

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 17, 2023
9:00 AM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in special called session on Thursday, August 17, 2023. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Council members attending: Frank Destadio, Clinton Holland, Mike King, and Phil Prebor.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Public Hearings

A. 2023 Maintenance and Operation Millage Rate

This was the second of three required public hearings before Council could adopt a millage rate, Finance Director Paul Salvatore began. The millage rate consisted of the Maintenance and Operations (M&O) millage rate and the bond millage rate. The proposed M&O millage rate remained at 6.043 mills, and the fiscal year 2024 budget was based on that. The bond millage rate was 0 because the bond debt was paid off several years ago, and he noted they had no plans for any General Obligation (GO) bonds in the near future.

He presented an 11-year history of the millage rate, showing how it peaked at 7.178 mills in 2012 at the end of the recession. The passage of the 2017 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) enabled them to lower the millage rate by half a mill, and over the ensuing years Council had reduced the millage rate by a total of 1.135 mills to its current 6.043. If the millage rate was still at the 2012 level, the City would collect about \$4.1 million more in taxes, and the owner of a \$500,000 house would pay about \$230 more a year.

The following slide showed the total millage rates in all the jurisdictions in Fayette County. Salvatore pointed out that Peachtree City was in the middle, even though it was a full-service city with its own Police and Fire/EMS departments. Tyrone, which had the highest total millage rate, relied on the County for fire service. Brooks and the County had total millage rates slightly lower than Peachtree City's.

Why were they advertising a tax increase if the millage rate was staying the same? Salvatore remarked that it was because of the increase in assessments, noting that the only way a tax bill would increase this year was if the assessed value of the property had increased, which was the case for most properties. The total increase in digest values countywide was 12.55%. He explained that the Tax Commissioner had notified them last week of an error. About 3.29% of that increase was attributed to new growth, not the .5% the County had reported earlier, while 9.26% was due to reassessments of existing property.

What was the impact on property owners? Salvatore showed that these new figures lessened the impact of a rollback from about \$130 annually for the average value home to around \$100. He presented a chart that showed the impact for each \$100,000 of value at the full millage rate of 6.043 mills and then with a rollback to 5.531 mills. The owner of a \$500,000 property would pay about \$1,200 a year in City taxes at the full millage rate, and about \$1,100 with the rollback. However, Salvatore went on, a full rollback would have a huge impact on City finances. They would lose approximately \$1.8 million a year in tax revenues with the .5 mill rollback, and the adopted budget was based on the full millage rate of 6.043. He

recommended they keep that millage rate.

There would be a third public hearing at that night's City Council meeting, followed by a vote on adopting the millage rate, Salvatore concluded.

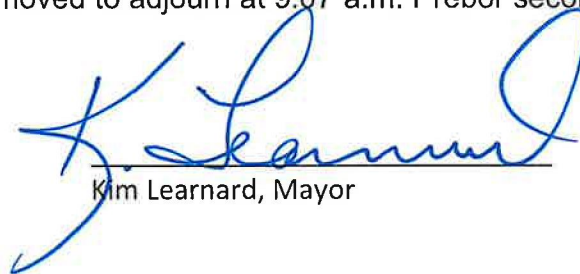
The Mayor opened the public hearing. No one wished to speak either in favor or in opposition, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Learnard asked for comments from Council, and Holland said he did not like the tax increase, but it was a good budget that had been pared down as much as possible, considering current inflation. He supported keeping the millage rate where it was. No one else had comments.

Adjourn

There being no further business, King moved to adjourn at 9:07 a.m. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.


Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary


Kim Learnard, Mayor

City Council of Peachtree City
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 17, 2023
6:30 PM

Call to Order

The Mayor and Council of Peachtree City met in regular session on Thursday, August 17, 2023. Mayor Kim Learnard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Council members attending: Frank Destadio, Clinton Holland, Mike King, and Phil Prebor.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Announcements, Awards, Special Recognition

A. Life-Saving Award (Michael Kendall, Emily Thornton, Ed Russman, and David Childs)

Fire Chief Clint Murphy read a letter from resident Dawn Barrell crediting Emergency Medical Services with saving her life during a call earlier in the year. Murphy and Learnard presented Michael Kendall, Emily Thornton, Ed Russman, and David Childs with the City's Lifesaving Award for their work.

Presentation

A. Golf Cart Safety Presentation

Tim Siegel told about his son Luke, who suffered a severe brain injury in a golf cart accident at the age of 9 and died of complications of COVID six years later. Siegel, a former college tennis coach in Texas, said he had since devoted much of his time to promoting golf cart safety, especially among young people. He urged communities to provide safety education and clear signage, as well as collaboration with law enforcement to enforce safe practices and conduct periodic safety checks. He also suggested holding open community workshops to encourage discussion of golf cart safety. Learnard thanked him for coming, and said Luke's story was inspiring.

B. 2023 Community Survey Results

City Manager Robert Curnow introduced Lee Feldman, a former city manager and a past president of the International City Managers' Association, now a representative of Zencity. Feldman said he and Director of Survey Research Dr. Rachel Levinstein would explain the results of the 2023 Community Survey.

Levinstein said the Zencity Community Survey was a recurring survey that looked at quality of life and satisfaction with community characteristics. They recruited 744 respondents using a combination of social media, local advertising, local worksites, and survey panels from April to July of this year. The City also collected an additional 1,190 responses through their own distribution efforts, and those were used to supplement the open-text questions.

