



City of Smyrna

A. Max Bacon City Hall
Council Chambers
2800 King Street SE
Smyrna, GA. 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Approved City Council

Monday, October 18, 2021

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Mayor Derek Norton, Councilmember Glenn Pickens, Councilmember Austin Wagner, Councilmember Travis Lindley, Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson and Councilmember Tim Gould

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Lewis Wheaton

Also Present: 1 - Scott Cochran

Staff: 4 - Joe Bennett, Heather Peacon-Corn, Jill Head and Tyler Addison

Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called to order the October 18, 2021 meeting of the Mayor and Council at 7:01 PM.

1. Invocation and Pledge:

Rev. Pam McCurdy of Bethany United Methodist Church located at 760 Hurt Road offered the invocation and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Agenda Changes:

There were no agenda changes.

3. Mayoral Report:

- A. [PRC2021-08](#) Proclamation in Recognition of the 10th Anniversary Celebration of Foundation Chapter No. 587, Order of the Eastern Star, Prince Hall

Chartered in June 10, 2011, Foundation Chapter No. 587 focuses its endeavors on serving Smyrna, GA and the greater Cobb County community.

The Chapter Motto is "Sisters Building the Foundation for Positive Change in the Community" and their 2021 Chapter Theme is "Bonding Together to Reach our Destiny!" as they focus on Dedication, Engagement, Sisterhood, Teamwork, Inclusion, and being Notable during this Year of Perseverance.

Worthy Matron Tamika Bryant thanked the Mayor and Council for this proclamation. Community service is at the heart of their chapter and they are very excited to continue their services.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould presented Sister Tamika Bryant (Worthy Matron), Michael Gaither, Candice Fedrick & Phoebe Boyd the proclamation.

4. Land Issues/Zonings/Annexations:

There were no land issues/zonings/annexations.

5. Privilege Licenses:

There were no privilege licenses.

6. Formal Business:**A. [AGR2021-10](#)**

Approval of the agreement with Croy Engineering for survey database services and transportation improvement program application for the South Cobb Drive Improvement Project in the amount of \$516,350.00 to be funded out of 2022 SPLOST.

Ward 5 / Councilmember Susan Wilkinson

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, presented the following background:

This project is divided into three tasks:

Task 1: Survey Database -

Croy will provide the professionals services to prepare the design database for the project.

Survey database will be completed and ready for submittal to the Georgia Department of Transportation for review in six (6) months of receiving the NTP. Task 1 Budget: \$454,600.00

Task 2: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Application

Croy assist the City of Smyrna in Grant Writing for the ARC TIP Solicitation. The grant writing proposal comprises the South Cobb Drive Improvements project being considered by the City of Smyrna for the TIP.

The application information is anticipated to be disseminated on October 1, 2021, the deadline for submitting the final application for your review will be within 15 business days from NTP. Task 2 Budget: \$11,750.00.

Task 3: Concept Refinement and Public Involvement

Croy will evaluate the concept for South Cobb Drive Improvements, Alternate #4, and make any necessary modifications due to industry design changes. Task 3 Budget: \$50,000.00.

Councilmember Welch asked if phase 1 is a detailed concept plan for review by the public. Greg Teague of Croy Engineering stated that the City completed the concept corridor study in 2017. Phase 1 would be taking Alternative 4 and refining it to reflect any changes. Councilmember Welch asked if phase 3 is the public input portion of the project. Mr. Teague stated that public input would come after gathering information for the survey database, working with Council and staff, and getting it approved through the Georgia DOT.

Mayor Norton explained that this is part of the money that the City bonded to get started on S. Cobb Drive. The reason the City is being moved up to the front of the

line is because the City has a concept plan, SPLOST funds, dedicated funds, and this allows the City to get started early. Rather than wait 18 months, the City will be considered in the spring.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould asked Mr. Teague to describe the timeline for the project. Mr. Teague stated that if the Council moves forward with this, the survey process will begin while simultaneously working with the City to update the concept and continue to work with Georgia DOT and ARC to get on the regional list. Assuming the City is added to the list in the spring, the City would contract with the Georgia DOT to receive federal and state funding. Then the environmental study would begin, public input would begin, then the project can move forward with approval from the Georgia DOT. Georgia DOT looks favorably on projects that are "shovel ready." Councilmember Wilkinson asked what the City's percentage obligation would be. Mr. Teague stated it varies. If Congress funds the infrastructure bill, then funds will be available, but at this point they do not know what the funding would be. Typically, the City is obligated to provide 20% funding subject to what funding comes available.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson made a motion to approve item AGR2021-10, the agreement with Croy Engineering for survey database services and transportation improvement program application for the South Cobb Drive Improvement Project in the amount of \$516,350.00 to be funded out of 2022 SPLOST; seconded by Councilmember Austin Wagner.

