



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole

Thursday, February 15, 2018

6:00 PM

City Hall

1. Roll Call

Present 7 - Mayor Max Bacon, Councilmember Derek Norton, Councilmember Andrea Blustein, Councilmember Maryline Blackburn, Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, and Councilmember Ron Fennel

Also Present 22 - Tammi Saddler Jones, Scott Cochran, Scott Andrews, Terri Graham, Kay Bolick, Christy Ullman, Jered Sigmon, Roy Acree, Brian Marcos, Kristin Robinson, Richard Garland, Ken Suddreth, Russell Martin, David Lee, Ashley Youmans, Terry McCormick, Brad Johnson, Dustin Davey, Kenneth Durden, Steven Westbrook, Christy Mana, and Jasmine Owens

Guests: Chip King (Archer Company), Teri Anulewicz (Georgia House Representative for District 42), Doug Stoner

2. Call to Order

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

3. Formal Business:

- A.** Resolution 2018-02 calling for Special Election, Setting Qualifying Dates, Setting a Qualifying Fee for Ward 6 Council seat; also approving a Contract between Cobb County Board of Elections and The City of Smyrna and authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract for the Primary Election May 22, 2018.

Sponsors: City Council

There was one item under Formal Business. Resolution 2018-02 calling for a special election, setting the qualifying dates, setting the qualifying fee for the Ward 6 Council seat, and approving a contract between Cobb County Board of Elections and the City of Smyrna for the Primary Election on May 22, 2018 was presented.

A motion was made by Councilmember Ron Fennel to approve Resolution 2018-02 calling for Special Election, Setting Qualifying Dates, Setting a Qualifying Fee for the Ward 6 Council seat; also approving a Contract between Cobb County Board of Elections and The City of Smyrna and authorizing the Mayor to execute the contract for the Primary Election May 22, 2018, seconded Councilmember Derek Norton.

The motion to approve carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Norton, Councilmember Blustein, Councilmember Blackburn, Councilmember Welch, Councilmember Wilkinson and Councilmember Fennel

4. Fire Department Presentation

Fire Chief Roy Acree passed out the 2017 Fire Department Annual Report and began the presentation on the Fire Department. Chief Acree explained the Fire Department organizational chart that showed 5 divisions of Bureau of Fire Prevention, Response Division, Administrative Division, Training Division, and Emergency Management Division. He introduced representatives from all divisions including Deputy Chief Brian Marcos, Division Chief Brad Johnson, Division Chief Dustin Davey, Lieutenant Kenneth Durden, Battalion Chief Stephen Westbook, Christy Manan, and Jasmine Owens. He also mentioned the role of Support Services Coordinator Ryan Jinks who was not present at the meeting. Chief Acree explained that the Fire Department has responded to 6094 emergency calls during 2017 that included fire, medical, mutual aid, and other calls. Chief Acree then explained that in 2017 the Fire Department responded to 39 structural fires, 19 vehicle fires, and 36 outside fires.

Chief Acree went on to explain the Fire Department Divisions. He said that the Training Division was responsible for all training hours, the recruitment program, the 35/35 program, and the blue card incident command certification program. He said the Emergency Management Division was the proactive side of the department and prepares internal staff, builds resiliency in the community, and researches best practices. Chief Acree mentioned that the City of Smyrna is one of only two cities in the state with an emergency management division recognized by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency. Chief Acree concluded that the Fire Department Annual Report would be uploaded to the Smyrna Fire Department website.

5. Salary Survey - Chip King/Archer Company

Human Resources Director Kay Bolick explained that the Archer Company conducted a study of all city positions in November 2017 and were present with the final report and recommendations. Archer Company representative Chip King explained that he worked closely with Human Resources staff to ensure classifications were maintained throughout the survey and that the survey was comprehensive. Mr. King said the study compared Smyrna to 12 other jurisdictions, including Douglasville, Acworth, Cobb County, Marietta, and Roswell. Mr. King said the findings showed Smyrna below market in all positions; lower end positions were about 5% below market and 1% below market at higher end positions. Mr. King then explained that the recommendations included adjusting the salary ranges for each pay grade. He said this would result in a 5% increase for lower paying positions and a small percentage change for higher paying positions. Mr. King stated the company would continue to work with Human Resources to monitor job salaries over the next few years as jobs change and positions are modified.

