickFix.

Mayor Norton reminded Council that the pre-council meeting will begin at 6:00 PM on Monday, not 6:30 PM, because they are going to go into executive session to discuss the 150th Birthday Celebration.

#### A. [COW21-61](#) City Administrator's Project Review / Updates.

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, discussed the following:

He had a meeting with Bill Bruton, City Manager from Marietta, to discuss sanitation. Smyrna is still struggling with personnel and truck drivers despite the pay increase that

was implemented recently. Marietta has been using temporary workers for twelve years, but the problem is that everyone is pulling from the same pool of temporary workers. Some days Marietta will get more, and other days Smyrna will get more. Marietta is also attempting to streamline their operational models. More recommendations and suggestions will be forthcoming as they work through these issues.

Paving has begun - Campbell Road is complete, but striping still needs to be done. Hawthorne Road will start Monday. They will move from Hawthorne to North Cooper Lake.

A new design for the flags was passed out to Mayor and Council. They are still tweaking the language.

Penny Mocer, Deputy City Administrator, discussed the following:

The new bus shelters are coming in. The first one is next to the Best Buy, another is by Zaxby's. The old ones are going to be taken to public works and rehabbed and replaced.

Ms. Mocer thanked those who were able to sign up for the Rebuilding Together Atlanta event this past Saturday when they assisted a Smyrna resident and Veteran in cleaning up his home and land. She encouraged everyone to sign up to participate in the next event. Signing up enables them to provide enough lunches, and there is a waiver that needs to be signed.

**5. Executive Session (as needed)**

**6. Adjournment**

Mayor Derek Norton adjourned the December 2, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:14 PM.