The motion to approve carried with the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Pickens, Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Lindley, Councilmember Welch, Councilmember Wilkinson and Councilmember Gould

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Wheaton

B. [ORD2021-20](#)

Approval of ORD2021-20 to amend the Pawn Shop Ordinance requiring holds for buy transactions (strictly purchases and not pawns other than precious metals, vehicles, titles, and vehicle components) be lifted and authorize the Mayor to sign and execute all related documents.

Ward: City Wide

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, presented the following background:

The key question was whether or not the current requirements stated in the City of Smyrna pawn shop business ordinances, regarding the length of time a pawned or purchased item was required to be held (originally established for the purpose of providing law enforcement ample time to check items for being stolen and be recovered) were unnecessarily lengthy, antiquated, or not in keeping with the speed and efficiency with which information is processed at the present.

As a part of the review process of the pawn policy it was determined that there are second hand businesses in operation in the city, which buy used items and offer them for resale, do not abide by any ordinances for buying and reselling merchandise, while pawn businesses do for the same type transactions (following pawn ordinances). As long as pawn shops continue to maintain their current system of recording pawn and purchase transactions, as specified in the City of Smyrna pawn ordinances, and are vigilant in their efforts to only purchase items from persons and under circumstances they believe or know to be reputable and legitimate, then it is reasonable not to require a holding period unless they are directed to do so by law enforcement.

The City Administration and Police Department support approval of ORD2021-20.

Mayor Norton explained this creates parity and removes the competitive disadvantage with other pawn shops.

Councilmember Travis Lindley made a motion to approve item ORD2021-20, an ordinance to amend the Pawn Shop Ordinance requiring holds for buy transactions (strictly purchases and not pawns other than precious metals, vehicles, titles, and vehicle components) be lifted and authorize the Mayor to sign and execute all related documents; seconded by Councilmember Charles Welch.

The motion to approve carried with the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Pickens, Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Lindley, Councilmember Welch, Councilmember Wilkinson and Councilmember Gould

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Wheaton

C. [2021-475](#)

Approve the implementation of the downtown improvements for the village green area and surrounding streets as shown on the preferred concept plan developed by Pond & Company and upgraded through citizen input as shown on the recommended concept plan dated October 15, 2021.

Ward 3 / Councilmember Travis Lindley

Joe Bennett, City Administrator, presented the following background:

In 2019, the city enlisted Pond & Company to prepare a downtown master plan update that became known as Smyrna B.O.L.D. This study included significant public engagement. Pond implemented a multi-faceted approach to obtain citizen engagement, including a dedicated project website, a community open house, stakeholder interviews, youth council focus groups and attendance at community events to raise awareness of the Smyrna B.O.L.D. effort and gather public input. In addition to this public input, a technical advisory committee including several upper-level city staff members was created and this committee met several times during this initial process. The results of the study were presented to the city in 2020. This plan included a redesign of the village green area. Croy Engineering was asked to take the conceptual plan of the village green area from the Pond study and develop an engineering plan. Subsequently, this conceptual plan developed by Pond was included in the 2022 SPLOST list of projects and highlighted as a key project to be done if the SPLOST passed. The 2022 SPLOST, which included this conceptual plan was overwhelmingly approved by the voters.

On June 21, 2021, the city council voted to move forward with the project. The city formed a downtown redesign task force consisting of council members, citizens, and professionals and reengaged Pond to do a more detailed design of the downtown park space. The city also engaged Croy Engineering to do a traffic study to determine the impact of the traffic network in the area that could result with implementation of the plan. This study concluded that the proposed plan will not adversely impact traffic in the area. Through this process, to get additional public input, Pond conducted additional open houses, and online public input sessions. At the end of this process the committee agreed upon a preferred concept plan that includes improvements to surrounding streets and unanimously recommends this plan to the city. The estimated construction cost of this portion of the project, including the roadway improvements is \$5,698,317.00.