They arrived at these numbers by using Census figures that showed what demographic groups were represented in Peachtree City, and what they should expect in the sample. Those groups included race, gender, age, and race. As responses came in, they watched how people identified themselves in these categories and filled the buckets in the core sample. They also used a process called rake weighting to further adjust the data so no demographic was over-represented or under-represented, Levinstein reported.

She started with the metric on overall satisfaction, saying the survey asked three questions about quality of life, then questions about community characteristics. The questions were averaged, and the responses assigned a positive, neutral, or negative score. The survey showed that 92% of residents were satisfied with life in Peachtree City, and Levinstein stated she had never seen scores that high with any of the clients they had served.

City Clerk Yasmin Julio asked her to go back and explain about the buckets and why there were 744 respondents. They started with targets, Levinstein explained, because they knew there were a certain percentage of men, a certain percentage of women, and so on in Peachtree City. They watched the responses as they came in to see if these quotas were being met, and the buckets were being filled. Once the buckets were filled, they had a reasonably representative sample, but they went a step further and used a process called rake weighting to adjust the data.

Destadio asked for an explanation of rake weighting, but Learnard said they should let them get through the presentation, then they could ask questions. Levinstein reported that 88% said they were satisfied with the overall quality of life, while 83% said they would recommend Peachtree City as a place to live, and 75% said they were likely to be living in Peachtree City in five years. They asked about 10 Community Characteristics questions in total, and the results showed that about 90% of the respondents were satisfied on the whole.

Breaking the responses down by demographics gave another look, Levinstein remarked. Younger residents showed slightly less satisfaction than older residents. People with a high school diploma or less were slightly less satisfied than people with more education. There were no real differences by race or ethnicity or by gender, she continued, and only slight differences with income.

She showed the topics covered in Community Characteristics and the scores. Almost everyone said they were satisfied with access to quality education and the sense of overall safety. About 87% were satisfied with cleanliness and maintenance.

However, just 27% reported being satisfied with the availability of affordable housing, and 36% were dissatisfied. Levinstein pointed out that every community across the county was dealing with issues surrounding housing. Later, she would discuss where Peachtree City fell when compared to similar cities and to the U.S.

as a whole. About 41% said they were satisfied with the availability of jobs that paid a livable wage, which also was an area where the country was struggling. Levinstein said 45% said they were satisfied with the ability of residents to give input to the Peachtree City government, and 22% were dissatisfied.

She highlighted two characteristics that she said were strongly related to overall satisfaction and that had a notably high score and a notably low score, even though there were no really low scores in Peachtree City. A high scoring area was access to quality education, so no changes were recommended there. There were a lot of areas, she noted, where they would advise Peachtree City to keep doing what it was doing. An area that was relatively low scoring, although still high, was the sense of community among residents, which had a 72% satisfaction rate.

There was not a lot of variation among the demographic groups in responses to the question about satisfaction with education. Among residents with incomes under \$49,999, about 85% were satisfied with the quality of education, while 93% and 95% were satisfied in other groups. White residents were more satisfied than black or Latino residents. There was no difference among households that did or did not have children younger than 18.

The sense of community among residents was scored at 72%, which Levinstein again noted was quite high. There was no real differences among age groups, but white residents were slightly more satisfied than black or Latino residents, and homeowners were slightly less satisfied than renters.

Next, Levinstein said she would put this into some context. Zencity conducted a national benchmark survey to gauge how the country felt about these same characteristics. The identified cities similar to Peachtree City on some objective metrics such as population density and median income, and compared Peachtree City to all the cities in that cohort. The other cities were Tucker and McDonough in Georgia, Estero and Lutz in Florida, and Hilton Head, South Carolina. Peachtree City excelled compared to the national sample and the cohort sample in almost every category, Feldman reported. The overall resident satisfaction in Peachtree City was 21% higher than the cohort, and Peachtree City led the way in almost every category. He pointed out that Peachtree City led in public transportation, even though there was not what was usually thought of as a public transportation system. By public transportation, Peachtree City residents meant the path network, which they liked very much, Feldman remarked.

The two areas where Peachtree City was not the clear leader were affordable housing and arts and entertainment/cultural affairs, and Feldman said housing was a big issue everywhere. Peachtree City was in line with the other cities, so he did not see a need for them to worry about it. They might want to focus on arts and cultural activities. If they felt they offered enough, perhaps they should evaluate their messaging.

He showed word clouds created by responses to the open-ended questions. The "residents love" cloud featured "paths, cart, safety, and community" among other words, while the cloud for "residents want changed" was dominated by "54,74, and traffic." Restaurants were also mentioned.

Levinstein said there were a couple of questions added at the end. They asked residents if Peachtree City government operated in a way that was open and accountable to the public. About 44% of residents agreed with that. Younger residents were more likely to agree than older residents, and middle income residents were slightly less likely to agree.

They also asked if Peachtree City government listened to residents and were responsive to their concerns. About 39% agreed with that statement, with fewer in the middle income category agreeing. It was higher among Hispanic and Latino residents.

