

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2009
7:00 p.m.

The City Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, August 20, 2009. Mayor Pro Tem Steve Boone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Other Council Members attending were Don Haddix, Cyndi Plunkett, and Doug Sturbaum. Mayor Logsdon was unable to attend.

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

Wade Williams, chairman of the Peachtree City Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA), introduced the WASA General Manager Steve Hogan. Stony Lohr from the Peachtree City Optimist Club presented a check for reflective safety vests for the volunteer firefighters to keep in their vehicles. Boone recognized Employee of the Month Terry Blackburn.

Public Comment

There were none.

Agenda Changes

There were none.

Minutes

Sturbaum moved to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2009, regular meeting. Haddix seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

1. Consider Radar Permit Update
2. Consider Request to Surplus Goods
3. Consider Easements for Georgia Power for SR 74 – Phase 2
4. Consider License Assignment Agreement – Tennis Center Pro Shop

Plunkett moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

06-08-08 Consider Amendments to OS Open Space Zoning Ordinance

City Attorney Ted Meeker noted that, although the agenda did not indicate it as such, this was a public hearing and had been properly advertised as such.

City Planner David Rast addressed Council, saying staff had brought this item to Council in December, but there were some items staff was asked to look at regarding buffer separations between the uses permitted in the Open Space (OS) district and adjacent residential districts. Rast said staff looked at the requirements for transition yards adjoining residential property (a 75-foot undisturbed buffer), which established the separation discussed in December and any adjoining development, and had referenced that requirement in the ordinance.

Rast explained that staff was recommending adopting two OS categories – Open Space - Conservation (OSC) and Open Space - Public (OSP). The next step would be to bring specific parcels of OS property to Council for appropriate rezoning.

Rast then presented examples of OS zoning in Kedron Village, including the natural branches feeding Lake Kedron, the fire station and water tower at Crabapple Lane, and the elementary schools. Rast said staff would propose that the natural greenbelt areas separating uses be rezoned to OSC, while the OS sites used for public facilities would be proposed as OSP. Those would be brought back to the Planning Commission and Council at a later time.

Hearing no comment, Boone closed the hearing. Sturbaum asked if this closed the issue about churches that was raised in December. Rast said yes, but noted that the changes often spurred new questions for other districts. Plunkett said the change tightened up the uses permitted in the OSP category.

Plunkett moved to approve the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Open Space. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

07-09-04 Public Hearing – Consider Variance to Building Setback, 123 Crown Court

Plunkett moved to continue the item indefinitely based on the correspondence received from the applicant. Haddix seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-09-10 Public Hearing – Discuss Millage Rates for 2009

Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore gave a presentation (included in the Official Meeting File) on the proposed millage rate. The current millage was 5.122 for maintenance and operations (M&O) and 0.411 for bonds, totaling 5.533 mills. Staff was proposing a .25 increase to the M&O and reducing the bond millage rate by 0.012, for a net increase of 0.237 to 5.771 mills. This would require no projected use of cash reserves for the 2010 budget and maintain a projected fund balance at \$9.4 million (or 36%). Salvatore said if the millage rate were left at the existing 5.533 mills, the 2010 fund balance would decrease to 34%.

Salvatore explained staff's reasons for the proposed increase, saying the proposed FY 2010 budget included eight new public safety employees (two for Police and six for Fire). There had also been several expenditures made over the years, including the Library bond and the addition of 27 new full time and 10 part-time employees in Public Safety since 2006 with no corresponding increase in taxes to cover those costs.

Staff was also looking forward to 2011, at which time they were proposing to reinstate the employee raises. The increase would also help fund paving costs if the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, which expired in March 2010, was not renewed by the voters. Finally, the 2009 Resident Survey supported a modest increase to help maintain service levels.

Salvatore then reviewed a property tax bill with the proposed millage rates county-wide, noting that the Peachtree City portion only comprised 16.5% of the total bill. Fayette County taxes

made up another 15.5%, with the State receiving 0.7% and the Fayette County Board of Education receiving 67.2%.

Frances Meaders was in favor of the increase, saying the City needed to keep its standards. Rich Granger asked about the justification, noting 27 positions added were not a net increase because another 30 employees had been let go.

Salvatore said the reduction in force was implemented to balance against the reduced revenues during 2009 (lower sales taxes, interest revenue, and building permits). City Manager Bernard McMullen said Granger was correct about the net effect, but without the reduction in force, staff would be asking for a much higher millage increase.

Beth Pullias supported the increase, saying there had not been an increase in four years and this would prevent use of cash reserves.

Robert Brown asked what the target reserve rate was. Salvatore said the minimum was 20%. Brown said the City was 16% above the minimum, and that left a lot of room. Brown said the reserve was in place to get the City through down periods, which the country was currently experiencing. He felt the City should not raise taxes during a bad economy merely to maintain an inflated reserve level. Brown asked what the total number of City employees was at present compared to 2006. Salvatore indicated that there had been 243 full time employees in 2006, compared to 239 in 2009. The number of part-time employees had increased significantly due to the City assuming management of the Amphitheater.