Mayor Norton explained this is not a public hearing, but he will allow public comment. He asked that the comments be held to 1-2 minutes and be only about what is being voted on tonight. Mayor Norton read from a prepared statement:

First of all, I want to express how excited I am for this reimagined, repurposed space. I believe it will not only create a new interactive green space for citizens to enjoy, but also be one piece of the downtown redevelopment puzzle that will lead to increased activity and energy in our city center. And when this happens, restaurants and retailers will come here because they want to be where all of the people are going. What our predecessors did here started a great thing, and now we're building on that and creating something even better for the citizens of Smyrna.

So I want to take a look back and talk about how we got where we are tonight. Almost two years ago in 2019 The BOLD Study was commissioned by Mayor Bacon's administration to look at what improvements could be made to our downtown area. This study provided the council a menu of options to consider if and when any part of the downtown was reimagined, and was based on comments and observations from hundreds of citizens gathered through a variety of forums.

As I visited more than 3,000 doors in the Fall of 2019, and as members of this body also campaigned, we heard loudly from citizens that a priority for them was new energy in our downtown. So I promised to work to bring this new energy – and I believe what we have before us tonight will go a long way towards delivering on that promise and giving the people what they asked for.

In June this council approved the concept plan after hosting public input sessions. The concept was based on the BOLD study and included replacing the roundabout with greenspace, extending King Street to Powder Springs street, a traffic signal at powder springs and Atlanta road, and a parking deck just south of the police station.

Since then we have gone back to the public and asked what you want this new greenspace to look like, and through 9 hours of public input sessions and over a week of online comments, in addition to the hundreds of emails, social media posts and comments, phone calls, and feedback from neighborhood, civic and business group meetings over the past several months, you have spoken. And one thing is clear - there is overwhelming support for this project in our community.

You have showed up in force to give us your feedback on what you want included - and what you do not want included. This plan has received more public input than any other single item in the City's history, and what we are voting on tonight reflects the feedback you gave us. Pond will present the plan here in a moment, but here are some of the highlights that are included that you asked for:

A new green, pedestrian-friendly, interactive space

Shade – 23 new trees will be planted, which is a net gain of trees. Also included are removable shade structures that allow enjoyment of the space year-round while also allowing the space open for large events.

Splash feature and reflecting pool – great interactive feature and compliment to the Veterans Memorial Green

New raised stage platform in front of the community center so that concerts will be

open and everyone will be able to see and enjoy

Plazas and seating areas for everyday enjoyment

Public Art

Bicycle parking areas

Improved handicap accessibility on the east side of the community center

Improved connectivity between the Veterans Memorial Green, the duck pond and arboretum, and the space between the Community center and Atlanta Road

Significantly improved and reduced wait times at Powder Springs and Atlanta road based on an extensive traffic study completed after school began to correctly account for total traffic through the area. And Croy will address that this evening.

We also heard what you did not want:

The SMYRNA letters have been removed from the plan in favor of a mural by the stage instead.

Bathrooms have been removed but infrastructure will be put in if we decide to move forward in the future

Right now we have 3 acres of space with the Veterans Memorial green, the duck pond and arboretum, and the space between the community center and Atlanta Road, and its disjointed by the roundabout and fountain. This plan will connect the entire area and turn it into a pedestrian-friendly activity center which will not only provide citizens with a new space to enjoy but will also encourage businesses to locate here because of the increased activity.

Now let's talk about the budget.

Tonight you'll here from opponents about the budget, and I want to address that right now.

This project is funded by the SPLOST that you voted for in November 2020. In that 2020 SPLOST you approved nearly \$59 million total, which is Smyrna's estimated share of the total of county wide collections over the next six years. And one of the line items was \$13 million for downtown and South Cobb improvements. Nothing delineates this specifically, but the plan was for \$6.5 million for downtown improvements and \$6.5 for South Cobb improvements. Another line item was the parking deck at \$4 million. Nothing planned here takes any money away from South Cobb Drive, which we have made significant progress on and which will remain a top priority.

As originally presented and voted on, this concept included greenspace, the new traffic light, and a public restroom, and had an estimated cost of \$2.5 million. When you add the parking deck, which is \$4 million, the total was \$6.5 million.