Mayor Max Bacon asked about a scenario where an employee is maxed out under their current salary range. He asked what would happen if their range increases and wanted to know if their salary would be eligible for increases. Mr. King said employees would be eligible for increases and when pay ranges increase, it gives the employee's salary more room to be adjusted. Mayor Bacon mentioned giving a flat \$500 bonus to employees who max out in their salary range and asked if bonuses should wait until next year. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones said that bonuses were not given this year in order to wait for the results of the salary survey. Mayor Bacon asked if the city had completed merit based increases, and Ms. Saddler Jones said yes.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein asked how Smyrna's benefits compare to cities with fewer employees. Mr. King answered that newer cities tend to contract out employees, who receive more competitive benefits from their organization. He also mentioned that when comparing to the private sector in larger organizations, benefits in the public sector have eroded.

Ms. Bolick explained that about 15 employees were at or near their maximum salaries and if they were to receive a merit increase, most cases would be at least \$1200, which would be higher than the flat \$500 bonus. Ms. Bolick also explained that about 49 employees are at their minimum pay within their range and would need to be adjusted. She explained that all were hourly employees and most were new hires, which she believed would help with turnover in jobs that are difficult to recruit and retain.

A. 2018 Smyrna Pay Plan Update

6. CIP and Use of Surplus - Kristin Robinson

A. Surplus

Finance Director Kristin Robinson explained the capital improvement plan (CIP) discussed by the finance and administration committee. She said the plan was broken down into the general fund, the water and sewer fund, and storm water fund. She then said the main focus for discussion was how to use surplus funds and said the city ended up with a general fund surplus of 2.8 million dollars. Ms. Robinson said that the community center roof was in need of replacing and the cost estimate came to 1.2 million dollars. She explained that it could be cheaper to repair the roof but it could still cause leakage issues that will cost money in the future. Ms. Robinson then mentioned the replacement of the HVAC units at City Hall and Jail which is estimated at 329,500 dollars. She said the other items discussed for the use of surplus funds included the fuel master upgrade at the Public Works Facility for 60,000 dollars, a dog park on Concord Road for 50,000 dollars, the cemetery preservation contract for 18,000 dollars, an annexation study for 25,000 dollars, and the installation of an ice rink for 95,500 dollars. Ms. Robinson explained that the cost of the ice rink would include power costs from Georgia Power, groundwork, and construction but the city would need to purchase a tent and possibly cut from other CIP projects if this is chosen. Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews said the ice rink would be placed along Atlanta Road and the agreement would include ownership of the tent, which would have a lifespan of 10 to 20 years. Mayor Max Bacon explained that the ice rink discussion has been ongoing for a few weeks and believed it was a good idea. Councilmember Andrea Blustein mentioned that money should go towards lights along the linear park instead. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson noted that if these projects are funded, then other projects will get pushed away. Ms. Wilkinson said she would want to see what the Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations are before committing to projects.

7. Community Redevelopment Ordinance Amendment

A. Approval of Ordinance 2018-05 amending the City of Smyrna Code of Ordinances relating to community redevelopment tax incentives; repealing conflicting ordinances; establishing an effective date; and for other purposes.

Sponsors: Norton

City Attorney Scott Cochran began this discussion by explaining that there has been an issue with a resident who leaves properties in disrepair. Mr. Cochran explained that the resident will continually meet the minimum requirements of the city for the purposes of permitting, but will not fully repair the properties. Mr. Cochran said a proposed community redevelopment ordinance could address the issue. He explained that the ordinance idea came from the state of Georgia amendment to the constitution that allows a funding mechanism for cities to promote redevelopment pockets. Mr. Cochran explained that the city would have to adopt a resolution and declare certain pockets of land to be designated as "pockets of blight," then approve an urban redevelopment plan. Mr. Cochran further explained that the city could make a declaration under the terms of the state law and begin redevelopment efforts. He said that one effort could be to tax a pocket of blight at a greater tax rate than other areas to deter people from leaving properties in disrepair. Mayor Max Bacon asked how the city could designate a pocket of blight if there is only one house in the area in disrepair. Mr. Cochran said that this could be an issue with the ordinance. Councilmember Charles Welch mentioned that the goal is to eliminate permit hopping. Mayor Bacon asked why this issue has gone on so long. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth said there is an issue with the way the ordinance is interpreted and allows residents to repair just enough to meet the requirements of the permit. Mr. Suddreth noted that he spoke with Mr. Cochran and they believed there could be another solution besides the proposed increase of taxation on blighted areas.

