



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole

Thursday, August 31, 2017

6:00 PM

City Hall - Admin Conference Room

Please note change in meeting room location

Roll Call

Council: Mayor Max Bacon, Derek Norton, Andrea Blustein, Ron Fennel, Corkey Welch, Doug Stoner, Susan Wilkinson

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Christiana Craddock (Executive Assistant to City Administrator), Christy Ullman (Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Ashley Youmans (Government Management Fellow), Maxwell Ruppensburg (Special Projects Coordinator), Richard Garland (Parks & Recreation Director)

Guests: Larry Terry, Don Hicks, Greg Teague, and Jim Croy (Croy Engineering), Rob Staples (Muscoe Lighting)

Absent: Teri Anulewicz

Call to Order

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

Review of September 5, 2017 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Bacon said that under the Mayor's report he would be presenting Information Systems Director Chris Addicks with an award.

Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland spoke on the bid award for lighting of the basketball and tennis courts in Rose Garden Park. He said the project was funded by CDBG and would outfit the courts with LED sports lighting, and then he introduced Mr. Rob Staples, of Muscoe Lighting, to share information about the LED lighting system with Council.

Mr. Staples said Muscoe Lighting had been in the business of LED sports lighting since 2008 and he showed examples of projects they had done throughout the United States. He said the main draw of the LED lights is that they reduce glare and make the lighting less obtrusive to neighborhoods (only 7 candela), and he showed a map that displayed the footprint of where the light illuminates the surrounding neighborhood. Mayor Bacon expressed some concern about the level of usage of the tennis courts at Rose Garden. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked about the cost efficiency of the lights, and Mr. Staples replied that the LED lights had a much longer lifespan (50,000 hours) as opposed to the old metal lights that need replacement every 1,000 – 2,000 hours. Councilmember Fennel said there were other heavily used parks that have lighting that intrudes into the surrounding neighborhoods, and he asked if the City

could look at this technology for other targeted locations. Mr. Richard Garland said that was his hope and plan for the lighting in the parks, and he was going to look at Brinkley next. He said this project used CDBG funds, though, so he was limited as to where he could use the funding. Mr. Staples said he could do a study with other parks that shows the candela footprint from 100 feet off the field. He also said another benefit of this technology was being able to turn the lights on and off remotely, as well as the 25-year maintenance plan and 25 year warranty.

Councilmember Corkey Welch asked about the operating hours for the courts, and Mr. Garland said they would not be open with lights on past 9:00pm. Councilmember Welch said he supported the project and encouraged the Parks department to look at putting tennis classes over at there. Mayor Bacon said he was supportive of the project and just wanted to make sure the City was being good stewards of the taxpayers' money.

The next item on the agenda was an ordinance for the Cigar Specialty Shop. Councilmember Doug Stoner said there was a high-end cigar shop he had been working with that wanted to also sell high-end liquor, and he had been working with them and City Attorney Scott Cochran on an ordinance that would allow them to do so. He said he had mentioned this business and ordinance in previous meetings, and the business was located next to Carraba's in Ward 1. He said they reviewed what other cities have done with such a business, and followed what the City has done with the wine and growler specialty shops, putting in certain requirements regarding inventory, number of cigars, humidor on site, and gross revenues of no more than 25% from alcohol sales. He said they wanted to narrow it down to a very specific niche in order to make sure that a "vape shop" would not be able to sell alcohol. City Attorney Scott Cochran reiterated what Councilmember Stoner shared and added that it excluded shops that sold vapes, e-cigarettes, hookahs, and bongos. He said the only thing that had not been determined yet was in regards to the rate of the license. He said it was different from the wine and growler shops, because they already sold alcohol in package and just had the add-on for pouring, but this business does not already sell alcohol, so it would be a new type of license and a fair rate would need to be determined. He also said Council needed to take into consideration that liquor licenses are more expensive than beer/wine (\$5K), and restaurants that have liquor licenses are also allowed to sell up to 50% alcohol, whereas this ordinance only allows for 25% of total sales in liquor. Councilmember Welch clarified that the intent is for their patrons to be able to have a nice scotch with their cigar, and Mr. Cochran replied yes, and there was also a similar business going in at the Battery. He also said that Council did not have to set the fee at the same time they pass the ordinance, but Council will be the ones to set the fee and vote on it. He added that if Council passed the ordinance on September 5th, the business would still have to apply for the license and go through that process, so there would be time to work out the cost of the license. There was consensus from Council to move forward with the ordinance on September 5th and for staff to put together a recommendation on the fee based on what other cities have done for similar licenses.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if Council needed to vote on the 9/11 Memorial Ceremony that will be held in front of City Hall.