This \$6.5 million was included in the bond that we voted on this summer so that we could get started on these projects before SPLOST money started coming in in 2022.

After hearing from the public it is clear that you want more for this space than just replacing the fountain with greenspace – you want features included that will make it great for years to come – and those all come with a price.

Included in the plan we will vote on tonight are all of those features and additions, and the new price tag is a little over \$5 million. When you add the standard 10% budget contingency for unanticipated expenses, the total is \$5.6 million. When you add design costs it gets close to \$6.4 million. With the parking deck included we are close to \$10.5 million, which is exactly what you voted for and approved in November for these line items. Since the voters approved \$6.5 million for downtown improvements, and you have spoken loudly about what you want for this space, and this project falls within that amount, I believe it is this council's obligation to give you what you voted for and what you want. After all, we represent YOU.

The vote tonight is on the details and corresponding budget for the new space replacing the roundabout and the new traffic light – ONLY. We will address the parking deck and the space to the east of the community center in the coming weeks and months, and I am excited about what is to come there as well! If construction costs for the parking deck make 253 spaces cost prohibitive, then I think the council should scale it back to fall within the \$4 million budget with the possibility of adding more spaces at a future date. But I reiterate that the vote tonight is ONLY on the details of the new space replacing the roundabout and the new traffic signal and the corresponding budget.

The Downtown Details Task Force - a diverse, talented group that I appointed and that Councilman Lindley chaired - has worked hard and done a tremendous job over several months to deliver this final product tonight.

And with that, I will turn it over to Andrew with POND for his presentation.

Andrew Kohr, Director of Landscape Architecture with Pond, presented the preferred concept plan.

Highlights:

- Pedestrian plaza at arboretum;*
- Linear Plaza with shade structures opposite the library;*
- Reflecting pool with bubbler and more shade structures;*
- Small parklet area with benches, bicycle parking, small greenspace;*
- Stage/platform area at 4 feet tall with mural;*
- Public art which will be refined in conjunction with the Smyrna Art Council;*
- Shared street is a curbsless street that sits at the same height as the sidewalk designed in such a way as to slow traffic.*

Councilmember Lindley asked Mr. Kohr to set the stage in total going back to 2019. Mr. Kohr stated that in 2019 as part of the Smyrna B.O.L.D. plan they were charged with completing a study to determine what improvements people would like to see for downtown Smyrna as part of the downtown master plan. The study showed people wanted to rethink the space around the roundabout and consider the disjointed areas near there. The study showed people wanted a more cohesive and linked downtown area to bring people together.

Councilmember Welch asked what the net gain/loss would be for parking. Mr. Teague explained that there would be a net loss of about 30 spaces along King Street, but there will be better access for ADA compliance to the Community Center.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Gould asked about the selecting of materials and refining of the plan going forward. Mr. Kohr stated that through the typical design process, the refining of materials and other such details will come in conjunction with working with the task force closely.

Greg Teague of Croy Engineering presented the traffic study.

Highlights when roundabout is removed:

- Western intersections had no noticeable changes;
- Atlanta Rd @ Powder Springs St from 7:30a - 8:30a and 4:30p - 5:30p with the addition of a traffic signal, there is significant improvement;
- Atlanta Rd @ Powder Springs St currently and with no further growth, industry standard states that traffic increases are expected to rise about 2% per year, and therefore, this intersection will likely get worse over time even when nothing is done;

Councilmember Wagner asked if the parking garage was contemplated in the traffic study. Mr. Teague answered that this study does take the parking deck into consideration and that even with it, this intersection still has "A" service.

Councilmember Welch asked what is included in the budget. Mr. Teague answered that it includes the traffic signal at Powder Springs St and Atlanta Rd, the widening of Powder Springs St to accommodate right and left turn lanes, the reconstruction of King Street on the eastern side of the Community Center, the extension of left turn storage of Atlanta Rd, the conversion of Village Green Cir into a right out only, the conversion of the intersection of Bank St and King St to an all-way stop, plus the designs that Mr. Kohr covered previously. Councilmember Welch asked Mr. Teague to discuss what is included for handicap access and improvements into the Community Center. Mr. Teague stated that on the east side of the Community Center along King Street there will be a drop off area and/or handicap parking with a sidewalk that has a 2% grade which meets ADA compliance all the way to the front of the Community Center. The current steps that are there will be eliminated. Additionally, there will be continued elevation of the roadway so there is ADA access to the four doors that are on the side of the Community Center.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked Mr. Teague to speak about the morning traffic and how many cars will be able to line up at the new traffic signal. Mr. Teague stated there is stacking distance for about 5-6 cars to turn left which is more than adequate for the peak times they studied. Councilmember Wilkinson asked about the wait time at the intersection of Powder Springs St and Atlanta Rd. Mr. Teague stated that the average wait time would be a little under eight seconds.