Levinstein stated she wanted to address concerns about the representative sample compared to the overall responses that Peachtree City collected. She presented the quality of life questions, showing that the City's distribution of more than 1,000 responses was consistently higher than Zencity's representative sample. Why was that? The Census showed that 20% of Peachtree City's residents were age 18 to 34, and 36% were 35 to 54, while 44% were 55 or older. When they did the representative sample, about 24% were in the younger category, 33% in the middle, and 39% in the older category. The City distribution differed greatly in this age category. Only 4% of the City's sample was in the 18 to 34 category. In the representative sample, they heard from all portions of the population, which the City's sample did not do.

She said they included the entire questionnaire for the City's records, but she would stop and entertain questions.

Destadio asked for an explanation of rake weighting, and Levinstein replied that adjustments were often needed when conducting a survey to minimize bias. Rake weighting was a method to do that and was used by survey organizations across the country. It involved demographics, such as making sure the same percentage of 18- to 34-year-olds that were in the population were represented in the survey. If you had too many in that age bracket, you wanted to downrate those responses so there was not a disproportionate voice. It just smoothed it out so no demographic group was under- or over-represented.

Prebor said he was glad to hear everyone was satisfied, and Learnard said she found it fascinating that 41% thought there were not enough jobs that paid a livable wage, especially since businesses in the industrial park were saying they could not hire enough people. That might be something they needed to look at. Again, Feldman said this was not atypical for cities across the country. It was part of a reset regarding what types of jobs we would have in the future. Levinstein added

that Peachtree City was doing better in this than cities as a whole; the average was about 33% throughout the U.S. and in the cohort.

King said this validated what they already knew about Peachtree City, and Feldman agreed that the use of surveys was not necessarily to find out new things, but to validate their initial thoughts.

They chose about 750 respondents for the Zencity portion and let the City do around 1,200, Holland remarked. Was there a reason they let it go at about 750 respondents, which, when added to the 1,200 was less than 2,000 respondents for a city with a little under 40,000 residents?

Feldman said there was a point where you had achieved the demographics of your sample size and the chances of having any deviation in responses became minimal. The City also chose to self-distribute the link, which maybe they did not need to do in the future, but it helped them determine if the Zencity methodology was consistent with the results they got. There was a big deviation on age, with the City's survey having far more people in 55 and older and very few in the 18 to 34 group. His recommendation was to keep the sample size where it was and use the Zencity methodology for the distribution.

Levinstein agreed, saying they wanted to respect people's time and collect enough information so they had a reliable estimate, but not so much that they were harassing a lot of people.

Destadio said he took the survey and thought it was just long enough to get the data they wanted, but not so long that it bored him.

Curnow thanked Levinstein and Feldman, saying it was interesting to see the divergence between the Zencity sample size and the City's. He asked Feldman what they should do to go forward? Feldman said he had been doing this for 36 years, and ideas about surveys had evolved. He had always advised using them to establish benchmarks for internal use in building strategic plans and the budget. Even though Peachtree City was a leader in most categories, he continued, they should not stop working towards improvement. He had always used annual or bi-annual surveys to gauge whether they had set the right priorities and were making improvements.

The Mayor and Council thanked Feldman his report.

Public Comment

Cal Beverly asked if Peachtree City had a new village, saying he noticed Lexington Village mentioned in materials accompanying the Towson Village annexation request? The village signage project listed in the 2023 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) list named six villages, but the City no longer had any information about villages on its website, where it previously provided descriptions and maps. Now, the

only way to get information was to search for the village on the website, Beverly reported, and he asked them to make it more accessible.

John Riley said he lived next to the Braelinn Recreation Center. A year and a half ago, he remarked, his way of life and probably his property value were damaged by the conversion of two City-owned tennis courts into six pickleball courts. Riley noted that he and his neighbors visited the SPLOST committee and convinced them to move the location of the recommended courts to an area next to the Tennis Center. However, that didn't solve the problem in his neighborhood. He wanted Council's help to alleviate the near-constant noise nuisance. Riley said he played pickleball himself, but the constant noise from these courts made them incompatible with a residential area. An acoustic fence had been erected, but made little difference. Perhaps the Recreation Master Plan could include a solution, he suggested.

The Mayor noted that neither the SPLOST project list nor the City had identified a location for new pickleball courts.

Blake Hayes said he wanted to make everyone aware of a new Georgia law that provided a one-to-one match as a tax credit for donations to organizations that helped foster children. If you gave a dollar, you would get a dollar off your State income taxes, he explained. There was a cap of \$20 million, but only \$790,000 had been allocated as of July 31. Hayes said the process was not complicated; you had to get approval by filling out a document at the State's tax credit website. There were 20 qualified organizations, including Bloom Our Youth in Fayette County.

Agenda Changes

None

Minutes

King moved to approve the August 1, 2023 Workshop Minutes and the August 10, 2023 Special Called Meeting Minutes. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Holland moved to approve the August 3, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Prebor seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with King abstaining due to his absence from that meeting.

