

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 14, 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 Cochran (City Attorney), Elsa Thompson (Administrative Services Coordinator), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to the Mayor & Council), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Management Fellow), Scott Stokes (Public Works Director), Kristin Robins (Finance Director), Jered Sigmon (Budget Officer)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering)

2. Call to Order

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

3. Proposed FY19 Budget

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones called the Finance Department to come forward.

Finance Director Kristin Robinson addressed the budget and advised that the contingency fund rose to \$7,600 as opposed to the \$215 that was announced at the prior Committee of the Whole meeting. She also advised that there was a potential land acquisition that may be taking place in 2019 therefore the City needed to budget for it and allocate use of the surplus fund for the expense because there was not enough contingency funds available.

Mayor Bacon inquired why the funds could not be taken from the Fiscal Year 18 budget.

Ms. Robinson stated the reason was that it was not planned for the acquisition to happen prior to July 1st, the expiration of the 2018 fiscal year budget.

Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that a meeting regarding the finalization had not happened yet.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that an Executive Session had been scheduled to take place later in the meeting to discuss the potential land acquisition.

Ms. Robinson advised that nothing else in the budget had changed from the previous meeting.

Mayor Bacon asked Mr. Fennel if there was anything he would like to add.

Mr. Fennel advised that the only questions he'd received regarding the budget were from Councilmember Susan Wilkinson regarding the funds allocated for the museum. Mr. Fennel noted that he was fine with all of the expenditures in the budget including the expense for the museum.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson stated that she felt that Council was prematurely allocating funds for renovations of the museum. She advised that some of the items

were not relevant to Smyrna and had to go through a process of contacting the owners to return them; she felt that it was too big of a process. Ms. Wilkinson was also concerned about where the items would be stored once the process of renovating the museum began; she was advised that they would be downstairs in the museum.

Mayor Bacon stated that he was under the impression that most of the items' owners' had already been contacted.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn inquired how the funds for the museum would be used and if it was possible to use a portion of the funds elsewhere. She stated that lighting was needed at the park in Councilmember Andrea Blustein's Ward.

Mayor Bacon stated that he did not understand why partial funds would be used elsewhere and asked Ms. Blackburn how she could be requesting lighting in a park when a discussion had not been had about it before.

Ms. Blackburn stated that she thought the lights had been discussed prior. Ms. Blackburn also addressed how the funds would be utilized for the cemeteries the City maintained.

Councilmember Corkey Welch stated that the items had to be moved from the upstairs of the museum because it was in desperate need of renovation, mainly flooring issues.

Ms. Wilkinson stated that she still felt that some of the purchases for the museum were premature. She noted that the lighting issue at the park was important and that another priority should also be, hiring an animal control officer.

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews advised that if the timeline for the museum renovations rolled into the 2020 fiscal year budget, it could be broken up into phases however the policy team advised that when the renovations are not done in mass quantities it increases the overall costs.

Ms. Blackburn inquired if that applied to the cemeteries as well. Mr. Andrews advised that the cemeteries were separate.

Ms. Blackburn stated her thoughts on the cemeteries costs and asked if staff could compare the costs of the revitalization of Hawthorne Cemetery and Daniel Cemetery. She inquired if any funds could be used for the lights.

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that they would get the cost comparison information to her.

Mayor Bacon advised that no funds would be allocated towards the lighting because the funds could come from SPLOST funding, not from the general fund budget.

Mr. Fennel stated that it would be a good discussion to have during their SPLOST update meeting.

Ms. Robinson advised that the numbers used in the budget for the revitalization of the cemeteries was based on the \$18,000 it took to complete Smyrna Cemetery.

There was a brief discussion about the cemeteries. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Bud McCullough had given the City a lot of information about Hawthorne Cemetery and

that they would relay it to the young woman handling the cemetery revitalizations.

Ms. Robinson clarified that the land acquisition would be added to budget; the museum allocation would remain the same and inquired if there was anything that she needed to change on the budget.

There were no changes.

4. Review of the June 18, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Bacon read the Mayor and Council Agenda. Ms. Saddler Jones addressed Item 3A. She advised that the awards had been discussed at the previous Committee of the Whole meeting, she gave a brief summary of how the process took place and advised and that the Mayor's suggestion of including a monetary gift was also added.

Mayor Bacon inquired what the difference was in the names of the awards – "City of Smyrna Award for Ongoing Excellence in Customer Service" and the "Jonquil Award for Service Excellence in Action".

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that although staff created two different titles, both were customer service awards. She noted that Mike Hickenbottom's award was for the service he provided daily while Takerra Brown's award stemmed from an isolated incident where she saved a woman's life that called into 911.

Mayor Bacon stated that the City previously had Employees of the Quarter and Lifesaver Awards and asked if the new awards replaced them. He noted that they had not been distributed in a long time.

Ms. Saddler Jones stated that they had not had any awards since she started with the City which was in 2009.

Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired if the Human Resources Department managed the awards and stated that if so, he had not seen them either.

