

**Pre-Council Meeting Minutes – FINAL**  
**Admin. Conference Room @ A. Max Bacon City Hall**  
**November 1, 2021**  
**5:30 PM**

*Present:*        *Derek Norton (virtual)*    *Glenn Pickens*    *Austin Wagner*  
                  *Travis Lindley*                    *Charles “Corkey” Welch*  
                  *Susan Wilkinson*                *Tim Gould*        *Lewis Wheaton*

*Also, Present: Scott Cochran (City Attorney)*

*Staff:*            *Joe Bennett (City Administrator), Frank Martin (Public Works Director),*  
                  *Carol Sicard (Director of Human Resources), Andrea Worthy (Economic*  
                  *Development Director), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Russell Martin*  
                  *(Community Development Director), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations*  
                  *Director), Joey Staubes (Planner II), Heather Corn (City Clerk), Jill Head*  
                  *(Deputy City Clerk)*

**Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould called the November 1, 2021 Pre-Council Meeting to Order at 5:30 PM.**

Andrea Worthy, Economic Development Director, gave a presentation about breweries and their economic impact.

Highlights:

- Lifestyle amenity and indicator of economic vitality
- Instrumental to downtown revitalization
- Breweries serve as community centers
- Craft breweries are a booming industry
- Breweries are experiential destinations
- Downtowns and breweries have a mutually beneficial relationship
- Stillfire plans to make a \$7 million investment in Smyrna
- Tax base increases with an addition of a brewery

How did Stillfire approach Smyrna?

Highlights:

- Stillfire reached out to Ms. Worthy
- Ms. Worthy presented properties that were available
- Stillfire stated they wanted something in or very near the downtown center
- Stillfire asked about the land next to the community center on Atlanta Road frontage
- There were no existing plans for the land in question
- Approached Council and Mayor

Councilmember Wilkinson asked about regulations placed on the brewery. Ms. Worthy stated that the City will be able to place regulations on the use on-site itself, the hours of operation, and the design/construction of the building, for example. They would have to meet development guidelines and urban design guidelines.

Councilmember Welch asked if there was any consideration given to the First Presbyterian that

was just purchased. Ms. Worthy stated it was not considered. She only produced available sites; she does not pitch City sites.

Aaron Bisges, GM and partner of Stillfire Brewing, presented a video of an existing Stillfire Brewery in Suwanee, Georgia and a layout of the proposed brewery in Smyrna:

Highlights:

- First floor would be the family-friendly brewery with outdoor activities
- There is a location for food trucks (Stillfire does not serve food)
- By law, they have to produce what they sell on site
- The Smyrna concept is three times the investment than their facility in Suwanee
- Second floor would be the event space floor: conferences, parties, events, meetings, etc.
- There will be a catering kitchen
- Third floor would be the 21+ age area where there would be a distillery and cocktails
- In order to compete, distilleries are becoming more and more common
- They partner with a lot of the local restaurants
- Family Feud Tuesdays, Trivia Wednesdays, Sound Check Bingo Thursdays, live music on weekends provided by local artists, Oktoberfest, specialty band nights, theme nights, etc.
- Stillfire marries their schedules with the City's schedules so there are no conflicts, and they fund their own events

Councilmember Wheaton asked about the beer they produce and wondered what volume of business they expect for distribution. Mr. Bisges stated that 90% of the beer produced is for on-site consumption.

Councilmember Welch expressed concern about placing the brewery right in front of the community center blocking it from Atlanta Road. Mayor Norton stated that only a portion of the community center would be blocked, but more would be visible because of the park area and the new open space in front of the community center. Mr. Welch asked if they considered other locations. Mr. Bisges stated that they scouted several locations, none to their liking. They had reached out to several metro areas, but they were looking for a similar setup as their location in Suwanee. They wanted a pedestrian-friendly, downtown location., and when he saw this site in question, he knew this was what they were looking for. Mr. Welch expressed concern about the playground area. He stated that it looks as if the City would take the \$600,000.00 for the sale of the property and then reinvest it back into Stillfire Brewery to create a small playground and recreation area. Mr. Welch further expressed that the proposed parking deck benefits Stillfire Brewery much more than it would benefit the City. Mr. Bisges and Mayor Norton both stated that the parking deck was a planned SPLOST project long before Stillfire Brewery approached the City.

Scott Cochran, City Attorney, explained that the property is not titled to the City. It is titled to the DDA (Downtown Development Authority). Technically, the City does not have anything to do with this property. The legal reason the sale of the property needs to go to the City is because there are some roads that used to bisect this land. The roadbeds are still in the name of the City, not the DDA, while the rest of the property belongs to the DDA. Doing this sale through the City will clear the title.

Mr. Cochran explained that through discussions they have decided to use deed restrictions where a Grantor, the DDA, conveys the land but keeps control by deed restrictions; deed restrict it for certain use and have reversion built into it so if they decide to sell or the business fails, the DDA has the right to acquire it at its appraised value. This is similar to a lease, except for one key

benefit - it actually goes into the tax digest.

Councilmember Wheaton expressed wanting to see further renderings, see more details about the design, and get a better sense of the details of the purchase. Mr. Cochran explained that the next steps would start with the City conveying the two smaller parcels to the DDA by quit claim deed to release any interest, then the DDA and Urban Design Committee do their part so standards are met, then it is brought before the Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Wagner expressed concern, too, about the playground/park area. Since it will remain City property, the City is responsible for maintaining it, etc. He wondered if it might be better for that land to be Stillfire's responsibility. Mr. Bisges stated that in Suwanee the park area belongs to the City and is used even when the brewery is not open. Mayor Norton concurred that the park will be built as an amenity for the citizens. Mr. Wagner further stated that because the land will be retained by the City, the City now has a responsibility to plan and determine what that park will look like and be comprised of and how much it will cost. There are still a lot of details that need to be presented before moving forward. Councilmember Pickens asked how often they are producing beer. Mr. Bisges stated it varies from day to day.

### **Review of the Agenda for the November 1, 2021 Mayor and Council Meeting**

Mayor Pro Tem Gould opened the discussion by reading through the Mayor and Council agenda for that evening.

Item 3A.

There was no discussion.

Item 6A - G.

There was no discussion.

Items 8A-K.

There was no discussion.

Councilmember Welch stated that he would like to see a master plan of projects compiled into one list so they can decide how to prioritize those projects. Councilmember Wheaton agreed that it would be great to see that list of projects to not only see everything that is going on, but to also get a big picture idea of what is happening in the City. Kristin Robinson stated that Landon O'Neal has been working on a spreadsheet that has a list of all the projects and their funding sources. She suggested that would be a good starting point for that conversation.

**Mayor Pro Tem Gould adjourned the November 1, 2021 Pre-Council Meeting at 6:53 PM.**