A. August 1, 2023 Workshop Minutes

APPROVED 5-0

B. August 3, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

APPROVED 4-0-1 (KING)

C. August 10, 2023 Special Called Meeting Minutes

APPROVED 5-0

Consent Agenda

Destadio moved to approve Consent Agenda items A, B, C, and D. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- A. Policy 8-06 Naming of Facilities, Parks & Other Areas**
APPROVED 5-0
- B. FY23 Budget Amendment - Vehicle Repair & Maintenance**
APPROVED 5-0
- C. FY23 Budget Amendment- Sponsorship Funds for Back to School Bash**
APPROVED 5-0
- D. FY23 Budget Amendment – Donations Purple Heart Ceremony Breakfast**
APPROVED 5-0

Public Hearings

A. 2023 Maintenance and Operation Millage Rate

This was the third of three required public hearings on the millage rate, Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore stated, and Council could take action on adopting the millage rate afterwards. The millage rate had two components: Maintenance and Operations (M&O), unchanged from last year at 6.043 mills, and the Bond millage, which was 0 because all bonds were paid off several years ago. The total City millage rate was proposed at 6.043 mills, and the adopted fiscal year 2024 budget was based on that.

He presented an 11-year history of the millage rate, showing how it peaked at 7.178 mills in 2012 at the end of the recession. The passage of the 2017 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) allowed them to lower the millage rate by half a mill, and over the ensuing years Council whittled down the millage rate by a total of 1.135 mills to its current 6.043. Those reductions meant the City was collecting about \$4.1 million less in taxes a year, and the owner of a \$500,000 house was paying about \$230 less a year.

He credited Assistant City Manager Justin Strickland with a chart that showed the total millage rates in all the jurisdictions in Fayette County. Salvatore pointed out that Peachtree City was in the middle, even though it was a full-service city with its own Police and Fire/EMS departments, not to mention the path system and all the parks.

Why advertise a tax increase if the millage rate was staying the same? Salvatore stated it was because of the increase in assessments, noting that the only way a tax bill would increase this year was if the assessed value of the property had increased, which was the case for most properties.

He explained that the Tax Commissioner had notified them last week of an error on the County's part. About 3.29% of that increase was attributed to new growth, not the .5% the County had reported earlier, while 9.26% was due to reassessments of existing property. The total digest growth had remained the same as first reported

at 12.55%.

What was the impact on property owners? These new figures lessened the impact of a rollback from about \$130 annually for the average value home to around \$100. Salvatore presented a chart that showed the impact for each \$100,000 of value at the full millage rate of 6.043 mills and then with a rollback to 5.531 mills. The owner of a \$500,000 property would pay about \$1,200 a year in City taxes at the full millage rate, and about \$1,100 with the rollback.

The City would lose approximately \$1.8 million a year in tax revenues with a .5 mill rollback, and the adopted budget was based on the full millage rate of 6.043, he commented. Salvatore said the recommendation was to maintain the current millage rate at 6.043 mills.

The Mayor opened the public hearing.

Suzanne Brown mentioned the \$10 million price tag for maintenance at City facilities. She questioned that if the maintenance was routine, had they not already paid the taxes to do those projects over the last several years? What happened to that money? She added that during that timeframe the reserve fund grew to between \$24 million and \$26 million. Why were they not using that to pay for the things they needed to fix? Inflation was hurting everyone, and this might be the time to shave a fraction off the millage rate, she concluded.

Blake Hayes stated that he could support this budget, adding that he did not want to downplay anyone's financial hardship, but if the millage rate was rolled back, what should be cut? He understood there had been suggestions to use the reserve fund, and others had suggested that maintenance projects should have been put on the SPLOST list. However, he pointed out, SPLOST could not be used for maintenance, only for capital outlays, with three exceptions: retiring previous debt, roads and other transportation projects, and limited repairs if there had been a natural disaster.

Most of the tax increase was due to property values increasing, and Hayes stated that was a good thing.

No one else wished to speak, and the Mayor closed the public hearing.

Destadio said the millage rate had been thoroughly discussed during the public hearings, and he thought Curnow and staff had done a great job putting this together and explaining their reasoning. People needed to be reminded that every rollback then rolls back each year, so the impact was cumulative.

King pointed out how Peachtree City's millage rate compared to Fayetteville's and Tyrone's, noting that Peachtree City's was lower even though it had a full Fire Department, which the other two municipalities did not, along with 100 miles of cart

paths. He recalled a comment earlier about maintenance not being done, noting that the City had assets of more than \$170 billion, so if \$10 million in maintenance was all they needed, they were doing pretty good. He said that talk was campaign rhetoric, which should not take place at City Hall.

Prebor, too, said he was okay with this millage rate. He told Hayes he appreciated his explanation of why Council could not use SPLOST money to pay for the maintenance projects because a lot of citizens did not understand that. He noted that the maintenance projects had been building up for longer than five years, with a lot of the deferred maintenance caused by the Great Recession when property values, and therefore tax revenues, declined. But they were catching up, he remarked. He said they debated the amount of reserves several years ago and decided on a minimum of 31% to maintain the City's bond rating. They did not want to set 50% as a goal because then they would have to find revenue to get it to that point, Prebor recalled.

The important thing as far as bond ratings, Salvatore remarked, was keeping the reserve fund stable. It would be a red flag if it was at 50%, then dropped to 30% in one year.

Holland stated that he had gone over the budget line by line and found it to be fiscally sound. There was no frivolous spending. It protected citizens and set aside money for maintenance. He had faith that the City Manager could get the maintenance projects accomplished. Holland acknowledged that inflation was impacting everyone, but he felt that Peachtree City was the best place in Georgia to live, and the amenities and services were worth the taxes paid.

Learnard noted that Moody's awarded its highest AAA credit rating to Peachtree City in March for a long list of technical reasons. They had no bond debt. Peachtree City was about quality of life and was a full-service city with, as they had learned from the survey, a high customer satisfaction rating. This had been a transparent process, and they would continue to work towards uncompromised excellence, she concluded.