Bob Walsh agreed that, based on the economy, the reserves should be used in lieu of a tax increase. He acknowledged that there had been a lot of cutbacks, adding that residents had been cutting the right-of-way at his subdivision entrance. There had been a lot of tough decisions, but reserves should be used to help see the City through these economic times.

Brown returned and asked what Peachtree City residents were getting for the nearly equal amount going to Fayette County, acknowledging that they received excellent services from the City for the taxes paid.

Darlene Gulli opposed the proposed increase because she felt it should be increased by a greater amount, and felt staff had done a great job in trying to reach a middle ground.

Hearing no further comment, Boone closed the public hearing, adding that the third public hearing on the millage rate would be held the following week, August 27, at 6:30 p.m.

Haddix said the City had struggled to cut the budget, but he felt they should return the cost of living increases to the employees. He also felt the City would dip into the reserves if the economy continued to decline, which he felt would happen.

Plunkett asked if Haddix was asking for a revised budget presentation, showing use of reserves and retaining the advertised millage rate increase. McMullen said staff would be presenting both

the millage rate and the budget on August 27, and would include that as one of the options. Boone encouraged everyone to attend that meeting because it included both the millage rate and adoption of the FY 2010 budget.

08-09-11 Presentation by Recreation Commission – David Ring

Recreation Commission Chairman David Ring addressed Council, giving the 2009 Strategic Report (a copy of the presentation is included in the Official Meeting File). Ring reviewed programs and participation and addressed the implemented and pending changes in the operation of the Amphitheater (City began operating this year), Tennis Center (Sequoia/Canongate assumed management in July), and Kedron Fieldhouse (requests for proposals going out this fall).

Ring then reported that Peachtree City's sports field were at maximum capacity, especially for soccer, lacrosse, and football. The Recreation Commission and staff were developing an equitable field allocation method and would hold public workshops for input and address the issue in the Recreation Master Plan.

Another major area of concern was the lack of a traffic signal at the northern entrance of the South 74 Baseball Soccer Complex (BSC). The Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) had denied the request for the signal three times as not meeting the warrants (which include traffic volume, accidents, injuries, fatalities). The commission felt very strongly that the signal was necessary. Boone asked about number of accidents at BSC, and Plunkett noted that waiting for fatalities to meet the warrants was not an acceptable situation.

Ring also reported that the number of tournaments had increased to 29 in 2009, over 25 in 2008 and 13 in 2007. Tournaments added to the local economy and the commission was working to ensure that some of the revenue came in to help maintain the facilities.

Finally, the Recreation Commission was hoping to better define its role with the City Council, including when Council expected Commission review and recommendations and what items staff should be bringing to the commission. The relationship would also be addressed in the Master Plan revision.

Robert Brown thanked Ring for the outstanding job he has done on the Recreation Commission. He then asked Council about the traffic signal, saying the DOT had approved a signal on SR 54 West in contravention to their own rules, but would not approve one where hundreds of cars at a time were going to youth sporting events.

08-09-12 Public Hearing – Consider Rezoning, R-43 to R-22, Greenwood Oaks

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

08-09-13 Public Hearing – Consider Amendment to Section 1008, GI General Industrial, adding Automobile Repair as a Permitted Use

Rast said this was a housekeeping issue, noting the ordinance had been revised to list specific allowed uses. Automobile repair and maintenance facilities, of which there were several in this

zoning district, had been unintentionally omitted, and staff was asking to return that as a permitted use. Hearing no public comment, Boone closed the public hearing.

Sturbaum moved to approve the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to include automobile repair as a permitted use in the GI General Industrial zoning. Haddix seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-09-15 Consider CAR 09-09 – Solicitation of Donations and Sponsorships

Salvatore explained that the City currently had no policy in place regarding employees soliciting or accepting donations for the City and soliciting sponsorships. This policy established a framework to ensure no employees were personally benefitting from such activity.

Haddix moved to approve the policy. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-09-16 Consider SAFER Grant for 6 Firefighter Positions

Fire Chief Ed Eiswerth said the department had applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a Staffing Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant a year ago, and had been notified in July of the award. Boone confirmed that it was a five-year program, with decreased funding from FEMA each year. Eiswerth said yes.

Eiswerth said funding began October 24, 2009. Plunkett asked if the FY 2010 budget included the City's required matching funds. Eiswerth said the department had found the funding for the first year, which was minimal, from the existing departmental budget request because manpower was really their most critical need.