Citizen comments:

*Kristoffer Mellstrom (355 S Sherwood Rd) - Thanks the council for putting the plan forward and is in favor of this project. Asked what the timeline is. Mr. Teague stated that construction would begin in March/April 2022 and completion in early Spring 2023.

*Richard Pecha (2667 Brown Cir) - Does not feel this plan is a necessity and wonders why money is being directed to this project rather than to a hospital to serve the area. He is in opposition to this project.

*Kash Trivedi (3580 S Sherwood Rd) - Excited about this project for his family, especially for his children. Thanks Councilmember Lindley for his transparency throughout the process. He is in favor of this project.

*Joseph Blankenship (1403 Wedmore Ct) - Thanks the Mayor and Council for allowing all of the opportunities for citizens to provide feedback and comments on the project.

He feels this redevelopment will attract businesses and residents. He and his wife are in favor of the project.

**Shaun Martin (2884 Anderson Cir) - Feels the process is flawed and goes against management processes for planning for the City and is in opposition to this project.*

**Robert Harrison (2889 Alexander Street) - Expressed excitement for this project. Reminded the Council that bike racks and benches can be artistic, they do not have to be purchased out of a catalog. He appreciates that they are considering a space for art and is in favor of this project.*

**Michael Power (1020 Karen Court) - Thanks the Council for their transparency. Thinks this a tremendous opportunity for the economy and beautification of the City, and he is in favor of this project.*

**Maryline Blackburn (1034 Huntington Trace Dr) - Co-founder of Sustainable Smyrna founded four years ago to work with Smyrna to better the educational system and social equity. Sustainable Smyrna takes issue with the process and transparency and questions why Councilmembers Welch and Wilkinson were left off of the task force. She is in opposition to this project.*

**Jay Wallace - Stated he is in favor of this project because it not only builds upon what the former Mayor did, but it also helps keep Smyrna competitive with other cities.*

**Mike Smith - Thanks the Mayor, Council, and Pond for making this design a reality. Excited about all of the greenspace and pedestrian friendly areas, especially for his children, and is in favor of this project.*

**Montserrat Knowlton (1367 Poplar Pointe) - Stated she had hoped the vote would not go forward without Councilmember Lewis Wheaton present. Expressed concern that she has asked for the comments from the open houses from the City and from Pond and have not received any of those comments. Expressed concern about the restrooms not being included in the preferred concept plan. She is in opposition to this project.*

**Scott & Kirsten Carlisle (1115 Bank Street) - Mr. Carlisle believes this project will breathe life back into small businesses which give back to the community. Ms. Carlisle stated that being a small business owner herself (daycare), the project will be wonderful for the children. They are in favor of this project.*

**Eddie Carter (1085 Church Street) - Stated that this project builds on what former Mayor Max Bacon started. Stated he looks forward to this project's completion and is in favor of it.*

**Kristi Anderson (1081 Creatwood Cir) - Stated that because of the pandemic, people were not aware of the scope of this project. Feels that nine hours is not enough time for public input for a project of this scope and size. She asked that out of respect for Councilmember Wheaton and out of respect for the fact that one of the open houses was held on a scared Jewish holiday that this vote be tabled in order to allow for more public input.*

**Karen & Sean Garcia (3393 Campbell Rd) - Stated they are the owners of Smyrna Swag. Stated how much they appreciate how thoughtful and deliberate this process has been. Thanked Mayor and Council for their open communication. They are in favor of this project.*

**Cat Sellers (2798 Stonecreek Rd) - Stated she is not convinced about the current plan as it involves destroying not improving an already award winning design; feels no consideration was made for the property purported to be sold to the brewery; the City needs true greenspace, not artificial turf. She is in opposition to this project.*

**Ken Hymes (151 Emisbrook Dr) - Does not believe there is overwhelming support for this project. Feels a 10% contingency is ridiculously low considering the current environment. Wonders if the studies include drainage issues and asked where does this project fit into the Smyrna strategic plan. There are enough questions that Council should pause, fact-find, reconsider, and do their due diligence. He is in opposition to*

this project.

