

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2015
7:00 p.m.

The Peachtree City Mayor and Council met in regular session on Thursday, August 20, 2015. Mayor Vanessa Fleisch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Others attending: Terry Ernst, Eric Imker, and Mike King. Kim Learnard was unable to attend due to a work commitment.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Police Chief Janet Moon was sworn in by Mayor Fleisch. Siblings James and Emily McMillian received "Saved by the Belt" certificates from Lt. Matt Myers. They were passengers a golf cart involved in a car-golf cart accident on June 30, and both were wearing after-market seat belts that had been installed on the golf cart.

Minutes

August 6, 2015, Regular Council Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2015, Special Called Meeting Minutes – 7:30 a.m.

August 13, 2015, Special Called Meeting Minutes – 6:30 p.m.

King moved to approve the August 6, 2015, regular meeting minutes; August 13, 2015, special called meeting minutes – 7:30 a.m.; and the August 13, 2015, special called meeting minutes – 6:30 p.m. as written. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Consider Easement for Leedy Property

2. Consider Purchase of Scan Tool with Budget Adjustment & Reallocations

Ernst moved to approve Consent Agenda items 1 and 2. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

06-15-08 Discuss/Consider SR 54 West Corridor Study Improvements Design

- **Commerce Drive / Marketplace (Discuss right-in/right-out concept for business input)**

City Manager Jon Rorie asked Council to continue this agenda item until the September 17 meeting. A meeting with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) was scheduled Tuesday, August 25, in Thomaston.

King moved to continued agenda item 06-15-08 Discuss/Consider SR 54 West Corridor Study Improvements Design [Commerce Drive / Marketplace (Discuss right-in/right-out concept for business input)] until September 17. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

07-15-02 Consider Adoption of FY 2016 Budget Resolution

Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore noted the workshops and public hearing had been held. The budget was ready for adoption.

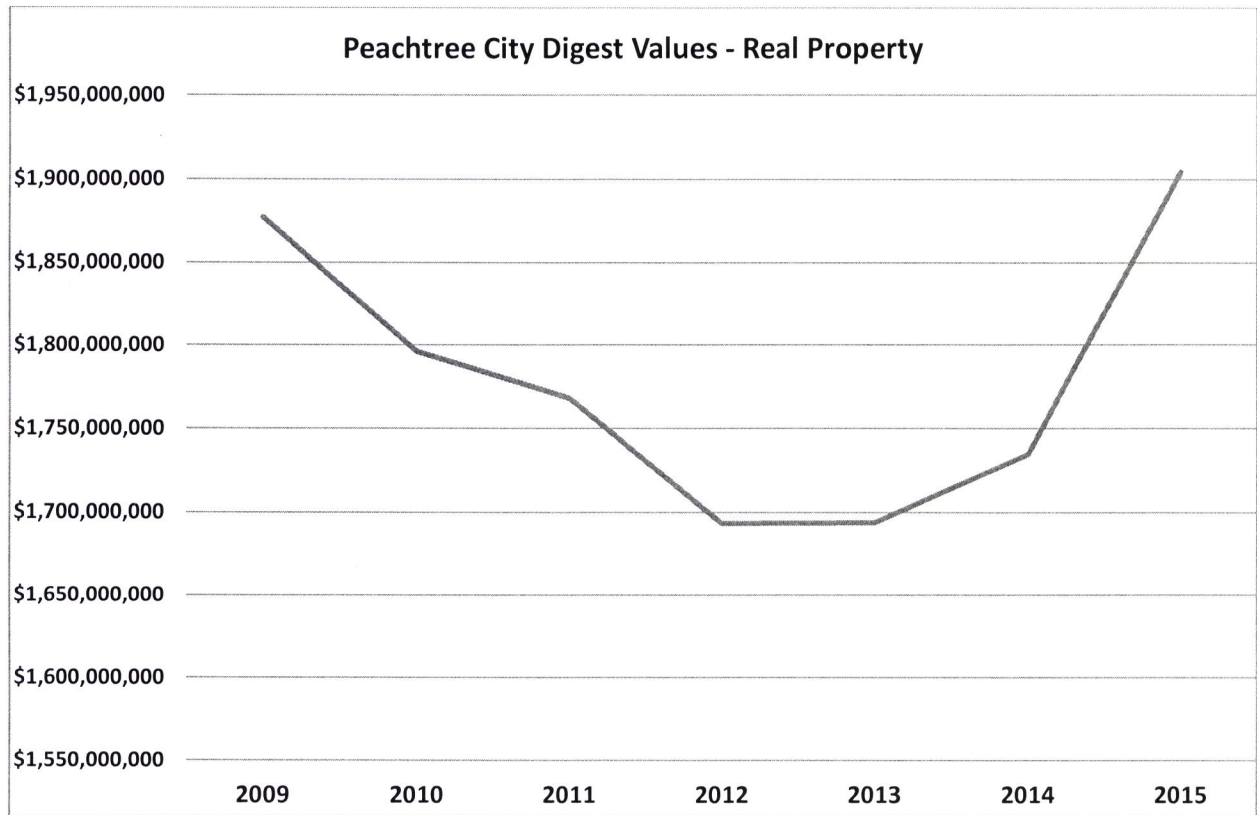
King moved to approve the agenda item 07-15-02 Consider Adopt of FY 2016 Budget Resolution. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-15-04 Public Hearing – Consider Millage Rate for 2016 (3rd of 3 hearings)