City Administrator Report

Administration Update

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones gave her administration update, which began

with a video clip of Atkins Park Chef Rusty Hamlin on the Food Network Star. Mayor Bacon commented that things like that needed to be showcased on the City website, and more good things happening in Smyrna needed to be highlighted. He said that every day there should be something new on the website to promote all the good things going on in Smyrna.

The next item on the report was an update on the usage of the Charter cable Channel 23, which airs the Council meetings. She said they were going to start putting announcements on the channel that will run on a loop whenever a Council meeting is not being aired. Council was very receptive and excited about the new use.

Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg gave an update on the Vision plan and said a new approach was going to be taken, with him coordinating more of the implementation and taking some of that off the work groups. He said there would also be more tracking and reporting on the projects that would be submitted to the work groups, Council, and Staff. He said there would be an Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 19th and that all work group chairs seemed to think this was a good idea and were supportive of the change in structure.

Ms. Saddler Jones handed out the sidewalk audit maps to each Councilmember. She informed Council that she and staff wanted to do a retreat to focus on budget requests and what Council's goals/objectives are for departments. Councilmembers Ron Fennel and Derek Norton expressed that they would prefer to do it in the fall/Winter (Nov/Dec), as a retreat would be a difficult commitment for them during the first quarter of 2018.

The last item discussed was a Smyrna Day at the North Georgia State Fair, suggested by Mayor Bacon since the City did not do anything special for employees in the Spring like they usually do. The cost would be \$15/person and would include admission, parking, and unlimited rides. Mayor Bacon said he thinks it is a great opportunity to do something for employees, and he expressed disappointment that the annual employee picnic did not occur. Councilmember Fennel mentioned that next year the City should look at doing a Braves game for City staff.

Windy Hill Boulevard - Recap of Design and Changes

Croy Engineering President Greg Teague presented Council with the most recent rendering of the Windy Hill Boulevard concept. He said the biggest update to the concept involved the bridges that cross the local traffic over the boulevard – the length had been tightened up. He said as they looked at the design on the previous concept, there were full circle plazas for a larger pedestrian area, but they thought they could tighten those circles up to semi-circles in order to achieve a cost savings without taking away from the experience. He said they also added a median on the western end at South Cobb to help control the traffic from the hill coming off South Cobb. He said because of this, Ventura will be a right in/right out, but vehicles can go up to Old Concord to make a U-turn or go down Glendale. He said traffic will be able to access those lanes from the local lanes. He also showed all of the Cobb Linc bus shelters and stops on the map, and said they would be staying exactly where they are (none were moving or being added). They added on the local roads a pull-off area for the buses at the stops so they would not impede local traffic in those single-lanes. Mayor Bacon asked for clarification on the buses and if they would be traveling on the major thoroughfare, and Mr. Teague said no, the Cobb Linc buses would be traveling on the local lanes (aka the access roads) and they were provided a pull-off area. Mayor Bacon expressed concerns about the ridership of that route due to the talk heard about Cobb possibly eliminating some routes. He said he wanted to confirm these

stops would stay before the City spends money to build the pull-offs for the buses. There was discussion about where the construction would begin on each end of the project, and it will begin on the east end with limited construction at Dixie Avenue (just some striping changes) and on the west end at Benson Pool Road.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson referenced the former concept that had a larger walkway for pedestrians on the bridges, and Mr. Greg Teague said that was correct, but this more recent design reduces the amount of conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and provides a safer passage for pedestrians on the bridges. Councilmember Wilkinson said the larger pedestrian area in the former concept added aesthetics to the bridge and made it more pedestrian friendly, and she said by making that area smaller it is making the area more for vehicular traffic rather than pedestrian traffic. Mr. Teague responded that if people want to use the plaza area, they can cross there, but having one single lane for them to use allows for more safety and control of the pedestrian traffic. He also said they added a speed table on the local access road for a maximum opportunity to keep pedestrians safe, and it also added a cost savings. Councilmember Wilkinson again stated she was under the impression those bridges were to be plaza areas to be enjoyed by pedestrians, and she felt that was important. Councilmember Corkey Welch responded that he did not see pedestrians using it as a real plaza, and Councilmember Andrea Blustein commented that a lot of kids in that area walk to Campbell High School and cross Windy Hill. Councilmember Wilkinson again stated the importance of those bridges being pedestrian friendly and that the changes in the aesthetics were going to change the bridge and make it less inviting. Mr. Greg Teague shared that the pedestrian area has the same configuration, the only change was to make them from a full circle to a semi-circle, which allowed for some value engineering. Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that people were not going to congregate and socialize on a bridge over the highway. Mr. Greg Teague shared with Council that these changes to the bridges gave a savings of 15% of the overall construction cost, and it achieves the same pedestrian and local movements. Councilmember Doug Stoner asked what would go in the pedestrian areas, and Mr. Teague said they will have seating, raised planters to separate the area from vehicular traffic, and stamped concrete so it is clear that it is a pedestrian area. He said they can also add streetscape features with lighting. Councilmember Stoner replied that those features would still create a plaza type environment, just on a smaller scale. Councilmember Wilkinson expressed her displeasure with the changes again. There was discussion among other Councilmembers that selling the pedestrian areas as a neighborhood park was not the purpose of it, nor was it feasible.

