

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 12, 2018

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Andrea Blustein, Susan Wilkinson, Maryline Blackburn, Charles Welch

Absent: Derek Norton (Mayor Pro Tem), Ron Fennel

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Andrews (Asst. City Administrator), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Elsa Thompson (Administrative Services Coordinator), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to the Mayor & Council), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations Director), Ken Suddreth (Community Development Director), Rusty Martin (Senior Planner), Mary Moore (Library Director), Library Staff – Ruth Hayden (Technical Services Librarian), Swapna Kaimal (Adult Services Librarian), Rebecca Power (Youth Services Librarian), Scott Stokes (Public Works Director)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering)

2. Call to Order

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

3. Library Presentation

Library Director Mary Moore updated Council and staff about the exciting things that were going on at the Smyrna Library. She advised that the library has had a nice steady climb in circulation over the past 22 years with a huge spike in circulation taking place in the last 5 years; the library crossed the 300,000 circulation mark as of 2017. She broke down the circulation percentage by materials: digital circulation 10%, adult selection is 21%, juvenile circulation 44%, magazines 1%, audiovisual 20%, paperbacks 2%, and young adults 2%. Ms. Moore also spoke about the “Library of Things”, a section in the library in which unconventional items that you wouldn’t normally find in a library such as workout equipment and baking sheet pans can be checked out by library card holders.

Susan Wilkinson stated that she was surprised at the low percentage of young adults. Ms. Moore noted that the “young adult” section is targeted for 13 – 18 year olds and it was difficult to get that age group to read for pleasure.

Swapna Kaimal, Adult Services Librarian, spoke to Council and staff about the library’s adult initiatives and advised that the library hosted their first business mentoring session in partnership with the nonprofit organization, SCORE Atlanta. She noted that SCORE is dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. Sessions are on Wednesdays 4pm – 8pm and the sessions are booked through May. She also gave a brief overview of the various projects the library has coming later in the year.

Ruth Hayden, Technical Services Librarian, has worked for the City of Smyrna for 22 years; she stated that thanks to the City she was able to achieve her degree through the Tuition Reimbursement program and was very grateful. She advised that the Smyrna Library had been selected to test out cataloging software which they helped improve over the years. She also briefly spoke about the 9 volunteers that work at the library whose ages range between 68 – 94 years old, they each put in 100 hours per

year.

Rebecca Power, Youth Services Librarian, responsible for the development and programming for ages 0 – 18 years of age. She spoke about the summer reading program that will take place May 25th – July 25th and noted that children who do not read in the summer lose about 3 months of learning growth. She gave information on the different shows the library puts on throughout the year for children and passed out the library's Summer Reading Program brochure.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the volunteers were from the "Friends of the Library". Ms. Hayden advised that some of them were but that the library did not recruit volunteers from "Friends of the Library. Mayor Bacon then asked if the library was in need of anything. Ms. Moore stated that although she had a long list, the City had been really good about including the library in the budget every year. Mayor Bacon stated that he believed the library is an integral part of the community and the main reason that we have a Downtown Smyrna.

Ms. Moore noted that Cobb County closing some libraries will affect the Smyrna Library drastically; would have to figure out how to accommodate/ serve South Cobb area.

Mayor Bacon thanked the Library Staff and stated that he's very proud of all they do.

4. Hawthorne Cemetery

City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that he met with Community Development Director Ken Suddreth reference this project. Mr. Cochran then gave a brief history on the property and stated that the Developer wanted to build 2 single family homes on the property. He noted that the Developer had already closed on the property and that the City owned the cemetery portion of the property. A deal was worked out with Williams Park so that the staff could handle maintenance on the cemetery portion of the property. The City will purchase a small area of the lot to be able to park 2 maintenance vehicles when necessary. The owner/developer will use the money from the City to build a wall separating the cemetery from the homes.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein inquired if a study was done on whether the graves were shallow. Mr. Cochran advised that a survey was done and also, that all of the graves would eventually be surrounded by either a wall or a fence.

Mr. Cochran noted that it was up to Council as to whether or not to proceed with this project however his advice was to get started because improving the cemetery and having the wall built, if the owner decided to sell, would make the property look better and be an easier sell.

Mayor Bacon advised that he would like to see the project get started.

There was a brief discussion reference Daniel Cemetery. Mayor Bacon agreed to put the item on the agenda in the future.