**Derek Porter, Sr. Pastor of First United Methodist Church - Stated that the Mayor and Council are working through this process with integrity and foresight for the community, and he is in favor of this project.*

**Tonya Brinkley (1031 Belmont Commons Dr) - Thanked the Council for tonight's discussion as she feels more informed and is less skeptical of this project, however, she does hope they delay the vote. Stated that her ward representative (Ward 5) has asked for the public comments and has still not received those. Stated she is skeptical of the budget. She feels the current means of communication with the public is inadequate.*

**Jill Gordon-Evans (371 Hickory Acres) - Stated she is for moving forward with the redesign. Does not agree with selling the property next to the Community Center to a brewery; does not like the idea of artificial turf. Urged the Council to consider further refining their plans.*

**Slade Gullledge (1355 Twin Oaks Cir) - Stated that it took visionary leadership to bring forward a plan like this and is in favor of it.*

**Keith Bentley (2651 Gilbert Street) - Stated he and his wife moved to Smyrna about 15 years ago in search of a new lifestyle. He and his wife are in favor of this project because this redesign allows for a more people/pedestrian-friendly environment.*

**Mike Mitchell (1181 Church Street) - Thanked the Mayor and Council for this project. Expressed that nostalgia seems to be at the root of why people are against this project, but he believes nostalgia does not mean conclusion. Anything the City can do to strengthen connectivity, community, and safety is a good thing. Stated he is very proud of the Mayor and Council. He is in favor of this project.*

**Jean Manki (3388 Pretty Branch Drive) - Thanked the Council for considering the trees on King Street and for adding 23 new trees to this plan. She asked that the Council consider something innovative with the landscape plan to include native trees and plants to support the environment - the birds, bees, and butterflies, etc.*

Councilmember Lindley, Chairperson of the Downtown Redesign Details Task Force, read from a prepared statement:

As a lifetime Smyrna native, it is a great privilege to serve my community through this Council. My family can attest to the vast changes in this Community. Much has changed over the last 28 years since the downtown revitalization began. In fact, very little is the same as it was in 1993. In this building alone, there are various versions of what the downtown was to look like when completed. As with our community, it has evolved and just as officials did in the early 1990's – we are obligated to listen to the calls for change and this redesign. I proudly serve Ward 3, which includes downtown. I have received many calls for the redesign – calls for more reasons to stay in Smyrna / things to do in our downtown. I believe we have a charge to listen to the majority and always be looking forward.

In June, the Council approved a concept and the Downtown Redesign Taskforce was established. I wish to thank the taskforce for their work. This group included subject matter experts that met six times. Two initial concepts were offered by Pond & Company as a starting point. The taskforce was charged to develop a final plan for recommendation following public input.

As a taskforce, we placed great emphasis on public engagement – over 9 hours of in-person open public comment were held, 9 days of online public comment. Aside from this effort, there have been many opportunities for engagement.

The concept before council tonight is in line with the results of the BOLD study and the majority of public comment and messages we have received.

On a personal note, like many, I attended the Saturday, October 9 – City Birthday Celebration – over 25,000 of our friends and neighbors celebrated this great community event. This is yet another example of the growth and opportunities we have in Smyrna.

I am pleased with the work of the taskforce and the plan they have recommended to the council for approval this evening and look forward to what is obviously a bright future for Smyrna.

Councilmember Wilkinson discussed the timeline from 2019 forward. The present plan that Pond presented has good elements, but she feels other options should have been available in order to develop something everyone would have liked. She agrees that the downtown area needs some refreshing, but she is concerned that this project and the S. Cobb Drive project are combined on the same line item project with SPLOST. She feels S. Cobb Drive deserves more funding.