Salvatore said this was the third and final public hearing required when there was not a full rollback of the millage rate. The maintenance and operation portion of the millage rate would stay the same – 6.756 mills. The bond rate would be reduced from 0.332 mills to 0.314 mills.

Salvatore continued that those property owners who had seen an increase in the assessed value of their property would experience a tax increase. For every \$1,000 increase in the fair market value of property, a tax bill would increase by \$2.70. The average increase in assessed values of real property in the City was 9.5%. For properties previously valued at \$200,000, the tax increase would be \$51.44, based on this average.

Salvatore noted that the tax digest was now where it had been prior to the recession, and the graph below illustrated that point:



Fleisch opened the public hearing. No one spoke for or against the proposed millage rate. The public hearing closed.

No action was required for this agenda item.

New Agenda Items

08-15-05 Consider Adoption of 2016 Millage Rate

Ernst moved to approve New Agenda item 08-15-05 Consider Adoption of 2016 Millage. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

King noted that New Agenda items 08-15-06, 08-15-07, 08-15-08, and 08-15-09 were to be continued or withdrawn, asking if they could be voted on at the same time. City Attorney Ted Meeker said they needed to be voted on separately. There had been some changes on the dates.

Rast said the date for New Agenda item 08-15-06 had to change from what was in the meeting packet due to the applicant's schedule. He continued that the rezoning and the variance for the request had to be re-advertised. The public hearing would have to move to October 15.

08-15-06 Public Hearing – Consider Rezoning, R-43 to LUC, Hwy 54/Robinson Road

Imker moved to continue New Agenda item 08-15-06 Public Hearing – Consider Rezoning, R-43 to LUC, Hwy 54/Robinson Road to the October 15 meeting. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-15-07 Public Hearing – Consider Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Accessory Uses

Imker moved to continue New Agenda item 08-15-07 Public Hearing – Consider Text Amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Accessory Uses until September 17. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-15-08 Public Hearing – Step Two Annexation Request, Bradshaw Property, SR 54 East

This item was withdrawn by the applicant. No action was required.