Councilmember Ron Fennel changed the discussion topic and asked to hear from Georgia House Representative for District 42 Teri Anulewicz who was a guest at the meeting. Ms. Anulewicz said that House Bill 930 was being presented at the state, which would create a regional transit authority across 13 counties in the Atlanta Regional Commission region which would include Cobb County. She announced that on Monday, February 26 at 6:30pm there would be a Transit Town Hall at the Smyrna Community Center to discuss what this bill would entail and let the public know what the transit plan would look like if implemented.

8. Open Container/Entertainment District

- A.** Approval to Adopt Resolution 2018-01 designating the Market Village as a Restaurant District.

Sponsors: Norton

- B.** Approval of Ordinance 2018-04 amending the City of Smyrna Code of Ordinances to regulate the carry-in or out of alcoholic beverages within authorized Restaurant Districts; to define the process for the designation of a Restaurant District; and to repeal any conflicting provisions.

Sponsors: Norton

City Attorney Scott Cochran explained that an ordinance for an entertainment district would mean that people can leave a restaurant with a drink and stay outside in designated areas without violating the law. Mr. Cochran explained that for Monday's agenda, the first district designated would be the Smyrna Market Village. Mayor Max Bacon said that people are allowed to drink outside during some city events. Mr. Cochran explained that the ordinance would not change that and said in order for patrons to sell alcohol beyond their premises, they will have to go through the same permitting process. Mayor Bacon asked if drinks would need to be in a different

container, and Mr. Cochran said yes, the drinks would need to be in a 16-ounce or less paper or plastic cup. Mayor Bacon noted that the public would need to be informed that this would not affect open container laws in vehicles. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked if people would be allowed to bring their own alcohol into the designated districts, and Mayor Bacon said no. Mayor Bacon believed that the response from business owners has been very supportive and said he trusts business owners to ensure customers are following the rules. Police Chief David Lee noted that downtown restaurants always pass alcohol stings.

9. City Administrator Report

A. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones began the report by announcing that the Administration department will have a new Administrative Services Coordinator beginning on February 26, 2018. She also announced that Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews would be out of the office from February 16 to March 4, 2018. Ms. Saddler Jones reminded the council about the Arbor Day and Ribbon Cutting Celebration at North Cooper Lake Park on Saturday, February 16, 2018 at 10:00 am. She also reminded the council about the group photo that would be taken on Monday, February 19, 2018 before the city council meeting. Finally, Ms. Saddler Jones displayed a picture of nine babies born during the past year from Smyrna Fire Department families.

10. Review of the February 19, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Item A under Land Issues/Zonings/Annexations was the plat approval for variances on two residential lots on Hayes Drive. Community Development Director Ken Suddreth explained that the developer bought an adjacent property with two lots stacked on each other and the request involves turning the lots so that both are touching the street. Mr. Suddreth said there has been no negative feedback on this item.

Item B was a rezoning request for the use of a building as an office on Concord Road. Mr. Suddreth explained that the applicant wants a zoning change to turn residential property into an office space and said the planning and zoning commission recommended approval.

Items C, D, and E were for the annexation request of a Cobb County owned lot along Old Concord Road. Mr. Suddreth explained that the proposal included 15 rear-loaded lots with all houses facing Concord Road. He noted that the driveways would not touch. He explained that the original plan included 16 lots with a cul-de-sac, but city staff did not feel the design was appropriate. He said the applicant came with an alternative plan to include a right turn lane and a detention pond. Mr. Suddreth noted that Councilmember Maryline Blackburn asked about increasing the sidewalk width, and the applicant increased the width from five feet to seven feet. Mr. Suddreth explained that the sidewalk would not be considered a multi-use trail because the city requires an eight-foot width for trails. Mr. Suddreth said the land would be annexed into the city and the planning and zoning commission recommended approval. Councilmember Charles Welch asked if the entrance of the development was changed. Mr. Suddreth answered yes, the entrance was changed at the request of staff and would be located on Charlotte Circle to meet the requirements. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn asked if the development could be decreased to 13 houses instead of 15. Mr. Suddreth said he believed that staff had negotiated all available aspects of the plan and the proposed density is equal to other areas in the city. Mayor Max Bacon said he