King moved to approve the 2023 Maintenance and Operation Millage Rate of 6.043 mills. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Agenda Items

A. 02-02-23CA-1 Design of State Route 54/74 Upgrades

City Engineer Dave Borkowski prefaced his presentation by saying how cooperative the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) had been to work with on this project.

He went over the timeline, noting that Council authorized the design of upgrades to

SR 74/54 intersection sign structures at the end of 2022 and approved some architectural elements to complete the design in January, 2023. Council authorized spending \$30,757 for geotechnical investigation at its February 2 meeting and \$16,000 for rock drilling in March. Now they had a final design and a cost estimate of \$935,261.37. Borkowski noted the previous estimate was \$1.7 million, saying the reduction showed the benefit of doing a cost estimate based on real engineering drawings.

The renderings depicted a sign headed north of SR 74, and there would be another facing motorists going south. There was a curved truss spanning the road, supported by columns of stamped concrete with a stone base and a pyramid top cap. Another rendering showed the columns at night, with downlighting and backlighting behind the Peachtree City logo.

To give Council an idea of what it would look like if they decided not to move forward with the project, he showed the standard GDOT sign of galvanized metal. Staff's recommendation was that Council authorize the Mayor to sign a contract with GDOT in the amount of \$935,261.37 for the construction of enhancements at the SR 74/54 intersection, pending legal review of the contract, and, in addition, allocate a total budget amount of \$1.2 million to cover any contingencies. King said he felt they had discussed this sufficiently, and Prebor added he was happy they were able to get that budgeted amount down.

Destadio remarked that he had expected many people to oppose spending money on this, but instead he had received many emails in support, saying Peachtree City deserved some unique, nice signs.

Holland said he, too, had gotten those emails and thought the design looked fabulous. But he said he wanted to borrow a phrase from Prebor: "Were they spending their money correctly?" Could they afford this right now? Would this money be better used for those backlogged maintenance projects? Could they go back and retrofit it?

Could they come back later to retrofit? Learnard asked. Borkowski replied that it would be twice as expensive, if it was even possible.

He went on to say that this money was coming from the 2017 SPLOST. Project seven? Holland asked, and Borkowski said it was, pointing out there was a specific line item that allowed spending for improvements on State routes. That money would have to be spent on something.

There was \$753,000 unencumbered in that account right now, Holland continued, but Borkowski said he had talked with Salvatore about this, and they had set aside \$1.5 million for this project from overages they had.

Salvatore said there was more than \$12 million in tier two money, and they moved

\$1.5 million over to this project in tier one, giving them about \$2.189 million, so there would still be about \$1 million left. Borkowski pointed out some of that would be needed for Huddleston Road/SR 54 improvements.

Destadio also stated that SPLOST funds could be used only for SPLOST projects. Holland said he understood.

Destadio moved to approve authorizing the Mayor to sign a contract with GDOT in the amount of \$935,261.37 for the construction of enhancements at the SR 74/54 intersection, pending legal review of the contract, and, in addition, allocate a total budget amount of \$1.2 million to cover any contingencies. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

New Agenda Items

A. 08-23-03 Approval of Recommendation for Recreation Master Plan

Programs Manager Cathy Wilder said the Recreation Department had put out a request for proposal (RFP) for a new Recreation Master Plan in June and got seven proposals back. Staff scored the proposals and was recommending that Council award the contract to CPL as the contractor.

Wilder introduced Cyndee Bonacci of CPL, who would be the project manager. Bonacci said she would give them a high-level overview of the proposal they presented to staff. She listed the members of their team, noting that CPL was already doing some work with Peachtree City on the architecture side. CPL had 19 offices along the east coast, Bonacci noted, saying they had been in business 48 years and had more than 75 municipalities as clients. They had done more than 450 recreation projects in the last decade.

At the start of every project, Bonacci said they asked three core questions: What did they have? What did they want? What did they need? They would begin by looking at demographics, assessing inventory, programming budget, staff and so on. Assessing wants involved getting input from the community, which would be through a variety of methods in order to get broad representation. CPL would look at the responses to the first two questions to help determine what they needed, setting goals and objectives with an initial five-year approach. There would be cost estimates, phasing, staffing reviews. The final part of the process would be adoption of the recommendations.

CPL was all about designing with the land, Bonacci remarked. They tried to work with nature by retaining all possible trees. She showed photos of two trailheads in Alpharetta. They had the same elements, but the one designed by CPL retained its tree canopy.

Staff asked them to address four key areas: budget, facility analysis and maintenance, community engagement and programming and staffing. She added

that community did not just happen; it had to be a continuous intentional process of assessment, evaluation, planning, and then repeating. The master plan should be an active living document that was readily referenced and used to help the City maintain its goals.

How long would this take? King asked, and Bonacci said it should take about nine months. Prebor asked her to expand on civic engagement. Bonacci told him it could be open houses, public input meetings spread around the city, stakeholder/staff interviews, and online surveys. There could be surveys of students in the public schools to see what they thought about recreation. There could be a web page for the project.

Destadio advised her that they needed to get a good representation of all ages, not just kids, and Bonacci said they would. He also mentioned the aging playgrounds in Peachtree City.