08-15-09 Public Hearing – Variance Requests, Sigvaris, 1119 S SR 74

Imker moved to continue New Agenda item 08-15-09 Public Hearing – Variance Requests, Sigvaris, 1119 S SR 74 to September 3. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-15-10 Discuss Vegetation in Lake Peachtree

Rorie said that, after the presentation, staff would ask for specific direction from Council in terms of moving forward. Giving a brief overview, he noted that the lake had been originally drained in early 2014 for seawall and dock maintenance. A discussion of the vegetation growth had been held in February, and the belief was the non-aquatic vegetation would die off once it was submerged in the water, but it could lead to an environmental challenge and fish kill. The cost estimate from Massana, the dredging company selected by Fayette County, had been \$181,000 to hand cut and remove approximately 45 acres of vegetation (the lake was 200 acres), which was an exorbitant cost. There was concern that cutting the growth too soon created an opportunity for regrowth prior to refilling the lake.

Rorie showed several photos that showed the growth of the vegetation over the area of the lake that was not included in the dredging. Massana needed to build another haul road to remove dredging material from Zone 4 and to dredge the area known as the Pinecrest boat ramp. The County had agreed to take on the \$28,000 cost to remove two feet around the Pinecrest boat ramp. As a result, the timeline for the dredging would be extended. Rorie said he had contacted the County Administrator to find out when the work would be finished, noting that people seldom mentioned that Lake Peachtree was also a collection point for stormwater throughout the City. There had been many delays due to rain, not only because of the storms but because of the stormwater drainage from multiple streams into the lake bed, which delayed work beyond the single day of a rain event. The anticipated date for the contractor to be out of the lakebed was now October 19, barring any more weather delays.

The question now was how to move forward in a timely manner knowing there was vegetation and while the dredging still occurring, Rorie noted. Staff had gone on a reconnaissance mission earlier in August, according to Rorie. They found some of the vegetation exceeded eight feet in height. There was not an average depth across the lakebed. Some areas of the lake were three to four feet deep, while others were seven to 10 feet. The normal pool of the lake was seven feet, and the height of some of the vegetation was 10 feet

Rorie said he had been asked many times why the City could not just go out and mow the lake. Public Works Superintendent Scott Hicks had taken a tractor onto the lake bed to mow, and the tractor had gotten stuck in a grass-covered area, but the base was marshy mush, where the water collected. There were sections of the lakebed that were dry, and there were sections that were soggy and wet. The tractor weighed 6,400 pounds and had become mired up to its axles after 15 minutes of mowing, and it took one hour to retrieve the tractor from the lake. The cost of replacing the equipment would have been \$115,000 if the tractor could not have been retrieved. Rorie said he was not willing to commit the City's heavy equipment for a fish habitat. It was not a question of if the equipment would get stuck; it was a question of when.

Recreation and Special Events Administrator Cajen Rhodes discussed restocking the lake. The Wildlife Resources Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was very familiar with the lakes in the City and had records on them. The DNR staff had planned to electrofish (using electricity to stun fish before they were caught, a common scientific survey method used to sample fish populations to determine abundance, density, and species composition) in sections of the lake; however, the trailer and boat sank in the muddy lake bed during the two attempts to enter it. As an alternate, Rhodes and the DNR staff waded into the lake and cast nets to determine what fish were in the lake, finding bluegill and shad. Rhodes said the bluegills were spawning. When their body of water shrinks, Rhodes said fish usually went into survival mode, so it was a good sign that the fish were reproducing, but it had been a very small sample.

Rhodes read from a letter written by Fisheries Biologist Brent Hess that had recommendations for restocking, which included leaving new vegetation in place for an instant fish habitat. Hess recommended the filling of the lake should begin in the fall to minimize potential detrimental effects of flooded vegetation on water quality. He also recommended removing all undesirable fish from the immediate watershed before refilling, which could mean the eradication of the fish that were still in the lake.

Rhodes continued that placing gravel underneath and around piers and docks improved fishing. Rock materials were great fish attractors. Fish habitat structures also included concrete rubble piles, crates, wooden pallets, and wooden stake beds. The fish habitats should be installed within easy casting distance of the bank.

