



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole

Thursday, November 30, 2017

6:00 PM

City Hall

Roll Call

Council: Mayor Max Bacon, Derek Norton (Mayor Pro Tem), Andrea Blustein, Doug Stoner, Ron Fennel, Charles Welch, Susan Wilkinson

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Andrews (Assistant City Administrator), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Christy Ullman (Executive Assistant to Mayor and Council), Terri Graham (City Clerk), Maxwell Ruppensburg (Special Projects Coordinator), Ashley Youmans (Management Fellow), Richard Garland (Parks and Recreation Director), Joe Bennett (Deputy Police Chief)

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering)

1. Call to Order

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

2. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones began the report by announcing that Keep Smyrna Beautiful won the First Place Affiliate award in the population category of 50,001 to 75,000 from the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation. Ms. Saddler Jones moved on to discuss the 2018 meeting date calendar created by Executive Assistant Christy Ullman and passed around copies to the Mayor and Council. Next, Ms. Saddler Jones mentioned the Reed House Grand Opening event on December 11, 2017 with a VIP Hour for Special Guests from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm and a Public Open House from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Mayor Max Bacon said he wanted to make sure that there would be food available for the Public Open House and to make sure the VIP list does not exclude anyone who should be on there. Ms. Saddler Jones then announced that she will be creating a new council member orientation with Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews. She said the orientation will include one-on-one sessions with department heads, training sessions on city software, and city building tours.

Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland discussed the Painted Piano Project. He said that the project was an effort between the Smyrna Public Library, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Smyrna Arts and Cultural Council to have local artists paint on donated pianos and place those pianos in public spaces. Councilmember Andrea Bluestein asked if the pianos were going to stay outside. Mr. Garland answered that yes and that donated pianos were okay to stay outside since they were not in the best condition.

Management Fellow Ashley Youmans asked the Mayor and Council about possible dates to schedule a time to tour the preschool program at City Schools of Decatur. Mayor Pro Tem Derek Norton mentioned it would be difficult to pick a date to fit

everyone's schedules and suggested to go ahead and schedule a date and see who could join.

Mr. Andrews mentioned that Ms. Saddler Jones was featured in the December 2017 issue of Public Management magazine produced by the International City/County Management Association.

3. Council Goals - Derek Norton

Mayor Pro Tem Derek Norton described that the report from the Council and Staff Retreat in October had seven focus areas that included communication, staffing, infrastructure, charter review, housing, schools engagement, and growth management. He said he has spoken individually with other councilmembers and determined that the top four priorities of the previously mentioned topic areas are infrastructure, communication, staffing, and growth management. He asked if everyone was in agreement that these four topic areas should be prioritized and asked the group if they wanted to discuss now or review the report and discuss at a later time. Mayor Max Bacon suggested that everyone look over the report individually and then regroup to discuss priorities.

4. Review of the December 4, 2017 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Max Bacon announced that there would be no Pre-Council meeting on Monday, December 4, 2017 and instead the Mayor's Education Awards will take place. He said the reception begins at 5:00 pm and the awards begin at 5:30 pm. Mayor Bacon also mentioned that the Smyrna Education Foundation Report would be under the Mayoral Report.

Item A under Formal Business was the approval to adopt Resolution 2017-21 in support of the city's pre-application to the Recreational Trails Program Grant. Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland explained that one of the requirements of the grant pre-application is to show a resolution of support. Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg mentioned that part of the resolution is a signed letter from the Mayor. Mayor Bacon asked if the resolution is only for the application and if there was a match required from the city. Mr. Ruppensburg answered that yes, the resolution is for the application and that the city would have to match at least 20% of the total project cost and the city would get reimbursed for 80% up to \$200,000. Mr. Garland mentioned that the matching funds can include labor completed in-house. Mayor Bacon asked if there were identified trails. Mr. Garland said that the conceptual plan is a bike park with trails of varying difficulty for North Cooper Lake Park and is being completed by Progressive Bike Ramps. Mr. Garland also explained that this grant is prioritized because if the city does not apply this year, the next grant cycle is not for another two years. He said that of about 100 attendees at the public input meeting on bike parks and trails earlier in November, roughly 95% showed support of the concept. Mr. Garland said that the proposed bicycle park could also be an economic driver since it is very close to the Silver Comet Trail. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked what the connection was to the Silver Comet Trail, and Mr. Garland explained that riders would have to exit North Cooper Lake Park to get to the Silver Comet Trail, but would like to create a direct connection in the future. Mr. Fennel noted that he was glad the city found the grant and to keep an eye out for more grant opportunities. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if the bike park will include equipment for younger children. Mr. Garland stated that the conceptual plan will lay out a bike park for children and beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails across the park. Councilmember Charles Welch asked that if we are granted the \$200,000 grant would