Having a good plan was the first step, and Holland said he was looking forward to it. When could they start? Bonacci said they would start working on a timeline with staff as soon as this was approved.

City Attorney Ted Meeker asked Learnard to ensure that the motion said adoption was contingent on the contract's approval by legal.

Prebor moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-03, award the contract to CPL for creation of City's new Recreation Master Plan in the amount of \$116,950, subject to legal review. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

B. 08-23-04 Vehicle Replacements Fire Engine 2218 and Fire Engine 2307

This was Project One on the 2023 SPLOST, Fire Chief Clint Murphy reported. Bids were obtained through Houston Galveston Area Council and Sourcewell procurement groups, with Sourcewell being the lowest bidder.

Prebor asked about the lead time, and Murphy said that was why this was coming to Council so quickly—they would not see these engines for 48 months. Also, this order would lock in the price now, even though they did not have to pay for four years.

Destadio moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-04, the purchase of replacements for Engines 2218 and 2307 in the amount of \$949,232 each, for the total cost of \$1,898,464 for both apparatus. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

C. 08-23-05 Vehicle Replacement Aerial Apparatus 2208

Murphy said this was SPLOST Project Four to replace a 2004 aerial apparatus. This lead time was 30 months, but they wanted to save money by locking in the

price now.

Holland moved to approve 08-23-05 to replace aerial apparatus 2208 in the amount of \$1,674,828 to be delivered in 30 months. King seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

D. 08-23-06 FY2024 Proposed Budget - Keep Peachtree City Beautiful, Inc. (KPTCB)

This year's budget was identical to last year's, said Keep Peachtree City Beautiful (KPTCB) Executive Director Al Yougel. King congratulated him on that, and Prebor thanked him for his work. He said he saw Yougel and KPTCB staff out working in all kinds of weather, and they were the ones responsible for keeping the city looking as clean as it did.

Were they still having problems with people putting household garbage in the KPTCB containers along the paths? Destadio asked, and Yougel said they were. It was not just residential trash, it was commercial and construction debris, too, he remarked. Destadio told him he was doing a great job.

King moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-06, Y2024 Proposed Budget - Keep Peachtree City Beautiful as presented in the packet. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

E. 08-23-07 FY2024 Proposed Budget - Conventions and Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Salvatore said he was the Finance committee member of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), and he and Curnow served on the Board of Directors. The total appropriations were \$946,296, with most of the revenue coming from the hotel/motel tax, which the City collected at 8%, with 3.5% of that going to fund the CVB operations. That was the majority of their income.

The CVB mission was to promote Peachtree City through marketing and advertising, and the budget reflected this. They employed technology to meet their goals, and next year intended to implement a virtual visitors center, and software for that was included in the budget. They also were budgeting for increased presence at trade shows.

They had plans for new ticketed events this year to bring people to the community. The main purchase this year would be replacing the vehicle they used to transport their booth to trade shows.

The CVB Board of Directors had reviewed and approved this budget, and now they were seeking Council's approval. Salvatore presented a breakdown of the budget, showing expenses and revenues. Most of the reserves being used would be for the vehicle, he noted. He and Curnow had reviewed the budget and felt it was sound. It was a balanced budget, he noted.

King moved to approve New Agenda item, 08-23-07 FY2024 Proposed Budget - Conventions and Visitors Bureau as submitted. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

F. 08-23-08 Step 1 Annexation Application for 11 acres on Deanwood Terrace, adjacent to Towson Village subdivision

Planning and Development Director Robin Cailloux said this was a Step One annexation request and was not a public hearing. The request was for 11.4 acres located off Deanwood Terrace, which was a new road in the Towson Village subdivision currently under construction off the Governor's Square area.

The City had a two-step annexation process, Cailloux explained. This applicant was using the 100% application method under Georgia law, but the City ordinance was the only regulation for the Step One process, and it said Staff was to review the request for compatibility with Comprehensive Plan policies. Council's role would be to decide whether to allow the application to proceed to Step Two. She noted that approval of Step One in no way indicated Council's support for the actual annexation.

The ordinance read: *The first step ... of this process is intended to provide a general overview of the proposed annexation and ... how it may or may not be compatible with the established goals within the city's comprehensive plan.* It went on to say: *Until such time that the city council votes to accept a (Step Two) application for annexation, city staff shall not take any action or make any recommendations with respect to such application.*

She presented an aerial photo of the property, with the City and County boundaries marked. It shared a boundary with the Shiloh Mobile Home Park and probably had not been developed as part of that Park because there was a significant tributary of Camp Creek running through it. The only access to this property, short of building a bridge over the creek, was through the adjacent Towson Village. The County's zoning was MHP, for manufactured or mobile home park, which allowed a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. Both City and County staff evaluated what the property could yield at its current zoning, and that would be about 40 mobile home lots.

The applicant was requesting to rezone to Limited Use Residential (LUR) so they could add about 21 lots to Towson Village. Cailloux showed a site plan that included the creek and buffers. An existing road that currently dead-ended on the property would be extended to be a cul-de-sac, with the new lots lining either side. These lots would average around 7,500 square feet, with some of the ones in the back being about 8,200 square feet.

Staff evaluated this request according to the growth boundary study done in 2014 and saw that this property was identified as an area for potential annexation. They also looked at policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Staff had identified four that

could be impacted, and Cailloux used a Future Land Use map to demonstrate. The first policy called for preservation of environmentally sensitive land by pulling it out as separate parcels. The development plan did do this, she noted.