The DNR officials encouraged the consideration of public access, suggesting the construction of fishing piers that reached far enough into the water to provide bank anglers with access to several types of fish habitat. Most of the shoreline should also be available to bank anglers. There should be one public boat ramp with plenty of parking for boating and bank users. The fishing facilities should include designated handicap access.

Rhodes added that the DNR recommended shading and sterile grass carp to help control the vegetation. Five sterile grass carp per acre should be added to the lake to control the weeds, and they would be added in in phases. Rorie added that the County had committed \$10,000 to purchase grass carp. Rhodes said the state had also provided recommended vendors.

Dan Davis of Integrated Science & Engineering (ISE) and John Vermont of Corblu Ecology Group discussed the lake's ecology. Davis said they would explain what would happen from a water chemistry standpoint and its impact. He introduced Vermont, saying they had worked together for 25 years.

Vermont said there were biological and chemical issues with letting the vegetation stay in place in the lake, including the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). The water in the lake must have

oxygen for the fish, as well as for the taste of the water and to help the water chemistry stay in balance. Dissolved oxygen was typically higher in the winter. In the summer when the temperatures were hot and the winds were low, the dissolved oxygen was typically very low. In a lake system, aquatic weeds generally produced some oxygen, which was good. In the lakebed situation in place now, wetland and upland plants had colonized.

When the lake was refilled, the upland plants should die quickly, Vermont said. The organic matter left was acted on by bacteria that used a great deal of oxygen to break it down. The oxygen was used up quickly in a lake system like Lake Peachtree's and could lead to a fish kill. It was best to be done in stages, so there was some concern. If the vegetation was left in place, there could be a big spike in BOD, which would suck all the oxygen out of the water and possibly lead to a fish kill. Vermont said he did not know the state the fish were in, but there was a lot of dark mud in the lake, which retained heat. The dead stalks from the upland vegetation would stand up in the water as hard sticks for two to three years, according to Vermont, which was bad for recreation.

The black willow trees were another problem Vermont said. The willows were a wetlands plant, but there were big patches of them in the lakebed, and they could survive for years. The lake would not look like an open water lake if they were left, and there could be a problem for the fish even if things were done just right. The fish population would re-establish quickly. Grass carp were a good idea, but the numbers had to be controlled. Once the carp had eaten all the vegetation, they would eat the fish eggs.

Vermont added that the BOD would turn the vegetation into the kind of goo found in a lawnmower when wet grass was mown, and the mower was not cleaned. It smelled bad, looked bad, and caused water quality problems.

City Engineer Dave Borkowski looked at the options/consequences of what could be done to address the vegetation. One option was to do nothing. The pros included cost avoidance, instant fish habitat, and natural decay of the vegetation. The cons included a possible fish kill, water quality problems, aesthetics, delays in refilling the lake, and water circulation problems. Borkowski said the vegetation was very thick, and the water would not be able to circulate very well at all.

The Cut in Place (cutting the vegetation but leaving it in the lake bed) option had a reduced cost, but it would create floating debris, which would create water quality and aesthetic issues.

The Cut and Burn option also reduced the cost, allowed for use of the existing haul road, and involved less organics. The cons included the impact on wildlife, smoke, ash fall-out, traffic impact, a six-week delay (the state burn ban did not end until September 30), and staffing costs. Borkowski explained the proximity of the smoke to SR 54, could require police to assist with the traffic, as well as firefighters to help with the burn.

Fire Chief Joe O'Connor noted the most recent experience with a large-scale burn in this area was when Lake McIntosh was being constructed. Most of the vegetation had been taken to the Coweta County side of the lake and burned. There had been many complaints about the smoke. O'Connor said the vegetation should burn if it was dry enough, adding that the state's Forestry Department did not think the vegetation would burn in place, but would have to be cut and moved above the water table. Rorie asked if staff would have to be in place during the burn process. O'Connor said they would.