Mayor Bacon stated that the Lifesaver award was given out by Public Safety to an individual that saved someone's life.

Ms. Saddler Jones stated that the "Jonquil Award for Service in Excellence in Action" could be given to other employees (not just public safety staff) that had gone above and beyond in different ways and would like to keep the awards separate.

Mr. Fennel inquired if both of the awards were service awards and if the distribution of the awards would be done on a consistent basis.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the awards would be given out quarterly. She stated that there was a nomination process; a committee of staff members, no department heads, meet quarterly to evaluate/ review the nominated individuals.

Council and staff continued to discuss the different awards and their significance.

Mayor Bacon continued reading the agenda items.

Community Development Director Ken Suddreth addressed Item 4B regarding updating the City's map. Mr. Suddreth advised that this item was a "housekeeping issue" and

noted that every time the City made a change, the Community Development Department would “unofficially” change their zoning map. He stated that the request was for the “official” zoning map that could be used in court if need be. He advised that if it was not updated and someone were to request it, staff would have to research documents dating back to 2013 and provide all of the amendments that had been done. Mr. Suddreth stated that the official zoning map resides in the City Clerk’s office and that he would be bringing this item forward annually.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if the map on the wall upstairs was up to date. Mr. Suddreth advised that it was.

Mr. Suddreth addressed Item 4C. He advised that the item was reference 3 lots being turned into 4 with an existing home already on the site. The lots are compatible with a development that Council had approved approximately 10 years prior.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the Planning and Zoning Board and staff had recommended passing this item. Mr. Suddreth advised that they did.

Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired about the square footage. Mr. Suddreth advised that depending on the zoning classification, it was either 1,800 or 2,000.

Mayor Bacon stated that he hoped that all of the changes had been addressed in the site plan and wanted to be sure there would not be any surprises later.

Mayor Bacon read Item 4D. Mr. Suddreth advised that staff had requested changes to this item that the applicant complied with and did not penalize the applicant since it was the City requesting the changes. Mr. Suddreth then gave an overview of the project.

There was a lengthy discussion between Council and staff about the proposed project in Item 4D.

Councilmember Derek Norton advised that there were 1 or 2 constituents may show up at the Council meeting due to them having an issue with this site and noted that they would prefer to see restaurants built there.

Mayor Bacon continued reading the agenda. He inquired where the funds for Item 8D, Community Center Flooring replacement, would be coming from. Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland advised that it would be funded by CDBG (Community Development Block Grant).

Mayor Bacon asked if any other items needed to be added to the agenda. There were no added items.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired what areas of the Community Development Center would be getting the new flooring. Mr. Garland advised that Administrative wing would receive the new flooring and noted that all of the carpet would be replaced except in the locker rooms since a locker room renovation was added to next year’s budget.

Councilmember Corkey Welch expressed concerns that the new carpet would be damaged once they began on the locker room renovations.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the special election results should be approved.

Councilmember Ron Fennel advised that the County had already done that through

their Elections office.

Mayor Bacon stated that the City had always approved the election results also.

City Clerk Terri Graham advised that she would add the item to the agenda.

5. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones gave an update regarding on the construction taking place at Fire Station #2. She advised that it should be complete by the end of July and that a grand opening my take place in August. Mayor Bacon stated that he believed the opening should be moved to September/October; Councilmembers Corkey Welch and Ron Fennel agreed.

Ms. Saddler Jones stated that Administration had been meeting with the Human Resources Director, Public Works Director, Fire Chief and Police Chief to make improvements in regards to vehicle and equipment accidents. She advised that anyone who drives a City vehicle, including herself, would be participating in Driver Training Courses starting in late July or early August. She asked Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews to provide more insight. Mr. Andrews advised that the team was implementing a point system that would streamline the disciplinary process so that it would be "more uniform across the board". He also noted that the Safety Committee would be meeting on a more regular basis.

Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that he would like to see better tracking of the incidents so that the City could be more transparent when asked for specific information regarding the accidents.

Councilmember Derek Norton inquired if the policies adopted by Council in 2012 would be included in the new policies. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that staff would be looking to consolidate some of the policies.

Mayor Bacon stated that the policies that were adopted in 2012 should be implemented with the new policies.

Mr. Fennel expressed his concerns about Safety Committee members not showing up to in the past. He stated that he was hoping to see a decrease in insurance premiums.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired about an incident with a City garbage truck that took place a few weeks back. Public Works Director Scott Stokes advised that the brakes in the truck needed adjustment, the accident was the driver's fault and he was being punished.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that new outdoor lighting had been installed at the Reed House on June 13, 2018 and that the lighting poles would be turned on daily from dusk until 12:30am.

Mayor Bacon inquired when the lights on Concord Road would be replaced. Mr. Stokes advised that Georgia Power had been notified and staff sent them photos. He noted that Georgia Power advised that they would be replacing certain lights in July. Mr. Norton told Mr. Stokes to also notify Georgia Power of the outage on Spring Road. Mr. Stokes advised that he would.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the Atlanta Braves would be celebrating local heroes on Saturday, June 16, 2018 at the SunTrust Stadium. Some of the City's police

officers and firefighters would be participating and SFD would also be doing the honor guard. She noted that the Alive after 5 should have taken place earlier in the day.