Another policy stated that it was more appropriate to have higher density development near a village center, stepping down in density as you got farther away. She pointed out the village center for this area, saying it was well within a 15-minute walk to this property. A medium density would be appropriate, and this single-family cluster was how the adjacent property was developed.

This also could satisfy the policy of encouraging housing options to accommodate aging in place or working from home while protecting the residential character of neighborhoods. If it proceeded to Step Two, she remarked, staff would look further into how to achieve that housing goal.

The final policy called for encouraging alternative modes of transportation through the construction of a multi-use path system. Peachtree City had an ordinance to require that all residential developments be connected to the path system, and the developers would be required to construct a path connection wherever was best suited at their cost.

They were not required to send Step One applications to the County, but Cailloux said they had done so, and the County reviewed it and had several comments. One said that the proposed development was consistent with or less intense than the County's Comprehensive Plan, while the other stated that the annexation and development would not cause an increase in the need for services or create a burden on County infrastructure.

Cailloux said that was staff's evaluation for Step One, and the applicant's representative, attorney Steven Jones, was present. Jones said this was a continuation of Towson Village, which was zoned Limited Use Commercial (LUC-33) for mixed use residential and commercial.

This would be an extension of the residential component to an area that was practically landlocked by a watercourse, Jones commented. The development would comply with State and local setbacks regarding that watercourse.

This new part, called Towson Place, would add 21 homes to the 94 in Towson Village. He pointed out the addition on a zoning map, and said they were asking for a Limited Use Residential (LUR) zoning, but he thought it was best to think of it as LUC.1 because they would be continuing everything that was imposed on Towson Village.

Jones presented a blow-up of the concept plan that was approved and adopted under LUC-33, mentioning that a connection to this adjacent property was one of the conditions in that LUC-33 for Towson Village. He mentioned again that the

growth study indicated this property was ripe for annexation, and the LUC-33 affirmed that with connections to this parcel and another parcel to the east. He pointed out an area where they would develop a pocket park. Jones again said they were thinking of this as LUC-33 with the same conditions that were approved with that rezoning.

The same style of houses were planned for Towson Place as were being built in Towson Village, he stated, and they would have the same builder. The price of the homes would be \$800,000 to \$1 million, depending on the floor plan.

Jones said he would be glad to answer questions and asked them to vote to accept this Step One proposal.

How many square feet would the homes be? Learnard asked. About 2,400 to 3,000 square feet, he replied.

King stated this was just Step One, a chance to look at what they proposed.

Destadio questioned a zoning sign he said was on the property, saying it said ER, or Estate Residential. Cailloux said that sign referred to another annexation request, one off of Stagecoach and Spear roads. Signs would not be posted for the Townson Place request until Step Two.

He said he was initially concerned about the frequency of annexation requests and related a conversation he had with his doctor about whether Peachtree City had a plan for the future. Destadio said they discussed a strategic plan at the Council retreat in March, but nothing had happened. He thought there should be another annexation study, too. However, he did want more data, so he thought they should go ahead , but also thought they should stop letting people make annexation requests.

Learnard asked Curnow if it was time to dust off the 2014 growth boundary study? Certainly, Curnow replied. He also noted they had conversations about a strategic plan at the retreat, and the continuation of that would be to bring back the facilitator to work through the particulars.

Curnow said he wanted to point out that revamping the annexation plan would not stop people from coming forward with annexation ideas that had to come in front of Council. When staff got an application, they were required by the ordinances Council had put in place to bring that information forward. They could not tell applicants to wait until they finished a new annexation plan.

Destadio recalled a moratorium on housing when he was first on the Planning Commission. He understood that was not possible legally, but he did not see why they could not do it with annexation requests.

Learnard asked if they should focus on updating the growth boundary study in advance of creating a strategic plan? Destadio said he did not want to just take the old one and dust it off, and Learnard said she understood that, but she was asking the City Manager if they could pull forward with just that, rather than tackle a whole strategic plan?

Curnow said they could certainly add that to the list of things they were working on.

Prebor said he thought they did something after 2014 and talked about going to Ebenezer Road and south to SR 85. Cailloux said she came on board in 2017, and nothing like that had been done since then.

King said he recalled that too, and, although, that expansion would not happen on this Council's watch, the key was controlling the borders. All Step One did was give staff a chance to investigate and report back to Council. Regardless of whether they said "no more," there would always be landowners coming to the City and wanting to annex and develop, he remarked. Council could always say no. Destadio said he understood.

Holland said he was not against all annexation, but he would prefer to see industrial or commercial development. That was better for the tax base, but there was a need for certain residential, he stated. His question was what the City would look like in 2050? They needed a strategic plan that would allow them to control the borders. He did not like the idea of piecemeal annexations. He thought the 2014 plan did a good job of taking care of some areas, and they needed to complete that plan, then adopt a new one.

What about the method of annexation? Holland asked Meeker if they could annex through referendum? Meeker said it was one of the methods of annexation, but there were requirements. If another jurisdiction provided water or fire services, they would have to sign a waiver for the City to proceed. Ultimately, it came down to a vote of the County residents who lived in the area proposed for annexation; that's who would participate.

