

**Special Called Meeting  
June 17, 2019  
4:00 PM  
HR Training Room**

*Present:*      *Mayor Max Bacon*                      *Tim Gould*                      *Charles “Corkey” Welch*  
                  *Maryline Blackburn*                      *Derek Norton*                      *Andrea Blustein*  
                  *Ron Fennel*

*Absent:*        *Susan Wilkinson*

*Also Present:* *Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Scott Andrews (Assistant City Administrator), Rusty Martin (Interim Community Development Director), Kristin Robinson (Finance Director), Roy Acree (Fire Chief), Brian Marcos (Deputy Fire Chief), David Lee (Police Chief), Frank Martin (Public Works Director), Kevin Moore (City Engineer), Richard Garland (Parks and Rec Director), Janet Liberman (Keep Smyrna Beautiful Director), Jennifer Bennett (Community Relations Director), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Christy Ullman (Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Council), Mary Arvin (Administrative Services Coordinator), Landon O’Neal (Management Fellow), and Tina M. Monaghan (Deputy City Clerk)*

**Mayor Pro-Tem Derek Norton called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.**

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews provided a summary of the 2020 SPLOST process to date including the numerous meetings that had taken place as well as some changes that had taken place since the last discussion. Money was added to traffic calming and property acquisition. A list of projects is due to the County on June 28, 2019.

Staff summarized the Municipal Services annex building which would house police, fire, IT, and some other various departments. With the City growing and number of staff increasing, there needs to be a future plan as to where to put them.

Council felt that the amount was too much and that while additional staff offices are needed, the current proposal may not set well with voters. There were other areas that could use more funding such as the aquatic center and land acquisition.

Parks and Rec Director Richard Garland explained that the agreement with the County to help with the aquatic center was verbal so there is nothing in writing. Plans should be made in case this partnership does not pan out as anticipated.

Council suggested considering less specific options because there is a study on downtown development coming up that would provide better direction as to the needs of the City. The cost estimate for the Municipal Services building was a large concern for all. While they realized that

it was just an estimate, they felt that the price per square foot was not acceptable. The emphasis was to focus on needs when deciding on projects and amounts.

Police Chief David Lee explained that there are preliminary plans for the building that show the potential uses of the facility. This would include space for the IT department, areas for training, room for special units, and storage space. The goal is to build something with room to grow that will meet the needs of the City for years to come. The size was not set in stone but rather an estimate of the maximum that would fit in the space allotted which is in between police and fire.

Mayor Max Bacon arrived at 4:19pm.

Fire Chief Roy Acree mentioned that consideration should be taken that the ground breaking for the Municipal Annex building wouldn't be for at least six years from now. Economic Development Director Tom Boland helped provide the estimates for the project. The rising cost of construction materials and labor was factored into the estimate.

Council agreed that the concept of such a project is not so much the issue as the price per square foot and making sure that it is something that the public can support and will be eager to vote for. The fact that it locks the City into this particular project and that there are so many unknowns left some wondering if there wasn't a better way to reserve money for additional space rather than one particular building.

A question was asked by Council whether SPLOST funding could be allocated to pay back a bond for such projects. Finance Director Kristin Robinson said that the wording of the referendum would have to include that this much money will be used to pay back bonds on such and such a project.

Councilmembers inquired about the need for additional space as of right now. Chief Acree explained that departments are making due, but many are working shoulder to shoulder. By labeling the project as a municipal services annex, it would allow for multiple departments to get the space that is needed.

Mayor Bacon mentioned the fire department that was just opened included a large classroom and he wanted to make sure that the new space was being utilized.

Mr. Scott Andrews asked for input into possible changes to the existing SPLOST project list.

The Mayor felt that there needed to be a survey of all City property and buildings to see where there might be extra space that should be used before considering an additional structure. There was some sort of survey done a year or so ago similar to what he was looking for.

Council wants to make sure that SPLOST projects are well thought out which will help with gaining voter support. The rest of the projects on the list were not an issue but the building was the one project that stuck out as a potential problem. The consensus was to lower the amount dedicated to that project and move the funding to other areas.

Mr. Garland responded to Council when he was asked if the City had enough parks. There are limits due to lack of available land, but the City makes good use of what is available.

City Attorney Scott Cochran explained that what we tell the voters we are going to do with the money, we are locked into doing. There is no deviation from what is listed on the ballot.

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones explained that the project list is due to Cobb County on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This is not the final list, but it is the information that will be used during the stakeholder meetings. The final vote for this SPLOST cycle will take place in November 2020.