believed if the City of Smyrna does not annex the land and allow the development, Cobb County would allow it anyway. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked about the road being classified as a major collector road. Mr. Suddreth explained that roads in the city limits are classified from arterial streets, which are the heaviest traffic streets, to residential streets. He further explained that Concord Road is a major collector, meaning it is one level below an arterial street and carries through traffic while also touching neighborhoods. Ms. Wilkinson noted that there has not been a traffic or intersection analysis done in the area and was concerned about approving the plans. Mr. Suddreth explained that it is not the developer's responsibility to fix an area problem. Ms. Wilkinson said that if the land is annexed, then it would be the city's issue to solve. Councilmember Ron Fennel said that the county would be responsible since the road is a thoroughfare and goes into the county after passing through Smyrna. Ms. Wilkinson said she believed the proposed turn lane should be longer, and Mr. Fennel disagreed.

Item A under Formal Business was the approval for the use of the Fiscal Year 2017 Surplus. Mayor Max Bacon explained that he has spoken with staff about the proposed ice rink and dog park for the use of surplus. Mayor Bacon said he had concerns about spending money on a parking lot used solely for the purpose of a business, Wade's Restaurant, and spoke with the owner about creating a dog park next to the parking lot. Mayor Bacon said he believed that if the dog park is not approved that something will need to go in that location. Councilmember Charles Welch said the dog park was a good idea. Councilmember Ron Fennel asked if the decision on the dog park would need to be made at the Monday night city council meeting. Mayor Bacon said he thought it would be best to delay the decision. Mr. Fennel asked if the decision on the ice rink would be delayed too, and Mayor Bacon answered yes. Mr. Welch asked if the proposed ice rink tent could be moved to other areas, and Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews answered that the tent would be too large to move. Councilmember Andrea Blustein stated that she did not believe the ice rink is needed because nearby areas have their own. Mr. Fennel asked how long would the ice rink be open during the year, and Mr. Andrews answered that it would be from November to February. Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked if the tent would stay up after the ice rink closes, and Mr. Andrews answered yes. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn asked if all councilmembers had contributed ideas to what the surplus funds could be spent on. Mr. Fennel said the finance committee came up with the list through discussion, but did not ask for a wish list from each councilmember.

Item B under Formal Business was the approval for Smyrna Police to enter into a contract with Ten-Eight Forensic Services, Inc. Police Chief David Lee explained that the contract would include handling of DUI and blood tests and that the company is used by Cobb County, City of Marietta, and other local jurisdictions. Chief Lee said this company is cheaper than the company previously contracted by the department.

Item C was the approval for the City of Smyrna to continue as a sub-recipient of the Cobb County Community Development Block Grant program. City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones explained that this contract is renewed on an annual basis and said the contract amount was for 195,000 dollars.

Item D was the approval of ordinance 2018-06 to amend the City of Smyrna Code of Ordinances, Chapter 70 Parks and Recreation Article I pertaining to the use park areas and recreation facilities. Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland explained that staff had compiled a list of additions and changes to the ordinances based upon what the city was missing and also received input from the park ranger and city attorney.

Under the Consent Agenda was the approval for the purchase of six Ford Explorers and the refurbishment of two Ford Crown Victorias for the Smyrna Police Department. Councilmember Charles Welch asked if these vehicles were budgeted items, and Police Chief David Lee answered yes.

11. Other Business

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones asked if the Open Container/Entertainment District resolution and ordinance should be added to the February 19, 2018 Mayor and Council agenda. The consensus was yes.

Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland mentioned that the consultants for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be presenting on the March 1, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting. He said that prior to the presentations, he will send the statistically valid needs assessment and findings report for review. He noted that the last tab is related to proposed tree removal around the arboretum and pond area and wanted everyone to have an opportunity to review before discussing. Mayor Max Bacon asked if any of the trees were planted in memorial and Mr. Garland answered no. Mayor Bacon mentioned that if trees are removed, there will need to be a plan for replacing the trees.

Councilmember Charles Welch reminded everyone to attend the Arbor Day and Ribbon Cutting Celebration at North Cooper Lake Park on Saturday, February 17, 2018.

Councilmember Ron Fennel mentioned that the Cobb Municipal Association asked Smyrna to host its monthly meeting in April and asked for suggestions on a venue and guest speaker.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson announced that the Mayor of Lake City, Georgia had passed away who had been the mayor for almost 30 years.

City Clerk Terri Graham announced that the new Deputy City Clerk started on Monday, February 12, 2018.

12. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.