

# **City of Smyrna**

*2800 King Street  
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, August 30, 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 Andrews (Asst. City Administrator), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to Mayor & Council), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Management Fellow), Maxwell Ruppensburg (Special Project Coordinator), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations Director), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Ken Suddreth (Community Development Director), Rusty Martin (Senior Planner), Roy Acree (Fire Chief), Robert Harvey (Deputy Chief)*

*Guests: Tim Matthews (Georgia Department of Transportation), Alan Scott (Pastor, Cumberland Community Church)*

## 2. Call to Order

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

## 3. MMIP Express Lanes - Tim Matthews (GA DOT)

*Community Development Director Ken Suddreth advised that he was invited to a meeting at the Chamber where Tim Matthews on behalf of Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) had a presentation which provided information about the happenings on interstate 285. He stated that the presentation compelled him to invite GDOT to come to the City and provide the same presentation to Council. He introduced Tim Matthews (Senior Design Project Manager) from Georgia Department of Transportation.*

*Mr. Matthews gave a brief overview of the Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP), an 11 billion dollar program that consisted of 11 projects. Mr. Matthews provided information which included updates about the MMIP schedule for the various highways such as GA 400 and I-285, project locations, as well as proposed access points.*

*Mayor Bacon inquired if any members of the Council had any issues with any of the information that was presented. There were no discussions or comments about the presentation. Mayor Bacon then stated that Council was in support of the MMIP project.*

*Council and staff thanked Mr. Matthews for his presentation and time.*

## 4. Strategic Vision Plan Update - Maxwell Ruppensburg

*Special Project Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg provided Council with updates on the City's Strategic Vision Plan. He stated that there were 5 focus areas, 16 goals and 59 action items. He identified points in the plan that the groups or the activities addressed. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that the Task Force were planning events for the upcoming year, had elected a resident co-chair, they had 5 meetings and would be having another meeting in September. He advised that the Youth Advisory Council established goals and were looking at community events to participate in and that they would be collaborating with Cobb & Douglas Public Health on a few community*

initiatives. He stated that the Community Housing Team were meeting bi-monthly and had 8 meetings so far, they had 20+ core members and had re-applied to the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Program which provides technical expertise and facilitation related to housing and community development. Mr. Ruppensburg commended ICMA Management Fellow Ashley Youmans for her work in executing the Citizens Academy and advised that there would be another academy in spring 2019. Mr. Ruppensburg provided information about the Smyrna Youth Council and noted that applications would only be accepted through September 12th and asked for assistance in getting the word out to the community and local students. He spoke briefly about Envisio; a strategic plan management tool which he noted was secured with the help of Smyrna Fire and Police Departments. He advised that Envisio provided an internal dashboard with details such as performance management and departmental plan and project management. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that through Envisio the City was able to gain access to Polco, an online civic engagement tool, free for one year. He stated that the first series of survey questions started being sent to residents via the City website and smartphone application in August with questions such as "How do you like Smyrna as a place to live". Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired how those questions could be accessed. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that one could visit the Polco website and search for "Smyrna" or he could send out a link. He spoke briefly about the Education Committee which included establishing a new community stakeholder committee. Mr. Ruppensburg provided information about Zagster, a proposed conversion to regional "Pace" system and noted some of its key benefits to include a 50% reduction in price. He advised that phase 2 of the Jonquil City Historical Trail was ready to begin and would be partnering with Smyrna Arts and Cultural Council and were considering proposing public art installations along the trail. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that the Mountain Bike Park Grant was doing well and that they were waiting to get the federal review back and noted that he and Ms. Youmans helped Keep Smyrna Beautiful secure a \$7,000 Community Watershed Improvement Grant from Keep Georgia Beautiful which would be used to improve watershed at the Lake Court Dog Park. Mr. Ruppensburg also provided information on a few upcoming events and advised that he would be out of the office on medical leave until early 2019. Councilmember Corkey Welch made note that today was the first time that Council had heard about some of the items Mr. Ruppensburg had spoken about.

## 5. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that the first round of interviews for the Public Works Director position had been done on August 27th and noted that the second round would take place on September 12th. She reminded Council about the upcoming Hostile Work Environment and Sexual Harassment Training that would take place at the September 13th Committee of the Whole meeting. She advised that on September 11th the Fire Department would be hosting a memorial ceremony in honor of the victims of 9/11; she asked Fire Chief Roy Acree to provide a few details about the ceremony. Mr. Acree advised that the ceremony was a joint venture with the Police Department and would be about 30 minutes long. He made note that he had asked Mayor Pro Tem Derek Norton to speak at the ceremony, gave a brief synopsis of the ceremony's timeline and advised that they would like to perform this ceremony annually. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews' grandmother had passed away and asked that everyone keep him in their prayers. Ms. Saddler Jones then advised that Councilmember Derek Norton had a presentation.