The Cut and Remove option would be better for water quality, had less organics, better aesthetics, and the fish could be restocked sooner because the biomass would be gone, Borkowski noted. The cons were the high cost, delays in refilling the lake (10 to 20 work days to accomplish the task), and less fish habitat.

Borkowski discussed a hybrid approach and the cost variations between the Massana bid and the alternative. The hybrid would meet what everyone wanted and would mitigate the possibility of a fish kill. He noted the Massana bid to remove 44 acres of vegetation had a unit price of \$4,000 per acre to hand cut and remove the vegetation. Zone 1 was 10 acres, with an estimate of \$40,000; Zone 2 was 24 acres, with an estimate of \$96,000; Zone 3 was one acre, with an estimate of \$4,000; and Zone 4 was nine acres, with an estimate of \$36,000. The mobilization cost was \$5,000 for a total of \$181,000 to cut the vegetation on 44 acres in the 200-acre lake.

Estate Management Services was the alternative, and removing lake vegetation was their job. The company had specialized equipment that would not get stuck. Borkowski said the costs were \$465/acre to cut and leave in place, \$595/acre to cut and mulch in place, and \$3,100/day to collect the floating debris with a mechanical plant harvester that was designed for that type of work.

The net sum acreage of vegetation that had to cut was 101.3 acres, according to Borkowski. The estimated cost was \$46,965 for the Cut and Leave in Place option, \$60,095 for the Cut and Mulch in Place option, and an estimated three days (\$3,100/day) for getting the floating debris out with the plant harvester. Borkowski said there was a possibility the company would have to return a couple of times after the initial effort to remove the floating debris. Fleisch asked how deep the lake had to be to use the machines. Borkowski said the lake had to be deep enough to inundate the majority of the lake, so everything would float.

Imker said he did not see the Cut and Mulch in Place as an option, adding that having the debris scooped out by the harvester seemed better. Borkowski agreed, saying staff recommended that, regardless of the option Council selected, the harvester be used to collect the debris that had floated to the top of the water. Fleisch said that mulching it would make the debris even smaller. Imker said this option was \$60,000, and he recommended sending the bill to the County.

Rorie said one of the recommendations from DNR was the eradication of the fish currently in the lake. Leaving some of the vegetation in the lake created instant fish habitats. There was also the ecological concern regarding leaving too much vegetation in the lake, which led to increased BOD, which could lead to a fish kill. There was a probability of a fish kill with all the options, and the City could not stop it. Another question from staff was whether the bluegill could be caught and moved to another lake.

Vermont said the City could do that, but it must have a permit. Moving fish from one body of water to another could not be done without a specific permit. He explained that the issues with Asian carp and kudzu were all caused by well-meaning people. When a lake was restocked, there was a specific balance to provide the right number of prey fish and predator fish. Dumping in other fish skewed those ratios. If the City wanted to move all the trophy bluegill to another body of water, it could be done with a permit, but it would not accomplish much.

Rorie said he did not want Council to make a financial commitment at this meeting. Staff just wanted to have the discussion so Council could see how everything intersected. Council could keep the cutting to the original 44 acres, just cutting back 100 to 200 feet from the shore and

leaving what was in the center to create fish habitat. The vegetation would die eventually. Vermont said most of the vegetation would die within a year.

Rorie said he did not recommend killing fish, but there was a chance to reduce the probability of a fish kill by reducing the vegetation. He asked Council to consider what they wanted to have as the end product. Rorie said he did not think Council wanted a lake with trees sticking up or filled with vegetation. The lake must also serve as a stormwater basin, while providing recreational opportunities.

Rorie asked for specific direction from Council, saying staff had already reduced the cost from approximately \$180,000 to \$60,000. They had found a more efficient and effective way to do it, but that did not mean it would be instant gratification or an instant solution. It would take time.