5. Open Container Revisions

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews spoke on the minor change to the Open Container Ordinance. He advised that in summary, the Smyrna Market Village coverage area had been expanded to include the Porch Light Latin Kitchen Restaurant

located at 300 Village Green Circle SE.

Attorney Scott Cochran advised that the restaurant owners would like for their patrons to be able to walk out of their restaurants with their open container and visit the various establishments in the restaurant district with a drink purchased at another restaurant.

Mr. Andrews noted that the Porch Light Latin Kitchen Restaurant was the only establishment that was against allowing patrons to enter their restaurant with drinks from another restaurant and that is why the City made the revision to include that it is at the restaurant's discretion to allow the patrons to enter into their business with a drink from another restaurant.

City Attorney Scott Cochran reminded Council that if they are not pleased with the changes to the Open Container Ordinance it can be revisited and changed again.

6. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones presented information about the Windy Hill Road SPLOST Project's informational meeting that was held on April 17, 2018. She advised that there would be stations set up in the gymnasium with Elected officials, staff members and representatives from Croy Engineering readily available to answer questions.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if Council would be voting on the design.

City Attorney Scott Cochran reminded everyone that the voters voted for this project.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson noted her concerns about the project.

Mayor Bacon stated that the changes that had been made to the project had saved the City money.

Public Works Director Scott Stokes noted the good points about this project.

Mayor Bacon reminded everyone that Council pushed for this project to be the number one runner and that it needed to be completed already.

Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett spoke about the Jonquil Festival – Grizzly Bear Experience and the possible protests that may occur. She advised Council and Staff of the emails and calls she had received in reference to people being upset about the bears'. She passed out a handout that gave a background on the organization and the type of care the bears receive.

Ms. Saddler Jones reminded Council of the upcoming Special Called Meeting and advised that a time needed to be set since they had already decided it would be held on Thursday, April 19th. They settled on starting the meeting at 1:00pm. She also noted the Budget calendar and dates, she passed out a handout with the dates and advised that it was also posted on the board in the back.

Ms. Saddler Jones announced that Cobb & Douglas Public Health Center had opened their Smyrna location on April 2nd and noted their services.

Ms. Saddler Jones also announced that the Community Relations Department created a Calendar of Events Brochure; Ms. Bennett passed them around.

7. Review of April 16, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

The Mayor, Council, City Attorney and Staff discussed item 4B, a public hearing under Land Issues/Zoning/Annexations.

Mayor Bacon asked Community Development Director Ken Suddreth to give Council and staff background information on the property. Mr. Suddreth stated that ADC had already had students living in the facility but they were shut down by the Fire Marshall and had to move the students out. City Staff advised ADC of the requirements and proper way to attempt to convert the church into a dormitory for their students. ADC submitted the proper forms and site plans. Mr. Suddreth noted that staff recommended approval. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that Staff would invite Pastor Palmer to address the Council at the next Council meeting.

There were no questions or discussions reference the remaining public hearings which were annexations.

Item 6A Under Formal Business, item 6A was discussed. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked for photos of the Hydraulic Stage. Mayor Bacon asked where it would be housed; Ms. Bennett noted that it would be stored in one of the parks. Councilmember Corkey Welch confirmed that the stage was an adequate size for the events the City hosts. Ms. Bennett noted the key points of the equipment.

Mayor Bacon asked Ms. Saddler Jones to read aloud the Consent Agenda items. A brief discussion was held reference item 8D, Mayor Bacon asked Public Works Director Scott Stokes to explain the reasoning for the rejection of the bids. Mr. Stokes advised that the bids were done during the recession and they were all over budget with the current rates in today's market.

Mayor Bacon asked Ms. Saddler Jones to continue reading the Consent Agenda. There were no discussions on any of the remaining items.

8. Other Business

Councilmember Corkey Welch reminded everyone of the \$14 donation for an advertisement in the Keeping Smyrna Beautiful magazine. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if the \$14 donation included a ticket to the garden; Mr. Welch advised it did not.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn stated that she was pleased with the Calendar of Events brochure created by the Community Relations Department. She commended the Smyrna Business Association Luncheon speaker, Kim Fields and noted that Ms. Fields would like to bring a performing arts center to Smyrna. She reminded Council and Staff about the April 21st Divas with a Cause event.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson made note that a couple, both in law enforcement, who had recently moved into the Smyrna Grove area were concerned about the Atlanta Dream Center item.

There were no further discussions or comments.

9. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.