Councilmember Corkey Welch asked about the schedule for the construction, and Mr. Don Hicks said the ROW acquisition should be done next spring and they were on scheduled to have the bid hit late Spring/early Summer, with a ground-breaking in Summer 2018. Mr. Larry Terry said currently they had closed 27/40 parcels, and Mr. Scott Cochran added they were waiting on updated appraisals on the remaining parcels and were in negotiations. Councilmember Fennel thanked Croy for making a cost savings opportunity in the project, and added that this was what SPLOST voters said they wanted, and for those who do not support the project, the voters would be aware.

Other Business

Mayor Bacon asked for an update on the Reed House, and Mr. Larry Terry said that the punch list was complete except for the lift, which needs a breaker fixed. He said other than that, the interior was complete. They were working on the site work and have started drainage work in the parking lot, curb work, and the grading was done. He said the exterior was on schedule.

Mayor Bacon said there were two things he wanted to discuss about the Reed House – a private gate in the back of the property for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods to access the property and the putting green that was taken out. He said he wanted the putting green and was not aware of the private gate and did not support it. He said he wanted to hear a recommendation from staff and Croy about both items. He said quotes were received to put the putting green back in, but he did not know if he could justify spending those SPLOST monies for it, and he was aggravated that it was taken out in the first place. He also expressed concerns about cars parking in the cul-de-sac to access the private gate. Councilmember Corkey Welch said the gate was brought up in a public meeting he and Councilmember Doug Stoner had with the surrounding neighborhood, and he did not have an opinion about it either way but was concerned that there would be public comment in support of it. Councilmember Doug Stoner said he also did not care if there was a fence or a gate, but it came up in a public meeting that the neighborhood wanted that access, so there was an idea to put a fence with a gate, and limit the access through the gate at various times. He said the gate would be locked for private events so that people could not park in the cul-de-sac and access the property. Councilmember Stoner added that it was a concern that people would drive to the gate and park in the cul-de-sac in order to go through the gate, so this was something he needed to go back and have a conversation with the neighborhood about. However, he was concerned about going back on something that they already told them they would be getting. Mayor Bacon said that the City should not be making commitments to do things in a public meeting without consulting the rest of Council, staff, and the consultant. He expressed concern again about parking on the cul-de-sac. There was discussion about the need for more communication about this issue and about other SPLOST projects. Mayor Bacon asked for a chart to be posted in the Admin Conference Room with information on all the City's funded projects. Councilmember Fennel said the Finance Committee was working on this as well. Councilmember Stoner said he would have a conversation with his constituents about the gate and would come back to Council with an update.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein expressed again her want for lighting on the linear park on Spring Road.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson said she could not support the lights on the Rose Garden tennis courts because she thought there was a better use of the CDBG funding. Councilmember Fennel asked if those lights could be placed elsewhere, and Mayor Bacon said he did support the funding and just wanted to see the highest and best use of the monies the City receives from the grant. There was discussion again about putting a tennis program at that park.

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones gave an update on the Wade's restaurant parking issue and said she and several staff met with the owner and expressed their concerns about the number of cars parked on Hollis and Dale Avenues. She said the owner was trying to do a lease agreement for parking across the street at the daycare center and he has also asked employees to not park in the parking lot. There was much discussion about the public parking lot and the need for it to be used and available to people frequenting the park, not just the restaurant.

Mayor Bacon asked City Attorney Scott Cochran if he had everything he needed for the Windy Hill acquisitions, and he said yes. He said the remaining properties were trying to relocate and this was to the City's advantage so they do not have to pay relocation damages. He said without the bond, however, the City would not be as far along as they are.

Adjournment

Mayor Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 7:31pm.