Rorie asked Council to allow staff to develop a true cost alternative. If that was the direction from Council, he would like to top it off with an official request to the County to fund the work.

Fleisch agreed that the County should fund removing the vegetation. She asked if the vegetation could be removed while Massana was still dredging. Rorie said yes. He would bring this item back for action on September 3. The City did not have to put out a bid or a request for proposal (RFP). Estate Management Services was a Georgia company, as well as a specialist company, and the City could brand name/sole source the project. They would need four to six weeks' notice, which would be in October. Council consensus was to follow that plan.

Imker asked if there were any funds in the FY 2016 budget for Lake Peachtree other than for additional attorney fees. Rorie said there were not. Imker said he considered repopulation of the fish a low priority as far as getting the job done. There would still be enough vegetation for the fish to survive after the work was done. He agreed the bill should be sent to the County.

08-15-11 Consider Unbudgeted Expenditure of Funds – Fire Department

O'Connor said this item represented good news for the City. The state, through the Fire Marshal's office, had made records management software available to all jurisdictions at no cost, which would allow the Department to make the change with the ongoing costs significantly lowered by approximately 20%. The short-term cost was to acquire the connection to the Fayette County 911 system was a \$5,000 one-time cost. The ongoing yearly cost would be \$1,750, which would replace the \$7,200 annual cost currently budgeted. The funds were available within the Fire Department budget. Staff needed authorization to reallocate those dollars.

Ernst moved to approve New Agenda item 08-15-11 Consider Unbudgeted Expenditure of Funds – Fire Department. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

Rorie asked Moon to briefly discuss her assessment so far of the Police Department. Moon said she had been in office for nine days and had observed a few things. She believed in community policing, which meant building community partnerships and problem solving. There were 42 homeowners associations in the five villages, which was an opportunity to infuse officers into those areas to let residents put a face with an officer and possibly have an officer assigned to an area. A better job needed to be done in implementing a strategy for succession planning in the department. Supervisors needed to be more proactive in decision making and critical thinking skills. Their training should build those skillsets, so when it was time for Moon to leave the job, the City would not have to look outside the Department and could continue the legacies that were in place. She encouraged officers to obtain higher education. They had to broaden their knowledge base so they could assume more responsibility as they started to grow. She had

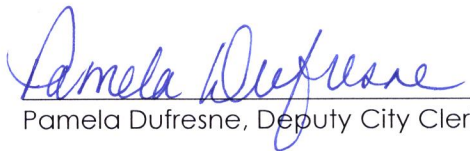
also identified some bureaucratic processes that slowed efficiency. It should not take seven days for a complaint to get to her desk so Moon could contact the first-line supervisor to do their job of addressing the situation and informing the citizen of the resolution of the complaint. The processes needed to be streamlined. Supervisors should be empowered to make decisions. When the form hit her desk, Moon said all she should have to do was to sign off on whether she agreed or not, then take any further action needed. Moon said she had received her packet from the New Neighbors League, and the representative told her they had a list of all new residents. Moon had asked for the list with the intent to send an officer to the new resident's home to introduce themselves, give the resident a business card, and serve as their personal police officer. Moon said she was still in the "wait, see, and listen" mode. She appreciated the support she had received.

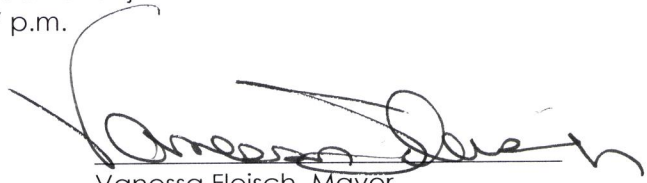
Executive Session

Imker moved to go into executive session for personnel and pending or threatened litigation at 8:31 p.m. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Imker moved to reconvene in regular session at 8:55 p.m. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn. Ernst seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.


Pamela Dufresne, Deputy City Clerk


Vanessa Fleisch, Mayor