Council asked how the Windy Hill project should be handled since it is already over budget. It was mentioned that it might be wise to allocate some money for that project in the new SPLOST cycle as well. They asked staff to look into this and come back with more information.

The Mayor suggested getting the Park and Rec Commission involved in the process. Mr. Garland said that there was discussion at a recent meeting and their biggest request was funding for park land requisition.

Council liked the idea of a parking deck. It is something that the City needs, and it has the potential to be a source of revenue in the future.

Both staff, Council, and the Mayor agreed that having the funding for land acquisition is important. Land moves very quickly and having the ability to act on it is key. The annexation study should help with a better understanding for potential park land outside of the current City limits.

At this point in the meeting it was agreed that \$6 million should be allocated to the municipal services building and \$9 million toward property acquisition. This was left opened to changes as needed.

Windy Hill beautification and a potential skate park within a linear park were discussed. Mr. Garland explained that the skate park was separated to leave the location open. While it might work on Windy Hill, there may be a better area that comes to light so by having two different line items, there is the ability to put the skate park in the best location available.

Mayor Bacon suggested taking into consideration any parks that may need restrooms or additional restrooms since there is a line for this in the project list. North Cooper Lake Park restrooms are listed but there may be other parks that could benefit.

Council emphasized the need for a listing for facility upgrades. There are a lot of buildings due for upgrades and this would be a good way to fund these projects. The suggestion was to take money from property acquisition and put it in the upgrades category.

Ms. Robinson reminded everyone that careful wording is important. A category such as property acquisition and improvements is likely to get more support from citizens than just property acquisitions. People want to see the existing facilities taken care of along with new additions.

The aquatic center and the possibility of a partnership with the County was talked about. The agreement was only verbal. Mayor Bacon pointed out that the partnership would only involve the initial building of the facility. Maintenance and staffing is something that the City would be responsible for. These are expenses that need to be taken into consideration.

Council mentioned that at every community outreach the City has done, an aquatic center was in huge demand. It is important to give the people things that they want as well as projects that the City needs.

Mr. Garland would like to see the City start with one splashpad and see how that works before adding any more. The project list calls for four splashpads which are popular with people but starting out with one will allow for a learning curve and a better determination of how many more should be added. The need for additional staffing is a consideration as well as the potential for a water ban as a result of a drought.

LED lighting at the parks was brought up. Mr. Garland clarified that the amount in the SPLOST project list covers the parks that will not be covered under Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

The Mayor inquired as to the benefit of converting all City facilities to LED lighting. Mr. Andrews stated that there is a company doing a presentation at the next COW meeting and a huge part of their proposal is things like conversion to LED for cost and energy savings.

Ms. Saddler Jones spoke about a meeting she had with Georgia Power and City Engineer Kevin Moore recently. They are willing to upgrade lighting around the City on public right of ways which would lead to a cost savings.

There was a change in the estimate for the parking deck and the Council wanted some clarification. Mr. Rusty Martin explained that further research led to a new, lower cost estimate on that project. There is a concept drawing for a parking deck that had potential retail space attached. A partnership between the City and a private entity could be a possibility. The City could build the parking deck which would attract the potential for a partnership with a business such as retail or a hotel.

The pedestrian bridge was next in the discussion. This is a partnership project with Cobb County. It would be located on Cobb Parkway and the cost would be split in half.

The Mayor asked Mr. Frank Martin if the amounts listed in repaving and curb and gutter were sufficient to complete the project. Mr. Martin said that the allotted amount would be enough to complete the desired projects.

There is a joint project with the County relating to improvements on the East/West connector. The funding allocated to this project is meant to cover the widening of the road along with some other improvements to make the area safer. The County will control the project but the City will have input.

Mr. Andrews explained that the use of terms tier one and tier two have changed. The County wants to list projects in order of priority rather than splitting them into separate categories.

The combined aquatic/gymnastic/learning library building was discussed. Mr. Garland explained that these three items would all be located within one structure. It would capture all aged groups and would receive support from the community. The County had mentioned that if the SPLOST turns out to be a six year cycle, they would have and be willing to put money toward this project.

The removal of the South Cobb Drive improvements was discussed. This was a project on the initial list presented at the retreat but after whittling down to stay within the budgeted amount, it wound up being one of the items that was removed. This would have included a multi-use trail and bike lane.

**Mayor Bacon adjourned the Special Called Meeting at 5:50 PM.**