Haddix moved to accept the FEMA SAFER Grant for six firefighter positions. Sturbaum seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

08-09-17 Consider Street Striping Contract

Plunkett moved to approve the street striping contract (Mid State Construction & Striping, Inc., of Perry, Georgia, in the amount of \$107,020.85, with the second phase of the project funded in FY 2010). Haddix seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-09-18 Consider Acceptance of Commission of Art – Founders Sculpture

Public Information Officer/City Clerk Betsy Tyler said the City had been approached by sculptor Andy Davis about a project for the City's 50th Anniversary. Davis had created several public works of art, including the sculptures at Albany, Georgia's, Ray Charles Plaza; General Lawrence Griffin in Griffin, Georgia; and Truett Cathey at the Truett's Grill in Griffin.

Tyler said Davis was proposing to create busts of Joel Cowan and Floy Farr and raise the funds through community donations. Donations would come to an account held by the City, with a cap of \$25,000. The artist's commission would be for \$20,000 and an additional \$5,000 would cover the display area, lighting, and plaques.

Davis then addressed Council, saying that we learned about past civilizations and cultures through their artifacts, and that "art" was a component of that word. He had been inspired by recent articles about the City's 50th Anniversary and the passionate discussions about the City's founding fathers. While no two people could single-handedly be credited with founding Peachtree City, Cowan and Farr were recognized figures in the City's history and would be good representatives to commemorate the 50th anniversary.

Plunkett then asked about the fundraising efforts and what would happen to donations if Davis was not successful in securing the entire \$25,000. Davis said he had never had a project go under-funded. Plunkett asked if donations would go back to the donors. Tyler explained that Davis would accrue costs as funds were raised.

Plunkett moved to accept the commission of art from sculptor Andy Davis for the creation of busts of Joel Cowan and Floy Farr, with a procedure in place to ensure that the City did not accrue liability if fundraising efforts were unsuccessful. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

08-09-19 Consider Wyndham Request for Use of Lake Peachtree

Plunkett moved to approve the request, under the condition that the Wyndham would indemnify the City during the event, and that staff develop a procedure for any such future requests. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Council/Staff Topics

Briefing on H1N1 Virus

Captain Dave Williamson, EMS Director for the Fire Department provided an overview of the H1N1 Flu virus and the City's preparations for operations if a large percentage of staff are out with the illness or with sick family members. Williamson indicated the City was working in conjunction with Pete Nelms of Fayette County Emergency Management.

Williamson explained that the normal influenza season begins in October, but the state was already seeing a lot of cases. There was no natural immunity in people under 60. The cases being diagnosed as positive for Influenza A were the H1N1 virus 99% of the time. Although no vaccine was currently available, one should begin to be available in mid - late October, with 100% availability in March 2010.

Priority recipients were pregnant women, caregivers of children under 6 months old, healthcare and First Responders, persons six months to 24 years of age (hardest hit group), and people 24-64 years of age with underlying health conditions (asthma, lung problems, heart issues, diabetes, etc.).

Williamson said the vaccine would be distributed through Public Health only, and several plans were being considered. Public vaccination sites could be set up, requiring up to 30 persons to staff. Schools and large employers might also be vaccination points for their populations.

Precautions everyone should be taking included hand hygiene, cough etiquette, adequate ventilation, social distancing (three feet or more, keeping sick children home), protective barriers, and disposable surgical masks (for those with illness or those around sick people).

Williamson said the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimated that there could be as many as 40-50% of employees absent during the height of the wave (due to illness, a child/family member who is sick, schools/day cares centers closed, or being too scared to come to work). Staff was looking at the identification and reduction of nonessential services if that worst case scenario developed, and identifying what "triggers" would mean a reduction in services. Williamson also noted that the CDC was currently not recommending that schools close. Williamson added that the creative staffing plans to maintain essential services would incur overtime costs. Information on the flu and any reduction of services would be provided to the public through the Public Information Officer and to staff through the Human Resources department.

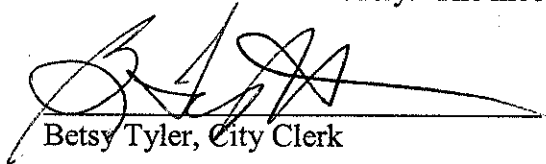
Staff had also purchased personal protective equipment and cleaning products for the various departments (in addition to what Fire & EMS had on hand).

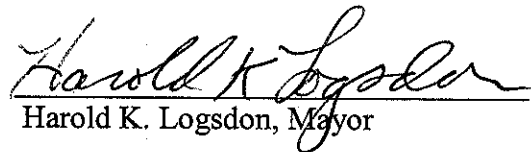
Williamson reminded everyone that the virus was the flu, and healthy people might get sick, but would recover. Sturbaum added that everyone should be prepared and use common sense. Fire Chief Ed Eiswerth reiterated that children with any fever should be kept home from school because the fever with this flu increased so quickly.

Plunkett moved to convene into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and pending or threatened litigation at 8:51 p.m. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Plunkett moved to adjourn from executive session at 9:01 p.m. Sturbaum seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, Sturbaum moved to adjourn. Haddix seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.


Betsy Tyler, City Clerk


Harold K. Logsdon, Mayor