Councilmember Derek Norton handed out to Council a packet which contained information for a proposed redevelopment project at the Cumberland Community Church property that was for sale. The packet included a 36 page memorandum, the

floor plan of the church, and a copy of a land survey. He advised that he had been approached by a representative of Cumberland Community Church to inquire if the City was interested in purchasing their property. He advised that the property was approximately 12.5 acres in size; the building where the church operated from was 375,000 square feet with 340 parking spaces and noted that the auditorium seated 625 people with the ability to add more seating. Mr. Norton also noted some of the activities that currently took place in the space. He advised that he asked Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland for his opinion on how that property could be used and stated that Mr. Garland made a few suggestions that were detailed in the packet for Council to consider. Mr. Norton stated that the City had built a good relationship with Cumberland Community Church and stated that he felt this would be a move in the right direction to continue that association. He advised that the church was under time constraints and asked Pastor Alan Scott to come forward to speak. Mr. Scott advised that they were anxious to move forward and entertaining all offers as well as looking to sell for the "best price". Councilmember Corkey Welch inquired if services were still taking place at the church. Mr. Scott advised that he was correct. Mr. Norton reiterated his statement that the church was under a time constraints and noted that if the City was interested in the property a decision would have to be made quickly. Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired how much the acquisition would cost. Mr. Norton stated that he "estimated a 15 million dollars bond" would be needed. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson noted that she thought a study needed to be done see if having a performing arts center at that location was "viable". Mr. Norton noted a few pros and cons about the property and stated the varying costs of performing arts centers recently built in other cities. Councilmembers expressed their concerns about the proposed project's expenses, location, and services. Mr. Norton asked Mr. Garland to speak about the potential revenue generators to offset some of the incurred costs. Mr. Garland gave a brief breakdown of potential cost recovery measures that could be made and noted other uses that could take place in the facility. Mayor Bacon stated that his biggest concern was that if Council considered purchasing this property, it would not coincide with the church's timeline because the City had to "do their due diligence" and noted that a referendum needed to be done so the public could vote on it. A representative of the church thanked Mr. Norton for his vision, gave a brief overview of the proposed project, and thanked Council for their time. Mr. Norton stated that if Council decided to proceed with the project they could have it voted on in the November election. He stated that Cobb County Elections Office advised that the window to have the item added to the electronic ballot was missed but the City could instead do paper ballots administered by the City Clerk and gave a brief overview of how that process would work. Mr. Norton asked the church representative if they would be able to wait for the election process to take place. The representative advised that they City might be at a disadvantage because there were other potential buyers and noted a few zoning issues. Mr. Scott stated that there were a few "enticing" offers. Mr. Norton gave a brief overview of his vision, pointed out a few key points of the site on a map and spoke about a site tour that was attended by department heads. He stated that due to this not being a budgeted item, he spoke with Finance Director Kristin Robinson and advised that she had "a few ideas" about where they could get funds for this project. He provided Council with information about existing bonds and pay out dates. He advised that there will be another site tour and extended invitations to the Council. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth stated that he felt the project would be right on target with the LCI and noted that it had been talked about in the past about utilizing that area in "some type of mixed-usage" project. He stated that he did not see this as an issue with LCI. Church representatives invited Council to tour the site. There were no further discussions or comments about this item.

## 6. Review of the September 4, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Bacon briefly read over the items on the agenda.

Item 6A/B – Deputy Chief Robert Harvey advised that in 2017 the State of Georgia passed legislation effectively forming a State 911 authority to maintain oversight of the auditing, collection, and distribution of 911 surcharges. He advised that Item 6B reflected that the current charges collected for 911 surcharges would double from .75 cents to \$1.50. Mayor Bacon inquired why the State had opted to collect the fees. Mr. Harvey stated that some of the companies currently collecting the surcharges were not doing a great job; he noted that an audit was currently taking place and that the City would recover those funds before the State took over. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if Council was supposed to get a copy of the audit. City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that it was not complete yet. Mayor Bacon advised the City hired a company to perform the audits and thought they collected a percentage. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that the company was through GMA (Georgia Municipal Association) and that the City paid them \$12,000 to perform the audit. Mr. Harvey advised that the City is due over \$100,000 in arrears surcharge fees.

Item 6C – Fire Chief Roy Acree advised that the Hazard Mitigation Plan which is done through Cobb County had to be updated every 5 years and involved all municipalities within Cobb County. He noted that the only difference this time was that it had to be done via a resolution and in previous years it was on the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Bacon advised that there were several items on the Consent Agenda that he wanted moved to "Formal Business" because those items had contracts that were in excess of \$200,000; items C, D, E, and F were moved to Formal Business from the Consent Agenda per the Mayor's request.

Item 6G – Councilmembers inquired if the road closures were different from when this item was initially presented to Council. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the "Smyrna Open Streets" event was moved from Downtown Smyrna. Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg gave Council details about how the event would flow and how the road closures would affect the residents. He also advised that the new route was suggested by the collaborative efforts of Fire, Police, and the Parks and Recreation Department. Mayor Bacon inquired if there would be a meeting/ focal point for the event. Mr. Ruppensburg advised that the event was not structured so that the participants would all be in a single area at once. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that ICMA Management Fellow Ashley Youmans would be on site and available on the day of the event in case any issues were to arise. Councilmembers expressed their concerns and made inquiries about costs that would be incurred.

No new items were added to the agenda.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson advised that she was contacted by someone about property on South Cobb Drive to inquire if the City would be interested in purchasing it. She noted that when roads were closed for Cheney Woods's block party, some people in the neighborhood were not pleased.

City Clerk Terri Graham advised that the new Deputy City Clerk, Tina Monahan, would possibly start working on Tuesday, September 4th. She stated that Ms. Monahan was coming to the City of Smyrna from the City of Nelson, where she was the City Clerk. She noted that Ms. Monahan had both a City Clerk and Financial Revenue Certificate and was also a former elected official.

Mayor Bacon gave a brief summary of a meeting he attended about transportation and

*advised that the next meeting would take place on September 11th.*

## **7. Adjournment**

*Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.*