Ms. Saddler Jones reminded Council and staff of Keep Smyrna Beautiful Assistant Director Virginia Davis' Farewell Celebration that was taking place on Wednesday, June 27, 2018 at Brawner Hall. She advised that she may not be able to attend the celebration due to the GMA Conference that she would be attending in Savannah.

Ms. Saddler Jones asked ICMA Fellow Ashley Youmans to give Council and staff information about the Smyrna Youth Council. Ms. Youmans' advised that an Intern from Fort Campbell High School had designed the flyer that she had distributed earlier in the meeting and noted that the Intern had done a really good job. She stated that the City would be accepting applications until mid-September and planned to have approximately 8 to 25 Smyrna-area high schoolers participate in the youth council. They will meet twice per month starting in October until the end of the school year to be the youthful voice of the City.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired how they had decided on the grade point average advertised on the flyer. Mr. Andrews advised that they had researched other cities and that it was the average number they found. After a brief discussion on the Smyrna Youth Council; Council and key staff went into an Executive session.

6. Other Business

Councilmembers Corkey Welch and Ron Fennel advised that he would not be present at the July 16th Council meeting.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein addressed her concerns about the possible need to add an Animal Control Officer to City staff. She spoke of an incident that she witnessed at a park where a 95 year old woman was bitten in her face by a loose dog. She stated that she contacted County Animal Control about the incident however they advised that she had to guarantee that the dog would be outside when they arrived which she felt was difficult to do.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson advised that she had received a call earlier in the day from a woman who stated that she was out walking her dog, on a leash, when she was knocked over by another dog her dog was also bitten by the loose do who was not on a leash. She stated that the woman wanted to know what the City could do to enforce the ordinance. Ms. Wilkinson stated that Cobb County could not enforce the City's ordinances; she clarified that statement with City Attorney Scott Cochran who advised that the ordinances should be the same. Ms. Wilkinson also advised that she heard that Cobb County would be doing away with their Animal Control Officers; City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that she would contact the County Manager to get clarification.

Mr. Cochran advised that when incidents get that severe the Police or City Marshalls should be called.

Ms. Saddler Jones asked Ms. Wilkinson if she could get the address for the woman who was knocked over by the dog who bit her dog so that they could send the police over to investigate.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn asked that staff look into getting emails for the Planning and Zoning Committee; Assistant City Administrator advised that it was

already in the works. Ms. Blackburn felt that it was unfair that the Planning and Zoning Committee's members personal emails and phone numbers had been posted to the public. She noted that she had received complaints that they had been receiving unnecessary emails and phone calls.

Councilmember Derek Norton advised that he only posted their emails, not their phone numbers on social media. Mr. Norton advised that he had taken them down after he realized that it was an issue.

Mayor Bacon advised that Community Development Director Ken Suddreth advised him that personal emails had been given out to the public before. He noted that any information given to the City was public.

Mr. Andrews advised that he would be sure to contact IT for a status on the City emails for the Planning and Zoning Committee.

Ms. Wilkinson inquired why the rolling calendar on the City site does not reflect the Planning and Zoning meetings but shows the next two or three Council Meetings. Ms. Wilkinson advised that Citizens have advised her that there is a Councilmember making faces whenever she spoke at meetings; she noted that she felt that it was disrespectful and stated that she would like to nominate Andrea Blustein for Mayor Pro Tem.

Mr. Andrews advised that there was a blight issue at a home on Doeskin, in case there were any calls. He noted that the homeowner was given a specific amount of time to complete the items however he was not finished and was still working on the issues with the property. He noted that Parks and Recreation Commission had a meeting earlier in the week and 5 of the 8 representatives were present. Mr. Andrews thanked Council for speaking to their representatives to make that possible.

City Clerk Terri Graham advised that she emailed campaign documents to Council and advised of their due dates. She noted that she handed out a flyer which contained upcoming election information about the precincts locations and dates to vote. Ms. Graham spoke about the Brunch Bill and noted that a resolution had been drafted and forwarded to the City Attorney. She advised Council that it needed to be discussed as it would be voted on in the upcoming election. She reminded Council about repealing the City's Hands-Free ordinance since the State's Hands-Free ordinance would go into effect July 1st.

City Attorney Scott Cochran stated that he was approaching his 20 years with the City and commended the Councilmembers for how well they have worked together. He stated that he hopes that it continues.

7. Executive Session - Real Estate Acquisition

The Committee of the Whole meeting went into Executive Session at 7:05pm.

Councilmember Ron Fennel made a motion that the meeting go into an Executive Session to discuss the acquisition of a property; seconded by Councilmember Maryline Blackburn.

The vote was carried unanimously by all Councilmembers present.

8. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.