Councilmember Welch stated that he does not support this project. He believes it to be a good plan from Croy Engineering and Pond, but he simply does not believe the changes are needed because the existing downtown is only 30 years old. He does believe the downtown area needs some updating, but he does not think that it should be wiped out because this current design is what put Smyrna on the map. The plan that they were originally presented with had a budget of \$6.5 million and included everything seen tonight plus a 250 space parking deck, destruction of the existing records building, restrooms, and the traffic circle park. He stated that the task force's current plans added \$3 million to the overall budget, but that is not what is being reported. Mr. Welch's estimations include \$6.5 million for phase 1, \$4 million for the parking deck, \$250,000.00 for restrooms, \$50,000.00 for the demolition of the records building, and 10% contingency which results in a \$5,297,000.00 for phase 2 bringing the grand total for the whole project to \$11,797,600.00.

Mayor Norton explained that the project will be a total of \$10.5 million with \$6.5 million being for phase 1 and \$4 million being for the parking deck; the numbers presented by Mr. Welch are inflated and include items that have been removed from the budget.

Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Gould thanked the public for being present. He supports this plan for two main reasons: 1) economic development, and 2) for creation of vital space that can be used year-round. Businesses want to be here because they know what the City wants to do here. Small businesses are the lifeblood of our community because they donate to our local schools and employ many people. This project is one small part of the economic development plan, and the economic development plan is part of a long-term strategic plan. The City needs to keep moving forward and bring creative and bold ideas. The provided plan includes pedestrian-friendly space and greenspace that can be used year-round.

Councilmember Pickens expressed that he has been in support of the project since the beginning. He feels that the downtown is currently disjointed and separated into three different sections. The Downtown Market Village and Veterans' Memorial areas are always packed. The roundabout is often a ghost town. The downtown area needs to be reinvigorated. Restaurants and shops will not come here if there is no place for people to gather.

Councilmember Wagner stated that he supports the design. He wanted a more pedestrian-friendly area, more family-friendly spaces, and this design takes all of that into consideration and achieves that goal. He thanks Councilmember Lindley and Pond and Croy for their hard work. He believes there have been problems with the process and the decisions that have been made. The land next to the Community Center and the parking deck have not been part of the conversation leading up to this vote. He is concerned about the S. Cobb Drive project. He expressed frustration with those opposed to the project because of misinformation that is being spread. He has been conflicted with this vote - it is a worthy investment and a net gain for the City, but he does not think the Council should be moving forward with this piece without conversations about the surrounding pieces. He moved to table this at the appropriate time.

Councilmember Wilkinson stated that there are some traffic aspects being included in the project that are good traffic calming measures that could move forward regardless of the approval of this project. The current design offers a lot of flexibility, there could have been other options that would have worked for the community. She attended the public input meetings at Brawner Hall, and she stated that she was bombarded by people against the plan. She expressed she wanted to be able to read the comment cards from the open houses, and she still has not received those comment cards.

Councilmember Welch stated that he would be happy to give a copy of his numbers to those who would be interested.

Councilmember Lindley stated he was pleased to be able to present the recommendation of the Downtown Redesign Detail Task Force, and he moved to approve the item at the appropriate time.

A motion was made by Councilmember Austin Wagner to table item 2021-475 for the implementation of the downtown improvements for the village green area and surrounding streets as shown on the preferred concept plan developed by Pond & Company and upgraded through citizen input as shown on the recommended concept plan dated October 15, 2021; seconded by Councilmember Charles Welch.

The motion to table was a tie and Mayor Norton broke the tie with a vote in the negative. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 3 - Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Welch and Councilmember Wilkinson

Nay: 4 - Mayor Norton, Councilmember Pickens, Councilmember Lindley and Councilmember Gould

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Wheaton

A motion was made by Councilmember Travis Lindley to approve item 2021-475 for the implementation of the downtown improvements for the village green area and surrounding streets as shown on the preferred concept plan developed by Pond & Company and upgraded through citizen input as shown on the recommended concept plan dated October 15, 2021; seconded by Councilmember Glenn Pickens.

The motion to approve carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Councilmember Pickens, Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Lindley and Councilmember Gould

Nay: 2 - Councilmember Welch and Councilmember Wilkinson

Absent: 1 - Councilmember Wheaton

7. Commercial Building Permits:

There were no commercial building permits.

8. Consent Agenda:

Councilmember Travis Lindley made a motion to approve the consent agenda as read; seconded by Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Tim Gould.