the city have to match \$40,000, and Mr. Garland said that the match would be at least \$50,000 to reach the minimum 20% match of the total project cost. Mr. Welch then asked if all the money would go to North Cooper Lake Park, and Mr. Garland answered yes. Mr. Welch asked what kind of surface would the proposed trails have and Mr. Garland answered that the trails would be natural surface. Mr. Welch asked how it is possible to spend that amount on natural surface without other improvements, and Mr. Garland said the conceptual plan would include adding other physical elements to the trails and there would be the need for technical trail improvements, such as a reinforcement of a bank or signage. Ms. Wilkinson asked if the park would require staff members to monitor at all times, and Mr. Garland answered that it would not necessarily require monitoring unless there was a designated event. Ms. Wilkinson also asked if the funds could cover restrooms at the park. Councilmember Doug Stoner noted that a restroom would cost close to the \$250,000 amount just to build. Ms. Wilkinson stated concern that eventually the park would need a restroom added if the park becomes popular. Mr. Ruppensburg said that the grant distributors are favorable to multi-phase projects, so it could be a possibility to fund an addition of a restroom in a future grant application. He also mentioned that using volunteers for maintenance will count as an in-kind match and they could be involved in ongoing maintenance, which could decrease the need for staff at the park. Mayor Bacon asked when the city would receive the grant award, and Mr. Garland answered that by April of 2018, the city will know if the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has approved the project to move forward and the funding would be available as early as September of 2018. Ms. Wilkinson expressed the concern that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is still being developed and the priorities are not solidified. Mr. Garland said he received the initial findings from the master plan statistically valid survey and that unpaved and natural trails were found to be one of the top priorities for the community, according to respondents.

5. Other Business

Mayor Max Bacon discussed that he spoke with Susan Thayer of the Cobb County School District to ask if the district had SPLOST funds to connect gaps in sidewalks around local schools. He stated that Ms. Thayer will check on the status of funds. Mayor Bacon then said the discussion moved to Ward Park and Lattanzi Field. He mentioned that Campbell High School is the only high school that does not have its own field and suggested to rent out the field to Campbell High School to capture lost revenue. Mayor Bacon mentioned that the original agreement included that Campbell High School would use the field as long as the school maintained it, but instead maintenance has fallen under the city. He said the discussion in the meeting included working out a deal for Campbell High School to pay rent to the city for using the baseball field. He said the Cobb County School District will get back with the city for an agreement.

Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland then mentioned that during the meeting with Susan Thayer, there was also discussion of the Argo Road Park. He said the city has put a playground on the property and mentioned that a fence was put up behind the property and Cyprus trees have grown around the property. He spoke with the school district about removing the fence and trees because it is undesirable for visitors to feel surrounded by these structures. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked if the playground was on the city's park, and Mr. Garland said that it is a city-owned playground on a Cobb County-owned property. Mr. Fennel suggested a joint-use agreement and that there are more opportunities for those types of agreements across the city.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson mentioned that she attended the National League of Cities conference and was able to attend workshops on the topics of the opioid epidemic, homelessness, affordable housing, branding, and tree ordinances.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein said that she drove by Corn Road and that the parking issue has not been resolved.