King moved to approve New Agenda item 08-23-08 Step 1 Annexation Application for 11 acres on Deanwood Terrace, adjacent to Towson Village subdivision. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously

Council/Staff Topics

A. Tree Planting Policy

Holland remarked that the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence was coming up in 2026, and he thought a good way to commemorate that would be to plant a tree that was common during Revolutionary times—an American elm. The City should designate a place where a large tree could be planted.

Should they take donations? How could citizens be involved? What did the other Council members think? he asked.

American elms were commonly grown in New England, and King was not sure one would thrive here. Nothing would be worse than to plant a commemorative tree and have it die the first year, he remarked, so a forester should be consulted.

Learnard asked Holland what he wanted Council to do? Holland said he wanted them to approve this as a City project, not from some outside agency. Would they have to pay a tree expert? Destadio asked, and Prebor mentioned they had a tree bank in the City. How much money was in it? Curnow said they had money in the tree bank, but he would want to engage an expert for this.

Holland said he was glad to get that input. He thought having a commemorative tree was something they should do.

King said he thought the idea had merit, but they needed information. Maybe an oak would be better suited.

Prebor mentioned a thought he had. He said that on a certain piece of property the Fayette County Development Authority was looking at, there would be trees removed. The developers would have to contribute to the tree bank based on the caliper inches of the trees removed. What that meant was that everyone who had property where trees were growing was losing money. If they went ahead and cut down trees now, even if they did not sell the property for 20 years, they would save money because they would not have to contribute as much money to the tree bank.

Holland asked if they had a consensus on the tree planting? Learnard said they needed more information.

B. City Administrative Regulations/Manual (CARS & CAMS) and Ordinance Review/Update

Meeker said staff came to him a couple of weeks ago about updating ordinances, and there were city administrative regulations and manual (CARS and CAMS) that should be incorporated into ordinances. They could take the code chapter by chapter, he said, download it as a Word document, red-line the changes, and save it. They were not talking about substantive changes, but mostly changes of references that were outdated. Learnard said Council had no objections.

C. Lake Peachtree

Borkowski said they were notified of an unknown green substance in the Battery Way Park pond on August 2. The Fayette County Water System said this was blue-green algae, and the City then closed Lake Peachtree to recreational use and

installed “no swimming” signs and issued warnings through the media. They had also been in contact with experts on testing. Borkowski said they would be testing the lake for bacteria and toxins on the 21st. It was possible that the swimming portion of that weekend’s triathlon would have to be cancelled, he noted. The testing company, Arcadis, would also advise them on what to do and would also be setting up a long-term monitoring process.

Strickland said he had talked to the County Water System Manager about drinking water quality. She said water had not been pumped from Lake Peachtree since March 2023, and they usually did not pump Lake Peachtree in the summer. When they were not pumping the water, they still tested the lake once a week at the spillway, not near where the bloom was found. He said he asked her if, based on last week’s test, it would be safe to pump from Lake Peachtree and treat the water? and she said it would.

Curnow said they would continue to monitor this, looking at it from both a drinking water and a recreation standpoint. The treating process would make it safe for drinking water, but that did not mean the algae bloom and the irritants for swimmers would go away soon. They were naturally forming. When they got a determination from the lab, they would make a decision about opening the lake.

D. Aberdeen Center

King remarked that the Aberdeen Conference Center went into receivership during COVID and had been operating as an extended stay business. The owners would like to sell the property, but they could not, and no one could come in and propose something, because of the City’s density cap. He was asking Council to consider removing that cap so someone could at least offer a proposal. Leaving it like it was would just lead to blight, and this was 38.6 acres of valuable property.

Learnard said they would need more information from the City Manager in order to move forward.

E. Administrative Variances

King said he wanted to talk about administrative variances, noting he sat on a board that approved two the day before. The two homes under consideration were both built in the 1970s. One owner wanted to expand a garage that was built behind the house. The addition did not call for a variance because it would be well within the setback that was put in place 27 years after the garage was built. However, two feet on the corner of the original garage was outside the setback, and that is what triggered the need for the variance. King said something that minor should not require a homeowner to spend \$300 to bring it to Council and go through the whole variance process when it could be handled by the City Manager.

He proposed they allow the Planning Director in these cases to come to the City Manager with a recommendation, and let him make a decision on if a full hearing before Council should be required. Council members could rotate sitting on the

administrative variance committee, which he noted was not technically a committee, but a process.

The other variance request they heard was for a backyard building that had been constructed without a permit in the 1970s, King went on. Nothing on the exterior was being changed, but in order to get a permit, they needed that variance because it was built originally without a permit.

Learnard said they would look into the process and make sure it was serving the citizens.

Holland asked if that was an open meeting? King said it was, but the only reason they had to go through all that was because they called it a committee. Council had stated their opinion on that, Holland replied, but King said Holland made a presentation at a Council meeting, but nothing was voted on. Holland said the variance committee should hold open meetings. Learnard again said they should take a look, and Destadio said he was okay with anything that met the law.

Executive Session

King moved to adjourn to executive session at 9:12 p.m. for pending or threatened litigation. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

King moved to reconvene in regular session at 9:14 p.m. Prebor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

King moved to adjourn to executive session at 9:14 p.m. for pending or threatened litigation and real estate matters. Destadio seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Destadio moved to reconvene in regular session at 9:38 p.m. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no more business, King moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m. Holland seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.



Martha Barksdale, Recording Secretary



Kim Learnard