The motion to approve carried with the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Councilmember Pickens, Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Lindley, Councilmember Welch, Councilmember Wilkinson and Councilmember Gould

Absent: 2 - Mayor Norton and Councilmember Wheaton

- A. [MIN2021-74](#) Approval of the October 4, 2021 Pre-Council Meeting Minutes.
- B. [MIN2021-71](#) Approval of the October 4, 2021 Mayor and Council Meeting Minutes.
- C. [2021-468](#) Approval of Mayor's appointment to the Smyrna Tree Board, Mr. Jeff Carter, to fulfill term expiring August 2024.
Ward: City Wide
- D. [2021-441](#) Approval to allow Belmont Hills Elementary School to host a Character Parade on October 29, 2021 from 9:00 - 9:20 AM, utilizing a temporary road closure of Glendale Place (272 feet).
Ward 5 / Susan Wilkinson
- E. [2021-457](#) Approval to award the contract for RFQ 22-012 for San Fernando Drive water line replacement to K.M. Davis Contracting Co. Inc., 3259 Austell Rd., Marietta, GA 30008 in the amount of \$574,792.30 (labor and materials) to be funded out of the FY 2022 Water CIP fund.
Ward 5 / Councilmember Susan Wilkinson
- F. [2021-460](#) Approval to purchase a 2022 Ford F-550 with 11' Duraclass Contractor Dump Body from Wade Ford, 3860 South Cobb Drive, Smyrna, GA 30080, through the City of Atlanta contract # 99999-001-SPD0000155. This will be funded by the FY 2022 CIP Vehicle Replacement Fund for a total cost of \$74,320.00.
Ward: City Wide
- G. [2021-465](#) Approval of "No Parking" signs along Woodland Terrace beginning at

Spring Road and ending at Galleria Manor complex.

Ward 1 / Councilmember Glenn Pickens

9. Ward / Committee Reports:

Councilmember Pickens thanked those that came out tonight. It was a great discussion.

Councilmember Wagner had no report.

Councilmember Lindley stated he had the distinct pleasure to attend the Rose Garden Festival. Last night a number of people got to participate in the Secrets of Smyrna put on by the local arts community. He hopes they will continue to that program in the future.

Councilmember Welch had no report.

Councilmember Wilkinson thanked those from ward 5 for their involvement and time. Councilmember/Mayor Pro Tem Gould also thanked those for coming and advocating for their point of view. He, too, joined the Secrets of Smyrna tour hosted by the Arts Council. He looks forward to future events.

Mayor Norton thanked those who attended College Football Saturday. There was a great crowd. Another is planned for November 13 and in December when the SEC Championship will be played. He thanked Richard Garland and staff for their hard work. Joe Bennett, City Administrator, wanted to put into record the timeline for the comment cards. Online comments ended on September 26; Pond was diligent in providing a percentage on October 5; Councilmember Wilkinson requested a copy of the public comments on October 12; Mr. Bennett contacted Pond on October 13; October 14 the City Attorney requested that he be able to review those comments so he could redact any personal information; Mr. Bennett heard from the City Attorney on October 18 and then sent the request for the copies to Pond.

10. Show Cause Hearings:

There were no show cause hearings.

11. Citizen Input:

Richard Pecha (Brown Cir)- Stated he feels like the City is turning into an entertainment center. The City is making every effort to displace a church to place a brewery near it. The City cannot even mow the lawn behind his property. He wondered why a Councilmember that is an engineer was not appointed to the Downtown Redesign Detail Task Force.

David Lincoln (Parkwood Road) - Stated he thinks the Council made a mistake. He wished that Councilmember Wheaton were able to vote so Mayor Norton did not have to be the tiebreaker. He stated it seems like the brewery is the driver for this whole design of the project. There should be a park in the city center, there should not be a brewery in the city center, the City should concentrate on greenspace.

Montserrat Knowlton (1367 Poplar Point) - She would like the City to focus on S. Cobb Drive, not on downtown.

Kristi Anderson (1081 Creatwood Cir) - Asked them not to allow a brewery on the land next to the Community Center.

Shaun Martin (2884 Anderson Cir) - Stated that it is a shame that there is so much

division.

12. Adjournment:

Mayor Derek Norton adjourned the October 18, 2021 meeting of the Mayor and Council at 9:52 PM.