Councilmember Ron Fennel shared that he attended the Council of Quality Growth with Councilmember Doug Stoner, which included discussions on budget challenges and potential solutions. Next, Mr. Fennel mentioned that the Georgia Municipal Association has selected former Valdosta City Manager Larry Hanson as the new leader and that the new Smyrna Business Association President David Munroe would be sworn in during the next week. Mr. Fennel then announced that the next finance committee meeting would be held sometime in January and the Cobb Municipal Association annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 12, 2017. Finally, Mr. Fennel said that Mike Beaty from the Great Promise Partnership would be visiting the area on Monday, December 4, 2017 to talk with prospective business partners and invited anyone interested to join them for lunch.

Councilmember Doug Stoner said he had a meeting with Community Development Director Ken Suddreth and other staff from the department about the comprehensive plan. He stated that the plan includes a 100 day action plan that the Community Development committee will review and establish the main priorities to implement first. Mr. Stoner encouraged everyone to take a look at the 100 day action plan.

Councilmember Charles Welch said he noticed that the sign on Concord Road near Brinkley Park said "see the city website" during the Tree Lighting Ceremony and suggested that during events, signs should display information about the event that is happening.

Mayor Max Bacon mentioned that someone had wrecked into a fire hydrant the past week. Deputy Police Chief Joe Bennett said that the driver was distracted, but there was no official word on specifically how the driver was distracted.

Mayor Pro Tem Derek Norton said he spoke with Judge Phyllis Collins about her thoughts on the proposed hands-free ordinance and punishment. He said that Ms. Collins was comfortable with the \$150 maximum fine and the discretion to add a traffic school requirement to the punishment.

Executive Assistant Christy Ullman said she needs to confirm if all councilmembers are re-appointing members or appointing new members to their Boards and Commissions.

City Clerk Terri Graham said received a phone call from the probate judge in Cobb County about a request to use Smyrna's county in the event of a disaster in Cobb County.

Special Projects Coordinator Maxwell Ruppensburg mentioned that the next community housing team meeting will be held on December 12, 2017. He said the city was invited to attend the Atlanta Regional Commission Regional Housing Task Force quarterly meeting on December 13, 2017. Next he mentioned that the Keep Smyrna Beautiful bicycle parking rack grant was voted best online and Keep Smyrna Beautiful will be receiving another \$11,000 in funds. Mr. Ruppensburg then mentioned that the Smyrna Vision Plan website is expected to launch by December 8, 2017 and that he has sent

invitations for the community input meetings that will be occurring next month. Finally, Mr. Ruppensburg said that CobbLinc visited the city to discuss the bus shelters inside the Smyrna city limits. He said CobbLinc has asked if Smyrna would like to be included in their capital investment across their system to replace all bus shelters across Cobb County. Mr. Fennel asked how much would that cost the city, and Mr. Ruppensburg answered nothing. Mr. Stoner asked if the bus shelters would include advertisements and Mr. Ruppensburg answered yes and that the city could also get some space for city-related announcements. Ms. Wilkinson asked how much the city gained through advertisements. Mr. Ruppensburg said that the amount was about \$30,000 last year at \$700 per bus shelter. He then explained that the city can look into renegotiating to a percentage per shelter because it would be more advantageous for the city. Mayor Bacon expressed concern with the trash outside bus shelters that accumulates. Mr. Stoner mentioned that it was the responsibility of Signal to maintain the bus shelters, not Cobb County. Mr. Stoner said that there will need to be a discussion about who will ensure maintenance of the bus shelters in a contract.

Mayor Bacon asked Larry Terry of Croy Engineering if there was a public meeting on the Windy Hill Road project, to which Mr. Terry answered yes.

Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews announced that the Historical Society would meet Monday December 4, 2017. Mayor Bacon mentioned that many of the museum artifacts need to be removed or cleaned. Mr. Fennel asked if expenditures would include making sure the museum structure was safe. Mr. Andrews answered that the estimate given by Brockington & Associates of \$150,000 to \$200,000 was only for the redesign. Mr. Fennel suggested that cases of museum artifacts be exported while the building is being cleaned.

Mr. Andrews also asked the Council to give suggestions of people who could be involved in the Diversity Task Force.

Deputy Chief Joe Bennett said that the hands-free phone holders to be given out to Smyrna residents have shipped and would be expected the next week.

6. Adjournment

Mayor Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.